

# The American Dream

Jay Blanton, Heather Wicker and Brad Williams

December 4, 2001



## **Context:**

We will be teaching this six-week unit on “The American Dream” using various American literature texts. As this unit is somewhat modeled around the materials we will each be using in our student teaching, it will be taught beginning a few weeks into the second semester of the school year. We will be teaching tenth grade college prep students in the Gwinnett County school system. Our students are all in the college prep track, but they embrace different kinds of learning styles and the level of proficiency of our students may vary from low to high achievers. Though we are at three different schools, the context is largely the same: a predominantly conservative, middle-class, white community. The school’s population averages from two to four thousand students. There is some cultural diversity in these schools, but the students are roughly 80% white, with the remainder of the population being made up of all other racial/ethnic groups. The gender ratio is relatively even, with roughly 50% males and 50% females with approximately thirty students in each classroom.

## **Text:**

- Walt Whitman’s “I Hear America Singing”
- Langston Hughes’ “I, Too, Sing America”
- e. e. cummings’ “next to of course god america I”
- Louise Erdrich’s “Dear John Wayne”
- Martin Luther King, JR.’s “I have a Dream”
- F. S. Fitzgerald’s “Winter Dreams”
- John Steinbeck’s Of Mice and Men

The “American Dream” is a myth that has overtaken the United States of America from its very inception. Why do we desire to live the American Dream? Where do people

develop this longing to fulfill this dream? Do those who are born in this country have the same perspective on the American Dream as those who have immigrated here from other countries? Who formed these dreams? Did we decide what we want or did our parents instill these dreams in us? The unit that we have planned will address not only what the American Dream is, but how do we attain it and is it unattainable? Also, we will confront the issue of the American Dream as it is presented from various perspectives. There is no denying that race, class, sexual orientation, and gender all have an effect on how we perceive, pursue and attain the American Dream. In teaching this unit we will help to open the minds of our students to look at the dreams of Americans and to judge for themselves whether they will choose to believe that such a thing as The American Dream exists. Prior to the terrorist attacks on the United States of America on September 11, 2001, our students seemed to be living in their own dream world. Our students have never had to deal with the harsh realities of terrorism and war. Our students seemed to be growing up with their very own American Dreams that in reality were probably unattainable. Now that America has been jolted into the reality of uncertainty, we feel that it would be wise to ask our students to look at Americans from yesteryears and to judge for themselves whether American Dreams are realistic, or not.

Some students see the American Dream as having a house with a white picket fence, a SUV in the driveway, a golden retriever, a happy marriage, and 2.5 kids. Some other students see the American Dream as being able to live comfortably well into old age without being financially burdened. Some see a realistic American Dream as merely surviving. The question that we pose to our students is, "Can the American Dream happen in the America of today?" We have chosen text that will challenge our students to decide

for themselves what their definition of the American Dream was and is and how it can/cannot be attained. We will encourage our students to think critically about how different races, cultures, sexes, and classes experience the American Dream. By the end of our unit the students will be able to argue for, or against the attainability of the American Dream and they will be able to defend for themselves our reasoning for teaching this unit. They will also be able to define and defend their own American Dream. We want our students to come to know who they are based on their own privilege. We want to open the lines of communication with our students to help them realize the privilege that they have come from is what dictates how their future will turn out. We want our students to realize that, “class [is] more than just a question of money, that it shape[s] values, attitudes, social relations, and the biases that inform[] the way knowledge [is] given and received” (hooks, 1994). We want them to think critically about themselves and their heritages. As Joan Wink says, we want them to embrace critical thinking because it “calls us to name, to throw on the table, and then to provide a safe place where ALL can reflect on it, and begin to deconstruct it. Only after this can we take action and build a more just society for all.” Once we make sure that our students know who they are, where they come from, and what and why they believe as they do, then we can “read and write our real world” (Wink, 2000). After making sure that the students understand themselves and their heritage then they can begin to live their lives as critical pedagogues. They can begin to see critical thinking as a way of life.

