

**AP Language and Composition**  
**Summer Reading Assignment**  
**2019-2020**  
**Tracye.bulger@cherokeek12.net**

Greetings future AP English Language student!

In preparation for *AP English Language and Composition* in the fall at RRHS, you are encouraged to read the book *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore. You'll want to purchase your own copy of the book or check one out from the local library. A used copy may be purchased online at Thriftbooks.com for \$4-\$5. If you have issues that will prevent you from purchasing your book, please see Mr. Bulger.

Please make every effort to purchase the specific version of each book so that you will have the same page numbers, layout, prefatory material etc...

*The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore

ISBN-978-0-385-52820-7

In addition to reading *The Other Wes Moore*, you will be required to complete a REHUGO project.

#### **Rehugo Analyses**

The ability to advance an informed, logical argument is crucial—not only to this class but to everyday life. Imagine how many local, national, and global issues could be solved if everyone were fully informed and carefully considered all the perspectives. No, I'm not dreaming. I'm simply considering the possibilities...if everyone LOGICALLY examined ALL evidence—evidence in support of their position AND evidence in support of OTHER positions. And therein lies the answer to successful argument:

- a clear statement of position (arrived at after considering the evidence of opposing viewpoints and evidence supporting your own viewpoint)
- consideration of the evidence of the opposition (which you will acknowledge and likely take issue with)
- a logical, effective presentation of the evidence in support of your position and
- a powerful conclusion—quite possibly, one which proposes a compromise or solution

Ultimately, though, all argument is based on evidence, whether that evidence is in the **form of facts, statistics, expert testimony, examples, anecdotes, or other appeals to our beliefs and needs.**

For this assignment, you will collect and analyze cultural and context-building experiences. Doing so will provide you with many opportunities to strengthen your awareness of the world around you while also improving your ability to write and think critically about many social issues. REHUGO stands for

**R=Reading**

**E=Entertainment**

**H=History**

**U=Universal Concepts/Truths**

**G=Government/Current Events**

**O=Observations**

The format for each analysis will vary, depending on whether you are analyzing an essay or speech [R], a documentary [E], an event in history [H], a famous saying [U], a political event or current event [G], or a trend in society [O], each analysis should be thoughtful and insightful.

### REHUGO Requirements

Type of Entry	Description of Entry	# of discussion entries	
Reading	Analysis of one essay. You may find essays online at the following site: <a href="https://tetw.org/Greats">https://tetw.org/Greats</a>	1	
Entertainment	Analysis of a documentary (Netflix, cnn.com, etc.)	1	
History	an event, document, speech, or person in history You could visit a historical museum/sight/monument; Renaissance Festival, etc. (Take a picture of you there.)	1	
Universal Truth (no clichés, please)	Analyses of universal truths (aphorisms). Your universal truth should go beyond a witty saying (of a substantial and compelling nature). It should reflect a life lesson that is relevant today.	1	
Government	Analysis of a current event – national or international. For the current event, read articles that represent opposing viewpoints	1	
Observation	Analysis of a picture, commenting on a trend in society.	1	

### HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR REHUGO ENTRIES

<b>R</b>		
	Essay	a. MLA Citation b. State author's argument c. Identify and evaluate two pieces of evidence (note type of evidence) d. Identify two rhetorical strategies and discuss the effect of each
<b>E</b>	Film	a. MLA Citation b. 1-2 paragraph summary

		c. 1-2 paragraph comment on the significance of the film
<b>H</b>	Historical Events, Documents, People, Speeches, Sights	a. MLA citation b. 1-2 paragraphs identifying the event or person—be specific c. 1-2 paragraphs commenting on relevance today
<b>U</b>	Universal Truths (Aphorisms) NOT clichés	a. MLA citation (avoid “anonymous” authors) b. Explain the meaning c. 1 paragraph commenting on relevance of today
<b>G</b>	Current Events	For each current event— a. Read op-ed articles on a significant contemporary national or global issue; the article must present opposing viewpoints on the issue (e.g. one article in favor of dissolving DACA and one article against) b. Include the title and author in each introductory paragraph c. Identify each author’s argument d. Identify and evaluate 2 pieces of evidence that support the writer’s argument (note the type of evidence) e. Identify 2 rhetorical strategies and discuss the effect of each f. State your position CLEARLY—in a manner that acknowledges the opposing position g. Include the links to your 2 articles in your analysis, so I can get to the documents
<b>O</b>	Cultural, Technical, Societal Trends	For published picture— a. Attach the picture to your analysis b. Identify the cultural, technological, or societal trend being commented on in the picture c. Evaluate the effectiveness of the visual d. Comment on and evaluate the implications of the trend

**Your REHUGO entries should be typed and MLA formatted.  
Due Tuesday, August 13, 2019.**

***The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore***

*This is the prompt for the in-class essay you will write on 8/16/2019. It is in the style of one of the three Free-Response Questions that appears on the AP English Language exam – the Synthesis Question.*

*The Other Wes Moore* “is the story of two boys living in Baltimore with similar histories and an identical name: Wes Moore. One of us is free and has experienced things that he never even knew to dream about as a kid. The other will spend every day until his death behind bars for an armed robbery that left a police officer and father of five dead. The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his. Our stories are obviously specific to our two lives, but I hope they will illuminate the crucial inflection points in every life, the sudden moments of decision where our paths diverge and our fates are sealed. It’s unsettling to know how little separates each of us from another life altogether.”

