What is the American Dream?

10th Honors/ Gifted English
Dream Unit
L. Douglas

American Dream phrase

- Historian and writer James Truslow
 Adams coined the phrase in 1931
- "The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement."

Statue of Liberty

- The Statue of Liberty is the idyllic symbol of the American Dream.
- A poem by Emma Lazarus is engraved on the statue's pedestal.
- "Give me your tired, your poor,/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"
- This has inspired millions of immigrants to come to America leaving behind their native countries.

Declaration of Independence

- The dream of coming to America and working hard to achieve anything a person wanted had its roots in the Declaration of Independence.
- "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Leave it to Beaver

- This classic 1950s TV show is the epitome of the American dream
 - Hard working
 - Clean cut and well-liked
 - Happy nuclear family
 - One income
 - Suburban house
 - Two children
 - Safe, public schools
 - Expanding prosperity
 - Children would have a better future than their parents



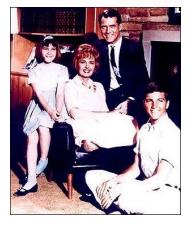
Other American Dreams

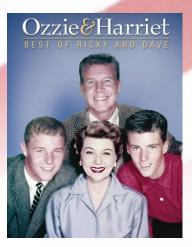
TV shows

- The Brady Bunch
- Ozzie and Harriet
- The Donna Reed Show
- My Three Sons
- The Bill Cosby Show











Death of a Salesman

What happens when the dream isn't perfect?

- A corrupted American Dream is presented in Miller's play.
- Willy struggles to support his family on his one salary.
- He is obsessed with being successful and well-liked.
- Biff was popular, but he doesn't know who he is. He wants to "find himself" at age 34.
- Happy is boastful and competitive and also unsatisfied with life.
- What happened to this family to make them like they are?

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