We will begin our unit, on a Thursday, by introducing the concept of the American Dream to the students. We will give the students an Opinnionaire with statements about the American Dream that they have to respond to (see page 19). This exercise will help them

to think about their previous knowledge of the American Dream. They will also be presented with a scenario about a man who has the American Dream and loses it (see page 20). They must use their own reasoning to decide whether the dream is reattainable. As the students work through these exercises they will draw on previous knowledge they possess and then they will relate it to the current lesson. At the end of the unit the students will be able to reflect back on these statements to see how they have/have not changed their views and opinions of the American Dream. We will discuss the meaning of the phrases in the Opinionnaire and we will begin our discussion of the myths and realities of the American Dream. We will focus on the students' beliefs of the American Dream rather than the teachers' because we want to make sure that the students are validated for their own opinion, yet at the same time they are stretched to see other points of view. It is not important what the teacher calls "The American Dream," only what the student defines it as.

Because the tenth-grade year is such a crucial year in high school opposition the unit may present itself in the form of parents and administrators. We feel that once parents and administrators understand that we, as teachers, are not trying to undermine the dreams that parents have placed in their spirits, but instead we are trying to bolster their opinions, hoping that they can stand firm in their beliefs then they will understand why we have chosen to spend so much time on questioning the students' dreams.

We will begin our unit with "I Hear America Singing" by Walt Whitman. Whitman wrote this poem to show the hard working ethic of those that are "singing" the song of America. Whitman describes the worker as the "true American" in that the noises of his/her working are music that they make. Our discussion of the American Dream as

Whitman alludes to it will center on the imagery of the workers. Who is this America he speaks of?

Students should have learned by this point in the year what makes up a good discussion. Whenever we have planned whole-class or group discussion, our students already know how important it is to listen and to actually hear one another (hooks, 1994).

The second text that we will present to the class is Langston Hughes' "I, Too, Sing America." We have chosen this poem because it is a response to Walt Whitman's poem that we just finished. Hughes' poem is a very racially centered piece that challenges the common thoughts of his day by showing that he too, aside from his skin color, can attain great social heights. The poem is his way of saying that no matter what color we are, we can attain the American Dream. It is important for our student's well being that they learn that not all cultures see the American Dream in the same light. Some find the American Dream as racial equality, whereas others find it as ethnic cleansing. Our discussions around Hughes' poem are liable to bring forth a bit of tension in our classrooms, but without critically thinking, or throwing these ideas on the table, we will never be able to work through them.

Many of us want to act as if race doesn't matter, that we are here (in school) for what's interesting in the mind, that history doesn't matter even if you've been screwed over, or your parents were immigrants who have labored for forty years and have nothing to show for it. (hooks, 1994)

How untrue this statement is and what frustrations we could generate in our classrooms if we did not face the truth, openly and honestly. Some parents may find this lesson hard to accept, but it is their lack of equality thinking that causes them to think this way. They

have not laid their prejudices on the table to be labeled and dealt with. Instead, they too are holding it all inside in hopes that an implosion does not occur.

The next poem that we will address in our unit on the American Dream is e.e. cummings' "next to of course god america i." We have chosen this poem because it challenges the students' opinion of the American that he/she knows and loves and it makes the student think of where exactly they will go with their own dreams. The poem challenges the students to look at the idea of patriotism and question whether or not there may be times when war is not the best way. In such a time of expected absolute patriotism from Americans, parents may question why students are being taught this idea of our forefathers' being anything but desirable, but we need for our students to reach out and find out what it is that they believe in without basing the beliefs on their parents' beliefs. Students need to become patriotic because they have the desire to be, not because everyone else is doing it. They need to feel America in their spirit.

The last text that we will use in our American Dream unit will be Louise Erdrich's "Dear John Wayne." We have chosen this text for a number of reasons other than it being a really good poem. Louise Erdrich is a Native American woman who writes about many of the social injustices that Native American's have had to deal with over the last few hundred years in the United States of America. "Dear John Wayne" is a poem written about the many racial stereotypes of the Native Americans and how they react to the stereotypes that have been placed upon them. After reading this poem we will culminate all the poetry texts together and have a whole-class discussion as to the similarities and differences to many different peoples approaches to the American Dream and how different races, cultures, classes, and sexes react to differing presentations of their

American Dreams. Hopefully, by this point in the unit, our students will be able to see themselves and others for who and what they are and have been through. We never truly know who we are until we begin to question our very being.

