



ID 3416159 © Christiano Duhj | Dreamstime.com

English Class Topic
Online only

Understanding
American Values:
Success!

Vocabulary & Phrases in the paragraph:

[sth = something; sb = somebody]

success = achieving sth desired, planned, or attempted, often measured by fame or money

pragmatism = doing what works best to achieve a goal

optimism = expecting good things to happen

is bent on being/doing sth = is determined to be/do sth

is up to his ears in work = has too much work to do

hang in there = be patient; don't give up; never give up

paid off = had a successful result

inspire = motivate [inspiration, motivation]

give it your best shot = try your best to do sth

focus your life = have a specific direction for your life

measure your success = rate the degree/level of your success

measure up = reach a particular standard; fulfill expectations

Grammar:

He wants to succeed (v). He wants to be successful (adj). He wants to be a success (n). He wants success (n).

Success is one of the most important things to Americans. It relates to many characteristics of American life – freedom, individualism, goal-setting, progress, pragmatism, and optimism. Americans are bent on being a success at something. The chance for success is part of the American Dream that has attracted millions of immigrants and has been taught to generations of American children. For many people, the dream has come true. They chose their goals, were often up to their ears in work, but they hung in there and it paid off. People especially admire highly successful people who came from ordinary backgrounds, such as Henry Ford, Billy Graham, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates and Michael Jordan. Their stories inspire us all to try to be successful. We dream big dreams. Children all over America are practicing basketball or football, giving it their best shot to become the next superstar athlete. To better understand any particular American, learn what his or her goals are. The drive for success makes Americans spend a lot of time and energy setting goals that help them focus their lives and measure their success. They can be huge or long-term goals like becoming the president of a university, or very small or short-term goals like getting three errands finished before 10:00 AM. Those who don't set goals, or don't achieve them, often fail to measure up to the important American value of success. (233 words)

Questions: (Try to use a vocabulary term/idiom or the underlined phrase in your answer.)

1. Name 1 person you consider to be a very successful American. Do you admire that person? Why or why not?
2. What are 2-3 things Americans probably have in mind when they talk about being successful in life?
3. What are 2-3 things people in your country probably have in mind when they talk about being successful in life?
4. If somebody is successful in school, will they probably be successful in life? Share some reasons why and why not.

5. What inspires you and/or who inspires you in your daily life? Why?
 6. What will your own life look like when you think your life is successful? (Include areas besides your career.)
 7. What are some specific steps you need to take in order to make your life more successful?
-

More idioms and proverbs:

1. a dead-end job = a job with no possible promotions
2. is a big shot = is an important person
3. calls the shots = is in charge; makes the final decisions
4. do sth above board = do sth openly and legally
5. do sth under the table = do sth illegally
6. make room for sb or sth = arrange time or a place for sb or sth
7. Go for it. = Go ahead and try to achieve your goal. Don't worry about failing.
8. One thing at a time. = Concentrating on one step at a time can lead to success. The person who tries to do too many things at the same time might fail at all of those things.
9. The end justifies the means. = You can use any method, even a dishonest method, if it helps you succeed.

TASK: Two students can "role play" a discussion where one agrees and the other disagrees with this quote:
"Your success story is a bigger story than whatever you're trying to say on stage. . . . Success makes life easier. It doesn't make *living* easier." Bruce Springsteen (1992), U.S. rock musician.

If you have time, read and discuss this proverb about success from the Bible:

"Let loving-kindness and loyalty to the truth always show like a necklace, and write them in your mind. God and people will like you and consider you a success." (Prov 3:3-4)

(find "easier lesson" on the next page)



Vocabulary & Phrases in the paragraph:

[sth = something; sb = somebody]

success = achieving sth desired, planned, or attempted, often measured by fame or money

core values: your central or deepest ideas about what is right and wrong, or what is important in life

optimism = expecting good things to happen

inspire = motivate [inspiration, motivation]

hang in there = be patient; don't give up; never give up

paid off = had a successful result

give it your best shot = try your best to do sth

focus your life = have a specific direction for your life

measure your success = rate the degree/level of your success

measure up = reach a particular standard; fulfill expectations

Grammar:

He wants to succeed (v). He wants to be successful (adj). He wants to be a success (n). He wants success (n).

Success is very important to Americans. It relates to many core American values – freedom, goal-setting, progress, and optimism. The chance for success is part of the American Dream that has inspired young Americans and attracted millions of immigrants to the USA. For many people, the dream has come true. They chose their goals, worked hard, hung in there, and it paid off. People especially admire highly successful people who came from ordinary backgrounds, such as Henry Ford, Billy Graham, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates and Michael Jordan. Their stories inspire us all to try to be successful. American children practice basketball or football, giving it their best shot to become the next superstar athlete. To better understand your American friends, learn about their goals. Americans spend a lot of time and energy setting goals that help them focus their lives and measure their success. This includes big and little goals, and goals for education, careers, and relationships. Those who don't set goals, or don't achieve them, often fail to measure up to the important American value of success. (177 words)

Questions: (Try to use a vocabulary term/idiom or the underlined phrase in your answer.)

- Content questions (find the answers in the article):
 - Name two core values related to success.
 - The American Dream has attracted millions of (what kind of people) to the USA?
 - Name two successful Americans.
 - To better understand your American friends, what should you learn about?
- If somebody is successful in school, will they probably be successful in life? Share some reasons why and why not.
- What inspires you and/or who inspires you in your daily life? Why?
- What will your own life look like when you think your life is successful? (Include areas besides your career.)
- Name one successful American you admire.

6. If the idea of “success” is different in your country (from what you read today), can you explain some of the differences? [In your country, what do people have in mind when they talk about success?]
7. Make up a sentence with one of the vocabulary terms.

TASK: Two students can “role play” a discussion where one agrees and the other disagrees with this quote:
“Success makes *life* easier. It doesn’t make *living* easier.” Bruce Springsteen (1992), U.S. rock musician.

If you have time, read and discuss this proverb about success from the Bible:
“Let loving-kindness and loyalty to the truth always show like a necklace, and write them in your mind. God and people will like you and consider you a success.” (Prov 3:3-4)

=====

These lessons were created or adapted by the staff of International Friendship Ministries, P.O. Box 12504, Columbia SC 29211; ifmusa.org; info@ifmusa.org. IFM is grateful to Kathy Williams for most of the original work. Some lessons were adapted from EFLsuccess.com (with permission). IFM makes these lessons available to our participants, but this does not imply our consent for others to publish these lessons online or in print without permission.

If posted at www.ifmusa.org/english: this resource was created for our students under the understanding of “fair use” for educational purposes.