

The American Dream

Essential Questions

-  In what ways does the American Dream manifest itself in American life?
-  How does one create a personal definition of the American Dream?

Unit Overview

If asked to describe the essence and spirit of America, you would probably refer to “the American Dream.” First coined as a phrase in 1931, the phrase “the American Dream” characterizes the unique promise that America has offered immigrants and residents for nearly 400 years. People have come to this country for adventure, opportunity, freedom, and the chance to experience the particular qualities of the American landscape. Consequently, different groups of people have left their imprint on the philosophical foundations of this country and contributed to what has become a modern American Dream. In this unit you will explore the foundations of the American Dream through literary movements and a variety of American voices. You will also investigate how this Dream might be realized in your own life and in the lives of those around you through a survey investigating assumptions about the American Dream. The unit will prepare you for a wide body of literature that continues to incorporate this idea and help you to synthesize this information into your own understanding of the concept.

Unit 1

The American Dream

Contents

Goals

- ▶ To understand and define the concept of the American Dream
- ▶ To identify and synthesize a variety of perspectives that exist about the American Dream
- ▶ To conduct a survey and use primary sources as a functional text to prove or disprove an assumption

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Survey

Primary Source

Secondary Source

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*Texts not included in these materials.



Learning Focus:

Making Text Come to Life

Whether you have seen it in a movie, read about it in a book, watched it on a popular sitcom, heard it from your parents, or viewed it being played out in a presidential campaign, “the American Dream” has become a part of our culture and a term used in our everyday lives. But what does it mean? Is there one kind of American Dream, or is it unique to each and every one of us? More importantly, do we all have the same access to that dream?

Reading **primary** and **secondary sources** exposes you to different viewpoints concerning the American Dream. Much has been written about the American Dream, and many secondary sources provide a more objective look at various points of view that have been developed about the American Dream. Encountering a wide variety of points of view allows you to deepen and broaden your understanding of how this idea came into being and how it has changed throughout our history.

Reading original or primary texts allows you to access the thinking of writers in a certain time period without the filter of another’s analysis. You get a writer’s subjective view of ideas of success, money, work, failure, and access—all aspects of the American Dream as it has been articulated through the ages.

Having the opportunity to conduct your own primary source survey puts you in the position of a researcher testing and validating your own ideas of what makes up the American Dream.

What Is the “American Dream”?

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Pair Share, Quickwrite

As you read each statement below, use a scale from 1 – 10 and decide to what extent these ideas are prevalent today. If the idea presented in the statement is something you are exposed to on a regular basis, rate it a 10. If you do not see evidence of the statement at all, rate it a 1 (and remember there are plenty of numbers in between).

- _____ 1. Education is important primarily to increase one’s self-knowledge.
- _____ 2. Individuals’ rights are superior to the needs of society.
- _____ 3. Belief in God has been characteristic of the American experience.
- _____ 4. Mankind is basically evil.
- _____ 5. Education is important primarily to get a job.
- _____ 6. Truth is found in faith.
- _____ 7. Human beings are basically good and getting better.
- _____ 8. Individual liberties must always be controlled by government authority.
- _____ 9. A free press is important to equal rights for everyone.
- _____ 10. Truth can be found in science.
- _____ 11. The American Dream means making lots of money.
- _____ 12. Hard work equals success.
- _____ 13. Everyone can achieve the American Dream.
- _____ 14. The American Dream includes getting married and having children.

Quickwrite: Reflect on your rankings. Share your responses with a partner or a small group. You might choose to share your responses with the whole class. Consider the class discussion and select one or two statements above. Describe your position in reaction to the statement(s) and explain the rationale for your thinking.

What Is Your Source?

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Brainstorming, Graphic Organizer

You have been exposed to a variety of sources throughout your high school experience. Some of these sources have been **primary sources** and some have been **secondary sources**.

1. Brainstorm examples of primary and secondary sources, then define primary and secondary sources in the space below. Consider the similarities and differences and even examples of sources you have used in the past.

Primary Source:

Secondary Source:

2. Your teacher will provide dictionary definitions of these terms. Copy them below. How close were you? What did you already know and what is new?

Primary Source:

Secondary Source:

3. Apply your knowledge to the following list. Next to each example, write either “primary” or “secondary” to identify the type of source.

Interview

Biography

Book About the Civil War

Original Photograph

Original Work of Art

Article Critiquing a Work of Art

Works of Literature

History book

Letters

Video of a Musical Performance

Poems

Coming to America

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Brainstorming, Quickwriting, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer

1. Brainstorm a list of characteristics or traits you believe are part of the American Dream. Write your list in the space at the left.
2. **Quickwrite:** Select one trait from your list and write about that trait.

“Ellis Island”

3. Read the poem “Ellis Island” silently. Volunteer to read the poem aloud to the class or listen while others read. Underline the dreams and disappointments of the people as they are expressed in the poem. Discuss the underlined passages with the class.
4. Brainstorm about the dreams, hopes, and backgrounds of your ancestors. Share your thoughts in a small group.

Biographical Sketch

5. Before reading the poem “Europe and America” complete a brief biography for yourself. On separate paper, write the following information regarding you and your family (past and present). Then share your answers with another student.
 - Place of birth for you, for your parents and/or grandparents
 - Places lived – you, your parents, and/or grandparents
 - Schools attended – you, your parents, grandparents
 - Significant adults or people in your life
 - Dreams of your parents and/or dreams for yourself
 - Disappointments of your parents and/or disappointments for yourself

LITERARY TERMS

An **image** is a mental picture or sensation created by vivid language.

“Europe and America”

6. Read the poem to yourself or listen while your teacher reads the poem aloud to the class. Highlight **images** in the poem that show the contrast between the experiences of the father and son.

ELLIS ISLAND

by Joseph Bruchac

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Part Native American, Joseph Bruchac began telling Native American stories for his own children and published his first book of stories in 1975. An award-winning writer and professional storyteller, Bruchac has since written dozens of books for children and adults that seek to promote and preserve Native American stories and culture.

Beyond the red brick of Ellis Island
where the two Slovak children
who became my grandparents
waited the long days of quarantine,
after leaving the sickness,
the old Empires of Europe,
a Circle Line ship slips easily
on its way to the island
of the tall woman, green
as dreams of forests and meadows
waiting for those who'd worked
a thousand years
yet never owned their own.

Like millions of others,
I too come to this island,
nine decades the answerer
of dreams.

Yet only part of my blood loves that memory.
Another voice speaks
of native lands
within this nation.
Lands invaded
when the earth became owned.
Lands of those who followed
the changing Moon,
knowledge of the seasons
in their veins.

5

10

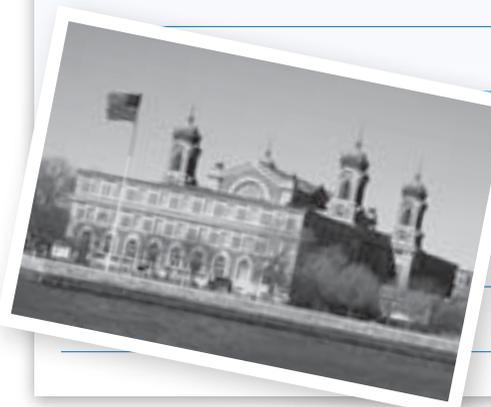
15

20

25

My Notes

Lined area for taking notes.



My Notes

Poetry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Ignatow was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1914 to Russian immigrants. His early jobs included working in a family butcher shop and a bindery. His poetry, which is written in straightforward language, often portrays urban life and the lives of the working poor. Ignatow won many prestigious awards for his poetry before he died in 1997.

Europe *and* America

by David Ignatow

My father brought the emigrant bundle
of desperation and worn threads,
that in anxiety as he stumbles
tumble out distractedly;

5 while I am bedded upon soft green money
that grows like grass.

Thus, between my father
who lives on a bed of anguish for his daily bread,
and I who tear money at leisure by the roots,

10 where I lie in sun or shade,
a vast continent of breezes, storms to him,
shadows, darkness to him, small lakes, rough channels
to him, and hills, mountains to him, lie between us.

My father comes of a small hell

15 where bread and man have been kneaded and baked
together.

You have heard the scream as the knife fell;
while I have slept
as guns pounded offshore



Denotation and Connotation in “Europe and America”

Denotation refers to the dictionary definition of a word. Connotation refers to the associations connected to a word. Connotation usually has a more powerful effect on the reader. It may be a visual image or an idea to ponder.

- Look at the examples listed. Then state the denotation and connotation of key phrases from the poem “Europe and America.” Discuss the effect that those particular words have on the reader. Choose some words or phrases of your own to analyze (use separate paper).

| Word or Phrase | Denotation | Connotation | Effect on the Reader |
|--|---|---|---|
| emigrant bundle of desperation | <p>emigrant: One who leaves the country of his or her birth</p> <p>bundle: A group of objects held together by tying or wrapping</p> <p>desperation: Recklessness arising from losing all hope</p> | The father is associated with that which is negative, bringing all his hopelessness to the new world. | The words set up the reader to contrast the father’s experience with the son’s. |
| bedded on soft green money | | | |
| bed of anguish | | | |
| vast continent of breezes, storms to him | | | |

- Create a graphic organizer that compares and contrasts the ideas and dreams of past and present generations.

Historic Pathways to the American Dream

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Double-Entry Journal, Graphic Organizer, Discussion Groups

After reflecting on the idea of the American Dream and those who came from distant lands to find their own pathways to the dream, you will next look at some historical groups and the imprint they have left on the American Dream through their philosophical underpinnings.

You will research a particular historical group and its philosophy in order to teach fellow students about your findings. You will then, in turn, learn from your peers regarding other philosophies that have permeated America's diverse belief systems so that you can make connections to the texts and ideas in this unit.

1. Read your assigned pieces (which are primary sources) in order to research the philosophy that has been assigned to you. For each source you analyze, record two to three quotations that grab your attention. Using a three-column journal, document the source and the quote in the left-hand column of the paper. In the middle column, write your response to the quote in connection to the philosophy your group is studying. In the right hand column, note any modern connections.
2. Locate an additional **primary source** (or excerpt) that adequately reflects the philosophy's identified characteristics. You might have already done this in your initial research. While this is the individual portion of the assignment, check in with your group members to make sure you have a diverse set of primary sources so when you return to your groups, you will have a blend of voices and experiences to discuss. You will want to include quotes and responses from this source in your journal.
3. Use your research and journal entries to answer the questions listed on the student page for your topic. Through this process, you should have a firm understanding of the core tenets associated with your philosophy.
4. Using your research, your understanding of the assigned texts, your responses to the questions, and your individual primary sources, create a concept map on chart paper or poster board. Use pictures, symbols, and words to represent the information learned regarding the specific philosophy. It might also be wise to include a copy or a created image of the additional primary source you located. Include characteristics of the philosophy, major writings, historical and modern connections, and key people. Present the map to the entire class. Each group is responsible for giving the class a comprehensive overview of its assigned philosophy.

Historic Pathways to the American Dream

Group 1: Puritans

1. Research to answer the following questions regarding the Puritans:

What is their view of God?

What are their values?

How do they define truth?

Do they have an optimistic or pessimistic view of life? Cite evidence.

What are their views of work and worldly success?

What is their view of society?

Who is their authority?

What is their view of education?

Do they view man as inherently good, evil, or somewhere in between?

Cite evidence.

2. Read the excerpt from *The New England Primer*. Discuss with your group the purpose of reading according to this book. How widespread was reading meant to be? What is the image of God and religion presented by the primer?
3. Read “The Trial of Martha Carrier.” What are the charges against Martha Carrier? What is the evidence against her? Discuss how the Puritan sense of justice and evidence is on trial in this presentation of the Salem witch trials of 1692.
4. Research Puritans and find at least one primary source which gives further insight into and specific examples of their philosophy and how it translated into how they lived.
5. Look back at the anticipation guide you completed at the beginning of this unit. Identify any Puritan philosophy embedded in the questions.
6. How would you define the American Dream according to the Puritans? Explain.

Group 2: Revolutionaries

Research to answer the following questions regarding the Revolutionaries:

What is their view of God?

What are their values?

How do they define truth?

Do they have an optimistic or pessimistic view of life? Cite evidence.

What are their views of work and worldly success?

What's their view of society?

Who is their authority?

What's their view of education?

Do they view man as inherently good, evil, or somewhere in between? Cite evidence.

On your own paper define the term *perfection*. Define *moral*. Find both terms in a dictionary and compare the definitions. Do you believe it is possible for a person to achieve moral perfection? Write a paragraph in which you take a pro or con position. Support your thesis with examples from personal observation, reading, or experience. Share your paragraph with your group and discuss.

Read “Moral Perfection” from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Discuss the qualities that Franklin chose in his autobiography and compare them to the details you included in your paragraph as well as the paragraphs of your group members. Do you think trying to arrive at moral perfection is a worthwhile goal? If it is, what does it show about a person who would try to do this?

Create your own list of virtues for yourself. State how you will try to achieve each virtue.

