

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 2

Comment: This paper is a 2 because, although the topic is mentioned, there is no real explanation of the article “‘Happyness’ for Sale” except for a repetition of the topic.

Optimism plays an important role in overcoming poverty for both Jenny, in “Circus in Town”, and Chris Gardner, in “Happiness’ for Sale.” Jenny’s family is in poverty and they could not even go see the circus when “there’s a circus in town.” Her mother complained to her father how Jenny could not “have things, and see things” like the other children. The closest she could see of the circus is the poster. Although Jenny could not physically experience the circus, through being optimistic and using her imagination, she is able to conjure up an experience like no other. Jenny’s mother thinks negatively. Her mother complains that the possible outcome for her little girl is a “big-gawky know-nothing”. Jenny’s outlook on her future contrasts to that of her mothers. Jenny sees herself as an intelligent individual. After all, “she was farther on in school than any other girl her age.” She is optimistic towards her future because she does not see herself ten years from now to be the kind of lady her mother expects her to be.

Optimism also plays an important role in “ ‘Happyness’ for Sale.”

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 2

Comment: This paper is a 2. The analysis of “Circus in Town” is acceptable but the analysis of “Happyness for Sale” is not. This paper is seriously underdeveloped.

Optimism played a large role in the lives of Jenny in “Circus in Town” + Chris Gardner “ ‘Happyness’ for Sale”. They were both able to escape from their current lives, even if it was only temporary in Jenny’s case.

In “Circus in Town” Jenny’s family is going through hard times during the Great Depression, but Jenny is still positive. Her childhood innocence is protecting her from the true reality of the situation. She imagines herself as part of the circus and lets herself escape from the hard times.

In “ ‘Happyness’ for Sale” Chris Gardner takes himself from nothing to completely successful. He believe that things would work out and him and his son would no longer be homeless.

In both of these stories optimism was used to make Jenny’s + Chris Gardner’s lives better and more fulfilling.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 3

Comment: This paper was awarded a 3. While errors are present, they are only distracting – they do not impede meaning. The paper demonstrates an understanding of texts, but development is limited. There is an understanding that the lives of Jenny and Chris Gardner are improved because of their optimism.

Optimism often brings people hope and motivation. In both the lives of Jenny in “Circus in Town” by Sinclair Ross and Chris Gardner in “ ‘Happyness’ for Sale” by Jia Lynn Yang, optimism is the quintessence which bestowed their inspirations. Consequently, their lives are improved for a certain degree and hopes are restored.

Jenny and Gardner both suffer the cruelty of poverty and yet they never give up of life. However, Gardner, who is homeless, is one day intrigued to a “Ferrari”, a geniuen eye-opener for him, and recognizes the target he will persuit throughout his life. While Gardner have set his goals, Jenny is unable to afford the entrance fee for the Circus. She deals with it by her imagination and creates her “own circus.” The two never give up their hopes and remain in a positive attitude.

Their optimism helps them to have faith in their abilities and keeps their hope without respite. Eventually, Gardner becomes wealthy and Jenny acquired her mental peacefulness. Optimism directs people’s lives and achievements, and is the key for Jenny and Gardner to face poverty.

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Scale: 3

Comment: This paper was awarded a 3. The paper addresses both texts in a limited way. The paper is simplistic, both in quality of writing and analysis. There is some support for the ideas, but it is underdeveloped.

In the short passage's "Circus in Town" and "Happyness", the characters Jenny and Chris have optimistic views which play roles in their lives.

Jenny in "Circus in Town" is growing up with nothing. Her mother talks about her being nothing when she grows up. But Jenny thinks she "is" going to do something with her life. She dreams of going to the circus and pretends her horse is an elephant. She doesn't get down on herself.

Chris in "Happyness for Sale" also was very poor. He was born poor and as he grew up he tried to change his life for the better. He is a single father who has to raise his child. He is homeless and moves around a lot. He wants to make his son's life better so he keeps on working looking to move up in the world. Once he gets money and fame he uses it to help others who are unfortunate and need help.

Both these passages show that no matter what happens in life, you should keep fighting, be optimistic and don't get down on yourself.

