

Grade 11, Unit 1: The American Dream

Timeline

September 8 – October 24 (28 days)
EA 1: Weeks 1 – 4; EA 2: Weeks 4 – 6

Unit Goals

- To understand and define complex concepts such as the American Dream.
- To identify and synthesize a variety of perspectives.
- To analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of arguments.
- To analyze representative texts from the American experience.

Embedded Assessments

Embedded Assessment 1: Writing a Definition Essay

Write a multi-paragraph essay that defines your interpretation of what it means to be an American. This essay should use the strategies of definition and different perspectives from the unit to help you develop a complex and thoughtful definition. If possible, incorporate an iconic image into your essay.

Embedded Assessment 2: Synthesizing the American Dream

Synthesize at least three to five sources and your own observations to defend, challenge, or qualify the statement that America still provides access to the American Dream. This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources (3-5) into a coherent, well-written argumentative essay. Your argument should be central; the sources and your observations should support this argument.

Essential Questions

What is the “American Dream”? ❖ How do writers use the strategies of definition to define a concept?

Common Core Focus Standards

RI.11.12.1; RI.11-12.5; RI.11-12.9; W.11-12.1; W.11-12.2

Language, Writer’s Craft, and Grammar

hyphen 1.3, 1.7 • quotations for effect 1.5 • using direct quotes 1.6 • quoting original sources 1.7 • transitions 1.10, 1.12
diction and parallelism 1.13, 1.16, 1.17

Academic Vocabulary (Tier 2)

primary source • defend • structure • challenge • qualify

Literary Terms (Tier 3)

exemplification • imagery • personification • synecdoche

Resources for Differentiation

See my.psd401.net > Curriculum Links > Curriculum Resources > Literacy > Secondary > Curriculum Maps
for resources to support and extend.

Common Core Focus Standards

RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

RI.11-12.9 Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.11-12.2 Write informative / explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Resources to Support

EA 1 Assignment: Write a multi-paragraph essay that defines your interpretation of what it means to be an American. This essay should use one strategy of definition (negation, function, exemplification, classification) and more than one perspective from the unit to help you develop a thoughtful definition. Try to incorporate an iconic image into your essay.

EA 1 Process Ideas:

- Ask students to state what authors argue in this unit about what it means to be an American. Use these as prewriting for the essay.

EA 2 Assignment: Your assignment is to synthesize three sources (one can be your own observation) to defend or challenge the statement that America still provides access to the American Dream. Integrate three sources into a clear, well-written argumentative essay. Sources should support a focused argument.

EA 2 Process Ideas:

- Provide an outline for the argument for students.

Resources to Extend

EA 1 Assignment: Write a multi-paragraph essay that defines your interpretation of what it means to be an American. This essay should use three strategies of definition (negation, function, exemplification, classification) and diverse perspectives from the unit to help you develop a complex and thoughtful definition. Be sure to incorporate an iconic image into your essay.

EA 1 Process Ideas:

- Ask students to conduct outside research on iconic American images to integrate into their essays.

EA 2 Assignment: Your assignment is to synthesize four to five sources (bringing in additional research) to defend, challenge, or qualify the statement that America still provides access to the American Dream. Integrate your sources into a coherent, well-written argumentative essay.

EA 2 Process Ideas:

- Ask students to find additional texts from a range of genres (narrative, explanatory, and argumentation) on the theme.

