Essay 2: Analyzing the Words & Images of The Best We Could Do

☐ proposal (1 page, 1 pt.) due Tuesday, February 19
☐ reading notes (2+ pages, 2 pts.) due Tuesday, February 26
☐ outline (2+ pages, 1 pt.) due Thursday, February 28
☐ rough draft (4+ pages, 2 pts.) due Tuesday, March 5
☐ meet with a tutor (or me) by Monday, March 11
☐ final draft (4+ pages, 10 pts.) due Tuesday, March 12

All of these must be typed using MLA format.

Topic

The Best We Could Do by Thi Bui is a graphic-novel memoir that requires a specialized kind of reading, focusing on its layout and visual details. The colors, shading, and pictorial composition contribute to the mood of each chapter and help to tell the story. The non-linear narrative structure and use of flashbacks encourage readers to examine how family history, social history, memory, environment, education, and other factors affect the family.

While reading and analyzing The Best We Could Do (pages 1-172), choose one of the following topics, and in your essay (4+ pages, 6+ paragraphs) analyze how the word and images work together in relation to that topic.

1. How is the family’s story influenced by or connected to the social history and events around them?
2. How do geography and their surroundings affect the various family members?
3. What is the importance (or challenge) of memory for Thi Bui and her family?
4. How do the various parents and children interact with each other? How are their relationships similar or different?
5. How do education and learning play a role in the lives of the family members?

Analyze specific examples, quotations, and images from the book by examining the events, content, themes, style, tone, artwork, layout, colors, etc. How do the images help you understand the story? How do the words help you understand the images?

Audience & Purpose

Imagine that your reader has read The Best That We Could Do but may not share your interpretation of the book. The purpose of your essay is to persuade your reader that your perspective is valid.

Required Reading Assignments

• The Best We Could Do (1-172)
• various articles on reading and writing about comics on my website
Structure & Content Checklist

_____ Write an informative yet creative title for your essay; write an inventive hook as well.
_____ Identify the book, its author, and its topics in your introduction.
_____ Your thesis statement needs to preview your essay’s points very specifically.
_____ Include clear topic sentences and transitions.

You must incorporate and analyze 2 or 3 specific examples, descriptions, quotations from *The Best We Could Do* in every supporting paragraph. Remember to I C E them (introduce, cite, explain).

_____ Write a strong conclusion that summarizes and wraps up the entire essay.
_____ It is acceptable to use first-person (“I,” “my,” “we,” “us,” “our”).
_____ Edit and proofread your sentences so that they are as clear and correct as possible.
_____ Include a properly formatted works cited page.
_____ Format your paper properly: double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font such as Times New Roman.

Process — You must complete and submit all of the following with the final draft:

_____ final draft & works cited page
_____ tutoring receipt or my comments**
_____ rough draft(s) & works cited page
_____ peer review sheet
_____ outline
_____ reading notes
_____ proposal

** You must visit SI, a tutor, or my advice hours for this essay.

• Bring your assignment sheet, *The Best We Could Do*, and draft with you when you see a tutor at the Language Success Center.

• Please feel free to visit my advice hours (MW 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. & TTh 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.) or email me (neil.watkins@chaffey.edu) at any point in your writing process.

Proposal Questions — 1 page, typed, due Tuesday, February 19

1. Which two or three active reading techniques will you use to read *The Best We Could Do*?
   How and why will these techniques help you?

2. What do you already know about Vietnam or the Vietnam War? What would you like to find out?

3. Which topic for this essay do you think you might choose? Why?

4. What do you want your reader to learn or understand from your essay?

5. What obstacles or challenges might you face as you write? How will you overcome those?

6. When & where will you write the essay?

Students’ Advice for Essay 2

“Work hard on the reading notes and the outline. They make the writing process easier.”

“Take one step at a time. If you think about everything at once, you will panic and get in your own way.”