

MPSI – CONCOURS BLANC

Épreuve de synthèse type CCINP (3 heures – 400 mots $\pm 10\%$)

Rédiger en anglais et en 400 mots une synthèse des documents proposés, qui devra obligatoirement comporter **un titre**.

Indiquer avec précision, à la fin du travail, le **nombre de mots utilisés** (titre inclus), un écart de 10 % en plus ou en moins sera accepté.

Vous aurez soin d'en faciliter la vérification, en mettant un **trait vertical tous les cinquante mots**.

Vous attacherez la plus grande importance **au soin et à la lisibilité**.

N'oubliez pas de sauter des lignes.

Vous indiquerez, en introduction, au minimum, la source et la date de chaque document. Vous pourrez ensuite, dans le corps de la synthèse, faire référence à ces documents par « doc.1 », « doc. 2 », etc.

Ce sujet comporte les 4 documents suivants qui sont d'égale importance :

1. "The American Dream is dead for us working class Americans", *Newsweek*, 17 August 2023
2. "The American Dream isn't dead, it's just misunderstood", *americancompass.org*, 19 August 2021
3. "The 'American Dream' of upward mobility is broken. Look at the numbers", *The Guardian*, 13 March 2021
4. "Life expectancy in wealthy countries", United Nations

Document 1: The American Dream Is Dead for Us Working Class Americans | Opinion

Newsweek, Aug 17, 2023

One of the strangest things of being a working-class American is hearing politicians talk about the American Dream, when everyone I know knows the truth: The American Dream is dead, at least it is for us.

Of course, everyone defines the American Dream in their own way. For some people, it's probably a big house and a fancy car, a country club membership and a closet full of designer clothes. But most of us want something much more simple.

For me, the American Dream would be to have my own home so I don't have to worry about being evicted by my landlord, enough money to pay for electricity, water, and internet for my homeschooled child, a car so I can get to work, and a bit of savings in case the car breaks down.

So far, this has eluded me, though not for lack of trying. I work three jobs and pick up any extra work when asked. But I still make just under what my bills come out to each month. I've thought a lot about why that is, and the conclusion I've come to is that it's because I don't have access to real opportunity.

That's what I've learned as a lower income American: You can't have the American Dream without opportunity.

Who would disagree with the idea that every American should have the same opportunity as the next? And yet, to those of us at the bottom, this is not just a dream—it's a fantasy. Equal opportunity means everyone has an equal chance to reach the height of their ability. But this hasn't been the case for many years now, if it ever was.

If you grew up lower income in the 1980s like I did, you didn't get to go to college and get a degree. 40 years later, that means you're stuck working a job that doesn't have the benefits that diploma-requiring jobs do. Meanwhile, the cost of living went up—but wages stayed the same. Many like me are stuck in a dead end job with low wages and no way out. The American Dream has become an American nightmare.

People say it's never too late to go back to school, but for many of us, it is. Imagine you're working full time. Imagine you're working more than full time like I am—two or three jobs, because that's what it takes to make ends meet in America in 2023. But let's say you find a way to invest all this time (and money!) into furthering your education. There's always the fear of not getting a job with the degree you have spent so much time and money on and then having no way to pay back a student loan. Now you're worse off than before.

It's just not true that all Americans are given the opportunity to pursue the American Dream. Good jobs often require a college degree, even if they don't require any skills you would learn at college. But we in the working class get locked out of those opportunities over a formality, a piece of paper.

(...) The American Dream is harder than ever to accomplish, especially with the rising cost of living in 2023. People living in poverty or who are low income are even further down the pole now. The divide is only getting bigger. And it's hard to see how we will ever have a shot at the American Dream.

Ruby Nicole Day is a 41-year-old married mother. She homeschools her son and drives for DoorDash. She lives in South Lebanon, Ohio. The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.

Document 2: The American Dream Isn't Dead, It's Just Misunderstood

*americancompass.org**, 19 August 2021, by Jeffery Mc Neil (The Edgerton Essays*, Perspectives from the Working Class)

Some people believe the American Dream is dead and the game is rigged against them.

