

The american dream in death of a salesman essay sample

[Experience](#), [Failure](#)



One of the main themes in the play *Death of a Salesman* is the American Dream. The philosophy of the American Dream originated in the early twentieth century when many immigrants came to America in search of economic opportunities and a better life. The protagonist, Willy, thinks that to achieve the American Dream, one needs to be likeable and have a good personality. In reality, the keys to success in America are hard work and diligence. Willy however, fails to see this, thus leading him up to fail in his business endeavors.

The American Dream is characterized by the materialistic and idealistic values of society. To fulfill the American Dream, one has to live a perfect life as a hardworking and successful citizen. Throughout the novel, Willy strives fulfill the American Dream, but he never achieves his goal because he doesn't understand what is required to do so.

In believing that Willy only has his personality and appearance to sell himself, Willy is seen as heroic. Even after he fails as a salesman, Will feels compelled to persist, because a salesman only way of survival is to dream. After Willy's death, Charley says of Willy that, " he's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine. And when they stop smiling back,- that's an earthquake. ... A salesman is got to dream boy. It comes with the territory." (138). Charley knows that the job of a salesman is hard, and that after much time and failure, his smile and his shoeshine fade. In this play, the American Dream is seen as the antagonist because it leads to Willy's deterioration, insanity, and destruction.