Once we have read these poems, we will present our classes with a Multiple-Intelligence Project that will culminate our students' feelings about the American Dream (see page 21, rubric page 22). By this point our students should have begun to question what they believe and why they believe it. The evidence of this critical questioning will come though in the multi-intelligence project (MI) that is located in the Appendix on page 21 with a rubric on page 22. We have chosen to put our MI project at this point in the lesson so that our students will begin to see their own progress towards change in their own lives and their own thoughts on their dreams.

We will introduce speeches to our students via Dr. Martin Luther King, JR's "I have a Dream" speech that he gave on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. Not only will this introduce them to speeches, it will introduce them to another aspect of the American Dream. As a whole class discussion, we will talk about what different people thought about the speech and how different people see their American Dreams wrapped up in that freedom about which Dr. King speaks.

For a change of pace from the beginning of our unit we will use a short story from F. Scott Fitzgerald. "Winter Dreams" is about a man who tries his whole life to pursue his American Dream of a beautiful woman while the woman that he loves pursues her own American dream (synopsis page 23). This story will get the students thinking about their own dreams again. They will have to realize that their lives do not happen in a vacuum. Their life and the lives of others work together to form this world and sometimes what we



see is not what we get and things do not always work out for good. While it is easy to assume that the American Dream mostly revolves around the acquisition of wealth, this story brings that into question. The main character, Dexter Green, attains great wealth, but is nevertheless unhappy and unfulfilled.

Throughout our unit we will periodically check our students' journals to make sure they are writing (see page 18). We have chosen to have them write in their journals outside of class so that they have more time to think about what they have to say, so that they are not rushed to write what they feel, and so that they have time to mull over their thoughts and decide what they do feel. Journal entries will count as a major part of the grade, but the students will have the full six weeks to work on the entries and to finalize the entries by typing them. We find that it is important for our students to write in their journals for the American Dream unit because by writing they are clarifying their own thinking (Wink, 2000).

Our final text for the unit is the novel Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck. This novel is a required text for the tenth- grade in Gwinnett County, so we have chosen our unit and coordinating materials with Of Mice and Men in the center as the culminating text. Because the novel is required reading we chose to take one of the themes in the book, The American Dream, and made it the unit theme.

As for our daily lesson plans, there are some things that we need to rationalize. Before this unit began, we will have just finished up a week of grammar preparing the students for countywide testing, therefore we cover grammar only four times in this unit with an assessment after the fourth unit of grammar. Our lesson plans list these grammar exercises

as Daily Oral language (DOL) (see appendix B for samples). Smagorinsky would call these daily lessons, tool sharpeners.

Each day is begun with housekeeping. This gives the teacher and the students time to prepare for the lesson in which they are about to participate. During this time the teacher will take attendance, put the class schedule for the day on the computer or on the board, and the students will get out their homework to turn in, if any was assigned. They will also take this time to turn in passes for leaving class early or excuses from being absent on previous days. This time will also be used to address certain personal issues with the teacher.

At the end of class each day, there is reference to student time for the remaining three minutes. It is our belief, as well as others, that this is time that students spend getting their mind prepared for their next class and thinking over what just happened in this class. By giving our students time to mentally and to physically prepare for the next part of the day, we are minimizing the time we have to take the next day going over things that they missed the previous day because they were not concentrating.

We have begun our unit on a Thursday to accommodate our Multi-Intelligence Project. We are giving the assignment on a Thursday to give the students the weekend to work on and polish the project at home.

As far as class discussion goes, there are many ways that the class accomplishes discussion. We will use several visual representations on the board or the overhead to keep students focused on their discussions. A variety of methods will be used: webbing or clustering, taking straight notes, outlining, drawing pictures, etc (see appendix B for examples). All methods used will be in addition to the personal notes that the students take

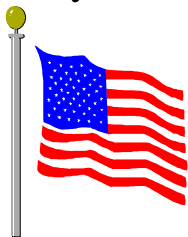
themselves. We will have one student per class take notes on the subject to be replicated and handed out to the class the following day as further evidence of the class discussion. On day twenty-six of our lesson plans we will use debate instead of class discussion to get the students involved in the issues presented during this unit. By using a debate format we will introduce the students to debating skills that will help them to see others' points of view by learning to argue both sides of the issue.

Our class will use a point system for grading instead of a one hundred-point scale. We feel that the point system weighs the assignments better as to their importance to the class and its major concepts.

