

# EngWr 101—Essay Assignment #2

## Assigned reading:

Ripley, Amanda. *The Smartest Kids in the World: And How They Got That Way*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.

(See also—<http://www.amandaripley.com/books/the-smartest-kids-in-the-world>—for additional information about the book as well as mixed-media resources.)

Published in August of 2013, Amanda Ripley's *The Smartest Kids* quickly became a *New York Times* bestseller and was plugged by *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and Amazon.com as one of the most notable books of the year. Even though there is *always* some expert talking about education in America and how bad our public schools are, Ripley's book drew a great deal of public attention.

## Assignment:

**In this essay, explore how Ripley's book influenced your understanding of the educational debate.**

How, for example, did reading Ripley's book affect your understanding of Guggenheim or his critics? Or based upon Ripley's research, how accurate would you say "A Nation at Risk" was when it was first released?

Pick a single issue (ONE) presented in Ripley's book, and then explain her text affected your opinion.

## Suggested pre-writing strategies:

- You have done a great deal of in-class writing while reading Ripley's book, and in many of these response writings, you have produced a summary of a specific issue or topic. Pick the issue or topic that you find most meaningful. Then make sure that you have a complete summary of Ripley's ideas and facts.
- Then, look back and summarize the previous text(s) that shaped your understanding of the topic you have chosen. Make sure that you have solid summaries so that you can compare and contrast the ideas with Ripley. At this point, try to *briefly* explain (explore) how and why Ripley changed your views.

This paper **must** also include critical responses to the texts (topics) you are referencing, which will necessitate some research—*a minimum of two outside sources are required for this assignment*.

Your paper **must** follow MLA format, including page setup, parenthetical references of your sources of information, **AND** a *works cited page, properly formatted*.