

Columbus wrote essay examples

[Art & Culture](#), [American Dream](#)



- Did Columbus have a profound or mild impact on the American Dream?

There are two views about Christopher Columbus' expedition to North America. Yes, he discovered a new land of opportunities, and paved way for millions of people to follow suit. These immigrants contributed to the building of a great nation and in the process achieved their personal ambitions. But, there is also an other faction which opines that, though Columbus found the sea routes for reaching this land, he was by no means the founder of the country, because indigenous people were living in this land having a civilization of their own, for many a centuries before his arrival.

Particularly, the information from our text which throws light on, his inhumane treatment of the Native Americans further puts his role as an American icon into skepticism. He came, assessed the financial benefits the new found land might offer his sponsors, and in the process almost initiated a process of extermination against the native community, which was leading a peaceful existence up until then. These are hardly the traits one would associate with American dream. Though he reached his goal, his activities after that, like claiming credit for the first sighting which rightfully belonged to Rodrigo, forcefully subjugating the local population and shipping thousands of natives as slaves most of whom died during the journey, might prevent us from mounting him on the pedestal of greatness.

But to be fair to Columbus, he had a vision, worked hard for it, and had the capability required for achieving his goal, and in the end he did achieve his goal. He had failures but was not disheartened by them. He was skilled enough to procure the means to pursue his dreams, by talking the Spanish catholic Monarch into sponsoring his expedition. He was bold enough to

voyage into uncharted waters. And he had conviction (though landmark he intended to find was Asia) that he would reach a land, in a path which was not attempted before. Yes, these are deeds one would associate with the American Dream and so, the answer to the question is yes he did have a profound impact on the American Dream.

- Which of the 4 questions we seek to answer this semester was most impacted by the interactions between the Native Americans and the first colonists? Do any of the tenets of the American Dream may have been profoundly impacted by this interaction?

The trait which stands out in the interactions between the natives and the first colonists is the hospitality of the natives, and the ruthlessness of the colonists. The natives' hospitality denotes how to this day this land has taken into her fold whoever reached her shores, and provided them with opportunity for material and personal growth. The ruthlessness of the colonists signifies the unwavering pursuit of personal ambition. Thus the first question we discussed in our class - "Who is to be included in and who is excluded from the Dream?" is most impacted by these interactions. This is because the colonists who were foreigners then flourished in the land, despite their initial hardships. Thus they are included in the dream despite their foreign origins. But sadly, the natives were almost wiped off from their own land, and thus they were excluded from the dream.

They brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things They willingly traded everything they owned (Christopher Columbus, 1492)

Not just Columbus, accounts by many other colonists clearly indicate that

the Indians were extremely generous. They obviously loved their land and enjoyed the riches it gave them, but they did not intend to keep it for themselves, and drive away anybody else who wished to have a share of their riches. During this period, every European nation was busily colonizing and looking to extract resources from far off lands. But the Native Americans were willing to share their gifts with their guests. They did not defend their territory with force or spend time in building weapons. In fact they were happy to have visitors and were eager to learn from them. They were more than willing to have a peaceful existence with the colonists, which unfortunately was not reciprocated by the colonists. The letter from Powhatan, the Indian tribe leader is a testimony to it. He says, " Why will you take by force what you may have quietly by love?" (Powhatan, 1607)

These words hold true even in the present century. Cometh a conflict or a war, Americans are as tough as they can be. But they willingly share the opportunities of their land for those who come seeking in a peaceful way. The first and last tenets of the American dream are reflected in these interactions. The essence of the letter written by Powhatan to Smith is the basic spirit behind, the first and last tenets which states ' Anybody irrespective of nationality, color or religion, can attain success in America, and this success is worth because it is pursued in a virtuous manner.

- Which of the four tenets of the American Dream do you personally agree with the most, and which one do you disagree with the most and why? Do you feel like Americans share your opinion in this agreement and disagreement? Provide examples as to why you think they agree or disagree with your sentiments of the particular tenets you most agree with or

disagree with.

The tenet of the American dream I agree with the most is the fourth one - "success is worth pursuing because it is virtuous". This is because anybody can succeed in life but the means they use and the purpose of their goal is what distinguishes their efforts as noble or arrogant. We saw the colonists were successful in settling in their new found colony. But the methods they employed by no means categorize that activity as a part of American dream. This is because the atrocities against the natives, committed by the colonists, were far from virtuous. So was the civil war era, where the economy prospered but at the exploitation of slaves. And I think this opinion of mine is agreed by most Americans, which is clear through the slavery abolition laws enacted and the general welfare measures for Native Americans which are prevalent today, and the widespread public support that it receives today.

The tenet of American dream I have a slight disagreement is with the first one - 'anybody can achieve success'. This is because I feel certain factions of society like blacks, Asian immigrants and women are exposed to various stereotypes even to this day and this affects their chances of pursuing success. But I do not think most Americans agree with this opinion of mine, as we have a black president today and millions of immigrants thronging our shores influenced by this development.

- When it comes to the Civil War, what do most Americans perceive as the reason for the military engagement? What other reasons were there? More specifically economic reasons. And how did those economic reasons impact the American Dream if at all?

The main agenda behind the American civil war was slavery and its abolition. It is not just a humanitarian issue but also an economic issue, because the south plantations were primarily tended by the slaves, and slavery based agriculture was the main reason behind the economic prosperity of the South. North, on the other hand mostly had factory based economy run by paid laborers, and so they supported an anti-slavery policy. The South was producing cotton in huge quantities (thanks to the slaves), and the North was turning the cotton into finished products. This economic disparity opened up a gulf between the North and the South. When Lincoln, who was a clear supporter of slavery emancipation, assumed office, South Carolina seceded from the union. Close to seven other southern states had already seceded just before the election, and thus the civil war began.

These economic reasons had a profound, if one might say the greatest, impact on the American dream. For the first time in the history of America, the law treated every individual equally, irrespective of their origins or color. Though slavery abolition was not completely attained during that period, still the process was initiated, and this was the single most important step towards the conception of the American Dream. The Southern economy, by the end of the civil war was transferred from a slave based agricultural community, to a mixed racial tenant farming community. Thus, it was a significant step towards the basic tenet of the American Dream, which is - anybody can pursue success.

- During the First World War, what was the conflict between political rhetoric and economic necessity faced by Woodrow Wilson? What were the struggles facing capitalism at the time? More importantly, how was the American

Dream impacted if at all by the results of World War I and the emergence of the US as a global player? Is there a specific question out of the 4 questions we seek to answer about the American Dream that was most affected in your opinion as a result?

The political reason behind the American entry into World War I was obviously because of the fact, that it was not able to afford to be neutral. While President Wilson was striving hard to maintain America's posture as a neutral country, he was also transporting war supplies to enemies of Germany. So Germany's attack on American submarines to England was expected, and after that America cannot but enter into the war. The economic reasons for America's entry into the war are that, the new found capitalist form of economy in America needed markets. It needed markets much larger than the local domestic market, and in essence the war was a way to expand the horizons of American capitalism.

The American emergences as a global player had a profound effect on the American dream, as it highlighted to the world the possibilities this nation offered. Here was a country which has a shorter history than most other European nations and has a population which mainly constitutes of immigrants. Yet it has, against all the odds, grown more powerful than any other powers of the Western world. This, in a way, first sowed the seeds of the American dream which would later grow to engulf the whole world. The World War I particularly impacts the second question of our class discussions which is ' Can the individual's pursuit of the Dream be harmonized with the claims of the state? '. This is because this is the first time the state's political

policies (entry into the war) culminated with individual interests (the capitalists).