

AMERICAN DREAMERS

A WebQuest for 8th
Grade Reading &
Language Arts



[Statue of Liberty, New York, N.Y.](#)

Peabody, Henry G., 1855-1951, (Henry Greenwood),
photographer.

Created by Kelly Six © 2008

Last Updated August 29, 2011

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have
been?

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#1 Introduction



[New York, N.Y., Ellis Island.](#)

Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company, 1880-1920, [between 1910 and 1920].

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

Most immigrants came to America in search of a better life. The dreams of these settlers have been commonly referred to as "The American Dream."

Upon arrival, new Americans were ready to start pursuing the dreams that brought them to this country. Many dreams of American settlers were similar, but the manners in which individual settlers sought out these dreams frequently differed. Differences in personality, ambition, gender, family status, and resources were some of the deciding factors in how individuals decided to achieve their American Dreams.

If you had been one of the early settlers in America, what do you think your life might have been like? Where would you have settled? How would you have worked to survive? What dreams might you have tried to achieve in a new land full of promise and adventure?

In other words...

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

#2 Task



[S. D. Butcher Photographing Babies at Broken Bow, Nebraska.](#)
Solomon D. Butcher, 1903.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

Your group has just been given the task of representing a specific group of early American settlers. It is your job to persuade your classmates that this was the “best” type of American Dreamer to be. How will you do this? By becoming experts in the lives of those settlers you are representing!

You will go back in time and witness the lives of of American settlers, as they search for their own versions of the American Dream. You will read **first-hand accounts of actual settlers** that document the hopes they had, the hardships they faced, they successes they achieved, and the disappointments they suffered.

Who will your group be joining in their quest for the American Dream?

You might follow a **Risk-Taking Prospector** to the California Gold Rush; enjoy the peaceful country life, raising pigs and chickens with a **Gentlemen Farmer** in Virginia; travel west to a sod house on the prairie with a **Hardy Pioneer**; enjoy the busy social life of a **City Slicker**; or camp under the moon and stars with a **Cowboy Rancher**.

All of the information you gather will help you to discover ...

What type of American Dreamer YOU would have been!

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#3 Process



[Oldest Store Building in Cozad, Nebraska.](#)

Solomon D. Butcher, 1904.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

It's time to get started!

Follow the steps below to begin your American Journey...

1. Assign jobs to each member of your group.

Content Expert(s) – This person reviews primary source documents and gathers information to be used during the group presentation. The Content Expert is also responsible for identify supporting details and examples that will be used in the presentation. If possible, two or more detail-oriented group members should be assigned to this job.

Technical Director – This person is responsible for developing the PowerPoint presentation. The Technical Director should have excellent technical skills and experience with PowerPoint. This person will need to work closely with both the Content Expert(s) and the Art Director.

Art Director – This should be the most creative member of your group. The Art Director is responsible

for selecting images for the PowerPoint demonstration. The Art Director must work with the Content Expert(s) to ensure images accurately reflect the information that will be presented in the PowerPoint presentation. The Art Director must also work with the Technical Director to ensure that images are used effectively in the PowerPoint presentation. Finally, the Art Director is responsible for designing an artistic project for the group. The Art Director may complete the project independently or may lead and direct the entire group in completing the artistic project.

In order to do your best work, group members should be assigned according to their various strengths and weaknesses.

2. Review the questions you will be expected to answer about your settler group. Remember, these are the key points that you will need to include in your PowerPoint presentation, so be on the lookout for clues while on your journey!

