

Contracting

Dear all,

to gain a better understanding of the issue (World Governments) and to improve your research skills, you have to create a country report and present it.

Apart from a "classic" oral presentation (free speech, index cards accepted, max. 3 minutes), please prepare a poster (facts & figures) choosing one of the respective forms below:

- mindmap
- wordmap
- map
- statistics
- any other form of illustration (cartoon, painting, photography, etc.)

The idea is that your poster focuses at the most important aspect (Political System), so that we can compare the countries. Of course, you are free of choosing a second topic of your choice (economy, geography, culture, etc.). Your poster should speak for itself. That's why it is of utmost importance that you try to structure your presentation, for example by:

- Defining your topic
- Setting a focus (what do you want to explain, what do you neglect and why?)
- Questions: Who? Where? Why? What? When? How?
- Aspects: political, cultural, social, economic, etc.
- Effects: short-term, mid-term, long-term
- Scenario: best case, worst case
- Case study/studies
- etc.

Of course, you do not need to address all structuring examples mentioned above. The goal of this project is to improve your research skills.

Time and work management is a key to success. Some know how to organize themselves, others need support. We are a small group, benefit from this situation and speak to me. As a reminder, you can always contact me via E-mail if you have questions or need advice.

**Deadlines:**

1. Draft version ready by Wednesday after the autumn break.
2. Poster & presentation ready by Wednesday November 1<sup>th</sup> 2018.

If you know that this might be difficult for you, schedule your time and try to be finished earlier!

**Assessment:**

1. Layout
2. Information
3. Structure
4. Creativity
5. Resources
6. (individual)

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ % of the oral performance (first term)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (B. Krug)



**How to create a country profile****Background Information**

- 1 What is your country's official name?
- 2 What sort of government does your country have?
- 3 What types of ideologies influence your country's government?
- 4 Who is the head of your country?
- 5 Which Ethnicities can be found in your country?
- 6 Which religions can be found in your country?
- 7 Which languages can be found in your country?
- 8 What are the major cities in your country?
- 9 How big is the population?
- 10 How is the economy system in your country?
- 11 Major exports/imports partners
- 12 Major trader partners
- 13 What are the agricultural products?
- 14 What are the industries products?
- 15 Natural Resources
- 16 Energy Resources
- 17 Which domestic issues might influence your country's foreign policy?
- 18 Has the UN ever had to intervene in any conflict involving your country?
- 19 If so, where and what were the circumstances?
- 20 Does your country have any refugee problems? Or Internal Displaced Population problems?
- 21 What are some major events/conflicts in your country's history?
- 22 Why are they important?
- 23 Where is your country located and how does its geography affect its political relationships?
- 24 Which countries share a border with your country?
- 25 Which countries are considered allies of your country?
- 26 Which countries are considered enemies of your country?
- 27 What are the characteristics of your country's economy?
- 28 What is your country's gross domestic product (GDP)?
- 29 How does it compared to other countries in the world?
- 30 When did your country become a member of the UN?
- 31 Does your country belong to any intergovernmental organizations (Please check the list of the Intergovernmental Organizations at Research Database) except the UN system such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the organization of the petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)?
- 32 Does your country belong to any regional organization such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) or the Organization of American States (OAS)?
- 33 Does your country belong to any trade organization or agreements such as American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)?

**Debate Topics**

1. What are the four problems/threat that currently seem to affect this country?
2. How does it affect your country?
3. What has your country done to combat the problem?
4. What are the various "sides" in the debate?
5. Which aspects of the issue are most important to your country?
6. If your country is not involved with the issue, how can it become involved?
7. How do the positions of other countries affect your's country position?
8. Is there evidence or statistics that might help to back up your country's position?

1. Work with a partner. Put the elements of the collage in one (or more) of the categories below.

Equality	Immigration	Liberty	Fortune

Independence	Individualism	Progress	Other

2. Which other pictures, people etc. could be added to this collection?  
Under which of the categories would you put them?

