

Annotation: The claim statement or thesis statement gives a social issue that this student has identified in her chosen film. Within the body paragraphs, the student gives various specific points in the movie as evidence that the social issue is displayed in the film. She even includes quoted material from the film as evidence. In her third body paragraph, this student discusses how effectively she believes the writers of the film display the social issue by discussing a powerful moment for the character and viewer in the film and how it displays the social issue and why it is powerful. In future revisions, the student might consider discussing the effectiveness of the evidence she gave to displaying the social issue in the other two body paragraphs as well (to fully address the prompt). The student may also consider revising the concluding paragraph.

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Money & Happiness

In life, happiness is something we all strive to achieve. However, the life of Chris Gardner, played by Will Smith, doesn't seem to be happy. Being months behind on their rent, Gardner struggles to sell his bone density scanners, which are turning out to be a poor investment. Determined to be able to provide for his son, something his own father was never around to do, Gardner applies for a stock broker internship. But there is one problem, the company only hires one out of twenty other people in the internship every six months. Although "The Pursuit of Happiness" is an amazing story about perseverance, the film does a good job portraying a man who is trying to find out what life is all about, asking himself if there is a link between the amount of money one has and their overall happiness.

Thandie Newton plays Linda, Chris Gardner's wife in the movie. Stressed from working two jobs and still not being able to pay her family's rent, Linda is repeatedly shown taking out her

frustrations on her husband, who doesn't seem to be making any money through his own work. Their arguments over finances are a good indicator on how the amount of money they have impacts their lives. If they had more money their stress from debt would decrease and their overall happiness would increase. However, that's not the case. Every day they work and work, but still their debt sees no improvement. That stress builds up over time, until Linda can not take it anymore and left her husband and son to go to work for her sister in New York. Linda's actions showed how big of a role money played in her happiness, making viewers question if how happy a person is reflects the amount of money they make.

After his wife left leaves, the screenwriters cleverly had their main character present the social issue head on by questions it himself. "They all seemed so happy to me" he thinks. "Why couldn't I be like that?" This is what Gardner thinks to himself as he watches men and women come in and out of Dean Witter Reynolds, the company he wishes to work at as a stockbroker. This directly confronts the social issue. Gardner was as smart, if not smarter than many of those people coming from the building. This is shown by Gardners' ability to solve the rubix cube, a new game at the time, when most people thought it was impossible to solve. The only difference between Gardner and the people he was watching was the fact that they all had jobs where they didn't need to worry about whether or not they were going to get money for that day of work.

Probably one of the most powerful moments in the movie was at the end after Chris Gardner is finally offered the job as a stockbroker at Walter Dean Reynolds. As Chris was being offered the job, there were clearly tears in his eyes. These were tears of joy and relief. After years of living in poverty and many months of homelessness, he now has a stable job. "This part of my life, this little part, is called happiness." This type of ending really topped off the display of how money impacted the life of Chris Gardner. As the movie progressed and Gardener fell deeper into poverty, so did his depression and stress. This continues until the end of the movie

when he finally got the job and could confidently say for the first time that he and his son were going to be alright. It is like falling off a tightrope and realizing you finally have a net to catch you.

After watching “The Pursuit of Happiness”, it should be clear to almost anyone that money does indeed have an impact on our happiness. A lack of money causes stress and a lack of security, which leads people to be unhappy with their lives. However, money is not the only key to happiness. Money can provide three fundamental elements we all need- food, clothing, and shelter. But money can’t buy genuine friendship, good health and the love of your family.