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Scale: 3

Comment: This paper was awarded a 3. There is an attempt at synthesis in the first and last paragraphs (Chris Gardner is mentioned in paragraph #2). There is a lack of development with respect to “Happyness for Sale”. The paper shows a sense of purpose – there is an understanding of optimism – but there is more summary than analysis.

Optimism plays a huge role in the lives of Jenny in “Circus in Town” and Chris Gardner in “Happyness’ for Sale.” Both tend to use to the stragety of blocking out signs of lost hope; In order to gain confidence and motivation to keep “moving forward.”

Hope is an easy thing to loose and “hope is sometimes all another person needs.” For Jenny and Chris it is the rescue to their situation. Jenny was constantly bonbarded with thoughts of failure and low financial status. For most eleven year old girls such thoughts would crush any signs of hopes and dreams. Jenny found greatness in everything around her except for such horrid thoughts. She has no interest in money for she was satisfied with her imagination taking care of all she had ever wanted. She would escape from reality and regardless of her family’s inability to take her to a real circus she already “had her own circus.”

Both Jenny in “Circus in Town” and Chris Gardner in “Happyness’ For Sale” find the capability to find something great in a situation which may seem hopeless.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 4

Comment: This paper is competent. While a clear synthesis is presented, some language errors, particularly involving verb usage, are evident. Discussion is developed and supported with will-integrated references to the text.

When people are in hopeless situation, being positive usually helps them escape from that circumstance. In Sinclair Ross's story "Circus in Town" and Jia Lynn Yang's article "Happyness' for Sale", both of the protagonists of the passages, Jenny and Chris Gardner, are represented as examples of the individuals who solve their problems by confronting the difficulties with optimistic attitudes.

An example of the role of optimism is portrayed in the story "Circus in Town" through Jenny's attitude against her situation. Because of her family's poverty, Jenny cannot go to the circus; unlike other children, her little hope just causes a quarrel between her parents. She just sits outside, and is desperate for her situation. Although Tom tries to console her by saying that the circus "[will not] be worth the money," she cannot accept her situation. However, instead of giving up her hope, she imagines her own circus. Her imagination help her to overcome her poverty at this moment: money does not matter to imagine her own circus. As a result, Jenny finds a way to escape from her poverty by being positive and imagining her wish.

On the other hand, Chris Gardner, the main character of the article " 'Happyness' for Sale", deals with his poverty in more active way.; in spite of his desperate situation of being homeless and raising his son without a mother, he does not lose the hope of being successful in his life; instead of cursing his situation, he makes decisions about "what [he is] going to do with [his] life," when he sleep at the bathroom. In other words, he never thinks that he is failed in his life. From this positive attitude, he can be successful in his life and founds his own firm, Gardner Rich. Furthermore, after his success, he attempts to give hope to other by having a lot of speeches believing that it is "sometimes all another person needs." This optimistic attitude of not losing the hope is the key of his success.

In both reading passages, the protagonists confront a situation where they might want to give up everything. However, they overcome the situation by being optimistic and not losing the hope; Jenny finally imagines her own circus, and Chris Gardner founds his own firm. Both of the stories remind people that being positive is the most important thing to be successful; even though they are in a hard situations, this mind helps them to overcome their circumstances.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 4

Comment: This paper was awarded a score of 4 due to its literal discussion and limited insight. While the paper tends to summarize more than analyse, a clear synthesis is apparent in the concluding paragraph.

Jenny in “Circus in Town” and Chris Gardner in “ ‘Happyness’ for Sale” are similar characters that are both optimistic and use their optimism to make the best of a bad situation. Optimism is key trait for both Jenny and Chris Gardner during hard times.

Jenny is a young girl living through the depression and has high hopes of going to the circus when she one day sees a poster with a picture of the elephant that performs in it. Since these were hard times for everyone her parents wern’t able to give her money to go and watch. Unlike her big brother, who gets upset that the parents start fighting, Jenny is optimistic and goes out to the barn. There she thinks of what the circus might be like and dreams about the things the elephant and people might do. She does this instead of getting upset, showing she is optimistic and can find a good thing out of a bad situation.

