

# DISCUSSION ON THE AMERICAN DREAM

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

### PREPARATION:

- Assign Roles: Divide students into groups of 3–5. Each group is assigned one role.
- Preparation Tasks for Students:
  - Research the assigned role on the internet, using the profiles and suggested topics .
  - Develop 2–3 key arguments supporting their role’s position on the statement.
  - Prepare rebuttals to counter the perspectives of other groups.
- Room Setup:
  - Arrange desks or chairs in a circle or U-shape for an open discussion format.
  - Provide name tags or table markers identifying each group’s role for clarity.

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

#### 1. Introduction

- Explain the discussion topic: "The American Dream is accessible to everyone. Do you agree or disagree?"
- Emphasize the goal: groups will represent their assigned role, supporting or opposing the statement based on their character's perspective.
- Outline the structure of the activity:
  - Opening Statements: Each group presents their perspective (2–3 minutes per group).
  - Open Discussion: Groups debate, respond to one another, and defend their positions.
  - Closing Statements: Each group summarizes their argument (1–2 minutes per group).

#### 2. Role Clarification

- Allow groups to briefly introduce their character to the class (e.g., "We represent a modern immigrant who believes..."). This ensures everyone understands the different perspectives.

#### 3. Opening Statements

- Each group delivers a prepared opening statement from their character's perspective.
- Encourage clarity and use of evidence (e.g., historical examples, statistics, anecdotes).

#### 4. Open Discussion

- Facilitate an open debate where groups can:
  - Respond to other groups' arguments.
  - Present counterarguments or rebuttals.
  - Ask questions or challenge the claims of others.
- As the teacher, moderate to:
  - Ensure all groups participate equally.
  - Keep the discussion respectful and on-topic.
  - Pose follow-up questions if the discussion stalls (e.g., "How would your character respond to the idea that systemic racism is a barrier?").

# DISCUSSION ON THE AMERICAN DREAM

## 5. Closing Statements

- Each group gives a short summary of their position, incorporating counter-arguments or insights gained during the debate.

## 6. Debrief

- Step out of character. Discuss as a class:
  - What new perspectives did you learn?
  - Did this activity change your view of the American Dream?
  - Which arguments were most convincing, and why?
- Final question: What do you personally think - Is the American Dream accessible to everyone?

## FOLLOW-UP ASSIGNMENT (OPTIONAL)

Ask students to write a reflective essay on the statement. The essay should include their own perspective, the role they played, and how the discussion influenced their point of view.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

This activity helps students to critically analyze the concept of the American Dream from multiple perspectives. They will also learn to connect historical context to contemporary debates about opportunity, equality, and systemic challenges.



## HOW TO BOOK THE PRESENTATION:

Wenn Sie sich für eine Präsentation oder einen Workshop interessieren, freuen wir uns über Ihre schriftliche Anmeldung. Nutzen Sie dazu ganz bequem unser **Online-Formular** oder schicken Sie uns eine **E-Mail an [school@daz.org](mailto:school@daz.org)**!

# MODERN IMMIGRANT

## ROLE PROFILE: MODERN IMMIGRANT (OPTIMISTIC ENTREPRENEUR)

You are Rajesh Patel, a software engineer from India. After graduating with a degree in computer science, you moved to Silicon Valley on an H-1B visa. Although the transition to a new country was challenging, your skills and determination allowed you to found a small tech start-up. After years of hard work, your company is thriving, and you've achieved financial stability. You believe that opportunities exist for those willing to work for them, but you are also aware of the difficulties faced by others in your community.



### Your opinion on the statement:

The American Dream is achievable with hard work, determination, and access to opportunities. Your success in Silicon Valley demonstrates that the U.S. provides pathways to success for those willing to seize them.

### Your Task

- Research the H-1B visa program and how it enables immigrants to work in the U.S.
- Identify 2–3 examples of successful immigrants in technology or other industries to help your argumentation.
- Think about challenges immigrants face, such as language barriers or discrimination, and how those may be overcome.
- Prepare an opening statement (1 minute) that explains your perspective on the discussion topic and supports it with examples or data.
- Anticipate arguments from other perspectives (e.g., immigrants who struggle, activists who highlight systemic barriers).

# HISTORICAL FIGURE

## ROLE PROFILE: HISTORICAL FIGURE (GOLD RUSH PROSPECTOR)

You are John Walker, a farmer from Missouri who moved to California during the 1850s Gold Rush. Life on your farm was hard, and you decided to risk everything to seek fortune in the West. After months of prospecting, you struck gold, enabling you to buy land and establish a prosperous farm. You attribute your success to hard work and taking risks, but you've also seen others fail despite their efforts.



### Your opinion on the statement:

The Gold Rush showed that anyone could change their life through risk-taking, hard work, and perseverance. Your story proves that wealth and success are attainable in America.

### Your Task

- Research the California Gold Rush, including its impact on individuals and the U.S. economy.
- Find stories of both successful and unsuccessful gold prospectors.
- Reflect on the role of risk-taking and luck in achieving success.
- Write an opening statement (1 minute) describing your experience and why you believe the American Dream may or may not be attainable for everyone.
- Be ready to challenge arguments about systemic barriers or inequality using your personal story.



# POLITICAL LEADER

## ROLE PROFILE: POLITICAL LEADER (OPTIMISTIC SENATOR)

You are Senator Marc Johnson, a U.S. politician who has spent years advocating for education reform and job creation programs. You believe that expanding access to education and entrepreneurship opportunities can help individuals achieve their dreams. However, you are aware that challenges like economic inequality and systemic discrimination still exist, and you are working to address them through policy.



### Your opinion on the statement:

Opportunities are expanding through education reforms, small business support, and government programs. While challenges exist, with the right policies, the American Dream is achievable for anyone.

### Your Task

- Research government programs designed to support education of those in need.
- Identify examples of people who have benefited from such programs.
- Reflect on areas where more progress is needed to make opportunities accessible to everyone.
- Draft an opening statement (1 minute) highlighting the importance of education and government initiatives in achieving the American Dream.
- Prepare responses to potential counterarguments (e.g., systemic barriers, lack of equity).



# MODERN IMMIGRANT

## ROLE PROFILE: MODERN IMMIGRANT (STRUGGLING WORKER)

You are Ana Martinez, a construction worker from Honduras who immigrated to the U.S. seeking a better life. Despite working long hours in physically demanding jobs, you find it difficult to support your family. Your qualifications from your home country are not recognized, and you've experienced discrimination. While you admire those who succeed, you feel the system often prevents people like you from achieving their goals.



### Your opinion on the statement:

The system is stacked against immigrants like you who work hard but face discrimination, low wages, and lack of recognition for skills. The American Dream is far from accessible for everyone.

### Your Task

- Research challenges faced by immigrant workers, such as wage gaps, unsafe working conditions, or lack of recognition for qualifications.
- Find statistics or examples highlighting systemic barriers to success for immigrants.
- Reflect on how these barriers have affected your character's ability to achieve their goals.
- Write an opening statement (1 minute) explaining your experience and why the American Dream may or may not be realistic.
- Prepare rebuttals to perspectives suggesting that hard work alone is enough for success.



# HISTORICAL FIGURE

## ROLE PROFILE: HISTORICAL FIGURE (CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER)

You are Ella Robinson, a civil rights leader from the 1960s. You've marched for desegregation, equal voting rights, and racial equality, alongside figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and countless others fighting for justice. You've witnessed firsthand the injustices of segregation, discriminatory laws, and economic disparities that have kept African Americans and other marginalized communities from accessing equal opportunities.



### Your opinion on the statement:

The promise of equality and opportunity remains unfulfilled due to systemic racism and discrimination. Progress has been made, but the American Dream is still inaccessible for many.

### Your Task

- Research key events of the Civil Rights Movement and their impact on racial equality.
- Find examples of both progress and ongoing challenges in achieving equal opportunities.
- Reflect on how systemic racism and discrimination have shaped your character's views.
- Draft an opening statement (1 minute) describing your experiences and whether the American Dream feels attainable.
- Be prepared to respond to arguments suggesting that equality has already been achieved.



# HISTORICAL FIGURE

## ROLE PROFILE: DISILLUSIONED SMALL FARMER (ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE)

You are James Whitaker, a small farmer from the rural Midwest during the 1930s Great Depression. You inherited your family's farm and worked tirelessly to maintain it. However, economic collapse, drought, and falling crop prices have pushed you deep into debt. While you've always believed in the American Dream—success through hard work—you've watched wealth concentrate in the hands of big landowners and corporations while small farmers like you struggle to survive.



### Your opinion on the statement:

The American Dream is not accessible to everyone. Hard work alone is not enough when economic systems favor the wealthy, and ordinary people face forces beyond their control, like debt, economic downturns, and lack of systemic support.

### Your Task

- Research key events of the Great Depression and their impact on small farmers, such as the Dust Bowl, falling crop prices, and foreclosures.
- Find examples of small farmers who faced economic ruin and compare them to wealthier landowners or corporations who benefited during this time.
- Reflect on how economic systems and external forces, like the economy and nature, have shaped your character's views on the American Dream.
- Draft an opening statement (1 minute) that introduces your experiences and explains whether you believe the American Dream is truly attainable for everyone.
- Be prepared to respond to arguments suggesting that hard work and determination alone can lead to success. Use your story and the challenges you've faced as evidence.

