

# The american dream



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

1. Give an outline of how the American Dream is interpreted in texts 2, 3 and 4. In text 2, by Arnold Schwarzenegger, the American Dream is interpreted as America being the place you would have to go, if you want your dreams to become reality. All it requires is hard work and determination, and you have to get involved with the nation, meaning that you have to learn the language, participate in political processes and not only take what America has to offer, but also give something back to the country. According to Schwarzenegger you can succeed beyond your wildest imagination if you just fulfill these demands. In text 3, the author, Anya Kamenetz, claims that the “ old American Dream” is, if not dead, then at least wounded.

The old American Dream was all about having a lifetime of job security, a constantly rising standard of living, and a bunch of materialistic items. Due to a poll in USA Today, that shows that Americans are more pessimistic about their lives than at any time in the past half-century, Kamenetz states that the “ new American Dream” has different values. According to Kamenetz, the values of the new American Dream is time to take care of one’s family and one’s health, to be involved in one’s community, and to “ have a life”. She also says the young Americans seem to be calling out for more government solutions, than the older generation.

Solutions that can help restore the social safety net in America and control the rising costs. In text 4, the author, David Wallechinsky questions the possibility of the “ traditional American Dream”, which is based on the belief that hardworking citizens can live a decent life without worries. Wallechinsky says that many average Americans are struggling to pay their expenses, and have to go into debt, just so their children can go to college. According to a

survey, three-quarters of the middle-class respondents surveyed say they believe that their financial destiny is in their own hands and it is their own responsibility. Yet, Wallechinsky says that many Americans are downsizing their dreams, due to the rising costs, declining wages, credit-card debt and diminished benefits.

2. Compare language, tone and style in texts 1 and 2. The tone and style in text 1 is far more objective than the tone and style in text 2, which is not surprising when you compare the 2 sources. The first text is from the Library of Congress and the second text is by Arnold Schwarzenegger. Arnold Schwarzenegger is a former movie star, and therefore it is likely that his statements are more subjective than statements from the Library of Congress, which is a government institution. The second text also has a touch of the spoken language, kind of like it was an interview, whereas the first text seems to be the words of the written language, seeing that it uses a far more formal language.

3. Taking your starting point in one of the texts, argue for your own attitude to the American Dream. I have chosen to take my starting point in text number 1, because it seems reasonably objective, and I believe that an objective description of the term gives me a better opportunity to interpret the meaning of the term in my own way. Also the text covers different aspects of the American dream which I actually agree with. According to the text, the term started out as America being the "Promised Land", where every man could succeed, regardless of his fortuitous circumstances of birth and position, if only he had the capability and abilities.

Later on, it became a pursuit of material prosperity, where people worked more hours to be able to buy bigger homes and cars. Now it seems the “Dream” is changing yet again, and people are becoming less focused on their income and the importance of spending time with loved ones appears to be growing. In my opinion, The American Dream is hard to define as an actual term, because it seems like the meaning of it keeps changing in step with the condition of society - as we also can extract from the text.

It also seems like “ the grass is always greener on the other side”. When people lived in hierarchy, the lower classes wished for a place with no social order. When people got political influence, they started wishing for more money and materialistic items. Now, when most people have decent wages, they wish for more time to spend with their families. Who knows what the American Dream might be in a hundred years or perhaps just in a few decades? I can't tell, but I do believe that “ the American Dream” expresses a vision of a richer and improved life, whatever it may be in the present time.