

Founding Values

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Teaching Objectives

Students will

- Learn or review the source of the words “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”
- Discuss the meaning of these founding American values and identify some ways they see/experience American values in their daily living
- Write their thoughts and perceptions on American values

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

I began the class by putting the phrase “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” on the board. I asked the class if they could identify the source of these words. We named the Declaration of Independence, talked about when it was written, and what these three concepts mean to Americans.

Next I asked the class to give examples they think show life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in America today. Student discussion tended to center on the idea that in America they can come to our class and learn for free, whereas in their home countries only those who can pay for school are allowed to go. We settled on education as one way to pursue the American dream (happiness), and talked about the freedom that allows anyone in America to go to school as one form of liberty.

I shared with the class the value that early Americans placed on education: Thomas Jefferson proposed a system of free public elementary schools because he believed people must be educated to maintain a democratic form of government. Jefferson wrote, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” James Madison said,

“Popular government without education is the prologue to a farce or a tragedy.”

Writing

To summarize our discussion, the students wrote their thoughts about the American value of education as they see and experience it. Their writing is shown on the following pages. One student wrote in Spanish, and we have translated that work.

An American value that I see in my life is that here in North Carolina we can learn English for free. When in other states you have to pay for the classes. Also the free classes have the flexibility unlike the class they have to pay for. I think that education is important and that it doesn't matter how old you are it's never too late to go to school and learn. To me that's an American value because we can get help to learn English.



Blanca Elias

Graphic from <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/clipart/default.aspx>

I am Victor Morales.

I know about my Life is Liberty
in The United States and go to the school.
but I Live's in this Country.

For 17 year's

I am marrede I have 4 children.

I am happy for Lives in this Country.

Because I am progrees a Little more

For Came the school For 6 months

I want to study English and Learn

The History a this Country.

Because I study for Citizenship.

I'm Happy for this College because I have
very nice teacher and I say
thank for help me.

because. When I came in this country

I not speak English.

In right now. I anderstand a Little more.

Sincerely,
Victor Morales



Student Work:

Por medio de este presente en mi opinion de star en este Pais para mi y mi familia a sido Buena tengo 3 hijas y an sido muy bien tratados en su educación. Siento que emos progresado. mi esposo se a eho cuidadano emos trabajado duro pero se nos an abierto puertas. Por esta razón estoy tratando de superarme en entender mas este idioma y estoy tomando clases de la Historia para tratar de tener mi ciudadania tengo 3 meses biniendo al colegio y e sido muy bien tratada. Estoy muy agradesida por las atenciones que he tenido. Los Maestros son muy Buenos. Y nos tienen mucha paciencia.

Les doy las gracias a ellos y a la institución que nos esta apoyando.

Muchas gracias
Esperanza Perez

Translation:

As of now, in my opinion, being in this country with my family has been good. I have three daughters and they have been well taught in school. I feel that we have progressed. My husband became a citizen. We have worked hard, but it has opened doors for us. That's why I'm trying to improve my understanding of English and am taking classes (civics) to get my citizenship.

I've been coming to classes at ACC for three months, and I have been well treated. I am very pleased with the attention I've received. The teachers are very good and have a lot of patience. I give thanks to them and the institution that is supporting us.

Thank you very much.

Esperanza Perez

I like to come to ACC because I can learn more. I come For G.E.D. classes and English classes and Citizenship. I'm learning about the history of the United States and G.E.D I'm learning math.

this is one way that I'm going to have success with this classes.



Omar