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3. Now, think of people, symbols, and things which portray negative aspects of the United States.

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The following articles contain information that you already know, at least most of it. It is taken from <http://america.day-dreamer.de/dream.htm> and should remind you of important facts. Your task is to summarize every article in not more than three sentences and to learn unknown vocabulary.



### **What is the American Dream?**

The term "American Dream" first was used by the American historian James Truslow Adams in his book "The Epic of America" published in 1931<sup>1</sup>. At that time the United States were suffering under the Great Depression<sup>2</sup>. Adams used the term to describe the complex beliefs, religious promises and political and social expectations.

"The American Dream" has become a widespread term to describe the American Way of Life<sup>3</sup> in general, but it is by far not that easy." The American Dream" always has something individual. That is, why till today no one succeeded in giving a universally acceptable definition of the term.

Another reason is the permanent change of the "American Dream", which always made it a highly discussed topic within the American Society. So, not only American authors like T.C Boyle<sup>4</sup> in his novel "The Tortilla Curtain"<sup>5</sup> are dealing with the topic of "The American Dream", but also Hollywood used and still uses it in a lot of movies, for example in "Pretty Woman"<sup>6</sup>.

A lot of American historians say "The American Dream" even has its beginnings in the Declaration of Independence and the first European Settlers because the basic idea is that every man and every woman shall, regardless of their birth, achieve what there are able to do. Everybody shall be treated and seen equally and be recognized by others for what they are and have reached, referring to their position.

To make "The American Dream" come true all Americans have to work together. "The American Dream" is supposed to be for each American, despite all social groups. According to Adams too many Americans have built mistrust towards "The American Dream" because they did not reach what they had hoped for and also had expected.

For a lot of people "The American Dream" is connected to becoming wealthy and the ability to achieve everything if one only works hard enough for it (From rags to riches). For others it is much more and is beyond materialism. For them it is the dream of living a simple, happy and fulfilling life and the most important features being faith and equality. "The American Dream" also is about liberty and America being the country of unlimited opportunities.

Another aspect is that America is Gods' chosen country ("City on the shining hill" meaning the new Jerusalem)<sup>7</sup> and all Americans have to bring "The American Dream" to the rest of the world, such as Democracy and American values. Also the idea that immigrants of different nationalities, different ethnic backgrounds and different religious beliefs can be fused into a new nation without abandoning their diverse cultures. The idea of America being a melting pot where everybody can live peacefully together. "The American Dream" has a lot to do with America being a country of immigration, and these immigrants all hoped to live a better life in the new world.

That is where from my point of view lies the paradox because all Americans are descendants of immigrants and nevertheless there are people like Delany and Kyra, protagonists in T. C Boyle's before mentioned novel "The Tortilla Curtain", who in the end even hate the illegal immigrants. Boyle makes this paradox really obvious with the Mexican guy living in Arroyo Blanco who made it and is accepted. This is one reason why nowadays a lot of people say "The American Dream" has become a nightmare.<sup>8</sup>

Concluded one could say "the American Dream" is the belief of the US-American Society that each individual can, through hard working and strength of mind, achieve everything.

However, it is also highly controversial, because did Martin Luther King realize his "American Dream"? Or Cándido and América did they even get the opportunity to achieve everything, regarding their abilities?

