

Hello everyone!

Our topic for today's class, Friday November 12th is: "The American Dream"

Activities: What is the American Dream?

- Today we will share our opinions and experiences of "The American Dream."
- Peter and Tina will lead our discussion with an article entitled
 - "Is the American Dream Still Alive? What does it Mean to You."



What is the American Dream?

The American dream is the *belief* that:

- ❖ *Anyone*, regardless of where they were born or what social class they were born into, can attain success in a society in which “upward mobility” is possible for *everyone*.
- ❖ Success can be achieved through sacrifice, risk-taking, and hard work, rather than by chance.
- ❖ The circumstances of someone’s birth, including whether they were born American citizens or immigrants - *do not* completely determine their future.



Here is the article that Peter and Tina will share with the group:



American Dream

It's actually hard to imagine that the words "American Dream" have a birthdate, a creator, an inventor. But they do. Over the years, these words have become very elastic -- meaning whatever the speaker wants them to: a new home, a new car, a new life, a chicken in every pot.

"American Dream" first was coined in 1931, by historian James Truslow Adams, in his book, "Epic of America."

In his writing, we see an America that saw itself as classless, in the Old World sense -- a place where you didn't have to "know your place" to succeed, a place where you made your own place in society. In the 1930s, that dream was less than a reality for so many: the unemployed, the migrants, and African-Americans. But that's what dreams are: an aspiration.

Today, this all seems very fresh. After ninety years, looking at what Adams originally wrote strips it of consumerism, of nativism, of a lot of divisions and devices that have weighed it down. Glance nine decades back and you see the American Dream is really very simple and elegant: it's a chance -- just a chance -- to become the person you really are, no more and no less.

And what you really own, Adams seems to say, is very much beside the point.

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Is the American Dream Still Alive?



What does The American Dream Mean to You?

Dream on... This month (Jan 21, 2021) marks the 90th anniversary of the American Dream — or at least, when the term was first coined. Historian James Truslow Adams described it as "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement." Ninety years later, thousands told us whether they think the American Dream is still alive.

- It was 50-50: Most of you think the American Dream is alive, but some think it's dying — and some think it's dead, but could return.
- The core of the Dream: 26% said financial freedom, 17% said equal opportunity, and 40% said a combo of those plus material ownership and racial equity.
- Key to achieving the Dream: 40% said hard work, and 43% said a combo of hard work, luck, and privilege.

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Is the American Dream Still Alive?

What does it Mean to You?



In your words... We asked what the American Dream means to you today:

- *“The ability to move above the station you were born in life through hard work and perseverance.”*
- *“To fail and have continuous opportunity to get back on our feet regardless of discrimination.”*
- *“Filling up my gas tank without checking my bank balance first.”*
- *“Exists because people are still willing to do anything to get to America.”*

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