

Advanced English 9 CP

Audino in Collaboration with Unterreiner and Kellett

“What is the American Dream?”

By Library of Congress, USHistory.org, adapted by NewsELA staff

First read	INTRODUCTION	Second read
<p>Highlight and then record 3-4 of the most important words from this section in this column, with a short explanation of why they seem important:</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>	<p>In 1931, the American historian and writer James Truslow Adams wrote a book called <i>The Epic of America</i>. Like many others, this book told the history of our nation. But unlike most history books, <i>The Epic of America</i> focused not on events in the nation's history but on how the average American has grown and changed.</p> <p>Adams stated that the American dream is "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it."</p> <p>According to Adams, the American dream was not about material possessions or money. Instead, it was a dream of a society in which each man and each woman could reach the highest place that their abilities enabled regardless of where they started in life. That person could be recognized by others for what they are, not for where they were born or who their family was.</p>	<p>Why do you think people have “grown weary and mistrustful” of the American Dream? Highlight some clues from the article.</p> <p>→</p> <p>What might be an example of “where [an individual] started in life” that might make the American Dream a challenge?</p> <p>→</p>
First read	THE FOUNDATION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM	Second read
<p>Highlight and then record 3-4 of the most important words from this section in this column, with a short explanation of why they seem important:</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>	<p>The authors of the United States’ “Declaration of Independence” held certain truths to be self-evident: "that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Might this sentiment be considered the foundation of the American dream?</p> <p>Were homesteaders who left the big cities of the east to find happiness and their piece of land in the unknown wilderness pursuing these Rights? Were the immigrants who came to the United States looking for their bit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, their dream? And what did the desire of the veteran of World War II — to settle down, to have a home, a car and a family — tell us about this evolving dream? Is the American dream attainable by all Americans?</p> <p>The belief that each American has the freedom to pursue a better life often involves a nice house, a car or two and a more comfortable existence than our parents. Incredible "Rags to</p>	<p>What might be YOUR definition of the American Dream, different from “a nice house [and] a car or two?”</p> <p>→</p>

	Riches" stories have been fueled by this belief. Presidents have started out in log cabins and highly successful entrepreneurs have come to America as penniless immigrants. More recently, we have seen Bill Gates, the guy who dropped out of Harvard to start Microsoft, become the richest man in the world.	
First read	DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DREAM	Second read
<p>Highlight and then record 3-4 of the most important words from this section in this column, with a short explanation of why they seem important:</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>	<p>Horatio Alger, Jr.'s 19th century novels embodied the American ideal that hard work and determination would eventually be rewarded. The young protagonists of his books "pulled themselves up by their bootstraps" and proved America to be the land of opportunity.</p> <p>Some say that the American dream has become the pursuit of material prosperity, but while people work more hours to get bigger cars, fancier homes and the fruits of prosperity for their families, they have less time to enjoy their prosperity. Others say that the American dream is beyond the grasp of the working poor who must work multiple jobs to ensure their family's survival. Yet others look toward a new American dream with less focus on financial gain. They place more emphasis on living a simple, fulfilling life.</p> <p>The American novelist Thomas Wolfe said, "...to every man, regardless of his birth, his shining, golden opportunity ... the right to live, to work, to be himself and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him."</p> <p>Is this your American dream?</p>	<p>What obstacles might prevent people from "pulling themselves up by their bootstraps" or enjoying the American dream? Highlight some clues from the article.</p> <p>→</p>