### References

- Hooks, bell. (1994). Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom. New York: Routledge.
- Wink, Joan. (2000). Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the Real World. New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, Inc.

## Daily Plans for American Dream Unit



### Week One

#### Day One- Thursday

5 min--Housekeeping

10 min--Introduction of American Dream Unit

What will be required, read, and expected by the students

Introduce journals for the unit and what students need to do ( For on-going assessment, see appendix page 18 )

40 min--Introductory activity for Unit (see attached page 19 and 20). Discussion over Oppinionaires and Scenario.

3 min—Student time

#### Day Two- Friday

5 min—Housekeeping

10-15 min—Finish discussion from previous day over Oppinionaire and Scenario and hand in the sheets for a daily Grade of 10 points or a zero.

40-45 min—Begin looking at Walt Whitman’s “I Hear America Singing”

The Teacher reads the poem and discusses what it means to the students. (Small groups to whole class) Their reactions and Interpretations and how the poem fits in with the unit are important issues.

3 min—Student time

#### Day Three- Monday

5 min—Housekeeping

10 min—DOL Lesson—Independent and Subordinate Clauses. All DOL assignments are to be kept in notebook so the students can study for their quiz.

30 min—Begin Hughes’ poem “I, Too, Hear America Singing” – Teacher reads this to the class, or has a student read it out loud.

Discuss impressions of poem and how it relates and differs from Whitman. (Whole class)

5-7 min—Ask students to complete a small writing assignment related to the poems.

Do the students have a song for America?

**Homework:** Compose a short (1/2 to a page) reaction or a response poem.

Why do the students sing or not sing for America?

3 min—Student Time

#### Day Four- Tuesday

5 min—Housekeeping (Previous day’s assignment will be turned in. If the students completed the assignment, they will receive full credit. 10 points)

25 min—Small group reaction and discussion of E. E. Cummings’ “next to of course god america I” and Louise Erdrich’s “Dear John Wayne.” They read the poem in small groups focusing on one poem at a time.

25 min—Whole class discussion of these poems will ensue.

What do the students see as differences or similarities between the four poems presented to the class?

3 min—Student Time

Day Five- Wednesday

5 min—Housekeeping

10 min—DOL Lesson—Adjective and Adverb Clauses

15 min—Continue previous day’s discussion over Cummings and Erdrich.

25 min—Tie up any loose ends and make sure the students understand the unit and how it relates to the poems.

3 min—Student Time

**Week Two**Day Six- Thursday

5 min—Housekeeping

5 min—Introduction to MI activity and Introduce Sign up sheet for presentations (see attached, page 21 and 22).

Possible points are 40.

45 min—Work on MI activity in class and sign up sheet will be passed around to sign up for presentation time.

3 min—Student Time

Day Seven- Friday

5 min—Housekeeping

50 min—Continue working on MI activity. Students have the weekend to finish and polish the project.

If students do finish early, they will get their own book or one from teacher’s selection and read silently.

3 min—Student Time

Day Eight- Monday

5 min—Housekeeping

50 min—Present Projects to the class based on schedule devised on Day Six. Students will turn in their projects after they finish their presentation.

3 min—Student Time

Day Nine- Tuesday

5 min—Housekeeping

10 min—DOL Lesson—Noun clauses- Assessment on Day 17.

10-15 min—Introduce background of Martin Luther King JR’s “I have a Dream” speech and have students follow along in the text as the speech is played on audio.

25-30 min—Whole class discussion of what speech means to students and what they think it means for all Americans.

3 min—Student Time

Day Ten- Wednesday

5 min—Housekeeping

50 min—Read F. Scott Fitzgerald’s “Winter Dreams” silently. Journals will be checked while students have sustained silent reading. If journals are

finished early, then teacher will read the short story with the students.

