



Unit 2 — The American Dream

Track E · Klasse 11 · Niveau E (Basisfach / Leistungsfach)

Learning objectives

- *I can read short extracts from American Dream sources (Declaration of Independence, James Truslow Adams 1931, contemporary critique) and trace one continuity and one rupture.*
- *I can use sentence-level emphasis (cleft + inversion) for argumentative writing.*
- *I can write a 280-word essay paragraph that holds two readings of the Dream in tension.*

Lead-in

The class read three short extracts: the *pursuit of happiness* line from 1776; James Truslow Adams's 1931 phrase *American Dream* in *The Epic of America*; and a 2024 critique by an economist who argued that the phrase has *outlived its statistical basis*. The class spent the lesson asking: *which of these is the real one?*

Key points

- *1931 (Adams, The Epic of America): The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone.*
- **Cleft:** *It is the 1931 phrase, not the 1776 line, that we usually mean by 'the Dream'.*
- **Negative inversion (formal):** *Not until the 1930s was the phrase coined. / Only after 1945 did the Dream become a mass image.*
- **Cleft (what):** *What the 2024 critique argues is that the Dream has outlived its statistical basis.*

Practise

- Build a cleft emphasising *the 1931 phrase*: ____ what we usually mean by 'the Dream'.
- Inversion: *Not until 1931* ____ (*the phrase coin / passive*).
- Build 4 emphasis sentences (2 cleft + 2 inversion).

Your turn

Essay paragraph, 280 words. Hold two readings of the American Dream in tension. Use 1 cleft + 1 negative inversion + 3 academic discourse markers.

Reflect

- I can trace one continuity and one rupture across three sources.
- I can use cleft and negative inversion for emphasis.
- I can write a 280-word essay holding two readings in tension.