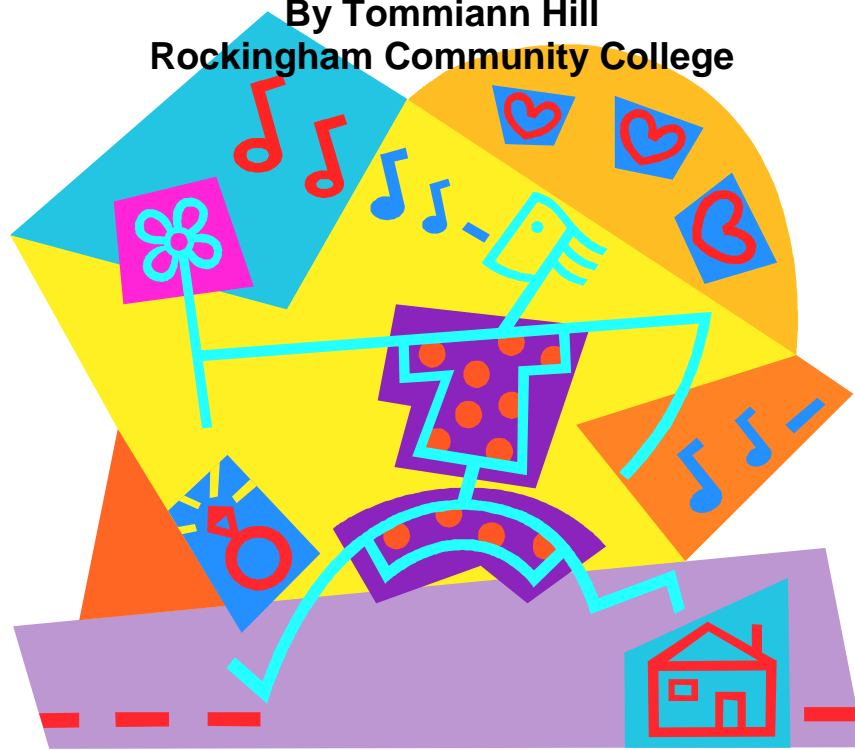


Pursuit of Happiness Posters

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Objectives

Students will

- Learn the source of the words “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”
- Create a personal “Pursuit of Happiness” poster
- Explain their poster to their classmates

Materials

- Poster board for each student
- Magazines, glue sticks/tape, scissors, markers (enough for all to share)

Level

This project works for all levels of ESL instruction. I do it with Beginning ESL students who have limited English Skills: The majority of my students typically have been in the country less than a

year. At every level of instruction, students' posters will reflect their personal English language acquisition.

Approach

- Before class begins, write the following statement on the whiteboard:
[Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness](#)
- **Prepare students for the topic above** by asking them to speak openly about their goals and future. For example:
 - a. What are your dreams?
 - b. What are your goals?
 - c. Where do you want to be in ten years? (The answer to this question may be either a dream or a goal.)
- **Encourage students** to converse with one another about their dreams and goals. Allow students, who are shy and have limited English skills to participate in their own language. This helps them become less anxious about the “right” answer when speaking.
- **Add a question** to the whiteboard. Then on one side of the question, write GOALS and on the other side, write DREAMS as shown in the example below:

What Are Your Goals and Dreams?

GOALS

DREAMS

- **Facilitate** “open” speaking/talking/brainstorming. Beginning with GOALS, write the students' spoken thoughts and ideas about their goals underneath the word. Encourage students to help classmates who have limited English skills with translating their thoughts/ideas.
- After exhausting all the GOALS, start with DREAMS. There will be some common answers and some confusion between Goals and Dreams. Give students an example: A goal may be “to know more English” while a dream may be “to marry and have three children.”

It's OK if some goals and dreams overlap. Again, write students' ideas and thoughts on the board underneath the word DREAMS.

- **Introduce** the concepts of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness by pointing out the statement you put up before class started: **Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**.

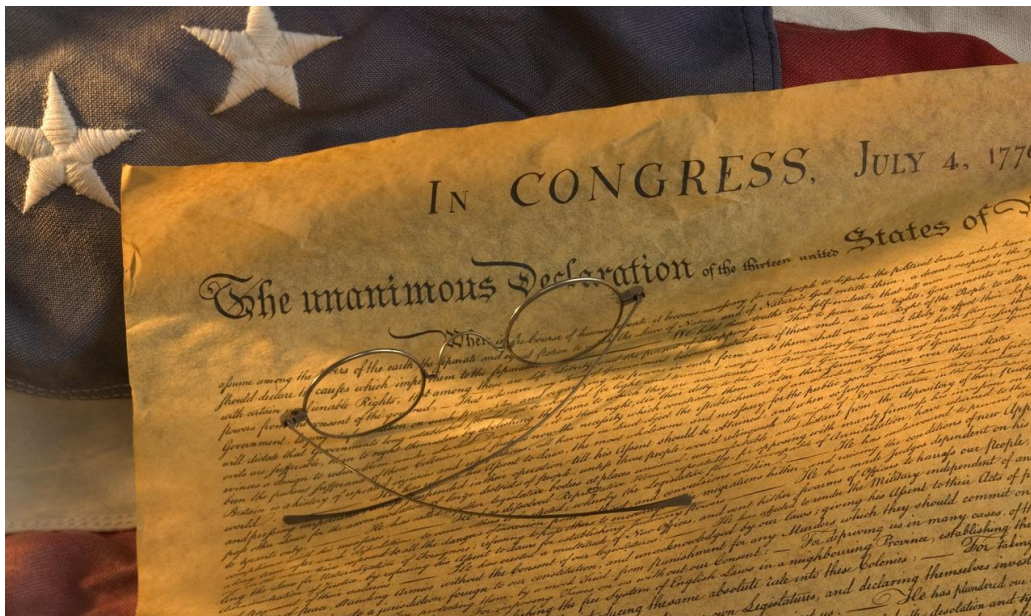
Challenge students to define these three human rights.

Life
Liberty
Pursuit of Happiness

After you reach a satisfactory set of working definitions and establish a general understanding of the meaning of these terms, encourage students to speak about their feelings regarding each of these rights.

Link the rights of Life/Liberty/Pursuit of Happiness to the reasons that students say they came to the United States.

- **Teach** students that the **Declaration of Independence** is the source of the phrase “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”.



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

Posters

Ask students to compile their ideas and thoughts about the Pursuit of Happiness into a simple poster format. Allow them to use the ideas/thoughts on the white board as a guide. Distribute magazines that the students may use to choose and cut out pictures that represent their goals and dreams. Students should:

1. **Choose** pictures that represent the Pursuit of Happiness to them.
2. **Place and glue/tape** pictures on poster board.
3. **Add captions.**
4. **Write** what each picture represents. (The written part of this activity may be copied from the white board, especially by beginning level ESL students.)

Poster Presentation

Ask students to present their posters to the class. Encourage them to speak in English when doing this, but facilitate the beginning students that struggle with their English skills.

Place the poster boards around the classroom. My students really enjoyed looking at other students' posters. At my college, I also displayed the posters upstairs in the library for other students to enjoy.

Observation

After discussing Life/Liberty/Pursuit of Happiness and their personal goals and dreams with my students, I was humbled by how their responses were not related to material things but to the happiness of their families.