Read the “Sayings of Poor Richard,” from *Poor Richard's Almanack* by Benjamin Franklin. Discuss these sayings in your group. Choose at least five and rewrite them for a modern audience.

Research the Revolutionaries and find at least one primary source that provides additional insight into and specific examples of their philosophy. How did that philosophy translate into how they lived?

Look back on the anticipation guide you completed at the beginning of this unit. Identify Revolutionary ideas embedded in the questions.

How would you define the American Dream according to the Revolutionaries? Explain.

Historic Pathways to the American Dream

Group 3: Transcendentalists

Research to answer the following questions regarding the Transcendentalists:

What is their view of God?

What are their values?

How do they define truth?

Do they have an optimistic or pessimistic view of life? Cite evidence.

What are their views of work and worldly success?

What is their view of society?

Who is their authority?

What is their view of education?

Do they view man as inherently good, evil, or somewhere in between?

Cite evidence.

Read the excerpt from “Self-Reliance.” Pick two or three passages from the selection that state a strong opinion. Write a personal response to the passages.

Read the excerpt from *Walden*. As you read, underline or highlight specific examples of Transcendentalist philosophy. Write the connection in the margin. In your group, summarize Thoreau’s criticisms of society. Identify a facet of modern society that Thoreau would object to and explain why he would find it objectionable.

Research Transcendentalists and find at least one primary source that provides additional insight into and specific examples of their philosophy. How did that philosophy translate into how they lived?

Look back on the anticipation guide you completed at the beginning of this unit. Identify Transcendentalist ideas embedded in the questions.

The New England Primer

For more than a hundred years Puritan children received their first schooling from *The New England Primer*. Since the chief purpose of education in Puritan times was to enable people to read the Bible, it was natural that the alphabet rhymes chanted by the children should be based on Bible stories. The *Primer* is believed to have been in existence by 1688. Several versions have been printed, often with different verses for the letters.



| | |
|---|---|
| A | In ADAM'S Fall, We sinned all. |
| B | Heaven to find; The Bible Mind. |
| C | Christ crucify'd For sinners dy'd. |
| D | The Deluge drown'd The Earth around. |
| E | ELIJAH hid, By Ravens fed. |
| F | The judgment made <i>Felix</i> afraid. |

| | |
|---|--|
| G | As runs the Glass, Our Life doth pass. |
| H | My Book and Heart Must never part. |
| J | JOB feels the Rod, Yet blesses GOD. |
| K | Proud Korah's troop Was swallowed up |
| L | LOT fled to <i>Zoar</i> , Saw fiery Shower On <i>Sodom</i> pour. |
| M | MOSES was he Who <i>Israel's</i> Host Led thro' the Sea. |

| | |
|---|---|
| N | NOAH did view The old world & new. |
| O | Young OBADIAS, DAVID, JOSIAS, All were pious. |
| P | PETER deny'd His Lord and cry'd. |
| Q | Queen ESTHER sues And saves the Jews. |
| R | Young pious RUTH, Left all for Truth. |
| S | Young SAM'L dear, The Lord did fear. |

| | |
|---|---|
| T | Young TIMOTHY Learnt sin to fly. |
| V | VASHTI for Pride Was set aside. |
| W | Whales in the Sea, GOD'S Voice obey. |
| X | XERXES did die, And so must I. |
| Y | While youth do cheer Death may be near. |
| Z | ZACCHEUS he Did climb the Tree Our Lord to see. |

Historic Pathways to the American Dream

My Notes

Essay

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cotton Mather entered Harvard University at the age of 12 and became an influential Puritan minister who wrote over 400 works. Some of his works describe the Puritan beliefs in the spiritual world and in the work of the devil in promoting witchcraft. He wrote reports to the judges of the Salem witch trials and then a history of the trials.

The TRIAL of MARTHA CARRIER

by Cotton Mather

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Sentences usually begin or end with the main idea. When the main idea or the independent clause begins a sentence, it is a cumulative sentence: “Martha Carrier was indicted for bewitching certain persons, according to the form usual in such cases, pleading not guilty to her indictment.” When the independent clause comes at the end, the sentence is periodic. Thoreau writes, “For my part, I could easily do without the post office.”

I. Martha Carrier was indicted for bewitching certain persons, according to the form usual in such cases, pleading *not guilty* to her indictment¹. There were first brought in a considerable number of the bewitched persons, who not only made the Court sensible of any horrid witchcraft committed upon them, but also deposed² that it was Martha Carrier, or her shape, that grievously tormented them by biting, pricking, pinching, and choking of them. It was further deposed that while this Carrier was on her examination before the Magistrates³, the poor people were so tortured that every one expected their death upon the very spot, but that upon the binding of Carrier they were eased. Moreover, the look of Carrier then laid the afflicted people for dead, and her touch, if her eye at the same time were off them, raised them again: which things were also now seen upon her trial. And it was testified that upon the mention of some having their necks twisted almost round, by the shape of this Carrier, she replied, *It’s no matter though their necks had been twisted quite off.*

II. Before the trial of this prisoner, several of her own children had frankly and fully confessed not only that they were witches themselves, but that this mother had made them so. This confession they made with great shows of repentance, and with much demonstration of truth. They related place,

¹ **indictment:** accusation or blame

² **deposed:** testified under oath

³ **magistrate:** a judge

Historic Pathways to the American Dream



WORD CONNECTIONS

Malicious comes from the Latin root *mal* meaning “ill will” “spite.” This root is also in *malign*, *malfunction*, and *malady*.

My Notes

V. John Rogger also testified that upon the threatening words of this malicious Carrier, his cattle would be strangely bewitched, as was more particularly then described.

VI. Samuel Preston testified that about two years ago, having some difference with Martha Carrier, he lost a cow in a strange preternatural⁶, unusual matter: and about a month after this, the said Carrier, having again some difference with him, she told him he had lately lost a cow and it should not be long before he lost another, which accordingly came to pass: for he had a thriving and well-kept cow, which without any known cause quickly fell down and died.



⁶ preternatural: unnatural

Historic Pathways to the American Dream

My Notes

These names of virtues, with their precepts, were:

1. Temperance

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2. Silence

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. Order

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. Resolution

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. Frugality

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

6. Industry

Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. Sincerity

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. Justice

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. Moderation

Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. Cleanliness

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

11. Tranquility

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. Chastity

Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

13. Humility

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.⁷

⁷ **Socrates** (sok'rātēz'): 4697–399 BC, Greek philosopher who lived humbly

“SAYINGS of Poor Richard”

by Benjamin Franklin

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Franklin published *Poor Richard's Almanack*, which included advice and popular sayings, many of which are still common today. Franklin expanded and adapted sayings from common culture and other writers, but he also composed original sayings.

From Poor Richard's Almanack

Experience keeps a dear school, but a fool will learn in no other.

Hunger is the best pickle.

Love your neighbor; yet don't pull down your hedge.

If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him.

Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.

A small leak will sink a great ship.

Silks and satins, scarlet and velvet, put out the kitchen fire.

If a man could have half his wishes he would double his troubles.

A lie stands on one leg, truth on two.

He that is of the opinion that money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.

Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

God helps them that help themselves.

A word to the wise is enough.

Fish and visitors smell in three days.

My Notes

LITERARY TERMS

An aphorism is a short, clever saying about life.



Historic Pathways to the American Dream

My Notes

The used key is always bright.

Lost time is never found again.

The sleeping fox catches no poultry.

He that falls in love with himself has no rivals.

One today is worth two tomorrows.

Little strokes fell great oaks.

Since thou are not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.

Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship.

Fools make feasts and wise men eat them.

When the well's dry, they know the worth of water.

If you would know the worth of money, go and try to borrow some.

Make hay while the sun shines.

He that lieth down with dogs shall rise up with fleas.

'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright.

The worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise.

If you would have your business done, go; if not, send.



“Self-Reliance”

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Educated at Harvard University, Ralph Waldo Emerson founded a new American movement called Transcendentalism. Fueled by strong optimism and the belief in the importance of the individual, Emerson helped to inspire social reforms in education, slavery, and the rights of women and Native Americans.

There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed¹ on that plot of ground which is given him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what he can do, nor does he know until he has tried....

Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion.² It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind....

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin³ of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today. “Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.” Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood....

¹ **bestowed:** presented as a gift or an honor
² **aversion:** strong feeling of dislike
³ **hobgoblin:** something causing superstitious fear

My Notes

Lined area for taking notes.

Historic Pathways to the American Dream

My Notes

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has got a fine Geneva watch, but he has lost the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so, being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His notebooks impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber⁴; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom, where is the Christian?



⁴ **encumber**: to impede or hinder

Historic Pathways to the American Dream

My Notes



WORD CONNECTIONS

Infinite comes from the Latin word meaning “unbounded” or “unlimited.” The word is formed from the root *fini*, meaning “end” plus *in*, meaning “not.” Other words based on *fini* include *final*, *confine*, *definitive*.

with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer’s requiem⁶; itself an *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings.⁷ There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence⁸ in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas⁹ say, “All intelligences awake with the morning.” Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon,¹⁰ are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live

⁶ requiem: a mass or a solemn ceremony for a deceased person

⁷ **wrath and wanderings:** Homer’s *Iliad* concerns the “wrath” of Achilles, and the *Odyssey* tells of the “wanderings” of Odysseus

⁸ **somnolence:** sleepiness, drowsiness

⁹ **Vedas:** Collection of sacred Hindu literature

¹⁰ **Memnon:** In Greek mythology, the King of the Ethiopians whom Zeus made immortal. Memnon’s statue at Thebes was supposed to emit musical notes at dawn

so sturdily and Spartanlike¹¹ as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime,¹² to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.”¹³

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable¹⁴ wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumbnail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning,¹⁵ and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy,¹⁶ made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the Nation have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether they do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers,¹⁷ and forge rails and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our lives to improve them, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each

¹¹ **Spartanlike:** The inhabitants of the ancient Greek city-state of Sparta were famed for their courage, discipline, and frugality

¹² **sublime:** elevated or lofty in thought or language

¹³ **“glorify...forever”:** From the Presbyterian book of beliefs, *Westminster Shorter Catechism*

¹⁴ **evitable:** avoidable

¹⁵ **dead reckoning:** Nautical term for a method of positioning a ship without using the more reliable method of astronomical observation

¹⁶ **German Confederacy:** In 1815, the first ineffective alliance of German territories.

¹⁷ **sleepers:** Wooden beams to which railway tracks are riveted

My Notes



Historic Pathways to the American Dream

My Notes

one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them.

For my part, I could easily do without the post office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life — I wrote this some years ago — that were worth the postage. The penny post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in the newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter — we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all news as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure — news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy....

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure....

Time is but the stream I go-a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and forepaws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

America, the Beautiful

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Brainstorm, Mark the Text, TP-CASTT

Poetry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After witnessing the view from Pike’s Peak in Colorado in 1893, Katharine Lee Bates wrote the words to her most well-known poem, “America the Beautiful.” She was an accomplished poet and professor who founded the New England Poetry Club and taught English literature at Wellesley College.

America, the Beautiful

by Katharine Lee Bates

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain.
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness.
America! America!
God mend thine ev’ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.

My Notes

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Writers create rhythm and vivid mental pictures by using parallel structure and effective verbs and adjectives. Bates uses parallel structure in the first three lines of “America the Beautiful” with a prepositional phrase that begins with *for*. *The* strong adjectives of *spacious*, *amber*, *purple* make a simple phrase vivid, rhythmic, and memorable. Notice how the poem “America” relies on strong verbs: *feeds*, *sinks*, *tests*, *sweeps*, *gaze*. Use these techniques to develop your writing.

5

10

15

America, the Beautiful

My Notes

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,

20 And mercy more than life!

America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness,
And ev'ry gain divine!

25 O beautiful for patriot dream

That sees beyond the years.
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears.
America! America!

30 God shed his grace on thee,

And crown thy good with brotherhood,
From sea to shining sea!



My Notes

Poetry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in Pittsburgh, Jeffers lived most of his adult life on the coast of California in a stone cottage that he helped to build. His poetry celebrates the divine beauty of nature and contrasts it with the destructive and impermanent nature of civilization and individuals.

Shine, Perishing Republic

by Robinson Jeffers

While this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire

And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and sighs out, and the mass hardens,

I sadly smiling remember that the flower fades to make fruit, the fruit rots to make earth.

Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances, ripeness and decadence; and home to the mother.

- 5 You making haste on decay: not blameworthy; life is good, be it stubbornly long or suddenly

A mortal splendor: meteors are not needed less than mountains: shine, perishing republic.

But for my children, I would have them keep their distance from the thickening center; corruption

Never has been compulsory, when the cities lie at the monster's feet there are left the mountains.

And boys, be in nothing so moderate as in love of man, a clever servant, insufferable master.

- 10 There is the trap that catches noblest spirits, that caught – they say – God, when he walked on earth.

LITERARY TERMS

Tone is the writer's attitude toward the topic of a work.