The book touches on many issues, ultimately asking: What allows some people to lead happy, successful, fulfilling lives, while others don’t?

To start the year, we are going to ask you to wrestle with those central questions: To what extent is success in life dependent on factors you have control over? To what extent is success a matter of pure luck?

Carefully read the following nine sources below. **Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that argues a clear position on whether luck or other factors within our control are more important to our success in life.**

Make sure your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.

In your essay, you must include reference to *The Other Wes Moore*.

You may also bring these sources, including the book, to reference in class, and you will have the entire period to write. **Do not write or outline the essay beforehand.**

Sources (B – G are attached)

**Source A** - *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore

**Source B** - "In the N.B.A., ZIP Code Matters" by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz

**Source C** - "Optimism and the Psychology of Chance Encounters" by Daniel Tomasulo

**Source D** - "How sunny weather lowers the college admissions bar, and more" by Kevin Lewis

**Source E** - "Why I'll Never Apologize for My White Male Privilege" by Tal Fortgang

**Source F** - "The Key To Success? Grit" by Angela Lee Duckworth

**Source G** - "Back to School – Part Two," *This American Life*

**Source H** - *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon by Bill Watterson

**Source I** - "5 Steps To Success" by Amanda Kaise

## **SOURCE B**

### **In the N.B.A., ZIP Code Matters**

by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, Contributing Op-Ed Writer, *The New York Times*, Sunday Review  
November 2, 2013 [nytimes.com/2013/11/03/opinion/sunday/in-the-nba-zip-code-matters.html](http://nytimes.com/2013/11/03/opinion/sunday/in-the-nba-zip-code-matters.html)

*The author, contributing writer to the Sunday Review, recently received a Ph.D. in economics at Harvard.*

As the N.B.A. season gets under way, there is no doubt that the league's best player is 6-foot-8 LeBron James, of the Miami Heat. Mr. James was born poor to a 16-year-old single mother in Akron, Ohio. The conventional wisdom is that his background is typical for an N.B.A. player. A majority of Americans, Google consumer survey data show, think that the N.B.A. is composed mostly of men like Mr. James. But it isn't.

I recently calculated the probability of reaching the N.B.A., by race, in every county in the United States. I got data on births from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; data on basketball players from [basketball-reference.com](http://basketball-reference.com); and per capita income from the census. The results? Growing up in a wealthier neighborhood is a major, positive predictor of reaching the N.B.A. for both black and white men. Is this driven by sons of N.B.A. players like the Warriors' brilliant Stephen Curry? Nope. Take them out and the result is similar.

But this tells us only where N.B.A. players began life. Can we learn more about their individual backgrounds? In the 1980s, when the majority of current N.B.A. players were born, about 25 percent of African-Americans were born to mothers under age 20; 60 percent were born to unwed mothers. I did an exhaustive search for information on the parents of the 100 top-scoring black players born in the 1980s, relying on news stories, social networks and public records. Putting all the information together, my best guess is that black N.B.A. players are about 30 percent less likely than the average black male to be born to an unmarried mother and a teenage mother.

Need more evidence? The economists Roland G. Fryer and Steven D. Levitt famously studied four decades of birth certificates in California. They found that African-American kids from different classes are named differently. Black kids born to lower-income parents are given unique names more often. Based on searches on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), I counted black N.B.A. players born in California in the 1970s and 1980s who had unique first names. There were a few, like Torraye Braggs and Etdrick Bohannon. But black N.B.A. players were about half as likely to have a unique name as the average black male.

From 1960 to 1990, nearly half of blacks were born to unmarried parents. I would estimate that during this period roughly twice as many black N.B.A. players were born to married parents as unmarried parents. In other words, for every LeBron James, there was a Michael Jordan, born to a middle-class, two-parent family in Brooklyn, and a Chris Paul, the second son of middle-class parents in Lewisville, N.C., who joined Mr. Paul on an episode of "Family Feud" in 2011.

These results push back against the stereotype of a basketball player driven by an intense desire to escape poverty. In "The Last Shot," Darcy Frey quotes a college coach questioning whether a suburban player was "hungry enough" to compete against black kids from the ghetto. But the data suggest that on average any motivational edge in hungriness is far outweighed by the advantages of kids from higher socioeconomic classes.

What are these advantages? The first is in developing what economists call noncognitive skills like persistence, self-regulation and trust. We have grown accustomed to hearing about the importance of these qualities for success in school, but players in team sports rely on many of the same skills.

To see how poor noncognitive skills can derail a career in sports, consider the tragic tale of Doug Wrenn. Mr. Wrenn was born five years before Mr. James, also to a single mother in a poor neighborhood. He, too, was rated among the top basketball players in high school. But Mr. Wrenn, unlike Mr. James, was notoriously uncoachable and consistently in legal trouble. He was kicked off two college teams, went undrafted, bounced around lower leagues, moved in with his mother and was eventually imprisoned for assault.