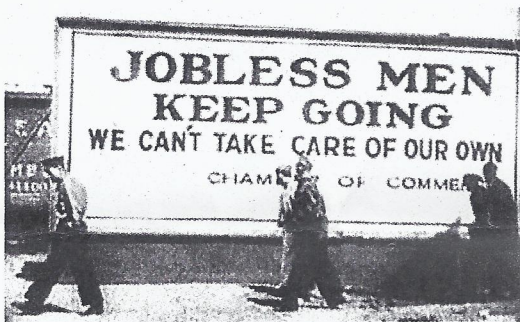
by Eva Michels

1. **Sources:**

2. James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1931)
3. [About the Great Depression](#)
4. [Wikipedia: American Way of Life](#)
5. [Bloomsbury.com - T.C. Boyle](#)
6. [Bloomsbury.com - The Tortilla Curtain](#)
7. [New York Times: Pretty Woman](#)
8. [Worldandnation: Revisiting a 'shining city on a hill'](#)
9. Freese, P.: *The American Dream and the American Nightmare*, Paderborn 1987, pp. 5-20.
10. *American Rhetoric: Martin Luther King, Jr. -- "I Have a Dream"*
  - [Wikipedia: American Dream](#)
  - Viewfinder Topics. New edition. *The American Dream, Humankind's Second Chance*. ISBN 3526510024 - Klett Verlag, Stuttgart

## How has the American Dream evolved?

Historical impacts on the American Dream



The basic principles on which the "American Dream" is founded were developed quite early in the 17th Century.

Based on the ideas and values of justice, liberty, fairness and equality of Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution guaranteed the American people "natural rights" like "life, liberty and property" (later changed to "pursuit of happiness" by Thomas

Jefferson) and freedom of speech<sup>1</sup>.

The reason to secure the rights of the people was to make sure the North Americans would not be oppressed again by their own or a foreign government as they had been before until they refused to be a British colony any more. When James Truslow Adams coined the term "The American Dream" in his study "The Epic of America" in 1931<sup>2</sup> the expression had already been commonly known and used all over the United States of America.

At that time the American society and economy suffered from the "Great Depression" that had evolved after the stock-market crash of 1929 causing poverty and unemployment until the early 1940s.

After World War II the United States of America emerged as the strongest and wealthiest nation on the planet. Heavy government military spending had revived the economy and while the other countries involved in World War II had to rebuild their bombed and ruined cities the USA were spared from the destruction at home. The wealthy American society and business had exceeded the other nations prosperity by far, making the USA an example for success in general, that all the other societies can take as a blueprint for their own development.

Now we have seen two major conditions under which the "American Dream" is an important feature of people's minds, consisting of different sets of certain ideas, taking advantage of when they deal with current problems and issues of life and social organization.

The first one is in time of oppression and exploitation when the people imagined, demanded and needed another form of social organisation they took the

mentioned ideals and values to realize their hopes and dreams of freedom and self-determination.

The other condition is when economic instability leads to poverty and unemployment. In such a state of mind the people need an imagination of better times in the past and more necessary in the future to strengthen their confidence in gaining wealth again and to go beyond survival questions of life. Therefore the "American Dream" helps the people remaining in hopeful expectation of better times instead of giving up on themselves leading a life full of worries and desperation.

With the concept of "The American Dream" that everyone is responsible for his own "fate" people have an important psychological tool to carry on working on improvements of their lives.

Yet another point of view is the outside perspective from the devastated European countries which looked up to the American fortitude and richness after the Second World War. Inspired by the pioneer attitude to create wealth out of nothing and reaching material support from the US (like the Marshall Plan<sup>4</sup>) the European nations were able to rebuild themselves and gain some of the highest living standards one can find throughout the world.

After the economic problems were managed and profits flourished again the political and social struggle shifted from issues of survival to civil rights, equality and peace. In the civil rights movement Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>5</sup> became a popular adversary of inequality, segregation and racism. He was respected for his non violent resistance (in allusion the Gandhi opposing British colonialism) and capacity to agitate the masses because his message and methods were so powerful and effective. Then in the 1960s many Americans participated in the peace movement to end American aggression in Vietnam<sup>6</sup>. These examples show that American citizens and society in general very well know and live "The American Dream" of a free country administered by a "government of the people, by the people and for the people" that they can influence for the better.

by Matthias Bokelmann

**1. Sources:**

2. The Social Studies Help Center: [The American Dream](#), 6.11.2006
3. James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1931)
4. [About the Great Depression](#), 6.11.2006
5. [Wikipedia: Marshall Plan](#)
6. [The King Center](#)
7. [The Anti-War Movement in the United States](#)

## **The American Nightmare**

About the Failure of the American Dream

According to the so-called „American Dream“ the United States is the country of the free and the brave where everyone can achieve his aim for a good life and luck. All men are viewed as equal and therefore have the same chances in life. In fact there is not much left of this dream. Following several newspapers, „the American Dream is More Livable in the Old World“ today, than in the US.

