

American Dream Debate (Wendy R. Williams)

“The American Dream is Alive and Well”

One major ideology in the United States is the idea of the “American Dream”—that anyone who works hard can get ahead and live a happy and prosperous life. For this assignment, you will debate the topic “The American Dream is alive and well.” Each person will do his or her own research outside of class to support their position (either that the American Dream is alive and well or that it is not). Then, when we meet as a class each side will have the first 30 minutes of class to develop the arguments they plan to make in the debate as a group. When we start the debate, each group will have (in turns) 6 minutes to state their arguments, 4 minutes to provide a rebuttal to the opposing team, 2 minutes to provide a second rebuttal to the opposing team, and 1 minute for closing comments.

You are being given two public policy reports—one pro and one con—that will get you started; however, you are not limited to this information. You may use any information you can find as long as you provide the support/citation for your argument.

For this assignment, prior to class you will prepare a written argument (with at least three points), a rebuttal (with at least three new points that anticipate what the opposing side may say), and a closing argument (summarizing why your position is the correct one). You should type out your three arguments, three rebuttals, and conclusion with space in between each argument/rebuttal/conclusion so that you may cut your paper up to use separately in the debate.

Your group will use the ideas you have come up with independently to create their collective argument, rebuttal, and closing. Your assignment includes your participation in the group debate including both your teamwork in creating the group arguments as well as speaking in front of the class.

Your assignment will be graded as follows: 1) Your written argument in favor of your position including three main points (30 points) 2) Your written argument against the opposing position including three new points (30 points) 3) Your written conclusion (10 points) 4) Your participation in the debate (10 points for teamwork in debate preparation, 10 points for speaking in front of the class, and 10 points for bringing a printed copy of your paper suitable for being cut up and used during class)

Note: If you are assigned the “American Dream is Alive and Well”/Pro position, you would write your “Debate” assignment on the “pro” position/policy paper and your Brief Analysis Essay on the “con” position/policy paper. Conversely, if you are assigned the “American Dream is NOT Alive and Well”/Con position, you would write your “Debate” assignment on the “con” position/policy paper and your Brief Analysis Essay on the “pro” position/policy paper.