The second relevant advantage of a relatively prosperous upbringing is height. The economist Robert W. Fogel has demonstrated the impact of improved early life nutrition on adult height over successive generations. Poor children in contemporary America still have substandard nutrition, holding back their development. They have higher infant mortality rates and lower average birth weights, and recent research has found that poverty in modern America inhibits height. In basketball, the importance of every inch is enormous. I estimate that each additional inch almost doubles your chances of making the N.B.A.

The N.B.A.'s changing demographics may also reflect the advantages of growing prosperity. Even casual fans will have noticed the difference the past 30 years have made: In 1980, fewer than 2 percent of N.B.A. players were foreign-born; now more than 20 percent are.

Much of this is surely because of the increased international popularity of basketball. In 1992, a 14-year-old German, Dirk Nowitzki, watched the American team starring Mr. Jordan, Larry Bird and Magic

Johnson win a gold medal in the Barcelona Olympics. Mr. Nowitzki, a childhood tennis and handball star, decided he wanted to become a basketball player. But there is a somewhat surprising factor that may also be contributing to the game's internationalization: Foreign countries are producing taller men.

From 1900 to 1980, the average American adult male's height rose to 5-feet-10 from 5-feet-6. But American height has leveled off since 1980. The number of American-born 7-foot N.B.A. players, which increased from 1 in 1946, the N.B.A.'s first year, to 16 in 1980, has leveled off as well (there were 20 last year). Western countries that have health patterns similar to those of the United States have also produced a fairly constant number of 7-foot N.B.A. players during the past few decades.

Meanwhile, other countries have caught up to the United States in health and height. A widely available proxy for early life conditions is infant mortality. In the United States, roughly 20 fewer infants per 1,000 births died in 2012 than in 1960. In other countries, declines have been much larger. In Turkey, over the same period, the rate dropped by a staggering 159 per 1,000 births. Even some Western European countries, like Spain, Greece and Portugal, had declines more than twice as large as those in America. All of these countries, recent research finds, have grown taller.

Take every country with bigger health improvements than the United States. Suppose they grew an inch on average in the past 30 years. This would most likely increase the proportion of 7-footers in these countries fivefold, and indeed these fast-improving countries have about five times as many N.B.A. 7-footers now as they did 30 years ago.

Or look at it from the other direction. Suppose Omer Asik, a 27-year-old Turkish player on the Houston Rockets, was born 25 or 30 years earlier, when Turkey's children were much worse off. Perhaps he would have peaked as a 6-foot-10 forward in Ankara, not as a 7-foot center in Houston.

After winning his second N.B.A. championship last June, Mr. James was interviewed on television. He said: "I'm LeBron James. From Akron, Ohio. From the inner city. I am not even supposed to be here." Twitter and other social networks erupted with criticism. How could such a supremely gifted person, identified from an absurdly young age as the future of basketball, claim to be an underdog? The more I look at the data, the more it becomes clear that Mr. James's accomplishments are more exceptional than they appear to be at first. Anyone from a difficult environment, no matter his athletic prowess, has the odds stacked against him.

## SOURCE C

### **Optimism and the Psychology of Chance Encounters**

by Daniel Tomasulo, Ph.D.    January 5, 2011

[psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/01/05/optimism-and-the-psychology-of-chance-encounters](http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/01/05/optimism-and-the-psychology-of-chance-encounters)

*This piece is by a licensed psychologist and author. The following appeared as one of his Ask the Therapist columns on Psych Central, an independent mental health social network website run by mental health professionals.*

*"...chance encounters play a prominent role in shaping the course of human lives." ~ Albert Bandura, Former president, American Psychological Association*

*"Did you ever observe to whom the accidents happen? Chance favors only the prepared mind." ~ Louis Pasteur*

A friend of mine recently went through a tough time: a personal crisis. She was scouring for signs of something positive, anything that would offer a ray of hope or light for her situation. She decided to go out for some tea when she encountered a woman, unknown to her, who began chatting about the trials and tribulations of her life.

The woman spoke of gratitude for those who had courage, and at the end of what was essentially a monologue the woman said to my friend: "Everybody goes through difficulties. Surround yourself with positive people and hang in there." With that the woman got up and left. My friend had not shared a word of her difficulties, yet this chance encounter satisfied her need to receive something positive.

Coincidence?

Perhaps. But the intriguing feature of this story is that the chance encounter provided the necessary spark of encouragement and hope. My friend e-mailed me and wanted to know what the positive psychology folks might think about such a meeting: How might fortuitous circumstances influence our wellbeing?

In 1957, writer and cartoonist Allen Saunders offered the quote: "Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans." John Lennon later popularized the above sentiment in his song *Beautiful Boy*. We can all relate. We spend so much time working toward something, only to have the unexpected snare our attention and take us in a completely different direction. Of course this could be for better or worse. But is there a science underneath the positivity of chance encounters? We can test it out.