The idea that James Truslow Adams had when he coined the term of the "American Dream" in 1931 was that everyone is equal and has the same right to strive for his luck. For sure, everyone still can strive for his luck, but in many cases he won't be very successful in his efforts as long as he's from the lower class of society.

This is to some extent due to the fact that in the last couple of years higher education has become a "luxury-priced necessity"<sup>1</sup>, as is noted in an article by the New York writer Leanne Shear. Without good education, young people don't have a chance of getting a well-paid job. As there is no standard school system

for everyone, but a system of expensive private schools for the economical prosperous and a system of state-financed schools that lack resources and quality teaching, it is obvious that the children of the poorer start out their career with lower chances for a good future.

The possibilities to climb the internal career ladder within a company once one has a job, are also not as good as they were before the "Wal-Martization" of America, as a laborer-unfriendly tendency is called, which has spread in the last three decades: Companies try to keep their costs as low as possible by outsourcing parts of their business, hiring temporary and part-time workers and fighting workers' unions. Parts of the "white-collar" jobs are also moved to China and India, where employees are much cheaper than in the US. A BusinessWeek commentary from 2003 says that more than a quarter of the labor force are trapped in "low-wage, often dead-end jobs". This makes a number of about 34 million workers with no chances of rising up in their social mobility.<sup>2</sup>

Recent studies have shown that "only 14 percent of the men born to fathers on the bottom 10 percent of the wage ladder made it to the top 30 percent"<sup>3</sup> and that "only 17 percent of the men born to fathers on the top 10 percent" of the wage ladder "fell to the bottom 30 percent"<sup>4</sup>.

The loss of upward mobility began in the 1970s when the post-World War II productivity boom was over and got even more serious in the 1980s due to globalisation and technology development.

Concluding, one must confess that the dream of a career "from rags to riches" has clearly become unrealistic in today's America as it has moved towards a "from riches to riches" reality: Parents who are wealthy can afford better schools and can pay better medical treatment for their kids, which positively adds up to improving their performance in life. The favoritism which often decided whether one gets a certain position in a company or not gives additional advantage to those whose parents have the right connections available. US-President George W. Bush is a great example of this system.

The notion that "any child can grow up to be president" seems to be not more than a poor joke in our days.

Going a bit further one could even say that the American Dream is a "mendacious label for chauvinist strivings, unwarranted feelings of superiority and thoughtless crimes against nature in the name of unbridled progress" as Peter Freese describes the feelings of some people towards the American Dream in his essay "The American Dream and the American Nightmare: General Aspects and Literary Examples"<sup>5</sup>.

by Fabian Everding

1. Sources:
2. [AlterNet: America's Broken Bootstraps](#)
3. [BW Online | December 1, 2003 | Commentary: Waking Up From The American Dream](#)
4. [FRAC News Digest - May 20, 2005](#)
5. [As rich-poor gap widens in U.S., class mobility stalls](#)
6. Peter Freese - "The American Dream and the American Nightmare: General Aspects and Literary Examples", "American Popular Culture", ISBN 3533037266, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg 1985



Remember: According to [http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson\\_1\\_Notes.htm](http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson_1_Notes.htm) American values and ideas connected with the concept of the American Dream are justice, liberty, fairness, democracy and equality.



A3 Images of the American dream



Images of the American dream A3

