

English 1301
Essay #2—Critical Review: *Waiting for Superman*

Important Dates

Thursday, February 20—discuss guidelines for Essay #2

Thursday, February 27-Tuesday, March 4—student draft review (for assigned students only)

Thursday, March 6—Writer’s Workshop (at least two typed pages due)/revision activity (bring electronic copy)

Tuesday, March 18—final draft due (on Blackboard)

Essay Prompt

For your second assignment, you will be writing a critical review of the film *Waiting for Superman*. A critical review combines personal reaction, detailed description, original analysis, and cultural assessment. Remember that a critical review, which we can also think of as an evaluation, should include plenty of reasons and evidence to support a judgment of the film’s value. Specifically, for this assignment, you will be considering whether or not you found *Waiting for Superman* to be a convincing critique of the American education system and why or why not. In writing this review, consider the following points:

- Judgment: Was the film convincing? Did it present a solid argument about the American educational systems and the impact of social class on education?
- Reasons: Why? What specific reasons can you offer to support your judgment? Remember that reasons are typically based on your criteria and evidence.
- Criteria: What criteria will you use to evaluate the film? These form the basis for deciding whether or not the film is convincing and can be unique to each individual’s essay. Typically, using two to four different criteria is good to help evaluate the film. The criteria can include, among other things, the production values of the film, the research presented, emotional impact, artistic innovation, audience appeal, political implication, or moral significance.
- Evidence: The evidence you present will support your reasons and judgment. Typically, evidence comes in the form of specific details from the film, observations, or facts about the subject matter.

Criteria

- Length of the essay will be **at least three-to-four pages, typed, double-spaced, and with proper MLA formatting and heading**;
- The writing can begin with a brief **summary** of the film and then a review of it. The summary portion should be no more than one third of your length;
- As guidance, students should use **Chapter 5**, “Writing a Review,” from their textbooks;
- Use of a number of **well-placed and effectively integrated direct quotes** and specific examples in their essay. I realize that one viewing of the film may not be enough. The DVD is also available in the Collin College library and online at Vimeo (<http://vimeo.com/20095459>);
- Writers should also include a **Works Cited** page with an entry for *Waiting for Superman*. No other sources should be used; however, if you do use additional sources, they need to be cited;
- Student draft review will occur on **Thursday, February 27-Tuesday, March 4**, for assigned students;
- All students must bring in a typed, two-page **rough draft** of their essay on **Thursday, March 6**, for the Writer’s Workshop. Not having a draft on this day and not participating in the workshop will result in a full grade deduction on the final essay. A digital copy of your essay is also required on this day for the revision activity;
- It should be clear that students have made **revisions** in each stage of their writing. In other words, the rough draft and final draft should not be the same exact paper;
- Please use **strong grammar, punctuation, and spelling**; and
- Students will turn in their final drafts through Blackboard and e-mail by class time on **Tuesday, March 18**. Please retain all stages of writing (prewriting, rough drafts, final draft, etc.).