Writing Prompt: Choose which speaker and **tone** in the previous poems and song most closely resembles your attitude toward America and discuss why. Describe how personal experiences align you with this attitude and any small differences in your viewpoints.

America's Voices: Call and Response

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Graphic Organizer, Read Aloud, Rehearsal, Oral Interpretation, Compose

Read “I Hear America Singing,” “I, Too, Sing America,” and “Indian Singing in Twentieth Century America.” Consider how the **diction** communicates the writer’s feelings and then complete the chart for the one(s) assigned to you. Then, as a group, perform your assigned poem for the class. Consider your movements (real and symbolic), voice inflection, and facial expressions in relaying the appropriate *tone* for the piece. While you watch other students perform their poems, fill in the remainder of the chart appropriately.

LITERARY TERMS

Diction is the writer’s choice of words.

| Title | Feelings About America | Words or Phrases That Reveal Those Feelings |
|---|------------------------|---|
| “I Hear America Singing” | | |
| “I, Too, Sing America” | | |
| “Indian Singing in Twentieth Century America” | | |

Read the poem “next to of course god america i” and fill in the appropriate chart. On your own paper, write a paragraph that describes the poem’s tone.

| Title | Feelings About America | Words or Phrases That Reveal Those Feelings |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| “next to of course god america i” | | |

My Notes

Poetry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Walt Whitman, who did not attend college, worked as a journalist, carpenter, and building contractor before publishing a collection of his poems, *Leaves of Grass*, in 1855. Calling himself the “people’s poet,” Whitman wrote poetry in free verse, used common speech patterns, and celebrated the country’s working class and cultural diversity.

I Hear America Singing

by Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

5 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

The woodcutter’s song, the plowboy’s on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown.

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else.

10 The day what belongs to the day — at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Poetry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fascinated with jazz rhythms and the lyrics of blues music, Langston Hughes' first book of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, was published in 1926. A major figure in the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes also wrote novels, short stories, plays, and nonfiction. His works captured and celebrated the colorful culture of black America.

I, Too, Sing America

by Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

5

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

10

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed —

15

I, too, am America.

My Notes

Lined area for taking notes, with a small image of a plate and cutlery at the bottom right.



My Notes

Poetry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A Native American poet, visual artist, and professor, Gail Tremblay was born in Buffalo, New York. She received her M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Oregon and teaches at Evergreen State College. She has received many awards for her visual art and poetry, both of which reflect Native American motifs.

Indian Singing in TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

by Gail Tremblay

We wake; we wake the day,
the light rising in us like sun —
our breath a prayer brushing
against the feathers in our hands.

- 5 We stumble out into streets;
patterns of wires invented by strangers
are strung between eye and sky,
and we dance in two worlds,
inevitable as seasons in one,
- 10 exotic curiosities in the other
which rushes headlong down highways,
watches us from car windows, explains
us to its children in words

My Notes

Poetry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After graduating from Harvard University, E.E. Cummings volunteered to drive an ambulance in France during World War I. He was accused of being a spy and was thrown in jail in France for three months. After the war, he wrote prose, poetry, and plays, but he is best known for experimenting with and breaking rules of traditional poetry, sentence structure, and punctuation.

next to of course god america i

by e. e. cummings

“next to of course god america i

love you land of the pilgrims’ and so forth oh

say can you see by the dawn’s early my

country ’tis of centuries come and go

5 and are no more what of it we should worry

in every language even deafanddumb

thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry

by jingo by gee by gosh by gum

why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-

10 iful than these heroic happy dead

who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter

they did not stop to think they died instead

then shall the voice of liberty be mute?”

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water.



Getting to Know the American Dream

My Notes

When she founded her company, there were few women entrepreneurs. But her father had often told Kesler she could do anything she wanted to do, and she was determined to succeed. As time went on, however, Kesler realized it was not just financial gain she was pursuing: She wanted to make a contribution to her community. And, as her business grew, she started requiring her employees to devote time to community service and insisting that her company contribute to local charities. And she didn't stop there. In time, Kesler's company was earning \$50 million a year, and a large portion was going back into the community.

When Kesler retired, she set a new course for her life. Today, the Delores Pass Kesler Foundation focuses on changing young lives through education, mentoring and children's programs. In 1997, she gave \$1 million to the University of North Florida to provide scholarships to students from Raines High School in Jacksonville. She cried before an audience of thousands when the principal thanked her. She told them that they didn't know how good it felt to be able to give that money away." An awful lot of people benefited from what started with a \$10,000 loan," Kesler says.

Chunk 2 **Wayne Ward Ford believes we all have a destiny – not a predetermined fate but a place that a higher power wants us to go – and he's proof of it.**

WAYNE WARD FORD

A troubled young man, he had an odd premonition about his future.

Wayne Ford was in eighth grade when a teacher asked the class to write their obituaries. How would they like to be remembered? Ford, who lived in a rough area of Washington, D.C., came up with a curious response: He said he would make his mark in the Midwest. He would be active in politics and in charge of a community center.

Wayne Ford would go on to get in trouble in high school." I was doing drugs, robbing, breaking into apartments," he recalls. To get away, he accepted a football scholarship to a small, nearly all-white Minnesota college. Once there, however, racism threatened to throw him off course. Instead, he turned his anger to activism and founded the school's black student union.

"Then," he says, "it all started to come together. The worst things in my life were the things that had the potential to make me great." Ford devoted himself to academics. History especially gave him a new perspective." When I started reading it," he says, "I thought, 'My God, the world has gone through hell, not just Wayne Ford.'"

After graduation, Ford turned to politics. Today, he's living the dream he had as a boy: He's the only black member of the Iowa State Legislature and the founder and executive director of Urban Dreams, a nonprofit community program for at-risk youth. Last year, he spoke before the Democratic National Convention. It was one of the biggest achievements of his life, but he says, "It wasn't the cherry on the ice cream. The best is yet to come."

SHAWN CARLSON

His grandfather's struggle to be accepted inspired him to encourage others.

Shawn Carlson says his dream and his passion — the Society of Amateur Scientists, which he founded — was inspired by his grandfather. "I've been privileged to know some of the greatest scientists alive today," says Carlson, who has a Ph.D. in nuclear physics. "And no one had a greater raw scientific talent than my grandfather." But, he adds, his grandfather's work was consistently rejected "because he didn't have the letters 'Ph.D.' next to his name.

"Amateur scientists," he says, "are overflowing with passion," and his aim is to teach them standards and procedures so the larger scientific world will take them seriously. He and his wife, Michelle sank their life savings of \$10,000 into starting the Society for Amateur Scientists in 1994 and endured several tough years. Then Carlson was awarded a MacArthur "genius" fellowship, which allowed him to keep the Society afloat.

Although he has been criticized by some in the scientific community, Carlson continues to pursue his dream of opening scientific innovation to everyone." The ability to come up with something original and be respected because you are a maverick — that's very much part of the American tradition," he says.

OSCAR CARLOS ACOSTA

Everything he wanted was within his grasp. Then, it seemed, it was gone.

As a boy in tiny Elida, NM, Oscar Acosta had a talent for throwing a baseball that brought him a college scholarship and a chance at athletic glory. Getting to the Majors was his dream, and he neglected everything else — his schoolwork, and his wife and children — to get there." I became consumed," he says. He made it to the minor leagues, but when a torn rotator cuff ended his pitching career, his life spiraled out of control. His wife took the kids and left. He was broke. He lost any belief in himself." I'd just given up," he says." I thought I was destined to go back and be a cow-puncher the rest of my life."

My Notes

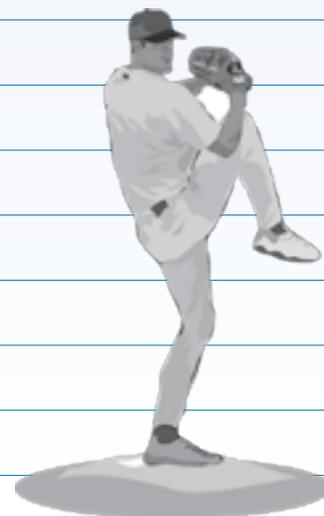
Chunk
3



WORD CONNECTIONS

Amateur comes from the Latin root *am* meaning "love." This root is also found in *amorous*, *enamored*, *amicable*.

Chunk
4



Getting to Know the American Dream

My Notes

When he got a second chance — an offer to coach in the Texas Rangers' minor league system — Acosta says, he realized it was time to change. His identity, he swore, would never be tied exclusively to baseball. He reconciled with his wife and for the next 11 years built back what he'd lost, taking his blessings as they came." I told my daughter, if God wants me to be a minor league instructor, that's what I'm going to do," he says.

Acosta did make it to the Majors — as a pitching coach for the Chicago Cubs. Now 44, he lives not far from where he grew up. Recently, Acosta watched his son play in the Little League game on the same field where he'd learned to pitch. "This was a big deal," Acosta says." It was like watching myself — like my life had started all over."

EILEEN COLLINS

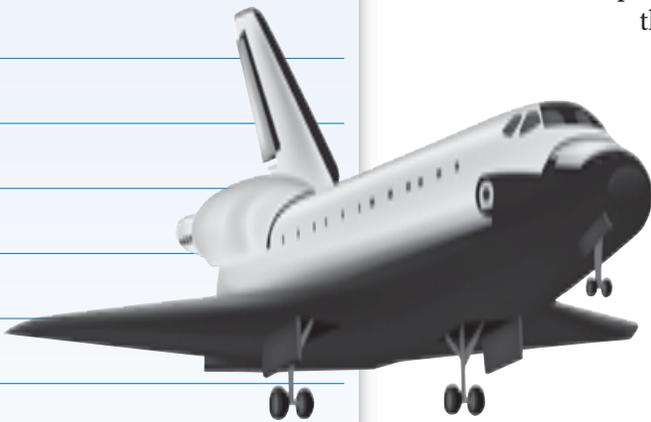
Chunk 5 She found what she wanted to do in life, but how in the world would she get there?

The first woman to pilot the Space Shuttle and to command a Shuttle mission grew up in public housing in Elmira, NY. There wasn't much money for family outings when she was a child." One thing my father liked to do," recalls Eileen Collins, "was take us to the airport to watch the planes take off." She knew she wanted to fly, so Collins saved up for lessons, and she had enough by the time she attended community college. Once in the pilot's seat, her future seemed clear: "You know how you find the thing that you like to do in life?" she says." I found it."

Collins pursued her dream, joining Air Force ROTC at Syracuse University and being among the first women allowed into the pilot-training program. But she didn't stop there. Eventually, she set her sights even higher — on NASA.

She recalls an early look out the window of the Shuttle: "Looking back at Earth is just beautiful. It's blue, it's white, it's tan. The jungles are a dark green. There's so much water. It's just amazing." And when Collins got the opportunity to land the Shuttle — the first woman to do so — she says, "I knew all those women pilots out there were watching me and thinking, 'Eileen, you better make a good landing.'" She did.

"I'm an explorer," says Collins, now 44." I want to go places that are new and different, learn new things. I think that's what being human is all about. It's what life is all about — exploring and learning."



My Notes

LIFELONG DREAMER

— Vietnam Boat Person

by Mary-Beth McLaughlin

Nancy Pham says that she had been a dreamer most of her life.

Her dreams have taken her from a crowded refugee boat in the choppy seas off war-torn South Vietnam to the quiet confines of a former church in suburban Toledo where she'd opened her own beauty salon.

She's still navigating choppy seas — any entrepreneur trying to launch a new business in tough economic times knows the going isn't easy. But she exudes a quiet confidence.

"I'm already a success, because I've already done what I wanted to do," said the owner of the Fifth Avenue beauty salon, which opened three months ago at the corner of Sylvania and McCord Roads.

Such confidence is born from a lifetime of beating the odds, starting at age 13, when the Vietnam War came to the city of Saigon where she lived with her family.

Confidence also comes from having survived a 15-day boat trip with her husband and two small children, one of whom was so sick, she feared she would have to bury the child by tossing her into the sea.

And still more confidence comes from having survived ending up in Oak Harbor, OH, with no job or money, not speaking English, and not even being sure of the size of the United States.

Speaking in soft, accented English, Mrs. Pham retold her story quietly. Only the long pauses and heavy sighs gave away the pain of surviving during wartime. From 1963 on, there were sandbags in the living room where the family ran during bombings that occurred every night.

"I was not afraid of it. Sometimes, I would just sleep in my bed and you could feel the whole house shake. It was really, really noisy," she said. "And then I would get up in the morning and I was not scared. I would feel wonderful I'm alive. And I would walk around the neighborhood and check and see who is alive and who is dead."

But life went on and Mrs. Pham did the “normal” things: graduated from high school; learning shorthand, typing, and English, and getting a job as a secretary at Macvee II, a company associated with the U.S. Army.

She met and married Chinh, a man 11 years her elder, who was in the Navy. They had two children, Huy (renamed William) and Trang (renamed Jenny). After Jenny was born in 1973, Mrs. Pham quit Macvee to become a full-time mother.

