

# Movie Kit



American  
Spaces



## *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?