The Pursuit of Happyness

Director: Gabriele Muccino  
Year made: 2006  
Starring: Will Smith, Thandie Newton, Jaden Smith  
Rating: PG-13  
Length: 1h 57min  
English level: Easy  
Themes: Entrepreneurship, American Dream

Warning/General Advisory
Includes some profane language, some street violence, a scene in a prison, and mild sex/nudity.

Context
Set in San Francisco in 1981, The Pursuit of Happyness is about a father, Chris, and his young son, who struggle with homelessness. Chris works as a salesman while trying to save up money to provide a better life for himself and his son. This movie shows the difficulty of being homeless, fighting for a comfortable, happy life, and how in the end, intelligence combined with perseverance pays off.

Key Vocabulary/Places
- Happyness – intentional misspelling for “happiness”  
- broker – a person who buys and sells stock for others  
- pursuit – the act of following after; chasing after  
- BART – Bay Area Rapid Transit, the metro system in the Bay Area  
- San Francisco 49ers – American football team  
- eviction – to put a tenant out of property by force  
- IRS – Internal Revenue Service; US government agency responsible for collecting taxes and enforcing tax laws

Discussion Questions
- Why does Chris struggle with homelessness? What does he do to improve his situation for himself and his son? Do you think he makes the right decisions to achieve happiness?  
- What qualities or actions helped Chris achieve his eventual success?  
- How did you feel when Chris and his son had to sleep at the BART station?  
- What does happiness mean to you?  
- Do you think that people have an unalienable right (i.e. a right that should not be taken away from them) to happiness? Why/why not?  
- How do you feel about Chris’s goals in life? To what extent do you identify with them in your own life?  
- Does it surprise you that this film was based on a true story?