Think of the three best, most important experiences in your life. Really. Take a moment to do this. No particular order—but three things that happened to you that really changed your life. Once you think about it you will realize that one or two, if not all three were likely to have happened by chance. Sure, there was the degree you received that you worked on for years, or the promotion at work you deserved. But it is probable that at least some of the major positive experiences of your life were chance happenings; people or circumstances you couldn't predict or control. They just happened.

Yet psychology is defined as a science that helps us describe, predict and control behavior. So here is a seeming contradiction. The major events in life — how we met our spouse or lover, what profession we chose, or friend we've made — may have all happened by chance. Some of the things that have made us happiest in life were never on our to-do list.

Who we become is greatly influenced by what happens beyond our control. And yet, as your own life has likely revealed, there is evidence that chance encounters can, and do, positively influence our lives. Perhaps it is time to build this into the formula for expecting, and experiencing more joy and more hope in our lives.

Albert Bandura wrote a paper thirty years ago that highlighted chance occurrences as the blind spot in psychology. He looked at both positive and negative chance encounters. But what is intriguing from the recent advances in positive psychology is that positive thoughts and expectations may facilitate and enhance the experience of a chance encounter. Bandura also pointed out that "fortuitous influences may be unforeseen, but having had occurred, they enter as causal chains in the same way as prearranged ones do."

In the May 2010 issue of the *Journal of Positive Psychology* researchers Peters, Flink, Boersma and Linton demonstrated that subjects who imagined a "best possible self" (BPS) for one minute and wrote down their thoughts generated a significant increase in positive affect. The researchers also concluded "...that imaging a positive future can indeed increase expectancies for a positive future." In other words, the researchers demonstrated it was possible to induce optimism.

By inducing optimism the prepared mind becomes a positive one. This is an intriguing finding: it suggests that we can change both how we feel in the moment, and how we feel about what is to come. If we are prepared properly and are optimistic we are likely to incorporate the chance encounter and use it as a positive experience. The glass we were not expecting to see will be half full.

But can being optimistic really make a difference? There are many studies now that suggest optimism can help with everything from sales to grades. Martin Seligman's book *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* ushered in the research on the advantages of having an optimistic attitude. If you are interested in your level of optimism here is a quiz you can take based on Dr. Seligman's book. But the very short answer is yes: Having a positive outlook makes a big difference in our outlook and productivity.

The challenge is for us to cultivate as much optimism as we can muster, and to do this in anticipation of the unforeseen. This is important because as Heraclitus said, "If you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it..."

I was in the process of preparing my next Proof Positive post when the e-mail from my friend came in. I left what I was writing for a future time and was inspired to prepare this post instead.

Now you're reading it.

As Bandura pointed out 30 years ago...



## SOURCE D

Uncommon Knowledge: Surprising insights from the social sciences

### **How sunny weather lowers the college admissions bar, and more**

by Kevin Lewis April 20, 2008

[boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2008/04/20/how\\_sunny\\_weather\\_lowers\\_the\\_college\\_admissions\\_bar\\_and\\_more](http://boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2008/04/20/how_sunny_weather_lowers_the_college_admissions_bar_and_more)

*"Uncommon Knowledge" is a regular feature in the Ideas section of the Sunday Boston Globe, offering a selection of recent findings in social-science journals. Kevin Lewis is a columnist for the Ideas section.*



As if high school seniors didn't have enough to worry about: the odds of getting into a college are affected by the weather on the day their applications are reviewed, a recent study suggests. The author of the study gained access to 682 applicant files, each with 16 different academic and extracurricular ratings, along with recommendations from two reviewers. The applicant's file also included the date each reviewer's recommendation was made, which allowed the author to link the recommendations to the weather. (The admissions offices, the author verified, all had windows.) Applications reviewed on the sunniest days were more than 10 percent likelier to be accepted, and the good weather prompted reviewers to give less weight to academic achievement.

*Simonsohn, U., "Clouds Make Nerds Look Good: Field Evidence of the Impact of Incidental Factors on Decision Making," Journal of Behavioral Decision Making (April 2007).*

## SOURCE E

Opinion / Education

### **Why I'll Never Apologize for My White Male Privilege**

by Tal Fortgang May 2, 2014

[time.com/85933/why-ill-never-apologize-for-my-white-male-privilege](http://time.com/85933/why-ill-never-apologize-for-my-white-male-privilege)

*This piece originally appeared in April of 2014 in The Princeton Tory, a journal edited and produced by Princeton University students. At the time, the author was a freshman at Princeton. It was re-printed in Time magazine a month later.*

There is a phrase that floats around college campuses, Princeton being no exception, that threatens to strike down opinions without regard for their merits, but rather solely on the basis of the person that voiced them. "Check your privilege," the saying goes, and I have been reprimanded by it several times this year. The phrase, handed down by my moral superiors, descends recklessly, like an Obama-sanctioned drone, and aims laser-like at my pinkish-peach complexion, my maleness, and the nerve I displayed in offering an opinion rooted in a personal Weltanschauung. "Check your privilege," they tell me in a command that teeters between an imposition to actually explore how I got where I am, and a reminder that I ought to feel personally apologetic because white males seem to pull most of the strings in the world.