3 min—Student Time



## Week Three

### Day Eleven- Thursday

- 5 min—Housekeeping
- 10 min—DOL Lesson—Sentence Constructions (remind them of the quiz on Day 17).
- 40 min—Finish reading and discussing “Winter Dreams”
- 3 min—Student Time

### Day Twelve- Friday

- 5 min—Housekeeping
- 25 min—Small group activity for American Dream thematic concerns
- 25 min—Class review and discussion of these concerns
- 3 min—Student Time

### Day Thirteen- Monday

- 5 min—Housekeeping
- 5 min—First vocabulary list for *Of Mice and Men* is distributed. Students will look up the words on his or her own and write the definition and a sentence using that word on a 3x5 index card to be turned in before vocabulary quiz at end of the week. A daily grade worth ten points will be given.
- 5 min—Distribute books for OMM. 40 min—Notes given about Steinbeck and the context of the book on the over head projector or PowerPoint.
- Homework:** finish Chapter 3 for Wednesday’s class.
- 3 min—Student Time

### Day Fourteen- Tuesday

- 5 min—Housekeeping
- 50 min—Introductory activity for OMM (see attached, page 24) (hand in for a total of 25 out of 20 depending upon whether class participation took place.
- 3 min—Student time

### Day Fifteen- Wednesday

- 5 min—Housekeeping
- 10 min—Finish introduction as needed
- 20 min—Small group development of critical questions for Chapter One to be handed in at the end of class to generate Critical questions for Chapter One.
- 20 min—Whole class discussion of Chapter One.
- 3 min—Student Time

## Week Four

### Day Sixteen- Thursday

5 min—Housekeeping

30 min—Address students' critical questions from yesterday's class in a whole class discussion

20 min—Small group round table about opinions on Chapter One

3 min—Student Time- announce DOL/Vocab. Quiz for Tomorrow.

### Day Seventeen- Friday

5 min—Housekeeping- Take up 3 X 5's of vocab definitions and sentences.

50 min—Students have entire period to finish the first OMM vocabulary quiz (15 points) and DOL quiz over previous four DOL Lessons. (20 points) If students finish early, they are instructed to begin Chapter Two of OMM and finish it for the weekend. Develop three critical questions for the chapter for Monday.

3 min—Student Time

### Day Eighteen- Monday

5 min—Housekeeping- take up critical questions developed over the weekend for Chapter two.

5 min—Vocabulary list 2 is distributed.

**Homework:** The students will construct a visual representation of one of the words and provide definitions/sentences of all the remaining words to be turned in at end of the week. 10 points

10 min—Go over vocabulary and DOL quizzes

15 min—Small group comes up with critical questions to be presented to the class.

20 min—Whole class discussion of Chapter Two

3 min—Student Time- announce quiz on Tuesday over Chapters one and two.

### Day Nineteen- Tuesday

5 min—Housekeeping

20 min—Quiz over Chapters One and Two of OMM (20 points)

30 min—Start Reading Chapter Three as a whole class by using the popcorn method of reading.

**Homework:** finish Chapter Three.

3 min—Student Time



## Week Five

### Day Twenty- Wednesday

5 min—Housekeeping

10 min—Go over Chapter one and two quiz.

40 min—Small groups will divide up and discuss how they will perform one scene from any of the first three chapters. Each group will consist of five students.

3 min—Student Time

### Day Twenty-One- Thursday

5 min—Housekeeping

50 min—Each group will present their representation of one scene. Each group will have no more than eight minutes to present their scene. Will be graded as a participation grade. If there is time left, then we will begin Chapter Four.

3 min—Student Time- Quiz tomorrow over Vocab #2.

### Day Twenty-Two- Friday

5 min—Housekeeping- take up visual representations of words, their definitions and sentences.

20 min—Vocabulary quiz 2 on OMM (15 points)

30 min—Discussion of Chapter Four and a look at the student's favorite or most interesting parts (Whole class discussion).

3 min—Student Time

### Day Twenty-Three- Monday

5 min—Housekeeping

5 min—Vocabulary list 3 is distributed.

10 min—Go over vocabulary quiz from Friday.

35 min—Look up words in dictionary and write sentences for each. Journals for the unit are checked while students are doing definitions.

Students read Chapter Five silently. **Homework:** Finish Chapter 5.

3 min—Student Time

### Day Twenty-Four- Tuesday

5 min—Housekeeping

50 min—Discuss Chapters Four and Five. Clustering and Web Notes guide based on each class's discussion will be typed up by the teacher and handed out later.

3 min—Student Time- Quiz tomorrow over Chapters 4 and 5.





## Week Six

### Day Twenty-Five- Wednesday

5 min—Housekeeping

25 min—Quiz over Chapters Four and Five of OMM (20 points)

25 min—Start reading Chapter Six together. The teacher may read, or student volunteers.

