

Name:

Why do people follow the "American Dream"?

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- ① **Before reading:** The US is often referred to as „promised land.“ **Research**, what the term means and where it comes from.
- ② **Read the text** and **discuss** with your partner what reasons for immigration you find most convincing. **Create a top three ranking.**
- ③ Currently, there are also many people migrating to Europe in search for safety and opportunity but people rarely talk about the concept of the „European Dream.“ Why is that the case? **Discuss** with your partner and **write a short explanation** including at least three arguments. If you struggle finding reasons, think back on what you learned in class about the American Dream and American history, have another look at reason 1 from the text or do more research on the terms of „promised land“ and „American exceptionalism.“

### **8 Reasons Why People Immigrate To The United States**

#### **[...] 8. Higher Standard of Living**

The United States is often portrayed as the “promised land” where people can seek out a higher standard of living. This encompasses all aspects of life, many of which will be explored in further detail below. In short, it implies better opportunities in terms of education and jobs, allowing individuals to become contributing members of society. It can also include the possibility of health care or having access to everyday necessities not available elsewhere.

#### **7. Education**

- 10 In 2015, 28 percent of visas were granted for the purposes of school. For many families, the United States offers parents an opportunity to give their children a better education. School is where they are the most immersed in American society; proper support could bring them success and with it, plenty of options for the future. Older students might immigrate to enroll in programs that might not be available in their native homelands.
- 15 The lure of America’s prestigious universities and colleges might certainly play a role in their choice of school as well.

#### **6. Job Opportunities**

- Along with education, many people immigrate to the United States seeking better job opportunities. In 2015, approximately 33 percent of visas were granted to people looking for work. Sometimes they come having already been offered a job, while others come hoping to acquire one. Trends indicate that many immigrants move to areas where wages are higher and there are more jobs available. For example, before the 2009 recession, many people from Mexico came in search of work in the agricultural industry because the promise of economic prosperity was greater. And despite the myth
- 20 that immigrants take jobs away from “born-and-bred” Americans, scholars typically agree that immigration has a positive impact on the labor market.

#### **5. Reunification**

- As its name implies, reunification is when people are reunited with a family member who already lives in another country. Ever since the laws were amended in 1968, reunification has become the most common reason for immigrating to America. A US citizen or permanent resident can sponsor their parent, spouse, or child. The original family member can be living in the United States for any number of reasons, including work or even as a refugee. Recently, however, the president has been attempting to reform the policy by cutting family-based immigration, ultimately restricting the movement of foreign families.
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#### 4. Marriage

When two people who live in different countries want to get married, one usually moves to the other person's homeland. This has become a common reason for immigration with the increase of online and long-distance dating. In the United States, the couple can  
40 apply for the K-1 visa which allows the fiancé to enter the country as long as they marry within ninety days. At that point, the non-US citizen can apply for permanent residency. It is such a common method of immigration, that certain people will go this route as an easy way around the system; however, marriages purely to obtain a green card is considered fraud and can lead to five years in prison and include a \$250,000 fine.

#### 45 3. Persecution and Violence

Current events such as the Black Lives Matter movement is shedding light on the discrimination certain demographics face within the United States. Regardless, America is often viewed as a safe haven by non-US citizens enduring ethnic, racial, and religious persecution. Individuals and families seeking asylum from violence and war usually im-  
50 migrate to the United States in search of safety and stability. If they live in conflict zones, they may be able to obtain a refugee status as long as they meet the definition and are of humanitarian concern to the US government.

#### 2. Politics

Oftentimes, such persecution and violence is a direct consequence of the political sys-  
55 tem that governs an immigrant's country of origin. Many of these systems are totalitarian regimes that refuse to listen to the voices of the common people when it comes to matters that concern the nation and their wellbeing. As a democracy, the United States offers immigrants a chance for their voices to be heard. Of course, it does not always work out the way we intend, but the ability to vote is a right and privilege not given to  
60 many people around the world.

#### 1. And Lastly... Because It Is America

This last reason might be a little bit of a cheat, but there is no denying the impact the image of America has on people all over the world. Fueled by popular culture old and new, many individuals and families are taken in by the very *idea* of the United States.  
65 Who would not be mesmerized by the glitz and glam of Hollywood, or the hustle-bustle of midtown Manhattan? From sports to TV and everything in between, America's influence extends everywhere, providing an enticing image for those interested in emigrating.

(source: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/8-reasons-why-people-immigrate-to-the-united-states.html>, words: 813)  
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