

Terms/idiom/Proverbs: **sth = something; sb = somebody.

[see <http://eflsuccess.com/common/> for common abbreviations and punctuation names]

initiative = the ability to make decisions and take action without waiting for someone to tell you what to do

opportunities = chances

discrimination (discriminated) = unfair treatment based on race/gender/etc.

the Golden Rule = "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" or "treat other people the way you want others to treat you"; this is a quote from Jesus in the Bible (Matthew 7:12), and for the first 200+ years of American history, every school child memorized this "Golden Rule." (also see Leviticus 19:18: "love your neighbor as yourself")

heritage = traditional customs or values

mobility = the ability to move easily from one job, area, or social class to another

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (oecd.org)

Phrases about freedom:

1. The American Dream. Although this is defined in various ways, for many it's the idea that, in America, **anyone who works hard can achieve economic success**.
2. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These human rights were emphasized in America's Declaration of Independence in 1776.
3. We shall overcome. This is the title of a song that became a theme for African-Americans during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. It referred to overcoming discrimination and winning freedom for minorities.

Traditionally, those who believe in "the American Dream" have assumed two things about achieving their goals in life. *First*, each person must be **free to pursue success**. Many believe that the purpose of government is to guarantee this freedom. Education and business are not supposed to create any barriers to this freedom. *Second*, each person must **take initiative to use that freedom**. In other words, the government, business, and education give us opportunities, but we have to become successful through our own effort.

Since many countries have nobility, "caste" or other systems that keep certain families rich and powerful while keeping common workers poor, the hope of *the American Dream* has attracted immigrants since America began.

America's Declaration of Independence (1776) proclaims that God created all people equal, but in practice, Americans have often discriminated against minorities and immigrants, blocking their road to success. In the 1960s, the civil rights movement and then the women's movement focused directly on this problem. Protestors sang "We shall overcome," and they really did overcome much of the discrimination in laws, policies, and personal behavior. These protest movements affirmed the core values of American culture. Protesters demanded freedom to make successes of themselves. They protested against a system in which their hard work was not rewarded fairly.

Some say the American Dream suffers as Americans drift from belief in "the Golden Rule" and other parts of their Christian heritage. In 2021, US Professors Rank and Eppard (cf [The Guardian](#) 2021 Mar) declared that the American Dream "is broken," citing research that indicates "the United States has far less mobility and equality of opportunity today than the European Union or other OECD countries." One can debate whether the American Dream is still possible, but countless people who were born into poverty certainly hope it is, and work to pursue success in the United States.

Idioms used in the following questions:

get a raw deal = receive unfair treatment

put your foot down = firmly refuse; take strong action to stop someone from doing something

Questions:

1. Finish this sentence: I think everyone should have **freedom from** (something negative). Why? (Examples: discrimination, poverty, verbal abuse, pressure in a job, annoying colleagues, secondhand smoke, etc.)
2. Finish this sentence: I think everyone should have the **freedom to** (do something, or **have** something). Why? (Examples: travel around the world without a visa, live anywhere they want, own a gun, have more than 2 children, have free education until 22 years old, have free medical care, fire their boss or teacher, etc.)

3. Do you believe “the American Dream” is alive or is “broken”? Explain.
4. If you don’t mind, please share your opinion about whether both men and women in your home country have equal opportunities for career success. Also, give 1-2 examples that influence your opinion.
5. Do you think women in America today are just as free as men to succeed in their career, or do you think they are still getting a raw deal? Give 1-2 examples that influence your opinion. Do America’s minorities have the same opportunities as the “white” majority? Explain.
6. Share about one time when you put your foot down (with your boss, colleague, friend, family member, neighbor, or other person). Why did you put your foot down in that situation, and what was the result?
7. Explain “the Golden Rule” in your own words. Also, give 1-2 ways you want others to treat you, and why those things are so important to you.

Bonus phrase: The land of the free and the home of the brave. This is the last part of America’s national anthem. It was written after a battle in the War of 1812, when America defeated England’s attempt to re-establish control of America.

In what ways do you think America is “the land of the free and the home of the brave”? Tell us about a phrase from your national anthem that describes a core value in your country.

====Lower English level====
on next page

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mobility = the ability to move easily from one job, area, or social class to another

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People who believe in "the American Dream" assume two things about achieving life goals. *First*, each person must be **free to pursue success**. Government, education and business are not supposed to create any barriers to this freedom. *Second*, each person must **choose to use that freedom**. In other words, the laws, schools and jobs give us opportunities, but we must work hard to become successful.

In many countries, the rich get richer while the poor have few opportunities. Therefore, the hope of *the American Dream* has attracted immigrants since America began.

America's Declaration of Independence (1776) proclaims that God created all people equal. However, discrimination against minorities and immigrants has often blocked their success. In the 1960s, the civil rights movement and the women's movement focused on this problem. Protestors sang "We shall overcome," and they really did overcome much of the discrimination in laws, policies, and personal behavior. These protest movements affirmed core American values, such as "hard work should be rewarded with success."

Some say the American Dream suffers as Americans drift from belief in "the Golden Rule" and other Christian values. In 2021, two US Professors reported that "the US has far less mobility and equality" than some European countries (cf [The Guardian](#) 2021 Mar). Whether or not the American Dream is still possible, countless poor people certainly hope it is, and work to pursue success in the United States.

Questions:

Content questions:

- A. What year was the Declaration of Independence written?
 - B. What two things do people assume about achieving life goals? (1) free to _____; (2) choose _____
 - C. Why does the American Dream attract immigrants?
 - D. What two 1960s movements focused on the problem of discrimination?
 - E. What is one Christian value that Americans have drifted from?
1. Finish this sentence: I think everyone should have the **freedom to (do something, or have something)**. Why? (Examples: travel around the world without a visa, live anywhere they want, own a gun, have more than 2 children, have free education until 22 years old, have free medical care, fire their boss or teacher, etc.)
 2. If you don't mind, please share your opinion about whether both men and women in your home country have equal opportunities for career success. Also, give 1-2 examples that influence your opinion.
 3. Read the last paragraph again. Do you believe "the American Dream" is still possible? Explain.
 4. Explain "the Golden Rule" in your own words. Also, give 1-2 ways you want others to treat you, and why those things are so important to you.
 5. Talk about ways that American women and men (or minorities) are, or are not, equally free to pursue success today. Give 1-2 examples that influence your opinion.

Bonus phrase: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These human rights were emphasized in America's Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Do you agree that these three are all "human rights"? Which of the three is most important to you? Explain.

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These lessons were created or adapted by the staff of International Friendship Ministries, P.O. Box 12504, Columbia SC 29211; ifmusa.org; info@ifmusa.org. IFM is grateful to Kathy Williams for most of the original work. Some lessons were adapted from EFLsuccess.com (with permission). IFM makes these lessons available to our participants, but this does not imply our consent for others to publish these lessons online or in print without permission.

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