Chris Gardner is a very successful man, but he wasn’t always that way. Without his sence of optimism Chris would still be living on the streets. Chris used his ability to make a bad situation, such as living in a public washroom, livable. He made no money and only had a slim chance of getting a job there yet he made 200 calls a day to snag clients for Dean Witter. He stated, “Every time I picked up the phone, I knew I was getting closer to digging myself out of the hole.” By saying that you can see how he was optimistic about the future and even though he had nothing he was able to see what could be instead of seeing what is.

Jenney and Chris both are a great example of optimistic people that show when you look for the good instead of the dwelling on the bad you are alot happyer and can achieve more. A smart person might be a better reader or writer but a person that is optimistic is truly skilled and Jenny and Chris are certainly no exception.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 4

Comment: This “4” paper is well-written. It presents a solid discussion of each piece, but offers only a limited synthesis, found mainly in the conclusion.

An optimistic outlook on life can bring happiness and imagination to one’s life even in times of sadness and sorrow. Optimism is a state of mind that can only be produced by oneself.

In the excerpt from “Circus in Town,” by Sinclair Ross, the character Jenny uses optimism to power her imagination. Coming from a family struggling with poverty during the depression, Jenny lives an uneventful life, compared to other children. This makes the finding of a poster advertising the circus, along with the possibility that she may be able to see it first hand almost unimaginable. At first Jenny is ecstatic. She imagines a whole new world that she has never seen before, one that will fill her life with happiness and hope for her future. However, once arriving home, Jenny’s parents bitter outlook on life and refusal to attend the circus breaks Jenny’s heart. In the end, Jenny is able to take an optimistic approach to the situation. Heading out to the barn with the circus poster she lies with the animals and pictures herself at the circus.

In “ ‘Happyness for Sale’, ” by Jia Lynn Yang Chris Gardner uses optimism to stay alive. Making just \$1000 a month Gardner took care of his son as a solo parent, while living out of shelters and occasionaly bathrooms. Not knowing what the next day would bring Chris never stopped believing that he would make it. Painstakingly he worked his way up from an internship to opening his own brokerage firm only 5 short years later. Gardner’s optimistic outlook kept him going through the difficult times. He could have given up when most people would have, but he was determined and persevered to get what he wanted for himself and his family. Today Gardner’s story is well known and he has many people asking for help in their times of trouble. Gardner does what he can to spread his optimism to others who need it and never forgets that his optimism is what got him here today.

An optimistic viewpoint of life does not always equal success but is more likely attainable when you have a positive outlook on life. Optimism is an important factor for people to live happy lives. Most live optimistic lives but unfortunately for some, optimism can not be bought in a store, but must come from within.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 5

Comment: This paper was awarded a 5 because there is clear evidence of synthesis at an interpretive level. There is sophisticated vocabulary, interpretation of both texts and a solid thesis.

In “ ‘Happyness’ for Sale” by Jia Lynn Yang and “Circus in Town” by Sinclair Ross the main characters Jenny and Chris both live in a harsh world that tells them they will never succeed. Despite the efforts of others and reality Chris and Jenny do not falter in achieving their dreams. Chris overcomes the fact that he is a single father lacking the best education and attempts at creating for himself a future to be jealous of. Jenny works against the debts her parents carry that keep her from enjoying the simple things of a normal childhood such as going to the circus.

Jenny from the story, “Circus in Town” is a young girl living in the time of The Depression. Her parents are incredibly broke and have a pile up of unpaid bills. When a wide-eyed Jenny begs her parents to let her go to the circus. Listening to her parents argue against each other about all the things they wish would happen and what they could only dream of being financially able. Although Jenny could have listened to her parents saying it was an impossibility and Jenny could never enjoy such things, she overcomes that and remains hopeful. Instead of suffering a harsh fate she goes to her own circus.

