

The American Dream (a worksheet)

Activity 1

Discuss with your partner.



1. Why do people immigrate to other countries?
2. Is immigration a positive or negative phenomenon?
3. Have you ever thought of moving to another country? Do you know who has?
4. What do you need to do in order to succeed in another country?
5. Which countries are popular immigrant destinations? Why?
6. What is "The American Dream"?

Activity 2

Julissa Arce is a best selling author who immigrated to the US. Watch a [video](#) about her American dream and answer the questions.

1. How did Julissa come to America?
2. What was her American Dream in the beginning?
3. What inspired her to write her book?
4. What does the word "immigrant" mean to her?
5. What does her charity do?
6. Has her American dream changed?
7. What's her next project?

Do you know about any other famous or successful immigrants who made it in America?

Activity 3

Read the story of another successful immigrant Thomas Peterffy and put the paragraphs into the correct order.

- A.** Thomas Peterffy was born in the basement of a Budapest hospital on Sept. 30, 1944. His mother had been moved there because of an air raid. After the war, Hungary became a satellite state. "We were basically prisoners there," he says. As a young man, Peterffy dreamed about being free from that prison--in America.
- B.** Peterffy managed to save \$200,000 and founded a company that pioneered electronic stock trades, executing them before the exchanges were even digitized. Afterwards, he began to concentrate on the sell side of the business, founding Interactive Brokers Group, which has a market cap of \$14 billion. Peterffy, 72, is now worth an estimated \$12.6 billion.
- C.** Indeed it was. He got a job as a draftsman in a surveying firm. When his firm bought a computer, "nobody knew how to program it, so I volunteered to try," he says. He caught on quickly and soon had a job as a programmer for a small Wall Street consulting firm, where he built trading models.
- D.** Instead, he left for the USA and came to New York City. He had no money and spoke no English. He had a single suitcase, which contained a change of clothes, a surveying handbook, a slide rule and a painting of an ancestor.
- E.** At the age of 20, he **hatched an escape plan**. At the time Hungarians were allowed short-term visas to visit family in West Germany, and **he took advantage of this**. When his visa expired, like millions who have immigrated to the U.S. illegally in recent years, he didn't go back home.
- F.** Peterffy went to Spanish Harlem, where other Hungarian immigrants had formed a small community, moving from one dingy apartment to another. He was happy, if not a bit afraid. "It was a big deal to leave home and my culture and my language," he says. "But I believed that in America, I could truly **reap what I sowed** and that the measure of a man was his ability and **determination to succeed**. This was the land of **boundless opportunity**."

Activity 4

Match the phrases and meanings. Use the previous activity to help you.

1. hatch an escape plan	A. to use a situation or opportunity to get what you want
2. take advantage of an opportunity	B. to make a plan, especially a secret plan
3. reap what you sow	C. opportunities without limits
4. determination to succeed	D. doing what you need to do to achieve what you want
5. boundless opportunity	E. to win as a result of something you did in the past

Activity 5

Read the text again and select True or False.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Peterffy started his company with borrowed money | T/F |
| 2. He founded two companies | T/F |
| 3. He needed his colleagues to teach him how to use a computer | T/F |
| 4. His first job was on Wall Street | T/F |
| 5. In New York, he found a community of his countrymen | T/F |
| 6. He felt very happy in America | T/F |

Activity 6

Discuss the questions with your partner.

1. Why is America considered to be the land of opportunities?
2. If we say that everyone can become rich if they work hard enough—does that mean that the poor are only too lazy?
3. Do you think the American dream is available to all Americans or are there boundaries and obstacles for some?
4. Why is it called “the American dream”? Wouldn't the same dream be possible in other countries?
5. What would your American Dream be?

