

## DOCUMENT A

I was born with a talent. Not for dance, or comedy, or anything so delightful. I've always had a knack for school. Everything that was taught there, I could learn: quickly and without too much effort. It was as if school were a vast machine and I a cog perfectly formed to fit in it. This is not to say that my education was always easy for me. When Ma and I moved to the U.S., I spoke only a few words of English, and for a very long time, I struggled.

There's a Chinese saying that the fates are winds that blow through our lives from every angle, urging us along the paths of time. Those who are strong-willed may fight the storm and possibly choose their own road, while the weak must go where they are blown. I say I have not been so much pushed by winds as pulled forward by the force of my decisions. And all the while, I have longed for that which I could not have. At the time when it seemed that everything I'd ever wanted was finally within reach, I made a decision that changed the trajectory of the rest of my life.

From my position outside the window of the bridal shop now, I can see the little girl sitting quietly at the mannequin's feet, eyes shut, the heavy folds of falling fabric closing her in, and I think, *This isn't the life I wanted for my child*. I know how it will go: she already spends all of her time after school at the shop, helping with small tasks like sorting beads; later, she will learn to sew by hand and then on the machines until, finally, she can take over some of the embroidery and finishing work, and then she too will spend her days and weekends bent over the unending yards of fabric. For her, there will be no playing at friends' houses, no swimming lessons, no summers at the beach, not much of anything at all except for the unrelenting rhythm of the sewing needle.

But then we both look up as her father walks in and after all these years and all that's passed, my heart stirs like a wounded animal in my chest.

Was I ever as beautiful as she? There are almost no pictures of me as a child. We couldn't afford a camera. The first snapshot taken of me in the U.S. was a school photo, from the year I came to America. I was eleven. There came a moment later in my life when I wanted to move on, and I ripped this picture up. But instead of discarding the pieces, I tucked them away in an envelope.

Jean Kwok, *Girl in Translation*, 2010



## DOCUMENT B

In his 1931 book *The Epic of America* and in articles published in the *New York Times* the following few years, James Truslow Adams defined what he meant by the American Dream, an idea whose essence has remained largely consistent these past eighty years:

*The dream is a vision of better, deeper, richer life for every individual, regardless of the position in society which he or she may occupy by the accident of birth. It has been a dream of a chance to rise in the economic scale, but quite as much, or more than that, of a chance to develop our capacities to the full, unhampered by unjust restrictions of caste or custom. With this has gone the hope of bettering the physical conditions of living, of lessening the toil and anxieties of daily life.*

However, in the late 1920s, much like previous periods of overexpansion and out-of-control speculation, Adams argued, the nation had lost its way, its guiding philosophy forgotten in the wild pursuit of money and the things it could buy. "The dream of a richer, better, fuller human life for all citizens instead of for a small class had been turned by our leaders and ourselves into a statistical table of standard of living," he wrote, the market crash and subsequent depression a natural result (and something Adams had predicted). Now, the nation having survived its "mental disorder," Adams was hopeful that his vision would be restored. "Like the passing of the shadow in an eclipse, the light of reason appears to be steadily extending over the horizon," the American Dream beginning to reemerge.

Lawrence R. Samuel, *The American Dream*, 2012



**NOTE IMPORTANTE AUX CANDIDATS**  
Les candidats traiteront le sujet **sur la copie qui leur sera fournie** en respectant l'ordre des questions et en faisant apparaître la **numérotation** (numéro **et** lettre repère le cas échéant). Ils composeront des phrases complètes chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger les réponses. **Le nombre de mots** indiqué constitue une exigence minimale. En l'absence d'indication, les candidats répondront brièvement (moins de vingt mots) à la question posée.

**Questionnaire à traiter par les candidats des séries ES et S**

**COMPRÉHENSION (10 points)**

**Document A**

1. Focus on the main character.
  - a) What is her country of origin?
  - b) During what period of her life did she move to the U.S.? Support your answer with a quotation.
  - c) What was her "talent"?
  - d) What did she have to struggle with?
  - e) Who did she emigrate with? *Yolke*.
2.
  - a) Among the following adjectives, choose the ones that best describe her:  
**determined** – ambitious – hesitant – strong-willed – soft – versatile
  - b) Pick out four expressions to support your choice
3. Focus on lines 14-23.
  - a) Describe the little girl's activity.
  - b) Will her situation be different for her when she is older?
4. Does the narrator have many photographs of herself as a little child? Why or why not?
5.
  - a) What did she do with her first photograph from school? Answer in your own words.
  - b) What does this reveal about herself then? (30 words).

**Document B**

6. List the bases of the American Dream as Adams defined it.
7. According to him, which element of modern life momentarily changed the philosophy of the American Dream?

**Documents A and B**

8. Document B, lines 10-11: "*With this...daily life.*"  
Identify the elements in Document A which relate to this quotation.



## EXPRESSION (10 points)

Les candidats des séries ES/S traiteront UN des deux sujets ci-dessous:

1. Would you be ready to settle in an English-speaking country for your job? Why or why not? (200 words +/- 10 words)

2. You have moved to an English-speaking country and you settled in. Write an article about your experiences and hopes for the future. (200 words +/- 10 words)