That isn't my mindset or attitude. In order to fulfill your dreams, you must aspire to be what you desire. That is the American Dream, to me. And I think some people don't understand what fulfilling that American Dream can take.

I live in Washington, D.C., and am surrounded by ambitious people aspiring to be politicians, writers, and journalists. Many of them are immigrants that came from repressive places where the government decides what your fate will be. In America, you're not forced to work, you can choose to hold a cup panhandling or you can take risks and start a business. Trust me, I know people who have done both.

Part of the problem is that too many equate the American Dream with doing well—making money, the big house, the nice cars. Too many Americans suffer from a sense of entitlement, wanting instant gratification, rather than paying their dues. They envy someone running a business, who has two cars and a trophy wife. You don't see the behind-the-scenes work it took to get there. You don't know how someone may have started his business, working in his garage, may have spent days in the soup line and was mocked for thinking outside of the box.

Ten years ago I came to Washington, D.C., with \$10 dollars, broke and homeless. I was unemployed and unemployable. I hadn't bathed in weeks and the only prospect I had was to beg or sell a newspaper written and sold by the homeless, Street Sense. If anyone had a reason to give up, it was me. Many had and they have passed away. Being proud and competitive, I refused to be a beggar and charity case and saw that selling papers was better than panhandling.

Make sure your dreams are your own, not others' expectations. Dreams start with plans and come down to choices. If you let others set your expectations for you, you're letting them make your plans for you. Do I become a comfortable slave or do I take risks by becoming someone who is independent?

Sometimes that means marching to the beat of your own drum. It also means having a positive mindset. If you go into something with the mindset that your task is impossible, you'll find yourself just wasting another day in bed dreaming. America will give you an opportunity, but you have to be the one to take action.

When it comes to solutions for those facing poverty, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. There isn't one factor or stereotype. I was lucky to find organizations such as Street Sense, S.O.M.E. (So Others May Eat), Miriam's Kitchen, and Bread for the City. Being addicted, I never went to rehabilitation, but found a sponsor at AA meetings and haven't taken a drink in 12 years. Instead of complaining about my first job, which wasn't great, I used it as a resume-builder. I focused on staying away from negative people and looking at the big picture. (...)

**American Compass is a self-proclaimed conservative think tank which considers itself part of the "conservative labor movement".*

**Edgerton Essays feature the perspectives of working-class Americans on the challenges facing their communities and families and the debates central to the nation's politics.*

Document 3: The 'American Dream' of upward mobility is broken. Look at the numbers.

Mark R Rank and Lawrence M Eppard, *The Guardian*, 13 March 2021

The US has long prided itself as being an exceptionally fluid society with respect to social class and economic mobility. The American Dream holds that anyone who works hard can achieve economic success – perhaps even rise from rags to riches.

Underlying this belief is the assumption of abundant opportunity and meritocracy. Arriving immigrants often believe they have come to a land of opportunity, with a level playing field allowing for advancement and success. Those who fail to do so tend to blame themselves.

Yet according to recent research, the United States has far less mobility and equality of opportunity today than the European Union or other OECD countries.

First, the amount of economic advantage passed down from one generation to the next is much higher in the US. Approximately 50% of a father's income position is inherited by his son. In contrast, the amount in Norway or Canada is less than 20%.

What about rising from rags to riches? In the US, 8% of children raised in the bottom 20% of the income distribution are able to climb to the top 20% as adults, while the figure in Denmark is nearly double at 15%.

Equality of opportunity is also much less viable in the US than in other OECD countries. American life expectancy varies by up to 20 years depending on the zip code of residence. Quality of education also differs widely depending on the wealth of the neighborhood that families reside in. And the chances of being victimized by a crime, exposed to environmental toxins or having unmet healthcare needs is far greater for America's poor than those impoverished in all other OECD countries.