**Homework:** Finish reading Chapter 6.

3 min—Student Time

### Day Twenty-Six- Thursday

5 min—Housekeeping

35 min—Finish Chapter Six with a debate about major issues between divided sides of the room.

15 min—Discuss requirements and deadline of traditional assessment (see attached, page 26).

3 min—Student Time

### Day Twenty-Seven- Friday

5 min—Housekeeping- take up vocabulary words, definitions and sentences.

15 min—Vocabulary Quiz 3 on OMM (15 points)

35 min—Go to library/computer lab to start research for paper. Journals will be checked for final time before they will be turned in at the end of the unit.

3 min—Student Time

### Day Twenty-Eight- Monday

5 min—Housekeeping- hand back quizzes. Any questions about them will be answered one-on-one with the teacher during lab time.

50 min—Library/Computer lab continue research for paper

Teacher will assist students as needed. The teacher will check for a rough draft of the paper.

3 min—Student Time

### Day Twenty-Nine- Tuesday

5 min—Housekeeping

45 min—Last Day in the Library or computer lab

Final paper is due on Day 30.

5 min--- Student Evaluations of the class and the teacher

3 min—Student Time

### Day Thirty- Wednesday

3 min—Housekeeping

5 min—Turn in papers with other requirements stapled or paper clipped with grading rubric on top.

Turn in journals.

50 min—Start movie and enjoy after a hard-earned break!!!

### Day Thirty-One- Thursday

3 min—Housekeeping

55 min—Finish movie



## On-going assessment for "American Dream" unit

Each of you will keep a journal for the duration of the unit. You are expected to complete the journal entries on your own time, or during free time in class. You will write your thoughts, questions, opinions, feelings, reflections, etc. about anything involved with our discussions and explorations of the "American Dream". It is your choice what you write about. The journals will be checked periodically during the unit to see your learning progression. Sometimes your questions will be answered or your thoughts will be examined in class with your permission. A total of five journal entries are needed to achieve an A. Each journal entry must be at least 250-300 words. They will be due at the completion of the unit. The final journal collection must be typed. If the assignment is not taken seriously, it will be reflected in your grade. This assignment is worth a maximum of thirty points. Points will be taken off if it is not typed and if minimum amount of words and entries is not met.

## The American Dream

Below are some statements that relate to the unit we are about to begin on "The American Dream." Circle the answer that best fits how you feel about each one. Take a few minutes to do this on your own; then we'll get together to discuss our responses, so be prepared to defend your opinions.

- 1) Anyone can achieve whatever he, or she wants to in life if they just try hard enough.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 2) There is never a time when someone should break the law even if it will prevent a greater injustice in his or her opinion.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 3) All immigrants were given the same chance to succeed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 4) In today's business world, women have the same opportunities for income and advancement that a man does.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 5) Doing well in school is an important thing if you want to succeed in life.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 6) There are times when war is necessary to protect our freedom.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 7) Any individual should be proud to be called into service to defend his/her country, no matter what the reason.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 8) Achieving the American Dream is possible.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 9) School isn't really that important. I can go into business and get rich without college.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 10) All homeless people are just too lazy to get a job and change their life.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 11) Having a family should be an important part of anyone's idea of the American Dream.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

# The American Dream

Read the following scenario and answer the questions below. We will discuss your ideas as a group, so be prepared to discuss your ideas.

John just turned 45 two weeks ago. He has been a hard worker for a tool manufacturing company for almost twenty years, working his way up from the warehouse to upper management. When the company downsized recently, he was fired for no real reason except for “reconstruction of duties” within the company.

When his wife found out, she was understanding, but after a month of job interviews where John was told he was either too old or “overqualified”, she left him and took their two children with her. Without any income, the bank foreclosed on his house and he had to declare bankruptcy. A week later, he was living on the street with twelve dollars in his pocket and one change of clothes. Without a home mailing address, John can’t get a job anywhere. Not knowing what else to do, he spent his last \$12 on a meal and a cheap bottle of wine. He then went and sat down in an alleyway with some other homeless people to drink his wine. John has no other family to turn to and he is ready to give up trying.

Should John give up?

What could he do to get a job?

Is there any chance for John to get his life back in the world we live in today?