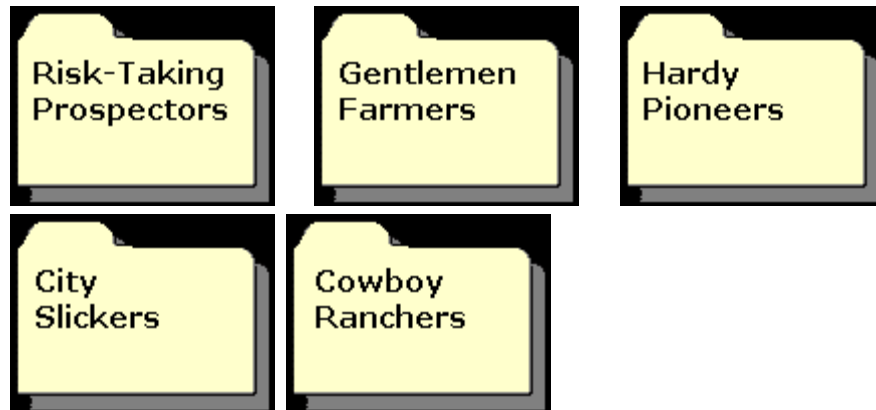
- Where did the majority of these settlers live?
- For what reasons did settlers choose to live in these areas?
- During what time period did the settlers you studied live in this area?
- What type of homes did these settlers live in?
- What was family life like for these settlers?
- What was a normal day like for these settlers?
- What did most of these settlers do to earn a living?
- What did these settlers do for fun?
- What types of setbacks or difficulties did these settlers face?
- Why did these settlers feel that this lifestyle would best allow them to achieve their own American Dreams?

3. Click on the link below that corresponds to the settler group you'll be following and complete all activities before proceeding to Item #4.

THINGS TO REMEMBER: You will focus on the dreams and motivation of the settlers in your group, what their

daily life was like, what hardships they faced, and how their American Dream was (or was not) fulfilled through the choices they made.

Be aware that, just because their original American Dreams may not have come to fruition, many settlers adjusted their expectations, hopes, and dreams to the circumstances they faced upon arriving in their chosen locations!



4. Once you have completed all instructions for your settler group, start working on your PowerPoint presentation. You should have at least 12 slides in your presentation. There should be at least one slide that corresponds with each of the 10 questions listed below:

- Where did the majority of these settlers live?
- For what reasons did settlers choose to live in these areas?
- During what time period did the settlers you studied live in this area?
- What type of homes did these settlers live in?
- What was family life like for these settlers?
- What was a normal day like for these settlers?
- What did most of these settlers do to earn a living?
- What did these settlers do for fun?
- What types of setbacks or difficulties did these settlers face?
- Why did these settlers feel that this lifestyle would best allow them to achieve their own American Dreams?

You also need to have an introductory slide that includes a title and the names of all group members. You are also required to have at least one concluding slide that states why your group believes that the settler group they have studied is the “best” type of settler to be (It doesn't matter whether or not you believe this to be true - looking at life from a different perspective is a valuable skill to have!). Your argument should be logical and effective – in other words, think about why someone would want to join this group of settlers and convince your audience to agree!

5. Begin working on your artistic project. Options for artistic projects include, but are not limited to: Posters, Advertisements, Brochures, Models, Dioramas, Skits, Letters, and Journals. These projects should show a great deal of creativity and will be graded on content, originality, effort, detail, and quality of work.
6. Prepare your oral presentation. All group members **MUST** demonstrate equal participation in the preparation and completion of the oral presentation. Plan carefully and practice your presentation as often as time allows!
7. **AFTER ALL ORAL PRESENTATIONS ARE COMPLETE**, you will be given a written assignment in which you will analyze your own personality type to determine what type of American Dreamer you would have been.
8. Finally, the class will hold a group discussion that will **CONCLUDE** the WebQuest. To prepare for this discussion, you will think about how American Dreams have changed over time and evaluate what modern-day and future American Dreams might look like, in comparison to those you have just studied.

#4 Evaluation



[Telephone Crew.](#)

Solomon D. Butcher, 1910.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

GRADES:

- All group members will receive the same grade for the group presentation.
- Individual group members will each receive a teamwork grade, based on self-evaluation, group feedback, and instructor observation.
- Students will receive individual grades for the independent written assignment.