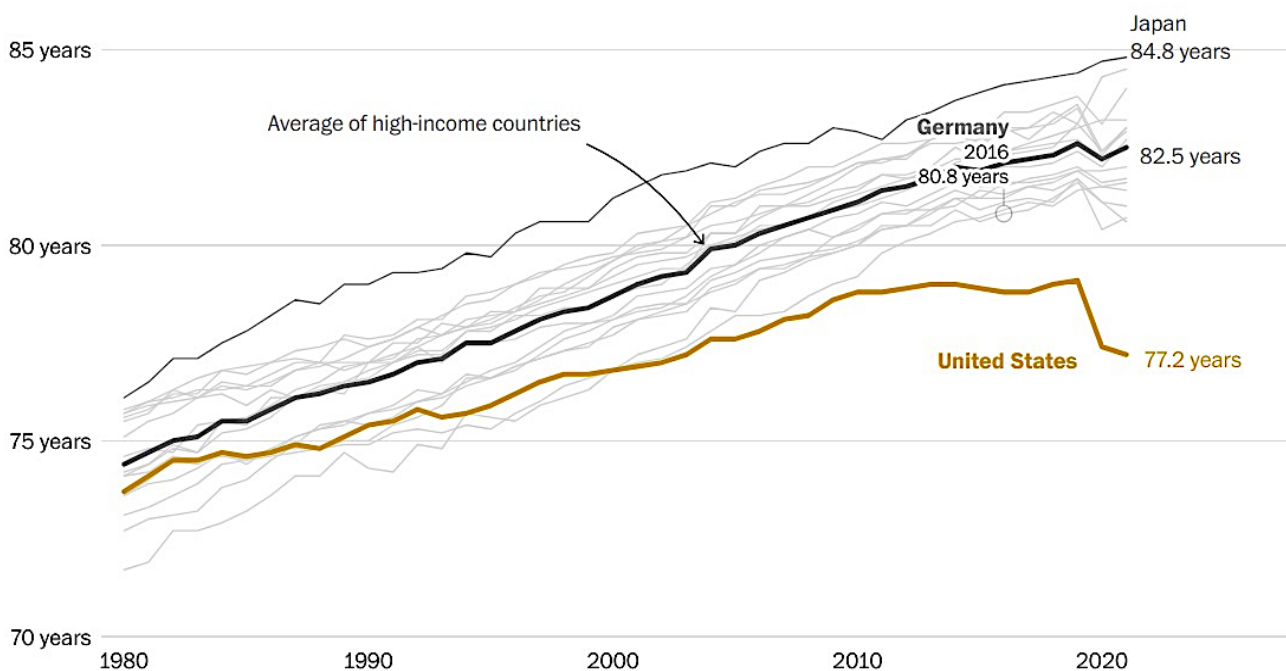
One of the reasons for lower US mobility is that the ladder of opportunity has become much harder to climb – because the rungs of the ladder have grown further apart. This is evidenced by the rising levels of income and wealth inequality. Currently, those in the top 20% of the income distribution earn nearly nine times more than those in the bottom 20%. This difference is far greater than in the European Union or the United Kingdom. Wealth inequality is even more skewed. In the United States, the top 5% of the population own three-quarters of the entire financial wealth of the country, while the bottom 60% possess less than 1%.

We discuss one explanation for these trends in our book, *Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong about Poverty*. The United States has traditionally viewed economic success and failure as the result of individual effort. Rugged individualism and self-reliance have been defining qualities of the American character. On the other hand, our European neighbors are much more likely to attribute poverty to structural factors such as social class or the lack of jobs. As a result, other OECD countries are much more willing to invest in a robust social welfare state designed to help ameliorate some of these structural inequities.

In addition, the United States has frequently viewed poverty and inequities through the lens of race and ethnicity. Poverty is often seen as a “black problem” rather than as an “American problem”. Race has been used to divide poor blacks and whites from seeing their common economic interests. (...)

Document 4:

Life expectancy in wealthy countries



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.