I do not accuse those who "check" me and my perspective of overt racism, although the phrase, which assumes that simply because I belong to a certain ethnic group I should be judged collectively with it, toes that line. But I do condemn them for diminishing everything I have personally accomplished, all the hard work I have done in my life, and for ascribing all the fruit I reap not to the seeds I sow but to some invisible patron saint of white maleness who places it out for me before I even arrive. Furthermore, I condemn them for casting the equal protection clause, indeed the very idea of a meritocracy, as a myth, and for declaring that we are all governed by invisible forces (some would call them "stigmas" or "societal norms"), that our nation runs on racist and sexist conspiracies. Forget "you didn't build that;" check your privilege and realize that nothing you have accomplished is real.

But they can't be telling me that everything I've done with my life can be credited to the racist patriarchy holding my hand throughout my years of education and eventually guiding me into Princeton. Even that is too extreme. So to find out what they are saying, I decided to take their advice. I actually went and checked the origins of my privileged existence, to empathize with those whose underdog stories I can't possibly comprehend. I have unearthed some examples of the privilege with which my family was blessed, and now I think I better understand those who assure me that skin color allowed my family and I to flourish today.

Perhaps it's the privilege my grandfather and his brother had to flee their home as teenagers when the Nazis invaded Poland, leaving their mother and five younger siblings behind, running and running until they reached a Displaced Persons camp in Siberia, where they would do years of hard labor in the bitter cold until World War II ended. Maybe it was the privilege my grandfather had of taking on the local Rabbi's work in that DP camp, telling him that the spiritual leader shouldn't do hard work, but should save his energy to pass Jewish tradition along to those who might survive. Perhaps it was the privilege my great-grandmother and those five great-aunts and uncles I never knew had of being shot into an open grave outside their hometown. Maybe that's my privilege.

Or maybe it's the privilege my grandmother had of spending weeks upon weeks on a death march through Polish forests in subzero temperatures, one of just a handful to survive, only to be put in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp where she would have died but for the Allied forces who liberated her and helped her regain her health when her weight dwindled to barely 80 pounds.

Perhaps my privilege is that those two resilient individuals came to America with no money and no English, obtained citizenship, learned the language and met each other; that my grandfather started a humble wicker basket business with nothing but long hours, an idea, and an iron will—to paraphrase the

man I never met: "I escaped Hitler. Some business troubles are going to ruin me?" Maybe my privilege is that they worked hard enough to raise four children, and to send them to Jewish day school and eventually City College.

Perhaps it was my privilege that my own father worked hard enough in City College to earn a spot at a top graduate school, got a good job, and for 25 years got up well before the crack of dawn, sacrificing precious time he wanted to spend with those he valued most—his wife and kids—to earn that living. I can say with certainty there was no legacy involved in any of his accomplishments. The wicker business just isn't that influential. Now would you say that we've been really privileged? That our success has been gift-wrapped?

That's the problem with calling someone out for the "privilege" which you assume has defined their narrative. You don't know what their struggles have been, what they may have gone through to be where they are. Assuming they've benefitted from "power systems" or other conspiratorial imaginary institutions denies them credit for all they've done, things of which you may not even conceive. You don't know whose father died defending your freedom. You don't know whose mother escaped oppression. You don't know who conquered their demons, or may still be conquering them now.

The truth is, though, that I have been exceptionally privileged in my life, albeit not in the way any detractors would have it.

It has been my distinct privilege that my grandparents came to America. First, that there was a place at all that would take them from the ruins of Europe. And second, that such a place was one where they could legally enter, learn the language, and acclimate to a society that ultimately allowed them to flourish.

It was their privilege to come to a country that grants equal protection under the law to its citizens, that cares not about religion or race, but the content of your character.

It was my privilege that my grandfather was blessed with resolve and an entrepreneurial spirit, and that he was lucky enough to come to the place where he could realize the dream of giving his children a better life than he had.

But far more important for me than his attributes was the legacy he sought to pass along, which forms the basis of what detractors call my "privilege," but which actually should be praised as one of altruism and self-sacrifice. Those who came before us suffered for the sake of giving us a better life. When we similarly sacrifice for our descendents by caring for the planet, it's called "environmentalism," and is applauded. But when we do it by passing along property and a set of values, it's called "privilege." (And when we do it by raising questions about our crippling national debt, we're called Tea Party radicals.) Such sacrifice of any form shouldn't be scorned, but admired.

My exploration did yield some results. I recognize that it was my parents' privilege and now my own that there is such a thing as an American dream which is attainable even for a penniless Jewish immigrant.

I am privileged that values like faith and education were passed along to me. My grandparents played an active role in my parents' education, and some of my earliest memories included learning the Hebrew alphabet with my Dad. It's been made clear to me that education begins in the home, and the importance of parents' involvement with their kids' education—from mathematics to morality—cannot be overstated. It's not a matter of white or black, male or female or any other division which we seek, but a matter of the values we pass along, the legacy we leave, that perpetuates "privilege." And there's nothing wrong with that.