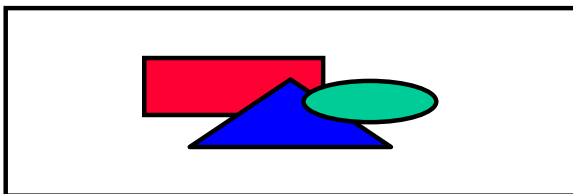
# I, Too, Sing America

Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, e.e. cummings, and Louise Erdrich “sing America” in very different ways. How do you “sing America?” Below is a list of mediums that you can use to communicate your “singing.” Guidelines are listed for each medium. The guidelines serve as requirements, so read and follow them carefully. The project is worth a total of 40 points to be part of your test grades. A rubric is attached. A total score will be calculated by taking the points from the rubric and multiplying them by two. Have fun! Be original! Do not be afraid to ask questions. You may want to consult me before you begin your project to make sure that it will meet the requirements. If you have an idea for the project that is not listed below, let me know. I am open to new ideas.

1. Essay or short story- must be 500 words in length.
2. Poem- must be 15 lines long, but does not have to follow a particular format.
3. Children’s book- must be ten pages with words and graphics included on each page.
4. Monologue/ Song- must be three minutes in length and will be presented in front of the class.
5. Audio/ Videotape- must be three minutes in length. Make sure that the sound quality is good. Also, make sure you make arrangements with me if a VCR or tape player is needed.
6. Art- open to interpretation, but must be accompanied by a one-page description of how it communicates the topic.
7. Dance/ Music- must be three minutes in length and accompanied by a one-page brief description of how it covers the topic.

Remember- if all else fails make sure that you ask questions. It is better to be safe than sorry when a test grade rides on this project. You can see me before/ after Class/ School, during advisement, or email me. Have fun!

HRW 11-20-01



## Multimedia Project: I, Too, Sing America

Teacher name: Blanton, Wicker and Williams

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	Excellent- 4 points	Good- 3 points	Satisfactory- 2 points	Needs Improvement- 1 point
<b>Originality</b>	Product shows a large amount of original thought. Ideas are creative and inventive.	Product shows some original thought. Work shows new ideas and insights.	Uses other people's ideas (giving them credit), but there is little evidence of original thinking.	Uses other people's ideas, but does not give them credit.
<b>Attractiveness</b>	Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance to presentation.	Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance to presentation.	Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but occasionally these detract from the presentation content.	Use of font, color, graphics, effects etc. but these often distract from the presentation content.
<b>Requirements</b>	All requirements are met and exceeded.	All requirements are met.	One requirement was not completely met.	More than one requirement was not completely met.
<b>Personal Expression</b>	The project accurately and completely reflects the student's voice.	The project portrays the student's voice.	Student individuality and voice was slightly expressed in the project.	The project does not completely express the student's voice.
<b>Medium</b>	Medium chosen to portray the topic was perfect for the project.	Medium chosen to portray the topic fit the project somewhat.	Chosen medium was questionable considering the topic.	Chosen medium did not fit the topic well.

Total Points=\_\_\_x2=\_\_\_points. 40 points possible.

Date Created: 2001-11-19 HRW

Copyright 2001, High Plains Regional Technology in Education Consortium

## “Winter Dreams”

“Winter Dreams” by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a short story that is mostly concerned with lost love. The main character, Dexter Green, is growing up near the Sherry Island Golf Club and is a caddy for the rich people that live there. When he is eleven years old, he is considered by many at the club to be the best caddy there, but one day he quits. He saw a young girl named Judy Jones and was so struck by her he quit then and there to make his way in the world. Dexter then spends several years and gets rich by opening a laundry service specializing in golf wear.

After becoming successful he returns to the world of the Golf Club, but this time as a member. One night he meets Judy Jones again and falls madly in love with her “arresting” beauty. Even though Judy is notoriously single, going through men who court her very quickly, he takes his chances. They are together for about a month and then she moves on. Dexter spends the next several years pining after her and finally develops the strength to move on. He begins dating a girl named Irene Sheerer and they get engaged. About this time Judy comes back into town after being gone for a year or two and she approaches Dexter. Although he feels bad about dropping Irene, he realizes that he is still in love with Judy leaves with her. Dexter was convinced that she was only interested in him to get him away from Irene and make herself feel better. Judy brings his predictions to the realm of reality when she leaves after another month.