Although it was nerve-wracking to ride on buses or go to hotels where Americans stayed — both were prime targets for bombs — the South Vietnamese people love the Americans and Saigon thrived with their presence, she said.

But in 1972, the Americans started their withdrawal, and things began to change. By 1975, with Saigon on the verge of falling, all former and current Macvee employees were promised safe passage to the U.S. if they wanted.

Mrs. Pham’s sister, still a Macvee employee, typed up the forms for the whole family to leave.

Their mother, who did not speak English, but already had moved once to escape Communism, was determined to leave. But Mrs. Pham hesitated.

“I worry, what will I do over [in the U.S.]? We have money, and a business and a house, and I thought, I never did anything to the Communists, they won’t do anything to me. So I don’t go,” she said.

So while her sister, mother, and remaining family members headed for the ship in the harbor, Mrs. Pham stayed with her two small children — until her husband arrived the next day and demanded to know why they hadn’t left.

Brushing aside her arguments, he loaded the kids in the car with clothes and borrowed milk, told neighbors they would return the next day after a visit to her aunt, and set off for the harbor.

Mr. Pham ignored the restrictions on service personnel leaving the country and boarded the boat with his family.

On April 29, 1975, the ship pulled out of the harbor as the radio blared news that Ho Chi Minh was now in charge of Saigon.

Pausing while lost deep in memories, Mrs. Pham whispered, “It seems like yesterday.”

They had no idea where they were going or how long it would take to get there, she said.

There was no roof, no room to move, and canned Army rations included raw fish with a worm inside. And there was no milk for 10-month-old Jenny, so they fed her sugar and water. But as days went by, Jenny became weak until she all but stopped moving, and her mother thought she had died.

My Notes

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Direct quotes in an essay make the writing and the person being quoted seem more real. Quotations can be part of a longer sentence that describes how the words were said: for example, *Pausing while lost deep in memories, Mrs. Pham whispered, “It seems like yesterday.”*

Getting to Know the American Dream

My Notes

“I don’t know where I’m at. Even if there had been a coconut floating by, I would have had some idea. My husband was crying and I was running from one room to another but there was no medicine,” she said.” We were just hoping they would stop somewhere.”

“I kept thinking, ‘If she dies in the ship, we’d have to throw her in the ocean,’” Mrs. Pham said.

But in the first of what she called “miracles,” the ship carrying the Phams stopped at Subic Bay, The Philippines, after 15 days at sea.

The family boarded another ship to Guam, and eventually was sent to a camp in Pennsylvania, where they waited for a family or church to sponsor them.

Many families requested sponsors located in sunnier climates like Florida or California, but Mr. Pham couldn’t wait.

“I did not know how big the U.S. is and I was worrying about everything. I wanted to get out and see what outside world is, and so I tell my husband we have to get out and make a living,” she said.

Her mother moved to New Jersey, her sister to California, and the Pham family was sponsored by St. John Lutheran Church, in Rocky Ridge, near Oak Harbor. On July 16, 1975, the Pham family boarded a plane for Ohio.

Nancy said she was anxious, having been told Ohio was full of snow and ice and cold.

“I’m such a worrier, that I looked down, picturing snow and ice and no living thing,” she said.” I look down and everything was so green and there were mountains and rivers. I feel so happy. I feel like I’m a bird, like I’m a fish. Everything is so beautiful and I think, ‘I can make a living.’”

The Phams stayed with an Oak Harbor family for two weeks, then moved when the church found a house for them to rent.

Chihn found a job at Glasstech, Inc., within two weeks, while Nancy took English lessons. But Nancy said she quickly knew that life in a rural community wasn’t for her, and started urging her husband to move the family closer to Toledo.

Eventually, Mrs. Pham borrowed money from her brother and the family bought a small house in east Toledo.

She sewed clothes for a next door neighbor, made and sold egg rolls, cleaned people’s houses, and worked as a lunchtime waitress. Along the way, she had Thomas, now 10.

But always, always she was dreaming.

Getting to Know the American Dream

My Notes

“What you want to do, you should do. You may lose money, but you do not lose what you want to do,” she said. “I don’t worry about being famous or about being rich. I ... want to have a beauty salon for everyone.”

It is an attitude that sits well with her eight employees.

Madonna Fong, a hair stylist at Fifth Avenue, said she has been in the beauty business for 16 years and has worked at a lot of salons that have been “temples of egos.”

“[Nancy] is very kind, very caring,” she said. “And she has such a great sense of peace in herself.”

Mrs. Pham said if she seems peaceful, it’s only because she still has dreams.

“If I stopped dreaming, that means I already died,” she said.

Mary-Beth McLaughlin is a newspaper journalist for the Toledo Blade.



Money and the American Dream

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Quickwrite, Oral Interpretation, Draft, Role Play

Money Quotes

The love of money is the root of all evil. (from The Bible)

Remember that time is money. (*Benjamin Franklin*)

Put not your trust in money, but your money in trust. (*Oliver Wendell Holmes*)

A good reputation is more valuable than money. (*Pubilius Syrus*)

“If money be not thy servant, it will be thy master. (*Sir Francis Bacon*)

“The safest way to double your money is to fold it over twice and put it in your pocket.” (*Frank McKinney Hubbard*)

“Those who believe money can do everything are frequently prepared to do everything for money.” (*George Savile*)

There’s no money in poetry, but then there’s no poetry in money, either. (*Robert Graves*)

Mammon, n.: The god of the world’s leading religion. (*Ambrose Bierce*)

Money cannot buy happiness. (*Anonymous*)

A fool and his money are soon parted. (*Benjamin Franklin*)

A penny saved is a penny earned. (*Benjamin Franklin*)

Money is like manure. If you spread it around, it does a lot of good, but if you pile it up in one place, it stinks like hell. (*Thornton Wilder*)

Money and the American Dream

My Notes

Drama

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lorraine Hansberry grew up in Chicago in an educated, successful and activist family. Her father moved the family into a white neighborhood to challenge discriminatory housing practices. Her play, a huge literary and commercial success that won significant awards, was developed out of that experience.

From *A Raisin in the Sun*

by Lorraine Hansberry

Walter: No — there ain't no woman! Why do women always think there's a woman somewhere when a man gets restless. (*coming to her*)

Mama — Mama — I want so many things...

Mama: Yes, son —

Walter: I want so many things that they are driving me kind of crazy...

Mama — look at me.

Mama: I'm looking at you. You a good-looking boy. You got a job, a nice wife, a fine boy and —

Walter: A job. (*looks at her*) Mama, a job? I open and close car doors all day long. I drive a man around in his limousine and I say, "Yes sir; no, sir; very good, sir; shall I take the Drive, sir?" Mama, that ain't no kind of job... that ain't nothing at all. (*very quietly*) Mama, I don't know if I can make you understand.

Mama: Understand what, baby?

Walter: (*quietly*) Sometimes it's like I can see the future stretched out in front of me — just plain as day. The future, Mama. Hanging over there at the edge of my days. Just waiting for me — a big, looming blank space — full of nothing. Just waiting for me. (*pause*) Mama — sometimes when I'm downtown and I pass them cool, quiet-looking restaurants where them white boys are sitting back and talking 'bout things... sitting there turning deals worth millions of dollars... sometimes I see guys don't look much older than me —

Mama: Son — how come you talk so much 'bout money?

My Notes

Short Story

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born William Sydney Porter in 1862, O. Henry used a variety of pen names while writing short stories during a prison sentence for embezzlement. Upon release, he chose to become O. Henry and moved to New York City, where he became a prolific writer of popular short stories. His stories are known for their surprise endings.

MAMMON AND THE ARCHER

by O. Henry

Old Anthony Rockwall, retired manufacturer and proprietor of Rockwall's Eureka Soap, looked out the library window of his Fifth Avenue mansion and grinned. His neighbor to the right — the aristocratic clubman, G. Van Schuylicht-Suffolk Jones — came out to his waiting motor-car, wrinkling a contumelious¹ nostril, as usual, at the Italian renaissance sculpture of the soap palace's front elevation.

"Stuck-up old statuette of nothing doing!" commented the ex-Soap King. "The Eden Musee'll get that old frozen Nesselrode yet if he don't watch out. I'll have this house painted red, white, and blue next summer and see if that'll make his Dutch nose turn up any higher."

And then Anthony Rockwall, who never cared for bells, went to the door of his library and shouted "Mike!" in the same voice that had once chipped off pieces of the welkin on the Kansas prairies.

"Tell my son," said Anthony to the answering menial,² "to come in here before he leaves the house."

When young Rockwall entered the library the old man laid aside his newspaper, looked at him with a kindly grimness on his big, smooth, ruddy countenance,³ rumbled his mop of white hair with one hand and rattled the keys in his pocket with the other.

¹ **contumelious**: a humiliating insult

² **menial**: servant, maid

³ **countenance**: facial expression

Money and the American Dream

My Notes

“Not a bad guess, dad; you haven’t missed it far.”

“Ah,” said Anthony, keenly; “what’s her name?”

Richard began to walk up and down the library floor. There was enough comradeship and sympathy in this crude old father of his to draw his confidence.

“Why don’t you ask her?” demanded old Anthony. “She’ll jump at you. You’ve got the money and the looks, and you’re a decent boy. Your hands are clean. You’ve got no Eureka soap on ’em. You’ve been to college, but she’ll overlook that.”

“I haven’t had a chance,” said Richard.

“Make one,” said Anthony. “Take her for a walk in the park, or a straw ride or walk home with her from church. Chance! Pshaw!”

“You don’t know the social mill, dad. She’s part of the stream that turns it. Every hour and minute of her time is arranged for days in advance. I must have that girl, dad, or this town is a blackjack swamp forevermore. And I can’t write it. I can’t do that.”

“Tut!” said the old man. “Do you mean to tell me that with all the money I’ve got you can’t get an hour or two of a girl’s time for yourself?”

“I’ve put it off too late. She’s going to sail for Europe at noon day after tomorrow for a two years’ stay. I’m to see her alone tomorrow evening for a few minutes. She’s at Larchmont now at her aunt’s. I can’t go there. But I’m allowed to meet her with a cab at the Grand Central Station tomorrow evening at the 8:30 train. We drive down Broadway to Wallack’s at a gallop, where her mother and a box party will be waiting for us in the lobby. Do you think she would listen to a declaration from me during that six or eight minutes under those circumstances? No. And what chance would I have in the theatre or afterward? None. No, dad, this is one tangle that your money can’t unravel. We can’t buy one minute of time with cash; if we could, rich people would live longer. There’s no hope of getting a talk with Miss Lantry before she sails.”

“All right, Richard, my boy,” said old Anthony, cheerfully. “You may run along down to your club now. I’m glad it ain’t your liver. But don’t forget to burn a few punk sticks in the joss house to the great god Mazuma from time to time. You say money won’t buy time? Well, of course, you can’t order eternity wrapped up and delivered at your residence for a price, but I’ve seen Father Time get pretty bad stone bruises on his heels when he walked through the gold diggings.”

That night came Aunt Ellen, gentle, sentimental, wrinkled, sighing, oppressed by wealth, in to Brother Anthony at his evening paper, and began discourse on the subject of lovers’ woes.

Money and the American Dream

My Notes

One of those street blockades had occurred that sometimes tie up commerce and movement quite suddenly in the big city.

“Why don’t you drive on?” said Miss Lantry impatiently. “We’ll be late.”

Richard stood up in the cab and looked around. He saw a congested flood of wagons, trucks, cabs, vans, and street cars filling the vast space where Broadway, Sixth Avenue, and Thirty-fourth Street cross one another as a twenty-six inch maiden fills her twenty-two inch girdle. And still from all the cross streets they were hurrying and rattling toward the converging point at full speed, and hurling themselves into the straggling mass, locking wheels and adding their drivers’ imprecations to the clamor. The entire traffic of Manhattan seemed to have jammed itself around them. The oldest New Yorker among the thousands of spectators that lined the sidewalks had not witnessed a street blockade of the proportions of this one.

“I’m very sorry,” said Richard, as he resumed his seat, “but it looks as if we are stuck. They won’t get this jumble loosened up in an hour. It was my fault. If I hadn’t dropped the ring we — ”

“Let me see the ring,” said Miss Lantry. “Now that it can’t be helped, I don’t care. I think theatres are stupid, anyway.”

At 11 o’clock that night somebody tapped lightly on Anthony Rockwall’s door.

“Come in,” shouted Anthony, who was in a red dressing-gown, reading a book of piratical adventures.

Somebody was Aunt Ellen, looking like a gray-haired angel that had been left on earth by mistake.

“They’re engaged, Anthony,” she said, softly. “She has promised to marry our Richard. On their way to the theatre there was a street blockade, and it was two hours before their cab could get out of it.”

“And oh, brother Anthony, don’t ever boast of the power of money again. A little emblem of true love — a little ring that symbolized unending and unmercenary affection — was the cause of our Richard finding his happiness. He dropped it in the street, and got out to recover it. And before they could continue the blockade occurred. He spoke to his love and won her there while the cab was hemmed in. Money is dross compared with true love, Anthony.”