Behind every success, large or small, there is a story, and it isn't always told by sex or skin color. My appearance certainly doesn't tell the whole story, and to assume that it does and that I should apologize for it is insulting. While I haven't done everything for myself up to this point in my life, someone sacrificed themselves so that I can lead a better life. But that is a legacy I am proud of.

I have checked my privilege. And I apologize for nothing.

## SOURCE F

### **The Key To Success? Grit**

by Angela Lee Duckworth

[www.ted.com/talks/angela\\_lee\\_duckworth\\_the\\_key\\_to\\_success\\_grit/transcript?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit/transcript?language=en)

*The author is an American psychologist. The following transcript is from TED Talk in April of 2013.*

When I was 27 years old, I left a very demanding job in management consulting for a job that was even more demanding: teaching. I went to teach seventh graders math in the New York City public schools. And like any teacher, I made quizzes and tests. I gave out homework assignments. When the work came back, I calculated grades.

What struck me was that IQ was not the only difference between my best and my worst students. Some of my strongest performers did not have stratospheric IQ scores. Some of my smartest kids weren't doing so well. And that got me thinking. The kinds of things you need to learn in seventh grade math, sure, they're hard: ratios, decimals, the area of a parallelogram. But these concepts are not impossible, and I was firmly convinced that every one of my students could learn the material if they worked hard and long enough.

After several more years of teaching, I came to the conclusion that what we need in education is a much better understanding of students and learning from a motivational perspective, from a psychological perspective. In education, the one thing we know how to measure best is IQ. But what if doing well in school and in life depends on much more than your ability to learn quickly and easily?

So I left the classroom, and I went to graduate school to become a psychologist. I started studying kids and adults in all kinds of super challenging settings, and in every study my question was, who is successful here and why? My research team and I went to West Point Military Academy. We tried to predict which cadets would stay in military training and which would drop out. We went to the National Spelling Bee and tried to predict which children would advance farthest in competition. We studied rookie teachers working in really tough neighborhoods, asking which teachers are still going to be here in teaching by the end of the school year, and of those, who will be the most effective at improving learning outcomes for their students? We partnered with private companies, asking, which of these salespeople is going to keep their jobs? And who's going to earn the most money? In all those very different contexts, one characteristic emerged as a significant predictor of success. And it wasn't social intelligence. It wasn't good looks, physical health, and it wasn't IQ. It was grit.

Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint.

A few years ago, I started studying grit in the Chicago public schools. I asked thousands of high school juniors to take grit questionnaires, and then waited around more than a year to see who would graduate. Turns out that grittier kids were significantly more likely to graduate, even when I matched them on every characteristic I could measure, things like family income, standardized achievement test scores, even how safe kids felt when they were at school. So it's not just at West Point or the National Spelling Bee that grit matters. It's also in school, especially for kids at risk for dropping out.

To me, the most shocking thing about grit is how little we know, how little science knows, about building it. Every day, parents and teachers ask me, "How do I build grit in kids? What do I do to teach kids a solid work ethic? How do I keep them motivated for the long run?" The honest answer is, I don't know.

What I do know is that talent doesn't make you gritty. Our data show very clearly that there are many talented individuals who simply do not follow through on their commitments. In fact, in our data, grit is usually unrelated or even inversely related to measures of talent.

So far, the best idea I've heard about building grit in kids is something called "growth mindset." This is an idea developed at Stanford University by Carol Dweck, and it is the belief that the ability to learn is not fixed, that it can change with your effort. Dr. Dweck has shown that when kids read and learn about the brain and how it changes and grows in response to challenge, they're much more likely to persevere when they fail, because they don't believe that failure is a permanent condition.

So growth mindset is a great idea for building grit. But we need more. And that's where I'm going to end my remarks, because that's where we are. That's the work that stands before us. We need to take our best ideas, our strongest intuitions, and we need to test them. We need to measure whether we've been successful, and we have to be willing to fail, to be wrong, to start over again with lessons learned.

In other words, we need to be gritty about getting our kids grittier.

## SOURCE G

### Back to School (excerpt of Part Two)

*This American Life*, Episode #474. [thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/474/back-to-school](http://thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/474/back-to-school)  
(Part Two begins at about the 43-minute mark)

Transcript at [thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/474/transcript](http://thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/474/transcript)

**Ira Glass** It's *This American Life*. I'm Ira Glass. Today, our Back to School show. We're looking at what children need to learn and talking about this new book by Paul Tough, which makes the case that a whole area of skills called non-cognitive skills are just as important to a child's success as the cognitive skills that our schools are organized around and evaluated on today.

We've arrived at the second half of our show where we turn back to teenagers and back to Kewauna Lerma who you heard from earlier. Paul Tough actually met Kewauna because she caught a lucky break and ended up in a program that was working with Chicago students and coaching them to learn non-cognitive skills.

But before a program like that could do her much good, there was a much more traditional intervention by her family. It came when she was 15. She got arrested for punching a cop. Yes, punching a cop.

She was shorter than five and a half feet. She was 15 years old. She was so aggressive that he called for backup, and they tased her before throwing her into jail. When she got out, her mom took her to her great grandmother's house for a talk.

