The American Dream

“[It] is a land in which life should be **better** and **richer** and **fuller** for everyone, with **opportunity** for each according to **ability** or **achievement**. […] It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a **dream of social order** in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the **fullest stature** of which they are **innately capable**, and be recognized by others for what they are, **regardless** of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.”

- James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (1931)

**In-Class Writing Exercise:**

1. Pick one of the five sections of the Declaration of Independence. Please indicate which section your are choosing to respond to in your journal:
   * *Section 1*: “When in the course of human events…” (1).
   * *Section 2*: “We hold these truths to be self-evident…” (1).
   * *Section 3*: “Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies…” (1).
   * *Section 4*: “In every stage of these Oppressions We have…” (2).
   * *Section 5*: “We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America…” (2).
2. Write down your initial **impressions** of the section. Use full sentences, please!

* How did you react to it? What did you “know” about the Declaration before reading it? How did reading the section confirm or alter your prior assumptions about it?

1. Next, note your **observations** about the section. What did you observe?
   * What key words or phrases stood out? What seems important or worth noting?
   * What kinds of patterns emerged in the language, the structure, or the syntax? Use specific examples when referring to the patterns.
2. Finally, try and begin to **analyze and interpret** the section.

* What do the details in your observations, impressions, and patterns support/contradict/explain about the section?
* Think about how these details contribute to the tone, themes, and arguments of the text.