

Cast of NBC's *American Dreams*

Constructive Editing

Print out two copies of your essay—one for you and one for a friend. Then, read your essay aloud while your partner follows along and reflects on the peer editing questions below. Remember, be constructive, not critical!

VOICE

1. What is the tone of the piece? Is the tone consistent?

2. If there is any change in tone, does the change seem intentional? What effect does the change in tone have?

3. Does the writer use a variety of rhetorical devices in establishing tone?

ORGANIZATION

4. What is the thesis of the piece?

5. Does the writer present his or her thoughts on the American dream in an interesting and original way?

6. Does the writer use specific information comparing his/her parent/guardian's experience in the '60s to the writer's own experience as an adolescent today?

7. Is the piece focused? _____
8. Does it try to cover too much/too little? _____
9. Is the piece more than just a list of events?

10. Does the piece indicate that the writer understands the significance of events?

11. Is each paragraph unified around one idea?

12. Does each paragraph have a clear, thematic topic sentence?

13. Does each paragraph conclude with an analytical statement?

14. Does the conclusion do more than repeat the introduction?

15. Does it elaborate upon the ideas set forth in the essay and address their greater significance? _____



If you are the editor, remember:

1. Always start by praising the writer—telling what works well in his/her piece.
2. Be specific in your feedback: refer to diction, lines, phrases, and ideas that are successful or confusing.
3. Ask clarifying questions: "What did you mean when you said...?"

If you are the author, remember:

1. Read slowly.
2. Be open to advice.
3. Thank your editor for his or her feedback.