**Kewauna Lerma** So they sat me down. When my grandmother began to talk, that's what kind of made me a little soft, because I'm really sensitive for my great grandmother, because she was the one you could talk to about anything. It was just the main thing that got to me is when it was like tears in the room and stuff. That when I went "Oh, no." Because I'm not good with people that's crying and stuff.

**Ira Glass** They started crying?

**Kewauna Lerma** Yeah, my mom. When my mom started crying, she just said, "I don't want you to be like me. I don't want you to go through what I had to go through, the mistakes that I had, the suffering, the home to home, the homeless." Because at a point in my time, we were homeless when my father had left us. He was the income. So we became homeless, and he didn't care.

My mom was just talking about, like, "I don't want you to be like me. And I don't want you to go through this stuff I have to go through with my kids, not being able to support my kids." And she said the main thing she wanted me to do also was to listen, because that's something that she didn't do. She didn't listen to her mother. And now, look.

It was really sincere. It really got through to me, which is the reason why I'm here today.

**Ira Glass** The changes didn't happen all at once. But in her sophomore year in high school, Kewauna started doing her homework. She stopped skipping class. She didn't hang out with the same people.

Freshman year before this talk, her GPA was 1.8. Sophomore year, it was 3.4. And then in her sophomore year, she happened to be at a school where she could sign up for a program called One Goal, which works in 23 high schools in Chicago. It's about 1,300 kids. Not in magnet schools or charter programs, these kids are not the cream of the crop. These are average kids in regular schools that do not send many kids to college. Again, Paul Tough.

**Paul Tough** And they're very much using the research into non-cognitive skills to figure out an intervention for these kids, to help kids really explicitly develop these non-cognitive skills. The term they use is leadership principles-- ambition, professionalism, resourcefulness, resilience-- that they just spend a couple years talking to these kids about and explaining to them how it's going to be important in college.

**Ira Glass** Now, you made some recordings when you were writing your book of the class. And I should say, these weren't broadcast quality. You were just making them to keep them for yourself. But they're good enough that you can actually hear what's happening. So here's one of those.

**Michelle Steffel** This is the part where you need to start being resourceful. It can't be, "Mrs. Steffel, can you call?" You are making the phone call. I want to make sure that's clear.

**Paul Tough** So what you're hearing is Kewauna's teacher, a woman named Michelle Steffel. There are lots of things that kids are learning in this class. But in some ways, when I would sit in the One Goal classroom, it felt like this kind of ongoing group therapy session. I don't think they would want me to say that, because it sounds too--

**Ira Glass** Touchy feely.

**Paul Tough** Touchy feely. Yeah. But really, that is what makes a huge difference for these kids is learning these psychological skills. And when they get to college, that's what's going to make a difference.

**Michelle Steffel** It's OK to be scared. It's OK to kind of stumble and fall along the way. And you should. It's not going to be easy. It shouldn't be easy. This is your life, OK? It's not going to be a bed of roses. OK?

**Ira Glass** One Goal's premise is it's going to be difficult to make up for how far behind these kids are in their cognitive skills, in traditional test scores and all that. When Kewauna first took a practice ACT test for college, she scored an 11, putting her in the bottom one percentile of everyone who took the ACT that year. After months of study, she said she went up one point.

But One Goal could teach her non-cognitive skills-- how to be resourceful, how to rebound from a setback, how to control herself and not get into fights-- plus concrete skills that would be useful, like how to present yourself, how to network. Kewauna never used to ask questions in class. She thought her questions were dumb. So she had to learn how to do that.

She ended up with an ACT score of 15, which, combined with a 4.1 grade point average in her junior and senior years, got her into college-- Western Illinois University in Macomb. She was a freshman last year.

Paul Tough has stayed in touch with her. And he says her training paid off. In fact, he says it's hard to imagine how she would have gotten to college and made it through freshman year without that training. Non-cognitive traits like grit and self-control are even more important in college than in high school.

**Paul Tough** And then the other thing that I think has made a huge difference for her at college especially is this resourcefulness, is this sense that she has of like, "I'm starting from behind. I need to do everything. I need to get everything on this campus working for me," which I think is not a way that most kids think when they arrive on campus, and definitely not kids from the South Side of Chicago.

**Kewauna Lerma** The first thing I did when I first got to every class, I introduced myself. First-- no, first, I sat in the front. If everybody else was sitting in the back, no. I sat in the front, like right on it. Like I'm nearly touching your desk and let them know, let them see my face, and let them remember it. And then after I go, the first step is to make sure they see your face, like they know who you are. As long as they know who you are.

And I always, like after class or before class, I introduce myself. Ask them about their office hours. And have like a little calendar on my wall and say, "This day." I always did a check-in to see how I was doing.

I will go to a teacher. I will go to a professor and get help. I have no shame in my game no more.

**Ira Glass** Kewauna's instructor from One Goal stayed in touch with her and the other students from the class all through their first year of college. This was part of the plan, because it's so common for kids to drop out of college, especially for kids from poor neighborhoods.