Dexter moves away to New York and ten years or so later is living by himself. He’s very rich, but lonely. A man who knows of Judy walks into his office and tells Dexter that she is married with children, her husband treats her badly, and she has lost her beauty and is unhappy. This depresses Dexter terribly, and the story ends with Dexter speaking: “Long ago,” he said, “long ago, there was something in me, but now that thing is gone. Now that thing is gone, that thing is gone. I cannot cry. I cannot care. That thing will come back no more.”

The angle we will be taking with this story in our “American Dream” unit is to question whether or not Dexter has achieved it. He is very wealthy, but unhappy.



## An Introduction to Of Mice and Men and the American Dream

Answer each of these questions individually. Please write a paragraph (5-7 sentences) about each statement that expresses your own thoughts and opinions.

1. Dreams of a better life can make a difficult life more bearable.
  - Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
  - In what ways can dreams improve life?
  - Can dreaming be destructive? If so, how?
2. Companionship is necessary for happiness.
  - How would you define companionship?
  - In what ways are friends or companions important to emotional well being?
  - Can a close friendship hold someone back from achieving his or her goals?
3. Under extreme circumstances, taking a life may be an act of mercy.
  - Do you think this is ever true? Why or why not?
  - Under what circumstance(s) might taking a life be merciful?

The responses will be turned in. Papers with adequate responses in length and original thought will achieve the maximum total of twenty points. The teacher will determine this based on his or her discretion. Five bonus points can be added to the grade based on student's participation in the discussion of these statements in class.



# Of Mice and Men

## Critical Analysis Essay

Assignment: In this essay, you will analyze a part of the novel that is interesting to you. This analysis is based on your own thoughts, opinions, and arguments supported by details, examples, and quotations from the novel. This is not an essay summarizing the plot of the novel!! You may chose to analyze a character, one of the thematic concerns, a symbol, an archetype, the setting, or another topic you have researched from commentary, literary criticism, or our discussion of the book. All research must support the thesis and aid in developing your analysis. 50 points

### Requirements:

- Please use at least two sources other than the novel—only one source can be from the computer IN ANY FORM--the other must be some sort of book, article, or other outside commentary/analysis of the book.
- Please cite and include copies of all sources you use.
- Please use MLA documentation to cite your sources.
- Please include a works cited page.
- The paper needs to be about 3-4 pages.
- Please use 12-point font, double space the paper, and include 1-inch margins.
- Please include the proper heading on first page in the top left-hand corner and a running header in the top right-hand corner of all pages thereafter.

Due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include each of the following and put each item in this order.

1-Grading rubric

2-Gradeable draft (including works cited page)

3-Typed or handwritten rough draft

4-photocopy of all outside sources used (minimum of 2)

# Grading Rubric for Critical Analysis Paper

## Introduction

1. Writer provides an “attention getter” to start the essay; this statement makes the paper interesting and gives the reader the topic of the essay. **3 2 1 0**
2. The writer provides “preview statements” that lead the reader to the thesis statement. **3 2 1 0**
3. The writer provides a thesis statement that clearly states the main idea of the paper. **3 2 1 0**

Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Body

1. Each paragraph has a topic sentence that lets the reader know what is to follow. **4 3 2 1 0**
2. Each body paragraph is logical and focused. **4 3 2 1 0**
3. The body contains a minimum of 3 primary quotes that deal with and help explain the thesis. **4 3 2 1 0**
4. Each quote is documented within the body correctly. **4 3 2 1 0**
5. The body contains a minimum of 2 secondary quotes that deal with and help explain the thesis. **4 3 2 1 0**
6. The body supports the thesis statement effectively. **4 3 2 1 0**

Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Conclusion

1. The conclusion is strong and convincing. **3 2 1 0**
2. The conclusion summarizes the ideas in a new and interesting way. **3 2 1 0**
3. The conclusion relates information back to the introduction and thesis statement. **3 2 1 0**

Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Other Components

1. The writer has used active voice. **2 1 0**
2. The writer has proofread for spelling mistakes and fragments. **2 1 0**
3. The writer has proofread for run-ons and comma splices. **2 1 0**
4. The writer has a title that is creative and goes with the topic. **2 1 0**

Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Works Cited

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Critical Analysis Final Grade \_\_\_\_\_