“All right,” said old Anthony. “I’m glad the boy has got what he wanted. I told him I wouldn’t spare any expense in the matter if — ”

“But, Brother Anthony, what good could your money have done?”

Listen While You Work

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Graphic Organizer,
Think-Pair-Share, Marking the Text

My Notes

Song

HARLAN MAN

by Steve Earle

I'm a Harlan Man

Went down in the mine when I was barely grown

It was easy then

'Cause I didn't know what I know now

5 But I'm a family man

And it's the only life that I've ever known

But I'm a Harlan Man

Just as long as my luck and lungs hold out

I'm a mountain man

10 Born in east Kentucky and here I'll stay

And if it's the good Lord's plan

I'll wake up in the mornin' and find

I'm lookin' at the end

Of another long week and I can draw my pay

15 'Cause I'm a Harlan Man

Never catch me whinin' cause I ain't that kind

I'm a union man

Just like my daddy and all my kin

I took a union stand

20 No matter what the company said

I got me two good hands

And just as long as I'm able I won't give in

'Cause I'm a Harlan Man

A coal minin' mother 'til the day I'm dead



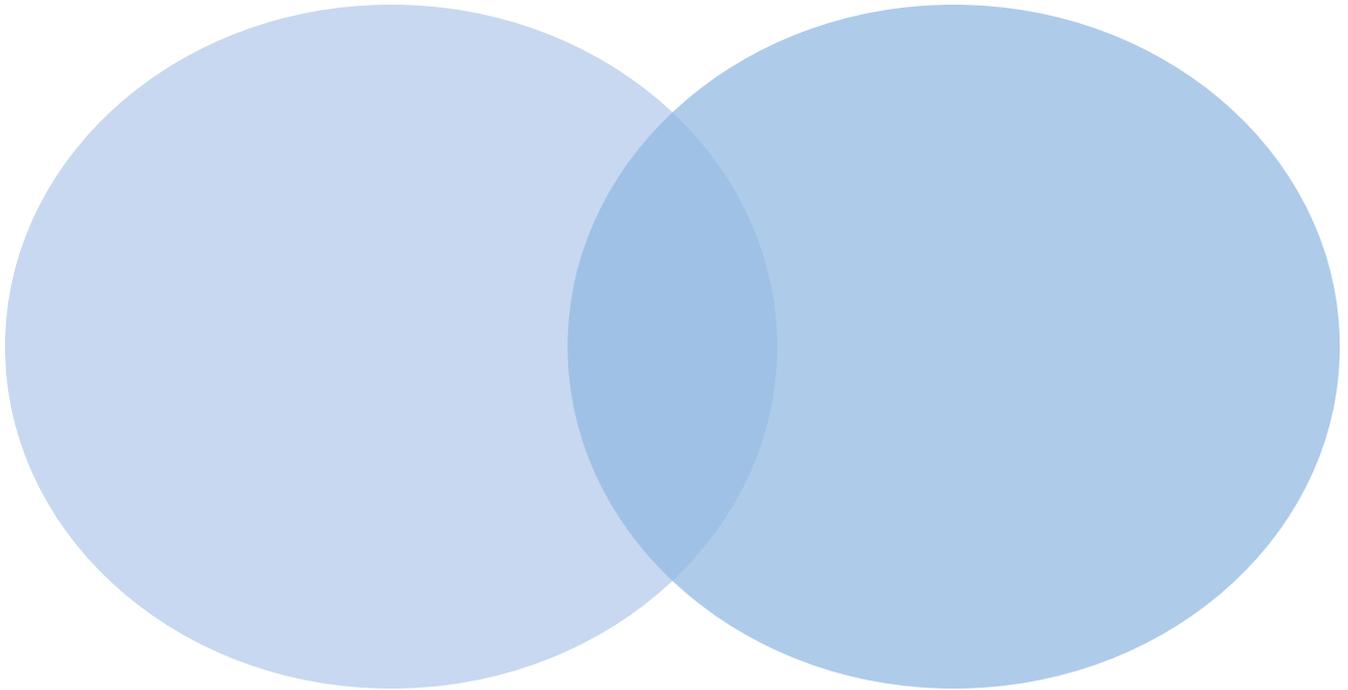
Listen While You Work

As you listen to the songs and or read the lyrics, fill in the chart in order to get a sense of the speakers' perspectives on work.

| Title | What is the speaker's age? What makes you come to this conclusion? | What are the speaker's feelings about the job? Why? | What is the theme of the song? Support your response. |
|--------------|---|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Song 1: _____

Song 2: _____



Thesis Statement: Compose a thesis statement comparing the two speakers. Support your statement with a paragraph of explanation.

Thesis Statement:

Support paragraph:

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Quickwrite, Read Aloud, Graphic Organizer, SOAPStone, Mark the Text

My Notes

Lined area for taking notes, featuring a small image of a spiral-bound notebook in the bottom left corner.

P o e t r y

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin Espada is an award-winning poet who was born in 1957 in Brooklyn, N.Y. He has a law degree from Northeastern University and teaches creative writing at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Who Burns *for the* Perfection of Paper

by Martín Espada

At sixteen, I worked after high school hours
at a printing plant
that manufactured legal pads:

Yellow paper

5 stacked seven feet high
and leaning
as I slipped cardboard
between the pages,
then brushed red glue

10 up and down the stack.
No gloves: fingertips required
for the perfection of paper,
smoothing the exact rectangle.
Sluggish by 9 PM, the hands

15 would slide along suddenly sharp paper,
and gather slits thinner than the crevices
of the skin, hidden.

Then the glue would sting,
hands oozing

20 till both palms burned
at the punchclock.

Ten years later, in law school,
I knew that every legal pad
was glued with the sting of hidden cuts,

25 that every open lawbook
was a pair of hands
upturned and burning.

As you read the poem, “Who Burns for the Perfection of Paper,” complete the following chart:

| “Who Burns for the Perfection of Paper” | |
|--|--|
| Choose a statement that reflects what the speaker learned from his work. | |
| Write out and create a visual of the last image of the poem. | |
| What do you think the title means? | |
| Write an interpretive statement about the speaker’s realization. | |

Working Toward the Dream

Complete the following SOAPStone to analyze the interview “Roberto Acuna Talks About Farm Workers,” recorded by Studs Terkel.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Speaker</p> <p>What can you say about the speaker based on references in the text? Is race, gender, class, or age important?</p> | |
| <p>Occasion</p> <p>What issues may have motivated the speaker to think about the incident or occasion?</p> | |
| <p>Audience</p> <p>Who is being addressed? Identify some characteristics of the audience.</p> | |
| <p>Purpose</p> <p>What is the message and how does the author want the audience to respond?</p> | |
| <p>Subject</p> <p>What is the focus? The subject can be stated by using a few words.</p> | |
| <p>Tone</p> <p>Using textual support, how would you describe the overall tone of the passage?</p> | |

Roberto Acuna Talks About Farm Workers

from Working

by Studs Terkel

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Studs Terkel, famous Chicago radio broadcaster, interviewer, and writer, was born Louis Terkel in 1912 in New York. A Pulitzer Prize winner, Terkel has written more than two dozen books, but he is probably most famous for his oral histories.

I walked out of the fields two years ago. I saw the need to change the California feudal system, to change the lives of farm workers, to make these huge corporations feel they're not above anybody. I am thirty-four years old and I try to organize for the United Farm Workers of America....

If you're picking lettuce, the thumbnails fall off 'cause they're banged on the box. Your hands get swollen. You can't slow down because the foreman sees you're so many boxes behind and you'd better get on. But people would help each other. If you're feeling bad that day, somebody who's feeling pretty good would help. Any people that are suffering have to stick together, whether they like it or not, whether they be black, brown, or pink....

I began to see how everything was so wrong. When growers can have an intricate watering system to irrigate their crops but they can't have running water inside the houses of workers. Veterinarians tend to the needs of domestic animals but they can't have medical care for the workers. They can have land subsidies¹ for the growers but they can't have adequate unemployment compensation for the workers. They treat him like a farm implement. In fact, they treat their implements better and their domestic animals better. They have heat and insulated² barns for the animals but the workers live in beat-up shacks with no heat at all.

Illness in the fields is 120 percent higher than the average rate for industry. It's mostly back trouble, rheumatism, and arthritis, because of the damp weather and the cold. Stoop labor is very hard on a person. Tuberculosis is high. And now because of the pesticides, we have many respiratory diseases.

The University of California at Davis had government experiments with pesticides and chemicals. They get a bigger crop each year. They haven't any

¹ **subsidy:** a grant or contribution of money

² **insulate:** To prevent the passage of heat by surrounding or filling with material that prevents

My Notes

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Repeating a grammatical structure, even one as simple as an infinitive phrase, creates rhythm and emphasis through parallel structure. Notice how Robert Acuna emphasizes his commitment with parallel infinitive phrases: "I saw the need to change the California feudal system, to change the lives of farm workers, to make these huge corporations feel they're not above anybody."

Working Toward the Dream



WORD CONNECTIONS

Pesticide is a hybrid word from the English word *pest* and *-cide*, which comes from the Latin word *cidium* meaning “a killing.” Other words based on *cidium* include *homicide* and *suicide*.

My Notes

regard as to what safety precautions are needed. In 1964 and '65, an airplane was spraying these chemicals on the fields. Spraying rigs they're called. Flying low, the wheels got tangled in the fence wire. The pilot got up, dusted himself off, and got a drink of water. He died of convulsions. The ambulance attendants got violently sick because of the pesticide he had on his person. A little girl was playing around a sprayer. She stuck her tongue on it. She died instantly.

These pesticides affect the farm worker through the lungs. He breathes it in. He gets no compensation. All they do is say he's sick. They don't investigate the cause.

There were times when I felt I couldn't take it anymore. It was 105 in the shade and I'd see endless rows of lettuce and I felt my back hurting.... I felt the frustration of not being able to get out of the fields. I was getting ready to jump any foreman who looked at me cross-eyed. But until two years ago, my world was still very small.

I would read all these things in the papers about Cesar Chavez and I would denounce³ him because I still had that thing about becoming a first class patriotic citizen. In Mexicali⁴ they would pass out leaflets and I would throw 'em away. I never participated. The grape boycott didn't affect me much because I was in lettuce. It wasn't until Chavez came to Salinas⁵ where I was working in the fields, that I saw what a beautiful man he was. I went to this rally, I still intended to stay with the company. But something — I don't know — I was close to the workers. They couldn't speak English and wanted me to be their spokesman in favor of going on strike. I don't know — I just got caught up with it all, the beautiful feeling of solidarity.

You'd see the people on the picket lines at four in the morning, at the camp fires, heating up beans and coffee and tortillas. It gave me a sense of belonging. These were my own people and they wanted change. I knew this is what I was looking for. I just didn't know it before.

My mom had always wanted me to better myself. I wanted to better myself because of her. Now when the strikes started, I told her I was going to join the union and the whole movement. I told her I was going to work without pay. She said she was proud of me. (His eyes glisten. A long, long pause.) See, I told her I wanted to be with my people. If I were a company man, no one would like me anymore. I had to belong to somebody and this was it right here. She said, “I pushed you in your early years to try to better yourself and get a social position. But I see that's not the answer. I know I'll be proud of you.”

All kinds of people are farm workers, not just Chicanos. Filipinos started the strike. We have Puerto Ricans and Appalachians too, Arabs, some

³ **denounce**: to openly condemn or censure

⁴ **Mexicali** (mek' si kal' ē): Capital of the Mexican state of Baja California Norte

⁵ **Salinas** (sə lē'nās): City in west central California

With Liberty and Access to All?

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Double-Entry Journal, Writing Prompts

Use information from *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* to complete this double-entry journal. Your journal should include at least five quotes from the excerpt that contain something that “grabs” your attention or emotions. On the left side of the journal, copy the text portion, along with the paragraph number. On the right side of the journal, write your response to the quote. Use additional paper if necessary.

Double-Entry Journal

| Quoted Material from the Text | Paragraph Number | The Effect of the Quote on You |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | |

From
NICKEL AND DIMED:

On (Not) Getting By in America

by Barbara Ehrenreich

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara Ehrenreich, a social activist, feminist, and political essayist has written for several well-known publications about controversial topics such as healthcare, war, families, and women's issues. In the excerpt here, she writes about working for a maid service in Maine, part of her experience of working with the nation's "working poor" in entry-level jobs.

It is undeniably fall when I find myself being assigned, day after day, to Holly's team. There's fog in the morning now and the farm stands are pushing pumpkins. On the radio in our company car the classic rock station notes the season by playing "Maggie May" several times a day — It's late September and I really should be BACK at school. Other people are going out to their offices or classrooms; we stay behind, Cinderella-like, in their usually deserted homes. On the pop station, it's Pearl Jam's hypnotic "Last Kiss," so beautifully sad, it makes bereavement¹ seem like an enviable condition. Not that we ever comment on what the radio brings us or on any other part of the world outside The Maids and its string of client houses. In this, the most dutiful and serious of all the teams I have been on, the conversation, at least in the morning, is all about the houses that lie ahead. Murphy — isn't that the one that took four hours the first time? Yeah, but it's OK once you get past the master bath, which you've gotta use mold killer on... And so on. Or we pass around our routing sheet and study the day's owners' "Hot Buttons," as sketched in by Tammy. Typical "Hot Buttons" are baseboards, windowsills, and ceiling fans — never, of course, poverty, racism, or global warming.