This is one the surprising things that Paul Tough says that he learned as he wrote this book. The United States used to have a higher percentage of its young people graduate from college than any other country. Now, we're not even close.

**Paul Tough** We're still doing pretty decently in terms of the number-- the percentage of kids, the percentage of say 18-year-olds, who go to college. The problem is--

**Ira Glass** Who enroll.

**Paul Tough** Who enroll, right. Who just show up there on the first day of school. But we also have the highest dropout rate in the world.

**Ira Glass** I'm just going to pause because that seems worth repeating. The United States has the highest college dropout rate in the industrialized world.

**Paul Tough** It's an issue that we haven't, even in education policy circles, we haven't paid any attention to before very recently. Nobody was really focusing on it. We're very focused on getting kids to college.

**Ira Glass** Of 128 students who signed up for One Goal at the same time as Kewauna, 85% of them have made it through their freshman year and are now back in school this fall as sophomores. Of course, they're still not done. Nationally, only about 58% of kids who start college end up graduating in six years or fewer.

But remember, Kewauna and these other kids in One Goal are average Chicago public high school students. They're not a select group. So the 85% is especially impressive. A University of Chicago study a few years ago showed that only 8% of high school freshman in Chicago will get a four year degree from college-- 8%.

And of course, this is the hope that Heckman and other educators and researchers have for these non-cognitive skills, that programs like One Goal can teach them to kids like Kewauna, making those kids capable of seizing a better future for themselves.

**James Heckman** And this, I think, just changes the way we think about poverty and human opportunity and what can we do to open up more possibilities to more people.

**Ira Glass** When James Heckman talks about this stuff-- you know, economists can be such a sober, cautious bunch-- he can sound positively Utopian.

**James Heckman** I think there's just a general question, which this whole research is about, which is, what are the determinants of human success? How fixed are these determinants? How much can you change them? How much can you bolster them? How much social policy can actually influence those? To me, that's extraordinarily interesting.

**Ira Glass** It's so interesting when you talk about this, because I feel like there's this vision of human perfectibility. Like, oh, our goal is we're going to make people so they'll be more successful and happy. Most of us don't even think about that as a possibility, because that goal is so big.

**James Heckman** Well, but I think one of the reasons why people don't think it's a possibility is they think these traits are fixed at birth or fixed so early there's not much we can do about it.

**Ira Glass** Yeah.

**James Heckman** And I think what we've learned is that these human capabilities can be shaped. And as an economist, what I like about it is that it has this possibility of reducing inequality, but not doing it through the standard mechanism of just handing out money and transfers from the rich to the poor. That's ancient.

The idea is you make the poor highly capable. That there really is a possibility of giving people more possibilities. That there really is the chance of improving their capabilities.

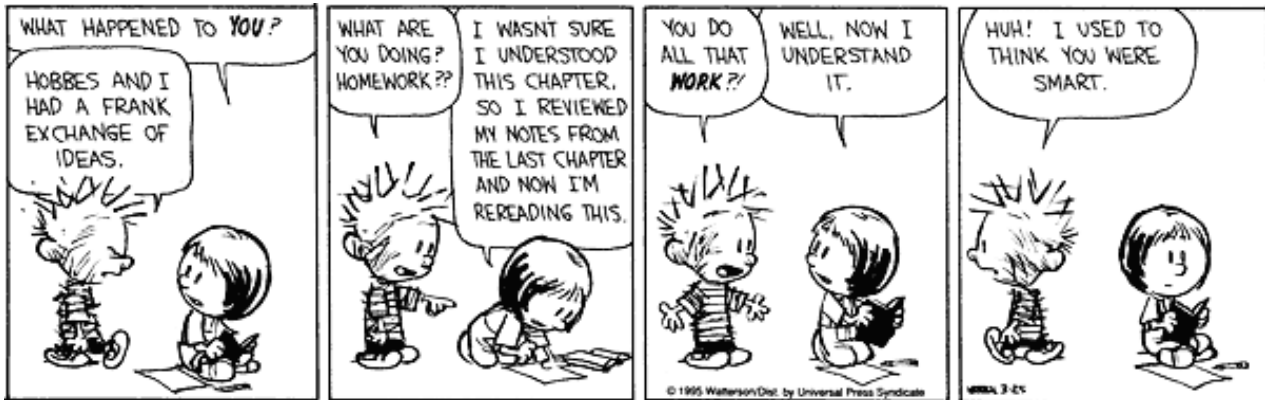
And I'm personally very excited by that. And a lot of the evidence comes together, whether it's neuroscience, psychology, economics. It's the confluence of these things. There are these happy times in science and social science and knowledge where different strands come together. And I think we're at such a time.

**Ira Glass** James Heckman. Paul Tough's book about all this is called *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*.



# SOURCE H

*Calvin and Hobbes*, Bill Watterson, 1995.



**SOURCE I**

**5 Steps To Success**

by Amanda Kaiser on May 15, 2014

[www.smooththepath.net/2014/05/15/5-steps-success-cartoon](http://www.smooththepath.net/2014/05/15/5-steps-success-cartoon)

