

Module 8: Voices of Courage During Modernism

Topic 5 Content: The New American Dream

Introduction

The New American Dream

The American Dream

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James Truslow Adams coined the phrase "American dream" throughout the pages of a book titled *The Epic of America*. He said: "It was not until there emerged a profound sense that America had *lost* something that the term was actually coined. What was it that folks in the Depression felt they had lost? Perhaps the same things that people still list when describing the American Dream today: individual freedom, social justice, the ability to participate in the consumer economy, and the hope of a better place for one's children."

How much has Adams's definition of the American Dream evolved since the Great Depression? Click on the shaded areas of the image to examine contemporary variations of the American Dream.



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Social Mobility?

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Social Mobility?

Is the American Dream all about wanting to live a better life than your parents or ensuring your children have a better life than you had? Many people work hard to do just that. Is it about the hope that you can do anything you set your mind to no matter where you come from?

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Consumerism?

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Is the American Dream all about consumerism, being able to buy what you want when you want it? For some people, achieving immense personal wealth and the social status that accompanies it is certainly a goal they strive to achieve.

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Personal Freedom?

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Personal Freedom?

Is the dream all about personal freedom, living the life you want the way you want? As evident by continual battles for equality within the United States, this is still a dream for many.

The slide features a collage of diverse people, including a woman in a graduation cap, a man in a suit, a woman in a hat, and a man and woman in the foreground. An American flag is also visible. A red 'X' icon is in the top right corner of the text box.

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