

# Exploring The American Dream

**AIM**

To explore the idea of the American Dream through the personal experiences and stories of immigrant communities.

**OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Develop interview questions related to a specific topic
- Conduct interview surveys in and outside the classroom
- Summarize and reflect on answers gathered through surveys
- Present findings in pairs/small groups to the class for discussion

**TARGET GROUP**

For the purposes of this lesson, the target group levels range from intermediate to advanced learners.

**LENGTH**

Two one-hour class periods

**Overview**

Students will analyze the meaning of an important cultural and historical term and develop a more complete understanding of it. Through interviews with individuals inside and outside the class, they will gain a broader perspective of the multiple meanings of the term and its impact on the culture of the United States.

**Activities**

**DAY 1**

**1. Making Meaning**

Ask students to write for five minutes on the meaning of the phrase “the American Dream,” then have them share their responses with a partner. Elicit responses from students and list answers on the board.

**2. Conducting a Survey**

Ask students to move around the classroom and interview 10 classmates on the meaning of “the American Dream.” Have students complete the interview chart and report back to their classmates in small groups.

**Conducting a Survey**

Question: What does “the American Dream” mean to you?

Name	Response
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

Discoveries:

Thoughts:

Reactions:

Questions:

### 3. Discussion Questions

In small groups or with a partner, ask students to discuss the following questions:

- How has “the American Dream” become known around the world?
- What was your understanding of this dream before coming here?
- How does this dream differ for different groups and individuals?
- How do people achieve “the American Dream” in their lifetimes?
- What are some challenges and obstacles to achieving the dream?
- What has been done to make the dream more accessible to everyone?

Ask students to write their own questions about “the American Dream” and move around the room to interview their classmates. Invite students to share their findings with the class. Ask them to write about their discoveries and thoughts for 10 minutes.

### Homework Assignment

Ask students to conduct a survey in the community using a blank survey chart. Have them develop a question that especially interests them regarding “the American Dream” and its implications. Ask students to prepare a short report on their findings to present to the class at the next meeting.

### Conducting a Survey

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Response
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

Discoveries:

Thoughts:

Reactions:

Questions:

## **DAY 2**

### **1. Presentation**

Have each student present their report on the survey findings to a partner, in small groups or to the class.

### **2. Discussion**

After presenting their findings, have students discuss and analyze them in small groups, then share their discoveries, thoughts, reactions and questions with the class.

### **Homework Assignment**

Ask students to write a summary of their surveys in class and in the community, along with an analysis on their findings.