Chris Gardner from “ ‘Happyness’ for Sale” is a poor salesman striving to pay the bills when his wife leaves him on his own with a young son to take care of. When he can no longer afford an apartment or childcare he lives on the street and sleeps anywhere they can. Despite people pushing him down and telling him change is simply not a possibility for people like him, Chris reaches for his goal. He remains forever optimistic as he gives up anything he has left for the smallest possibility of change. His mind overcomes matter and in the end that changes his life.

Despite the fact that the entire world is telling Chris and Jenny that they can’t, the fact that they could even dream of or hope for such things already proves something to the world. Their optimism makes them ultimately different when it comes down to it and their optimism changes their lives.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 5

Comment: This 5 paper is a proficient and fluid piece of writing. The analysis of optimism is well developed. Synthesis is established in the introduction and is strongly supported throughout the paper.

Without optimism few would ever believe in reaching great and difficult goals. Both Jenny in "Circus in Town" and Chris Gardner in " 'Happyness' for Sale" realize this fact and use their optimism to better them selves. Both believe that they can become greater than what they are and that nothing is unattainable through effort.

Jenny was so joyous and hopeful at the prospect of attending the circus. She imagined the wonder of the elephant and "red-coated brass band"(1) so vividly through the poster. Even when her excitement was destroyed by her parents' quarrel, Jenny was still able to hide away in the loft "in its dim, high stillness, [and] she had her circus."(22) Through her imagination and optimism she was able to create a "splendid, matchless circus of a little girl who had never seen one"(22) that was grander than reality could ever bring for her now. She was not defeated by her family's lack of money or her parents' arguement, she continued to dream. This determined optimism that Jenny has extends beyond imaginings of a circus. Even though her mother only believe that there is "nothing ahead for her but chickens and cows,"(10) she still wants more than that. She expects that things will be very different than what has been put before her. With her strong abilities in academics she expects to exceed her mother's expectations. Her hope for her future will see her through.

Chris Gardner always had hope for the future. He always knew that he could achieve his dreams. When he and his son were homeless, Chris did not fall into the negatives around him. Even sleeping in a public washroom he was still making " 'A lot of hard decisions [] about 'What [he was] going to do with his life,' " he didn't give up. He still looked forward to his dreams and didn't stop because times became difficult. Nothing would stop him, nothing would be enough to make him give up. He still focused on the positive as he was trying to achieve his dream of becoming a Stockbroker.

Through boundless determination, belief in the future and optimism Chris achieved his dreams and then some. Jenny possesses such qualities and therefore will find her way to a bright future as well. Never being brought down will help them both achieve anything.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 5

Comment: This response demonstrates a strong understanding of the task and the texts. The analysis goes beyond the literal to the inferential. First draft errors are present.

A little girl “pirouett[s] on her bare toes” and is ecstatic. a man down on his luck fights the world to provide for his son. Both “Circus in Town” by Sinclair Ross and “Happyness for sale” by Jia Lynn Yang have elements of optimism.

Jenny displays the classic blind optimism of young children. Nothing can be or is wrong with my life. Presented with a torn Circus poster by her brother, she is at once aglow with the possibilities. She runs to her father, only to be turned away. She runs to her mother, only the get a confusing answer. At dinner, tension is thick. Confronted with reality she make a break for it. After dinner, still optimistic about seeing and experiencing the circus she retreats to the hay loft. It is there where she finds her circus, so wonderful it outshines reality.

Chris Gardner is an ordinary man, a father and a business man. After running into hard times and losing everything Chris has to resort to his optimism. His optimism drives his determination, his desire for a better life. Working by day and sleeping in bathrooms or shelters by night, Chris stays positive. Bit by bit he can see the change, his positive outlook and his drive has made a difference.

In both stories the main characters have optimism. What makes the stories unique is in the way which the degree differs. Jenny shows the blind optimism of youth which leads her to utilizing her imagination instead of getting depressed. “Happyness for Sale” is different in that it takes chris years of having an optimistic attitude, being determined to look and work for a brighter future.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 6

Comment: This essay is a low 6. The writing throughout is effective, with an insightful understanding of the topic. There are pertinent references used, and ideas are synthesized nicely.