But the relevant point about Holly is that she is visibly unwell — possibly whiter, on a daily basis, than anyone else in the state. We're not just talking Caucasian here; think bridal gowns, tuberculosis, and death. All I know about her is that she is twenty-three, has been married for almost a year, and manages to feed her husband, herself and an elderly relative on \$30–\$50 a week, which is only a little more than what I spend on food for myself. I'd be surprised if she weighs more than ninety-two pounds

My Notes

1

2

¹ **bereavement:** mourning or sadness at the death of a loved one

With Liberty and Access to All?

My Notes

before breakfast, assuming breakfast is even on her agenda. During an eight-to-nine-hour shift, I never see her eat more than one of those tiny cracker sandwiches with peanut butter filling, and you would think she had no use for food at all if it weren't for the fact that every afternoon at about 2:30 she starts up a food-fantasy conversation in the car."What did you have for dinner last night, Marge?" she'll ask, Marge being our oldest and most affluent team member, who — thanks to a working commercial fisherman husband — sometimes brings reports from such fine-dining spots as T.G.I. Friday's. Or we'll drive by a Dairy Queen and Holly will say, "They have great Foursquares" — the local name for a sundae — "there, you know. With four kinds of sauce. You get chocolate, strawberry, butterscotch, and marshmallow and any kind of ice cream you want. I had one once and let it get a little melted and, oh my God," etc.

- 3 Today, though, even Marge, who normally chatters on obliviously² about the events in her life ("It was the biggest spider" or "So she just puts a little mustard right in with the baked beans..."), notices how shaky Holly looks."Is it just indigestion or is there nausea?" she asks. When Holly admits to nausea, Marge wants to know if she's pregnant. No answer. Marge asks again, and again no answer."I'm talking to you, Holly, answer me." It's a tense moment, with Marge prying and Holly just as rudely stonewalling, but Holly, as team leader, prevails.
- 4 There are only the three of us — Denise is out with a migraine — and at the first house I suggest that Marge and I do all the vacuuming for the day. Marge doesn't chime in on my offer, but it doesn't matter since Holly says no way. I resolve to race through dusting so I can take over as much as possible from Holly. When I finish, I rush to the kitchen, only to find a scene so melodramatic that for a second I think I have walked out of *Dusting*, the videotape, and into an entirely different movie. Holly is in a distinctly un-team-leader-like position, standing slumped over a counter with her head on her arms. "I shouldn't be here today," she says, looking up wanly.³ "I had a big fight with my husband. I didn't want to go to work this morning but he said I had to." This confidence is so completely out of character that I'm speechless. She goes on. The problem is probably that she's pregnant. It's been seven weeks and the nausea is out of control, which is why she can't eat anything and gets so weak, but she wants it to be a secret until she can tell Ted herself.
- 5 Very tentatively and mindful of the deep reserve of rural Mainers, as explained to me by a sociologist acquaintance, I touch her arm and tell her she shouldn't be doing this. Even if she were feeling OK she probably shouldn't be around the chemicals we use. She should go home. But all I can talk her into is taking the Pure Protein sports bar I always carry in my bag in case my sandwich let me down. At first she refuses it. Then, when

² **obliviously**: unaware or forgetful

³ **wanly**: weakly; suggesting ill health, fatigue, or unhappiness

With Liberty and Access to All?

My Notes



a world-wide basis if possible. I am a “good person,” as my demented charges at the nursing home agree, but maybe I’m also just sick of my suddenly acquired insignificance. Maybe I want to “be somebody,” as Jesse Jackson likes to say, somebody generous, competent, brave, and perhaps, above all, noticeable.

- 8 Maids, as an occupational group, are not visible, and when we are seen we are often sorry for it.⁶ On the way to the Martha Stewart-ish place, when Holly and Marge were complaining about her haughtiness in the past encounter, I had ventured to ask why so many of the owners seem hostile and contemptuous toward us. “They think we’re stupid,” was Holly’s answer.” They think we have nothing better to do with our time.” Marge too looked suddenly sober.” We’re nothing to these people,” she said.” We’re just maids.” Nor are we much of anything to anyone else. Even convenience store clerks, who are \$6-an-hour gals themselves, seem to look down on us. In Key West, my waitress’s polo shirt was always a conversation starter: “You at Jerry’s?” a clerk might ask.” I used to work at the waffle place just up the boulevard from there.” But a maid’s uniform has the opposite effect. At one place where we stopped for refreshments, an actual diner with a counter, I tried to order iced tea to take out, but the waitress just kept standing there chatting with a coworker, ignoring my “Excuse me’s.” Then there’s the supermarket. I used to stop on my way home from work, but I couldn’t take the stares, which are easily translatable into: What are you doing here? And, No wonder she’s poor, she’s got a beer in her shopping cart! True, I don’t look so good by the end of the day and probably smell like eau de toilet and sweat, but it’s the brilliant green-and-yellow uniform that gives me away, like prison clothes on a fugitive...

⁶ This invisibility persists at the macroscopic level. The Census Bureau reports that there were 550,000 domestic workers in 1998, up 10 percent since 1996, but this may be a considerable underestimate, since so much of the servant economy is still underground, or at least very low to the ground, where few data collectors ever venture. In 1993, for example, the year when Zoe Baird lost her chance to be attorney general for paying her undocumented nanny off the books, it was estimated that fewer than 10 percent of those Americans who paid a housecleaner more than \$1,000 a year reported these payments to the IRS. Sociologist Mary Romero offers an example of how severe the undercounting can be: the 1980 census found only 1,063 “private household workers” in El Paso, although at the same time that city’s Department of Planning, Research, and Development estimated their numbers at 13,400 and local bus drivers estimated thathalf of the 28,300 bus trips taken daily were taken by maids going to and returning from work (Main in the U.S.A., p. 92). The honesty of employers has increased since the Baird scandal, but most experts believe the household workers remain largely uncounted and invisible to the larger economy.

The Structure of an Argument

You have been introduced to the structure of an argument. As a review, read through the five key elements that are usually found in a good argument.

- 1. The Hook** (Setting readers up to agree with you)
 - The hook grabs the readers' attention and catches their interest.
 - It often establishes a connection between reader and writer and provides background information.
 - It can be, but is not limited to, an anecdote, an image, a definition, or a quotation.
- 2. The Claim** (Your thesis, what you are arguing)
 - Usually comes in the opening section of your paper.
 - States your belief and what it is that you wish to argue.
 - Can be straightforward and clear, i.e. "I believe that..."
- 3. Concessions and Refutations** (Build the other side up...then knock them down)
 - The author recognizes the arguments made by the other side.
 - This builds credibility by being able to discuss the other side with (apparent) objectivity.
 - Grant that the other side has some validity, then...
 - Argue at length against the opposing viewpoint by proving your side has MORE validity.
- 4. Support** (Start stacking your facts to convince them)
 - Set out the reasoning behind your argument.
 - Provide supporting evidence of your claim (data, quotes, anecdotes).
 - Blend together logical and emotional appeals.
- 5. Call to Action** (The final word)
 - Draw your argument to a close and restate your claim.
 - Make a final new appeal to values.
 - Voice a final plea.
 - Try not to repeat information, but sum up your argument with a few final facts and appeals.

Writing Prompt: On a separate piece of paper, use these five elements to draft a response to one of the following prompts:

- Compose a letter to the maid service company stating problems the maids face. Provide suggestions of what the company can do to improve conditions.
- Compose a letter to a local newspaper citing a need for a change in the attitudes of people toward those in service occupations, particularly those who are maids and wear uniforms.

Creating a Survey About the American Dream

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Brainstorm, Discussion Groups, Graphic Organizer

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

A **survey** is a method of collecting data from a group of people. It can be written, such as a print or online questionnaire, or oral, such as an in-person interview.

Start with this assumption about Americans and money:

American teenagers are more obsessed with money than American adults.

Your job will be to prove or disprove this assumption by creating, conducting, and interpreting a **survey**. Individually, consider the following questions.

1. What groups of people will you need to survey?
2. What information will you need to gather about your respondents?

In small groups, brainstorm different types of questions that could appear on your survey. When you create a question that you think will be effective, write it on separate paper. When writing questions, remember to:

- Create a question that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” response.
- Write a question that can be answered numerically. For instance, you could ask respondents to rate something on a scale from 1 to 10.
- Write a question that asks respondents to categorize themselves. For instance, a political candidate might ask a respondent to state whether they are likely to vote, not likely to vote, or undecided.
- Write two questions that have open-ended responses — questions that need to be answered with words or phrases of the respondent’s own choosing.

As a class, share your sample questions and with your teacher’s help, come to consensus on the five questions that will give you the best information to prove or disprove the assumption. Be sure that you have asked for the respondent’s age on your survey.

Your teacher will give you copies of your completed survey to distribute. Each student in your small group should plan on getting responses from at least ten people, being sure that half are teenagers and half are adults.

Gathering Data

1. Total number of respondents: _____

Total number of adults: _____

Total number of teenagers: _____

2. Calculate the percentage of your “yes” and “no” responses.

Adults: Yes: _____ No: _____

Teenagers: Yes: _____ No: _____

Overall: Yes: _____ No: _____

3. Calculate the average of your numeric responses:

Adults: _____

Teenagers: _____

Overall: _____

4. Calculate the percentages of respondents who identified themselves in particular categories:

| | Adults | Teenagers | Overall |
|-------------------|--------|-----------|---------|
| Category 1: _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Category 2: _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Category 3: _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Category 4: _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

5. Look through the open-ended responses. Write down words and phrases that seem to be repeated by each group.

Adults:

Teenagers:

Both groups:

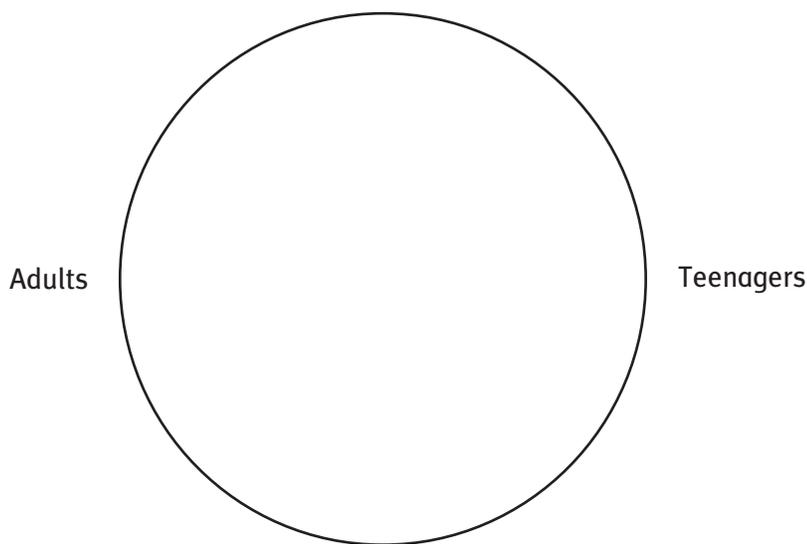
Creating a Survey About the American Dream

Interpreting the Data

1. Summarize your findings in the space below. Did you prove or disprove the assumption about American teenagers and adults and money? Are the results inconclusive? Explain your answer, referring to the specific percentages you calculated on the previous page.

Presenting the Data

2. The circle below represents 100 percent of the respondents to the survey. Write one of your numeric questions above the circle and shade in different colors the percentage of teenagers who responded one way and the percentage of adults who responded the same way.



3. What other methods of presenting data visually might work for your survey?

Reflecting on Survey

4. You and your classmates conducted the exact same survey. Compare your results with the rest of the class. Which questions seemed to work well for your survey and which questions would you change if you could? Why?

Presenting Findings from a Survey

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: **Think-Pair-Share**,
Graphic Organizer

Assignment

Working in pairs, your assignment is to develop, conduct, interpret, and present the findings of a survey that is designed to prove or disprove an assumption about the American Dream.