This project will be worth a total of 140 points. Total points will be broken down as follows:

[Teamwork](#) - 16 points

[Content](#) - 32 points

[Presentation](#) - 20 points

[Art](#) - 32 points

Essay - 40 points

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#5 Conclusion



[Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Palmer, Essex, Illinois.](#)

Chicago Daily News, Inc., 1921.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

CLASS DISCUSSION:

Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class:

- How have this WebQuest and related activities made you more aware of the dreams of various Americans throughout history?
- What has this WebQuest taught you about the American Dream?
- Are any of the American Dreams of settlers still around?
- How have American dreams changed over time?
- How have American dreams remained the same?
- How do various groups in America try to accomplish their dreams today?
- Do you think it was easier to achieve the American Dream in the past or in modern America?

Be prepared to explain all of your answers, using information you have learned while completing this WebQuest.

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#6 Credits



[Sleigh bells ringing.](#)

Fred Hultstrand, Milton, North Dakota, 1912.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

Designed by Kelly Six, © 2008, [Kelly Six](#) with [West Greene School District](#) in partnership with [Teaching with Primary Sources at Waynesburg University](#). Last updated August 29, 2011.

Template created April 2006 by Ann Canning, [Teaching with Primary Sources at Waynesburg University](#) based on a template designed by Lisa Bradshaw, [Teaching with Primary Sources - Colorado](#).

Many ideas for WebQuest content and worksheets were adapted by permission from [Teaching with Primary Sources - Northern Virginia Partnership](#).

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#7 Introduction for Teachers



[New York, N.Y., Ellis Island.](#)

Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company, 1880-1920, [between 1910 and 1920].

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

Designed by [Kelly Six](#).
Last updated August 29, 2011.

This lesson was developed as part of [Teaching with Primary Sources at Waynesburg University](#), a federally funded professional development program to assist educators in using [Library of Congress](#) primary resources to support student learning.

The WebQuest is designed to familiarize students with several different types of dreams that were held by early American settlers. After completing the WebQuest and related activities, students will assess their own personalities and characteristics to determine what type of settler they most likely would have been. This will also tell them something about their own American Dreams.

Knowledge gained will be related to a variety of texts that students will read throughout the school year.

This WebQuest will be used in conjunction with the Holt, Rinehart & Winston publishing company's Elements of Literature series, Second Course, © 2007. Students will examine the concept of "The American Dream" as a recurring theme in a variety of literary works that will be

studied throughout the school year.

This WebQuest was designed for use in the [West Greene School District](#) in Greene County, PA.

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#8 About The Learners



[Digging out after the big blizzard, Milton, North Dakota, 1893.](#)
Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, Fargo.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

This WebQuest is designed for 8th grade Reading. The WebQuest can be used in any Reading, Language Arts, or Social Studies curriculum dealing with the concept of the American Dream. The lesson can be varied for differing age and ability levels (see "Process for Teachers – Variations" for details).

Before beginning this WebQuest, students should have a basic understanding of early American immigration and expansion. This may be covered with the students directly prior to beginning the WebQuest. Students must be able to understand abstract concepts and must be able to analyze information, examine evidence, draw conclusions, summarize information, and apply information to real-life experiences. At least some of the students should have a basic understanding of PowerPoint to create the group presentations. If students do not have this ability, the lesson may be adjusted to meet the abilities of the students.

This WebQuest was designed for an inclusion classroom with some IEP students. Most students in the class will not have special needs. Special needs students will be divided among the five research groups. Students who are gifted may use resources

beyond those required in the WebQuest. This will increase the amount of information being processed by the group and may lead to more developed PowerPoint and/or artistic projects. Students may choose to do more than one artistic project, in addition to the WebQuest requirements.

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#9
Pennsylvania
Academic
Standards



[Pressler Ranch and pines.](#)
Lake, Harry H., 1860-1952.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

Upon completion of this WebQuest and related activities, students will meet the following PA Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Standards:

- 1.1.8 Learning to Read Independently
- 1.2.8 Reading Critically in all Content Areas
- 1.3.8 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature
- 1.4.8 Types of Writing
- 1.5.8 Quality of Writing
- 1.6.8 Speaking and Listening
- 1.8.8 Research

Students will meet the following PA History Standards:

- 8.1.9 Historical Analysis and Skills Development

8.3.9 United States History

Students will meet the following PA Arts and Humanities Standards:

9.1.8 Production, Performance and Exhibition of
Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts

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#10 Process for Teachers



[S. D. Butcher Photographing Babies at Broken Bow, Nebraska.](#)
Solomon D. Butcher, 1903.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

In this WebQuest, students will investigate the hopes and dreams of various types of American settlers.