An individual's belief regarding personal control can have a significant impact on the decisions that they make, as well as their overall attitude towards life. Such is the case in "Circus in Town" by Sinclair Ross and " 'Happyyness' for Sale" by Jia Lynn Yang. In both passages, the main character is forced to deal with the hardships that accompany an impoverished lifestyle. In both cases, the character adapts coping strategies that involve a positive, optimistic outlook towards the future; however, the young and inexperienced Jenny relies on fantasy and imagination as an escape, whereas the more mature Chris is able to channel his energy into changing his misfortunes.

In "Circus in Town", a young child named Jenny has been brought up in a poverty-stricken area that has plagued her family with a life of nothing but "chickens and cows"; however, Jenny is able to escape reality through the use of her powerful imagination. Despite the fact that she is unable to abandon her unfortunate lifestyle, she is able to remain positive after receiving one simple piece of paper: a poster of a circus. Jenny does not attempt to change her unwealthy and insecure circumstances, but rather avoids them by creating her own idealized version of life, complete with "purple lights" and the ability to ride a horse with "silver bells on reins and bridle". Her overall inexperience with life results in an ignorance towards the ability to change; Jenny does not realize that a change in her unfortunate life is possible, and instead becomes satisfied with changing it in her mind. The poverty that surrounds her does not result in feelings of self pity; however, it also does not result in the drive for realistic change.

Chris Gardner in " 'Happyyness for Sale' " similarly has dealt with experiencing an impoverished lifestyle; however, unlike Jenny, Chris's drive for change and internal focus of control result in the necessary actions for a new way of life. Chris, who had spent "long nights at the shelter" with his infant son for years, eventually made the necessary decisions to take action against his less than ideal living circumstances. His internal desire to "do something with [his] life" eventually resulted in several astounding milestones, including an interview on "ABC's news-magazine 20/20". Chris's powerful belief that "baby steps count" as long as one is always "moving forward" has led him to a life of wealth, fame, and fortune that he believes is possible for anyone to attain. His experience and maturity when he was homeless resulted in mature decisions and actions, which ultimately led him to an ideal reality.

Both Jenny and Chris have experienced hardship that is immensely difficult to overcome and have remained positive throughout the difficult times; however, Chris's maturity in decision making allowed him to overcome his circumstances, whereas Jenny's youthful existence only allows her to dream and fantasize. Overall, one's attitude towards the circumstances they must deal with will determine the level of happiness they are able to attain; as well, their personal feelings of control will determine whether or not they can achieve what they desire.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 6

Comment: This paper is awarded a 6. The use of examples and supporting evidence are well-chosen, and there is a sophisticated approach to synthesis throughout. This paper employs skilful control and effective writing.

Amid despair, hardship and poverty a shining glimmer of hope was envisioned through the eyes of little Jenny and the remarkable Chris Gardner. Optimism brought them each to place where life was better; allowing them to overcome dire circumstances despite the doubts of others. As the sole driving force for the unique way in which each of these characters achieved their goals, optimism was the key component to their individual successes.

From the era of the depression to a modern day struggle Jenny and Chris maintained a positive attitude. Throughout the depression, times were hard and poverty was a mere way of life for thousands of families across the country. Jenny, stuck in these times, a young girl destined to a life of “chickens and cows... [a] gawky know-nothing...” (Sinclair Ross, 2), used an optimistic outlook to imagine a joyful and rich moment in time. Chris Gardner on the other hand, lived through the depression and into a world of homelessness in which he was able to not only survive but eventually make something truly great of himself. While getting off the streets and providing for his son was an accomplishment in itself, Chris Gardner found much success in starting his own company and his fame with the media. “The Gardner gospel of persistence, progress, and faith...”(Jia Lynn Yang, 8), brought about a tangible success to which his entire life had been committed. In contrast, the inner greatness seen in those comparatively short moments of Jenny’s childhood were powered by the same optimism.

