

Unit 1/The American Dream

The Declaration of Independence

Other sources:

<http://www.history.com/topics/declaration-of-independence>

- Please, define the general content of the text. How can you relate it to its tone? Do you think the text is revolutionary/radical? In what sense?
- What are the key words in the text? Please, write a list with the most important issues it deals with.
- Taking into account we are dealing with the sociocultural and political situation of people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the contemporary United States, please, think on the effect of the Declaration on the present socioethnic configuration of the country.
- Discuss the text's strengths and weaknesses in terms of equality and civil rights. Does the Declaration of Independence account for everyone? Why does it? Why does it not?
- In what way do you find the Declaration interesting and/or different to any other document of this sort you may know of?

I have a Dream

Other sources:

<http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/docufilia/docufilia-muerte-memphis-misterioso-asesinato-mlk/1748137/> (Muerte en Memphis, documental)

<http://www.jccc.edu/performing-arts-series/files/pdf/study-guides/dream-study-guide.pdf>
(study guide)

1. Before Reading the text, please, do a survey of the political situation of the time. How relevant were the several marches for the accomplishment of King's dream. In this context, how would you describe the speech? What was his dream? What do you think the impact of the speech could have been at that time?
2. Discuss about the form, tone and the rhythm of the speech? How is it articulated and with what purpose?
3. How can you relate King's speech to the notion of the American Dream? What references does he make to the most relevant historical foundational texts? How and to what extent has the dream been accomplished today?

Barack Obama's election night speech, 2008

Other sources:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJfGx4G8tjo>

1. Please, try to do a brief survey on Obama's political development before he got elected President of the United States.
2. What are the main issues that his speech conveys (try to find some keywords).
3. How does he appeal to the people of the United States? How does he address them?
4. How present is the American Dream in the speech? And American values? How does he invoke the role of history?
5. How important is the sense of community and belonging in his words?
6. How does he also make the rest of the world participant of his victory?
7. "Change has come to America". Discuss.
8. Some years have passed after his first election. Do you think "change has come to America?" How do you interpret the relevance of the speech after these years?