Students will be divided into five groups, depending on class size. Each group will be assigned a group of settlers whose lives they will research. Each group will be asked to make an oral presentation to the class, including both PowerPoint and artistic projects.

When all presentations have been completed, students will work independently to write an essay about what type of settler they believe they would have been.

The WebQuest activities will conclude with a class discussion.

Research and preparation of the oral presentation, PowerPoint, and artistic projects will take approximately one to two weeks. Group presentations are expected to take one to three days, depending on class size and length of presentations. The concluding activity will take no longer than one class period. Total class time for this WebQuest and all related activities should be approximately two to three weeks.

In order to teach this WebQuest, the teacher must have a basic understanding of early American immigration and expansion. The teacher must also be familiar with the concept of the American Dream and must be able to assist the students in understanding abstract concepts. The WebQuest requires both the teacher and students to analyze information, examine evidence, draw conclusions, and summarize information. The teacher should have experience with design and presentation of PowerPoint slide shows.

Variations

This WebQuest can be adjusted for differing grade levels by adding or deleting required primary source material for each settler group. Additional projects, such as debates or formal research papers, might be assigned to more advanced classes.

If class size is too small, one or more of the settler groups may be eliminated from the research.

If student ability is lower than that required to complete the WebQuest successfully (younger children or special needs students), the teacher may choose to use this WebQuest as an instructional tool. In this case, the class would study the WebQuest as one large group. The teacher would need a projector with which he or she could project the information from one computer to a large screen. In this case, the teacher should focus on one particular settler group and lead the class in examining the American Dream as it would apply to one specific type of settler.

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#11 Resources for Teachers



[People gathered in front of the city hotel, Sargent, Nebraska.](#)
Solomon D. Butcher, 1888.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

The following materials are necessary for completion of this WebQuest:

- Access to computers with internet browsers (at least one per group)
- PowerPoint software
- Projector and screen for PowerPoint presentations
- Art supplies

A complete list of primary source collections and individual items used in developing this WebQuest can be viewed [here](#).

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#12 Evaluation for Teachers



[Telephone Crew.](#)

Solomon D. Butcher, 1910.

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

Students will be graded as a group for the oral presentation, PowerPoint presentation, and artistic project. The following rubrics will be used for group grading: [Content](#), [Presentation](#), and [Art](#).

After presentations have been completed, students will be asked to evaluate all members of their group. Students will rate themselves and their peers on a scale from 0-5 and must give a short reason for each rating. These ratings will be strictly confidential. This information, in addition to teacher observation, should be considered when completing the [Teamwork](#) rubric.

Finally, students will be graded individually on their written essays. The [Essay](#) rubric should be used for this activity.

#13 Conclusion



[\[Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Palmer, Essex, Illinois.\]](#)
Chicago Daily News, Inc., photographer. [1921].

What type of American Dreamer would YOU have been?

The final day of this WebQuest should be a class discussion. The teacher should lead the students in discussing the following questions:

- How have this WebQuest and related activities made you more aware of the dreams of various Americans throughout history?
- What has this WebQuest taught you about the American Dream?
- Are any of the American Dreams of settlers still around?
- How have American dreams changed over time?
- How have American dreams remained the same?
- How do various groups in America try to accomplish their dreams today?
- Do you think it was easier to achieve the American Dream in the past or in modern America?

When all WebQuest activities have been completed, students

should have a clear understanding of the American Dream. Students should comprehend that the American Dream has changed over time and differs among individuals. Students should be able to take the knowledge they gained and apply it to various texts. Students should also be able to identify ways in which the American Dream is alive today.

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