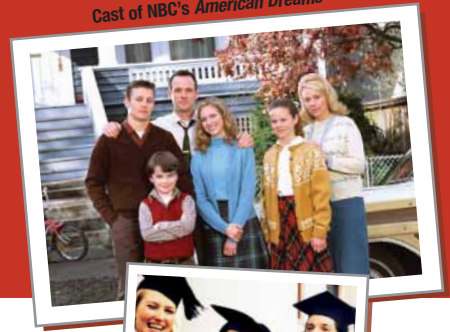


How does your American Dream compare to that of your parents?

Here's an example of how a student might have answered this question in 1965!

Cast of NBC's *American Dreams*



On sunny Saturday afternoons, my father sprays the suds off the surface of his 1961 Chrysler Newport and smiles as the powder-blue gloss is revealed. When he walks back into the house he says, "Livin' the American dream!" My mother beams and nods her head.

Good use of specific imagery to draw the reader in and identify the essay topic.

My father feels proud to know that he has earned his happiness, his American dream. I'm not yet sure what my dream is, and what I have to do to earn it. My father says that America is a place where you have the freedom to be your best. Sometimes I feel that words like "best" and "happiness" are hard to define and therefore hard to strive for. Then I think about what my father means by those words. I see how his happiness stems from the knowledge that he has provided for his family: the food, the house, the good neighborhood, the good schools are all his efforts to ensure a better future for his children. His dream is not a dream for himself but for others.

Alternating between what your father thinks and what you think emphasizes how you are trying to define your own American dream by clarifying what your father means. Short sentence at the end of paragraph shows that you have understood your father's dream.

On sunny Saturday afternoons I sometimes sit on the front steps to keep my father company and watch what happens in my neighbor's front yard. I see families. One house after another contains families striving for

Good use of repetition of opening image to create structure—continues comparison of your father's experience and your own.

Good variation of sentence length.

their American dream, and each home is like its own America: a place where people work to help others achieve their dreams. We like our privacy, but there have been times when neighbors have walked into our yard because my father or mother needed help. Walking into someone else's yard is not much different from the marches, the Freedom Riders, and the sit-ins at lunch counters happening today while I write this essay. As a World War II veteran, my father helped our European friends realize their dream of freedom from tyranny, and today many people are helping their American neighbors fight for the same freedom.

Good simile.

Good analogy.

Good diction.

People like my father see the American dream as having the power to help others achieve it. They know that their efforts might not help those facing injustices. To define my American dream I must learn how I can help others achieve their dreams. I must find out what my "best" is so that I can offer it to others. This is a process that I have just begun, but one day I will be ready to make that walk to my neighbor's yard. The possibilities for my future are endless.

Returning to metaphor of "walk to my neighbor's yard" effectively concludes the essay by unifying it. Good job synthesizing the greater significance of observations made in previous paragraphs.