Steps

1. As a class, brainstorm ideas, hypotheses, or assumptions you have about people's attitudes regarding America or the American Dream.
2. Determine a target group for your survey and develop a working hypothesis like the one in the previous activity: "American teenagers are more obsessed with money than American adults." You may wish to consider race, culture, age, and gender among other variables. Look to texts and ideas from the unit to help you develop your questions.
3. Consider who the targets of your survey will be to prove or disprove your thesis. What are some general questions you might ask?
4. Begin creating your survey questions as you did in the previous activity. Be sure to have questions that will provide both numeric and open-ended responses. Write the most effective questions on separate paper as a rough draft of your survey.
5. Exchange drafts with another pair of students and take each other's survey. Share thoughts about any questions that might be confusing or ineffective.
6. Create your final survey, typed neatly on one side of a piece of paper. Double check that your survey asks for all of the information about the respondent that you will need: age, gender, race, among others.
7. Hand out your survey to at least 30 people. Be sure that your surveys are widely distributed to a variety of people.
8. Collect your data and categorize it as you did for the previous activity.
9. Begin the process of interpreting your data by asking whether you were able to prove or disprove your assumption. Consider ways that you can present your findings visually.
10. You will present your findings in the manner described by your teacher, but you should include the following:
 - a. An introduction that identifies the assumption you made, why you think that this assumption is important to prove or disprove, and what your findings revealed.
 - b. Body paragraphs that explain your findings using both numerical responses and words and phrases. Be sure to include your own interpretation of the findings.
 - c. At least two visual representations of your findings.
 - d. A conclusion that summarizes the implications of your findings (how you want people to respond, what you learned from the project).

SCORING GUIDE

| Scoring Criteria | Exemplary | Proficient | Emerging |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Survey | Questions are focused and effective for the stated assumption; they elicit both open-ended and numeric responses. Questions lead to the underlying attitudes of the respondents. | Questions are appropriate for the stated assumption; they elicit both open-ended and numeric responses. | Questions do not appear to be directly related to the stated assumption and/or may not elicit both open-ended and numeric responses. |
| Explanatory Text | <p>The analysis of the survey demonstrates a perceptive look at the topic. The text is organized in a way that presents a clear thesis supported by thoughtful connections and insightful conclusions.</p> <p>The text demonstrates excellent understanding of standard writing conventions.</p> | <p>The analysis of the survey demonstrates a clear understanding of what the students learned about perceptions of the topic.</p> <p>The text is organized in a way that presents a clear thesis and support, but the reader may have to infer important details.</p> <p>The text demonstrates an overall understanding of basic writing conventions with some deviation.</p> | <p>The analysis of the survey lacks reflection on learning and/or understanding of the topic.</p> <p>Organization is insufficient. The thesis may be unclear and/or there may be limited evidence to support it.</p> <p>There are frequent errors in standard conventions that seriously interfere with the meaning.</p> |
| Presentation | Students craft an engaging, well-organized presentation of their survey and analysis. Visuals effectively enhance findings and engage the audience. All members contribute. | Students craft a well-organized presentation of their survey and analysis. Visuals support presentation of findings. All members contribute. | Students' presentation may be disorganized. While an attempt to incorporate visuals is made, they may distract or be under-utilized. Not all members contribute equally. |
| Additional Criteria | | | |

Comments:

Learning Focus:

Defining Your American Dream

How will you pursue happiness? What is success? What is the American Dream?

An important task of every critical thinker is to be able to read and understand the thinking of others. But the task doesn't end there. More importantly, your work is to reflect on the ideas you encounter, to weigh and evaluate the thinking of others, to mull over in your mind the multitude of ideas presented. This hard work sets you on the path to understanding and articulating your own thinking.

You may find yourself having mental conversations with writers whose ideas you respect or admire or disagree with as you struggle to formulate your own ideas. This is important creative work. It is not enough to simply read and agree or disagree, but as a critical thinker you must be able to gather together many ideas and sort through them to find what you can use and what you can discard in formulating your own thinking. This act of synthesis or combining is the creative act of constructing your own definitions of what is important to you.

Synthesizing your own thoughts, your reading, and your research will lead to your own personal understanding of the American Dream. Articulating your own thinking as well as taking ideas from texts and authors and synthesizing them into a thoughtful, personal, and **persuasive argument** puts you in the role of author of your own American Dream.

LITERARY TERMS

A **persuasive argument** convinces readers to accept or believe a writer's perspective on a topic.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a senator from Illinois, Barack Obama rose to national prominence after giving a speech at the 2004 Democratic Convention. In 2008, he was elected as the first African American president of the United States.

My Notes**Speech****Keynote Address**from the **2004**

Democratic National Convention

(Excerpt)

by Barack Obama

On behalf of the great state of Illinois, crossroads of a nation, land of Lincoln, let me express my deep gratitude for the privilege of addressing this convention. Tonight is a particular honor for me because, let's face it, my presence on this stage is pretty unlikely. My father was a foreign student, born and raised in a small village in Kenya. He grew up herding goats, went to school in a tin-roof shack. His father, my grandfather, was a cook, a domestic servant to the British.

But my grandfather had larger dreams for his son. Through hard work and perseverance my father got a scholarship to study in a magical place, America, that's shone as a beacon of freedom and opportunity to so many who had come before him. While studying here, my father met my mother. She was born in a town on the other side of the world, in Kansas. Her father worked on oil rigs and farms through most of the Depression. The day after Pearl Harbor he signed up for duty, joined Patton's army and marched across Europe. Back home, my grandmother raised a baby and went to work on a bomber assembly line. After the war, they studied on the G.I. Bill, bought a house through FHA, and moved west, all the way to Hawaii, in search of opportunity.

And they, too, had big dreams for their daughter, a common dream, born of two continents. My parents shared not only an improbable love; they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation. They would give me an African name, Barack, or "blessed," believing that in a tolerant America your name is no barrier to success. They imagined me going to the best schools in the land, even though they weren't rich, because in a generous America you don't have to be rich to achieve your potential. They are both passed away now. Yet, I know that, on this night, they look down on me with pride.

I stand here today, grateful for the diversity of my heritage, aware that my parents' dreams live on in my two precious daughters. I stand here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that, in no other country on earth, is my story even possible. Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not

because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy. Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over two hundred years ago, “We hold these truths be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

That is the true genius of America, a faith in the simple dreams, the insistence on small miracles; that we can tuck in our children at night and know they are fed and clothed and safe from harm; that we can say what we think, write what we think, without hearing a sudden knock on the door; that we can have an idea and start our own business without paying a bribe; that we can participate in the political process without fear of retribution, and that our votes will be counted — or at least, most of the time.

This year, in this election, we are called to reaffirm our values and our commitments, to hold them against a hard reality and see how we are measuring up, to the legacy of our forbearers, and the promise of future generations. And fellow Americans — Democrats, Republicans, Independents — I say to you tonight: we have more work to do. More to do for the workers I met in Galesburg, Illinois, who are losing their union jobs at the Maytag plant that’s moving to Mexico, and now they’re having to compete with their own children for jobs that pay seven bucks an hour; more to do for the father I met who was losing his job and choking back tears, wondering how he would pay \$4,500 a month for the drugs his son needs without the health benefits he counted on; more to do for the young woman in East St. Louis, and thousands more like her, who has the grades, has the drive, has the will, but doesn’t have the money to go to college.

Now, don’t get me wrong. The people I meet—in small towns and big cities, in diners and office parks—they don’t expect government to solve all their problems. They know they have to work hard to get ahead and they want to. Go into the collar counties around Chicago, and people will tell you: They don’t want their tax money wasted by a welfare agency or the Pentagon. Go into any inner city neighborhood, and folks will tell you that government alone can’t teach kids to learn. They know that parents have to teach, that children can’t achieve unless we raise their expectations and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a black youth with a book is acting white. They know those things. People don’t expect government to solve all their problems. But they sense, deep in their bones, that with just a slight change in priorities, we can make sure that every child in America has a decent shot at life, and that the doors of opportunity remain open to all. They know we can do better. And they want that choice. . . . John Kerry believes in America. And he knows it’s not enough for just some of us to prosper. For alongside our famous individualism, there’s another ingredient in the American Dream saga, a belief that we are connected as one people. If there’s a child on the south side of Chicago who can’t read, that matters to me, even if it’s not my child. If there’s a senior citizen somewhere who can’t pay for their prescription and

My Notes



The Road to Success

My Notes

having to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, even if it's not my grandmother. If there's an Arab American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties. It is that fundamental belief — it is that fundamental belief — I am my brother's keeper, I am my sisters' keeper — that makes this country work. It's what allows us to pursue our individual dreams, yet still come together as a single American family."E pluribus unum," out of many, one.

Now even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us, the spin masters and negative ad peddlers who embrace the politics of anything goes. Well, I say to them tonight, there's not a liberal America and a conservative America — there's the United States of America. There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America. The pundits like to slice-and-dice our country into Red States and Blue States; Red States for Republicans, Blue States for Democrats. But I've got news for them, too. We worship an awesome God in the Blue States, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the Red States. We coach Little League in the Blue States and, yes, we've got some gay friends in the Red States. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq and patriots who supported the war in Iraq. We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America.

In the end, that's what this election is about. Do we participate in a politics of cynicism or a politics of hope? John Kerry calls on us to hope. John Edwards calls on us to hope. I'm not talking about blind optimism here — the almost willful ignorance that thinks unemployment will go away if we just don't talk about it, or the health care crisis will solve itself if we just ignore it. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about something more substantial. It's the hope of slaves sitting around a fire singing freedom songs; the hope of immigrants setting out for distant shores; the hope of a young naval lieutenant bravely patrolling the Mekong Delta; the hope of a mill worker's son who dares to defy the odds; the hope of a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too. Hope in the face of difficulty, hope in the face of uncertainty, the audacity of hope!

In the end, that is God's greatest gift to us, the bedrock of this nation; the belief in things not seen; the belief that there are better days ahead. I believe we can give our middle class relief and provide working families with a road to opportunity. I believe we can provide jobs to the jobless, homes to the homeless, and reclaim young people in cities across America from violence and despair. I believe that we have a righteous wind at our backs, and that as we stand on the crossroads of history, we can make the right choices, and meet the challenges that face us...

THE RIGHT TO FAIL

by William Zinsser

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William K. Zinsser (b. 1922), American critic and writer, was born in New York and educated at Princeton. He has written articles for many leading magazines and newspapers and authored 17 books. He has taught writing at Yale University, the New School, and Columbia University Graduate School.

I like “dropout” as an addition to the American Dream language because it’s brief and it’s clear. What I don’t like is that we use it almost entirely as a dirty word.

We only apply it to people under twenty-one. Yet an adult who spends his days and nights watching mindless TV programs is more of a dropout than an eighteen-year-old who quits college, with its frequently mindless courses, to become, say, a VISTA volunteer. For the young, dropping out is often a way of dropping in.

To hold this opinion, however, is little short of treason in America. A boy or girl who leaves college is branded a failure—and the right to fail is one of the few freedoms that this country does not grant its citizens. The American Dream is a dream of “getting ahead,” painted in strokes of gold wherever we look. Our advertisements and TV commercials are a hymn to material success, our magazine articles a toast to people who made it to the top. Smoke the right cigarette or drive the right car—so the ads imply—and girls will be swooning into your deodorized arms or caressing your expensive lapels. Happiness goes to the man who has the sweet smell of achievement. He is our national idol, and everybody else is our national fink.

I want to put in a word for the fink, especially the teen-age fink, because if we give him time to get through his finkdom—if we release him from the pressure of attaining certain goals by a certain age—he has a good chance of becoming our national idol, a Jefferson or a Thoreau, a Buckminster Fuller or an Adlai Stevenson, a man with a mind of his own. We need mavericks and dissenters and dreamers far more than we need junior vice presidents, but we paralyze them by insisting that every step be a step up to the next rung of the ladder. Yet in the fluid years of youth, the only way for boys and girls to find their proper road is often to take a hundred side trips, poking out in different directions, faltering, drawing back, and starting again.

My Notes

GRAMMAR & USAGE

A short sentence often adds punch to an idea, especially if it comes between longer, more complicated sentences. Notice how Zinsser uses a three-word sentence to reinforce the main point of his essay: “Failure isn’t fatal.” The sentence is direct, simple, and short, which gives it extra attention. Try working in short sentences strategically into your own writing.

The Road to Success

My Notes

“But what if we fail?” they ask, whispering the dreadful word across the Generation Gap to their parents, who are back home at the Establishment nursing their “middle-class values” and cultivating their “goal oriented society.” The parents whisper back: “Don’t!”

What they should say is “Don’t be afraid to fail!” Failure isn’t fatal. Countless people have had a bout with it and come out stronger as a result. Many have even come out famous. History is strewn with eminent dropouts, “loners” who followed their own trail, not worrying about its odd twists and turns because they had faith in their own sense of direction. To read their biographies is always exhilarating, not only because they beat the system, but because their system was better than the one that they beat. Luckily, such rebels still turn up often enough to prove that individualism, though badly threatened, is not extinct. Much has been written, for instance, about the fitful scholastic career of Thomas P. F. Hoving, New York’s former Parks Commissioner and now director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Hoving was a dropout’s dropout, entering and leaving schools as if they were motels, often at the request of the management. Still, he must have learned something during those unorthodox years, for he dropped in again at the top of his profession.