The power of maintaining an optimistic spirit had also enabled the characters to overcome the downfalls of those around them. Jenny was able to surpass the doubt and pity of her family as they continually spoke of her future as though she had no chance of success, no opportunity for a better existence. Finding hope in the magical daydreams of the circus Jenny’s spirit facilitated the fantasy against all odds. Chris Gardner also endured hardship in ways that he himself could not have avoided. With “his 20-month-old son, whom he “was raising alone”(6), Chris was forced to work twice as hard in his life as a single parent. The stereotypes accompanying his homelessness must have also been incredibly difficult. It was only with the blessing of the characters’ optimism that such surmounting power was achieved.

Invisioning a better life was the key to success for both of these characters in similar ways. An imagination with the power to bring life to the vision a circus with “a red-coated brass band, a clown, an elephant ripped through the middle.”(1) was Jenny’s mechanism of escape as “...the threats of what would happen next time failed to touch her.” (Sinclair Ross, 3). Just like Jenny, Chris Gardner also saw something greater in a vision, which combined with his optimism, brought him to the miraculous ending to his truly amazing life’s story. An example of symbolizing this vision was described in Chris Gardner’s story of the man with the Ferrari.

“One day he saw a red Ferrari and, ...asked the owner what he did for a living. Stockbroker the man replied. From that moment, Gardner determined to become one too.”(Jia Lynn Yang, 7)

His belief that such a task was even possible as he was literally homeless, goes to show how his optimism played such a leading role in his life.

These characters' abilities to overcome the hardships of their times was truly amazing. Whether it was the attempt to gain a small taste of the joys a childhood dream could bring, or a struggle to success in the harsh modern world of business and wealth, optimism paved the way for the happiness the characters found. With a vision and a positive attitude Jenny and Chris Gardner succeeded to find a better world in their own individual ways.

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 6

Comment: This paper is a superior 6. The approach to the topic is engaging and demonstrates skilful control of language and topic. This paper uses strong transitions and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the texts. This essay shows a sophisticated approach to synthesis.

Though these two stories come from opposite ends of the wealth spectrum they have much in common. Both characters are filled by optimism, a key instrument which elevates them from monetary suppression, and inspires them to reach their desires.

The first bit of evidence which indicated optimism's influence on Jenny's financial status was her resourcefulness. Imagination, as any intellectual person can appreciate, is the most valuable resource available to man, and this Jenny is rich with. Her fanciful daydreams of dancing purple-tighted on the bare back of a galloping horse allow her to vicariously live the experience. "Look what Tom brought me, a piece of circus!" She shrilly exclaims to her father. A lack of material wealth and pleasurable experience has allowed the girl to reach deep into her pool of imaginings, and appreciate the excitement and wonderment of a circus through merely a scrap of poster! It is in this manner that optimism allows Jenny to attain her wealth.

Where Jenny's optimism prompted her imagination, Chris Gardener's spurred determination. Though a homeless man, trapped in a desperate situation, Gardener refused to accept the circumstance and through pure will power manifested the life style he desired. His consistently optimistic mindset allowed for him to patiently trod through calamity and poverty, but most importantly, like Jenny it allowed Gardener to dream. Every day the average citizen is bombarded with the excess of the wealthy – through shopping windows, on the TV, even strolling through the park or driving to work. And though many people dream, few people think to themselves "I deserve that lifestyle, and I'm ready to live it." "Persistence, progress, and faith," all born from optimism, was the manner that Chris Gardener was able to achieve his wealth.

Imagination and determination weren't the only two advantages that lead Jenny and Chris to their dreams. Optimism was the key aspect which freed both characters from poor expectations. When Jenny tells her mother of the circus, the mother's reaction is of fury. She berates her husband for the deficit of wealth which is preventing her daughter from the life she thinks she deserves. But Jenny is indignant. Jenny sees her self as smart and capable and full of promise. She sees a bright future ahead, where her mother paints a grim one.

Though Chris' story tells of no particular character who condemns his future as it does Jenny's, low expectation are placed just as heavily upon his shoulders. A homeless African American with an infant son in tow does not give much promise to success in our society. We look down on the poor and accuse the single parent with indignities such as "Why don't you try? What did you do wrong? How could you fail?!" Optimism is the only weapon of the down trodden, and this weapon Jenny and Chris Gardener wielded with masterful skill.