



**Text A**

**The American Dream**

The American Dream is a national ethos of the United States in which freedom includes a promise of the possibility of prosperity and success. In the definition of the American Dream by James Truslow Adams in 1931, “life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” regardless of social class and circumstances of birth.

The American Dream took form with the landing of the first Puritan settlers on the American shores. In 1620 a hundred men and women known to history as the “Pilgrim Fathers” came to the Massachusetts shores on board the Mayflower. They were a group of Puritans escaping religious persecution in England. To the eyes of the Pilgrim Fathers – and to those who soon followed them – the new continent, thanks to its luxuriant nature and immense spaces, appeared as a new-found earthly Paradise which sin had not yet contaminated. Here was the possibility to create a new world, which would become an idyllic land of ease, peace and plenty. It was a second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrous in the Old World.

Such a dream - the hope of an ideal society formed of equal men living in harmony and freedom, - has always been one of the driving forces of American civilization: it is rooted in the United States Declaration of Independence, which proclaims that “all men are created equal” and that they are “endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable Rights” including “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”; it also inspired the Bill of Rights, Lincoln’s struggle against slavery, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s “new frontier”, a term used to describe the challenges facing the United States.

**1 Read text A and answer these questions.**

1. How can the “American Dream” be defined?.....
2. When did the American Dream start?.....
3. Who were the Pilgrim Fathers? .....
4. How did the new continent appear to their eyes. ....
5. What was their hope? .....
6. Why can the American Dream be described as one of the driving forces of American civilization?  
.....

## Text B

### The American Dream: Dead or Alive?

Posted by Tom Purcell

The American Dream is dead – for many native-born Americans, anyhow.

You remember the American dream. It was the hope that everyone can get ahead in America, that your kids will attain more prosperity than you. It was the certitude that in America, anyone is free, with a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The dream was alive and well when I was a kid in the 70s. Despite a rough economic patch, most everyone I ever knew dreamed of starting his or her own business.

My mother had a million ideas and tried many of them. My father regretted not buying out his uncle's hardware store – he liked his job and worked hard, but never attained the freedom of the self-made man.

I started my own business as soon as I could mow lawns. By my junior year in high school, I was making considerable money – and I had four employees – rebuilding stone retaining walls. America's restless, hopeful entrepreneurial spirit made our country great – but it is dying now. It is made clear by the growing list of people who expect the president, through some government program, to hand them their "American Dream". Though presidents like to promise such things, not one president ever delivered it – not one president ever can or will.

The American dream can be pursued only by the individual and through sheer initiative – what we call the American spirit.

That spirit is alive and well – though not so much among native-born Americans.

No, the American spirit lives in the hearts of immigrants, who still come here, legally, to make a better life.

The best of them ask nothing from our government – they don't want handouts. They want nothing more than the opportunity to work hard

and make their own way.

I have met many such fellows

I know one, an Irishman, who came from a small Irish village to work in America as a butler. He married and started a family. To improve his income, he began selling insurance. By his 40th birthday, he had raised the capital to start his own highly successful Irish pub – one that afforded him a fantastic living.

I knew two brothers from India who owned a convenience store and a sandwich shop. The older brother had been a professor at a technical school in his homeland.

When he made to America, he had trouble finding similar work. He didn't complain. He took whatever job he could – busboy, cook, janitor – and saved every penny. He used his savings to bring his wife here, and then, one at a time, his five siblings.

He and his brother eventually saved enough to buy the convenience store, then a motel. He was in his late 50s when I met him. Both of his American-born sons were doctors.

His property had soared in value over the years. He was offered \$6 million for the land on which his convenience store sat. He still makes sandwiches every day.

I met another guy who had been born in Beirut, Lebanon, where his father had two businesses and his family was well off. Then civil war tore their country apart. His family lived in a bombed-out building for three years before they were able to make their way to America.

When he arrived, broke, he took a job as a janitor. His siblings took on menial work. The family saved \$20,000 and used the money to open a bakery. He is now the president of a bakery that employs more than 150. You see, the American Dream is alive and well – just not so much among native-born Americans who want some politicians or government program to make their dream happen for them.

#### 2 Read text B and answer the question.

1. Is the American Dream still alive? What is the opinion expressed by the author of the article?

#### 3 Write a summary of the article.

#### 4 Class discussion.

- After World War II the Italian people worked hard to give their children and future generations a better life than they had. Do you think their dream has come true?