His case reminds me of another boyhood—that of Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*, the most popular literary hero of the postwar period. There is nothing accidental about the grip that this dropout continues to hold on the affections of an entire American generation. Nobody else, real or invented, has made such an engaging shambles of our “goal-oriented society,” so gratified our secret belief that the “phonies” are in power and the good guys up the creek. Whether Holden has also reached the top of his chosen field today is one of those speculations that delight fanciers of good fiction. I speculate that he has. Holden Caulfield, incidentally, is now thirty-six.

I’m not urging everyone to go out and fail just for the sheer therapy of it, or to quit college just to coddle some vague discontent. Obviously it’s better to succeed than to flop, and in general a long education is more helpful than a short one. (Thanks to my own education, for example, I can tell George Eliot from T. S. Eliot, I can handle the pluperfect tense in French, and I know that Caesar beat the Helvetii because he had enough frumentum.) I only mean that failure isn’t bad in itself, or success automatically good.

Fred Zinnemann, who has directed some of Hollywood’s most honored movies, was asked by a reporter, when *A Man for All Seasons* won every prize, about his previous film, *Behold a Pale Horse*, which was a box-office disaster. “I don’t feel any obligation to be successful,” Zimmerman replied. “Success can be dangerous—you feel you know it all. I’ve learned a great deal from my failures.” A similar point was made by Richard Brooks about his ambitious money loser, *Lord Jim*. Recalling the three years of his life that

went into it, talking almost with elation about the troubles that befell his unit in Cambodia, Brooks told me that he learned more about his craft from this considerable failure than from his many earlier hits.

It's a point, of course, that applies throughout the arts. Writers, playwrights, painters and composers work in the expectation of periodic defeat, but they wouldn't keep going back into the arena if they thought it was the end of the world. It isn't the end of the world. For an artist—and perhaps for anybody—it is the only way to grow

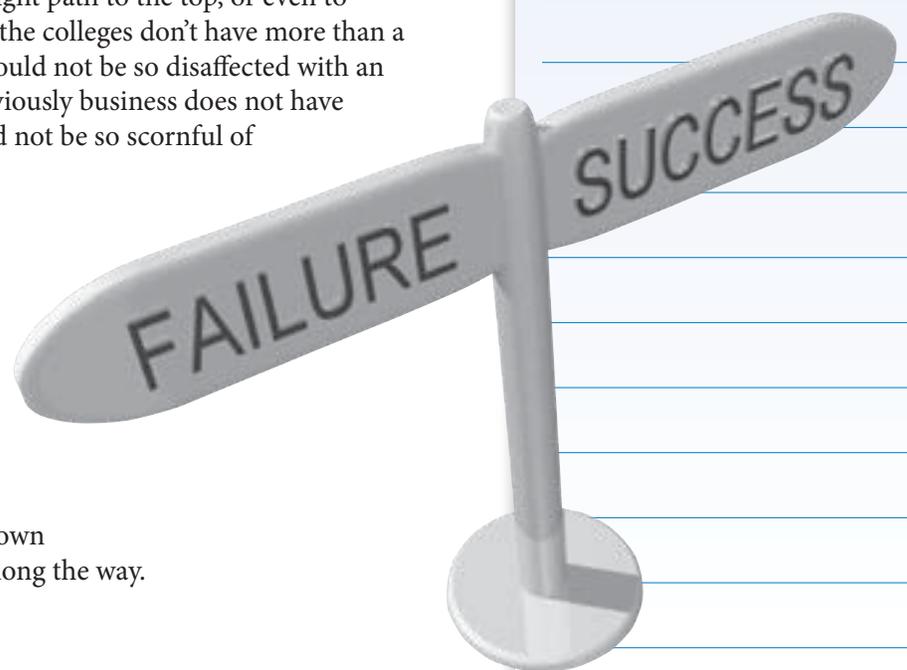
Today's younger generation seems to know that this is true, seems willing to take the risks in life that artists take in art. "Society," needless to say, still has the upper hand—it sets the goals and condemns as a failure everybody who won't play. But the dropouts and the hippies are not as afraid of failure as their parents and grandparents. This could mean, as their elders might say, that they are just plumb lazy, secure in the comforts of an affluent state. It could also mean, however, that they just don't buy the old standards of success and are rapidly writing new ones.

Recently it was announced, for instance, that more than two hundred thousand Americans have inquired about service in VISTA (the domestic Peace Corps) and that, according to a Gallup survey, "more than 3 million American college students would serve VISTA in some capacity if given the opportunity." This is hardly the road to riches or to an executive suite. Yet I have met many of these young volunteers, and they are not pining for traditional success. On the contrary, they appear more fulfilled than the average vice-president with a swimming pool.

Who is to say, then, if there is any right path to the top, or even to say what the top consists of? Obviously the colleges don't have more than a partial answer—otherwise the young would not be so disaffected with an education that they consider vapid. Obviously business does not have the answer—otherwise the young would not be so scornful of its call to be an organization man.

The fact is, nobody has the answer, and the dawning awareness of this fact seems to me one of the best things happening in America today. Success and failure are again becoming individual visions, as they were when the country was younger, not rigid categories. Maybe we are learning again to cherish this right of every person to succeed on his own terms and to fail as often as necessary along the way.

My Notes



The Road to Success

Complete the following SOAPStone to analyze the essay “The Right to Fail,” by William Zinsser.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Speaker</p> <p>What can you say about the speaker based on references in the text? Is race, gender, class, or age important?</p> | |
| <p>Occasion</p> <p>What issues may have motivated the speaker to think about the incident or occasion?</p> | |
| <p>Audience</p> <p>Who is being addressed? Identify some characteristics of the audience.</p> | |
| <p>Purpose</p> <p>What is the message and how does the author want the audience to respond?</p> | |
| <p>Subject</p> <p>What is the focus? The subject can be stated by using a few words.</p> | |
| <p>Tone</p> <p>Using textual support, how would you describe the overall tone of the passage?</p> | |

Defining the Dream

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Graphic Organizer, Prewriting, Rereading, Notetaking

Defining the “American Dream”

In a synthesis essay, it is paramount to define important terms at the beginning of your text. In the case of this prompt, the definition you create becomes a vehicle for establishing your thesis. Consider defining important terms using the following ideas.

Define by Function (What does the “American Dream” do?):

Define by Classification (What groups belong to or have access to the “American Dream”?):

Define by Example: (What are some examples of the “American Dream”?)

Define by Negation: (What is the “American Dream” not?)

Return to the readings and work you have done in this unit. Review them to determine whether and how you can use these readings or writings as sources to support your thinking.

Synthesizing the American Dream

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Rereading, Notetaking, Prewriting, Drafting, Self-Editing/Peer Editing, Sharing and Responding

Assignment

Your assignment is to synthesize at least three to five sources and your own observations to defend, challenge, or qualify the statement that America still provides access to the American Dream, to the “tired, the poor, and the huddled masses.” This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources (3–5) into a coherent, well-written argumentative essay. Be sure to refer to the sources and employ your own observations to support your position. Your argument should be central; the sources and your observations should support this argument.

Steps

Planning

1. As a class or in small groups, review the elements of a strong synthesis paper.
2. Revisit and carefully consider the various texts (sources) from the unit to identify three to five sources that might be relevant to your position.

Creating

3. Draft your own position on the issue. Consider two or three possible positions you could take and then decide which of those positions you really want to take. Be careful not to generalize, but instead consider the nuances and complexities of the topic.
4. Imagine presenting your position on the issue to each of the authors of your sources. Create an imaginary conversation between you and the author of the source discussing the following questions and record your findings.
 - ▶ Would the author/creator agree with your position? Disagree? Why?
 - ▶ Would the author creator want to qualify your position? Why and how?
 - ▶ Does the author make a specific claim about your issue?
 - ▶ What assumptions or beliefs are either spoken or unspoken (implicit or explicit)?
5. On the basis of this imagined conversation, revise and refine the point that you would like to make about the issue so it can serve as your central thesis. Draft your opening paragraph in which this thesis is introduced relatively quickly after a sentence or two that contextualizes the topic for the reader.
6. Compose your essay considering the elements of argumentation. Be sure to develop the case for your position by incorporating within your own thinking the conversations you had with the primary sources.

- ▶ You should feel free to say things like “Source A would disagree with my viewpoint, but here is why I still maintain my position” or “Source B would agree with the majority of my position but would offer a slightly different perspective in this area.”
- ▶ Don’t forget to cite your sources appropriately in the text itself.

Presenting and Revision

7. Review your paper considering the two syntactical lessons from this unit (connotation and sentence openings). Make sure your sentences are varied and your word choice is appropriate for your argument. Use the S.O.S. chart for additional support.
8. Review your paper for effective elements of the argument. Do you have a hook, claim, support, concessions/refutations, and a call to action?
9. Complete your final draft.
10. Present your argument to your peers. Consider the various viewpoints and reflect on your own thinking about your claim. Has your view changed? Did other members of your group have similar views? Different? Record your reflections.

SCORING GUIDE

| Scoring Criteria | Exemplary | Proficient | Emerging |
|------------------------|--|---|---|
| Ideas | <p>The essay effectively synthesizes the sources and the writer’s position to defend, challenge, or qualify the central claim of the prompt. The cohesive, sustained argument includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a thesis that contextualizes the issue and captures its complexity; • support that convincingly goes beyond the citation of a variety of source material to analyzing the sources’ significance to the writer’s position; • a conclusion that goes beyond a summary of the thesis by illuminating how the writer’s position will continue to influence the reader. | <p>The essay adequately synthesizes the sources and the writer’s position to defend, challenge, or qualify the central claim of the prompt. The sound argument includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a straightforward thesis that briefly contextualizes the issue; • support that clearly connects and comments on the various source material to the writer’s position; • a conclusion that is logical yet may be somewhat repetitive to the thesis. | <p>The essay tries to synthesize the sources and the writer’s position yet inadequately defends, challenges, or qualifies the central claim of the prompt. The attempted argument includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a weak thesis or one that is lost in a summary of sources; • support that paraphrases source material with no commentary or analysis to the writer’s position; sources may be misunderstood; • a conclusion that returns directly to the attempted thesis or that is missing. |
| Organization | <p>The essay’s effective organization aptly reinforces the ideas of the argument. Ideas move smoothly and comfortably with successful use of transitions enhancing the essay’s coherence.</p> | <p>The essay’s clear organization supports the ideas of the argument. Ideas are easy to follow. Transitions are used to move between ideas.</p> | <p>The essay’s lack of organization detracts from argument, making the ideas difficult to follow. It may jump too rapidly between ideas and lack transitions.</p> |
| Use of Language | <p>The essay demonstrates a mature style that advances the writer’s ideas. Precise diction and skillful use of syntax, with keen attention to varied sentence openings, help to create a convincing voice. Standard writing conventions (including accurate citation of sources) are followed.</p> | <p>The essay demonstrates a style that adequately supports the writer’s ideas. Logical diction and syntax, with some attention to varied sentence openings, help to create a suitable voice. Standard writing conventions (including accurate citation of sources) are followed; errors do not seriously impede readability.</p> | <p>The essay demonstrates a limited style that ineffectively supports the writer’s ideas. Lapses in diction or syntax may not allow a suitable voice to sustain throughout the essay. Sentence openings may be repetitive. Errors in standard writing conventions impede readability and sources may be inaccurately cited.</p> |

SCORING GUIDE

| Scoring Criteria | Exemplary | Proficient | Emerging |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Reflection | The reflection perceptively analyzes how the writer has considered various viewpoints and thoroughly reveals the writer’s thinking about his/her claim. | The reflection explains how the writer has considered various viewpoints and addresses the writer’s thinking about his/her claim. | The reflection does little to analyze how the writer has considered various viewpoints or to show the writer’s thinking about his/her claim. |
| Additional Criteria | | | |

Comments:

Reflection

An important aspect of growing as a learner is to reflect on where you have been, what you have accomplished, what helped you to learn, and how you will apply your new knowledge in the future. Use the following questions to guide your thinking and to identify evidence of your learning. Use separate notebook paper.

Thinking about Concepts

1. Using specific examples from your unit, respond to the Essential Questions:
 - In what ways does the American Dream manifest itself in American life?
 - How does one create a personal definition of the American Dream?
2. Consider the new academic vocabulary from this unit (**Survey, Primary Source, Secondary Source**) as well as academic vocabulary from previous units and select 3–4 terms of which your understanding has grown. For each term, answer the following questions:
 - What was your understanding of the word prior to the unit?
 - How has your understanding of the word evolved throughout the unit?
 - How will you apply your understanding in the future?

Thinking about Connections

3. Review the activities and products (artifacts) you created. Choose those that most reflect your growth or increase in understanding.
4. For each artifact that you choose, record, respond, and reflect on your thinking and understanding, using the following questions as a guide:
 - a. What skill/knowledge does this artifact reflect, and how did you learn this skill/knowledge?
 - b. How did your understanding of the power of language expand through your engagement with this artifact?
 - c. How will you apply this skill or knowledge in the future?
5. Create this reflection as Portfolio pages—one for each artifact you choose. Use the following model for your headings and commentary on questions.

Thinking About Thinking

Portfolio Entry

Concept:

Description of Artifact:

Commentary on Questions: