

American Literature Essay Test

Directions: In a 2-3 page well-constructed, thoughtful essay, synthesize the information that was presented in class discussion, student presentations, in the articles we read, and from your own personal experience, by responding to the following prompt:

Question: What is the American Dream, how has this ideal been constructed and normalized in the American consciousness, and is this dream achievable?

Using **Concrete Details** from the articles and **Commentaries** to justify your points...

- define the American Dream and all of the subcategories that are essential to this notion
 - What is success in this country?
 - Whose definition is it?
 - Who conforms to it?
 - Why is it important?
- illustrate the roots of this ideal –
 - **Where** do the expectations come from?
 - Historically? (Puritan work ethic, events in history?)
 - Contemporary times? (media, celebrity, technology)
 - **Why** do people feel the need to conform to this ideal?
 - How are people convinced?
 - Why do individuals adhere to these ideals?
- Illustrate the reality of these ideals -
 - What are the inherent contradictions in these ideals?
 - Are these ideals achievable? (give examples from articles, anecdotes)
 - What is the reality of contemporary American Society?

Use the following articles from class to find CDs, and offer your own unique perspective on these ideas and what we have read and discussed:

Illegally in US, & Never a day off at Wal-Mart

US works More, for Less

American Dream: Lost & Found

TV: A Special Section

TV Statistics

Troubletown Satires

Life magazines & student presentations

Violence in America

Advertisements

Dove Campaign for Real Beauty

Masculinity in Advertising: GI Joe Article

American Mythologies

Graphic Organizer for a Five-Paragraph Essay

Topic:

<p>Paragraph 1 Introduction</p>	<p>Hook:</p> <p>Thesis statement:</p>
<p>Paragraph 2 Body</p> <p>Use evidence</p>	<p>Topic sentence:</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>
<p>Paragraph 3 Body</p> <p>Use evidence</p>	<p>Topic sentence:</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>
<p>Paragraph 4 Body</p> <p>Use evidence from current events.</p>	<p>Topic sentence:</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>
<p>Paragraph 5 Conclusion</p>	<p>Reworded thesis:</p> <p>Summary:</p>