

American Myth Essay

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American Myth Essay Assignment

Write an essay that describes your personal experience with a myth of the American Dream. In this context, a “myth” should be thought of as a recurrent theme, belief, or assumption related to the American dream that the country struggles to realize.

A famous example of this would be Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech where he challenges America to live up to its promise that “All men are created equal.” He reflects on the inherent righteousness of this belief and describes his disenfranchisement alongside that of African Americans who have waited for centuries to see this promise upheld. MLK appeals to our emotions with anecdotes and analogies, and he reasons with the audience using examples from history and sacred texts to persuade us that his argument is logically and ethically sound.

This assignment will help you to practice:

- applying pathos using narrative techniques you developed writing the Profile essay;
- using logos (presenting a logical case for your opinions using appropriate evidence and reasoning to support your argument);
- developing ethos (presenting a clear and compelling authorial voice that instills trust by using credible sources and relating to ethical principles)
- refining your grasp of writing a standard [argumentative academic essay](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/argumentative_essays.htm) 
 [\(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/argumentative_essays.htm](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/argumentative_essays.htm) ; and
- identifying and addressing outside perspectives that differ from your opinion and/or experiences.

Length:

1000-1250 words (4-5 double-spaced pages, 12-point font, 1” margins); create a title using “my,” “me,” or “I” that announces both your topic and purpose; for instance, “What Reality TV Taught Me About American Meritocracy,” “Where’s Our Wakanda? Why *Black Panther* Inspires My Dreams for American Social Justice,” “I Didn’t Pull Myself Up by The Bootstraps and Neither Did You,” or “Why My American Dream Doesn’t Include a Car, Kids, or Buying a House.”

Prompt:



Think about how American ideals regarding work, family, relationships, justice, safety, equality, merit, individualism, and opportunity have influenced your life and perspectives about the American dream.

Choose ONE American ideal, describe how it's viewed by others, and make an arguable claim (thesis statement) about it. Use evidence from class readings or elsewhere, relevant personal experiences, cultural artifacts (movies, stories, books, songs, memes, legends, etc.), and logical reasoning to support your claim. Persuade your readers to appreciate and/or agree with your opinions while acknowledging alternative views and convincing them that your view is the most sensible.

Objective:

To write an argumentative essay that provides a cultural critique of ONE aspect of the American dream, explores your personal experiences with it, and critiques the perspectives of others who might support or disagree with your opinion.

Guidelines:

- Use specific examples from texts, personal experience, cultural artifacts, and class discussions to illustrate your point. These may be quotes, statistics, facts, anecdotes, analogies, scenes, characters, etc. (Be sure to cite all of your sources using [MLA](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)  [\(\[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html\]\(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html\)\)](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html) or [APA](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html)  [\(\[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html\]\(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html\)\)](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html) style)
- SHOW your audience your intended meaning rather than telling them what to see.
- Revise your paper after you've reflected on what you've said:
 - think about your main idea and how you've articulated it for readers; and
 - read aloud to catch word choice and sentence style problems.

Proofread for typos, spelling, and punctuation errors once you've completed ALL revisions

Samples of Past Student Essays

[Avengers Idealist War](#)

[Shooting Holes in the American Dream_Myth Essay](#)

[I Won't Make More than My Parents and Neither Will You_American Myth Essay \(Final\)](#)

Points 100

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Dec 13, 2022	Everyone	-	-

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