

## The American Dream then and now

### Possible answers and solutions

1. Outline the reasons Schwarzenegger gives for leaving his home country of Austria.

Aspects of the assignment	Phrases from the text you could have highlighted	Notes in the margin: your own words/paraphrases (Use your dictionary!)
reasons for leaving Austria	<p>“When I was a boy the Soviets occupied part of Austria. I saw their tanks in the streets.” (ll.13-14)</p> <p>“I remember the fear we had when we had to cross into the Soviet sector.” (ll.14–15)</p>	After World War II he was confronted with communism when part of Austria was controlled by the Soviet army.
	<p>“It was common belief that the Soviet soldiers could take a man out of his own car and ship him back to the Soviet Union as slave labor.” (ll.16–18)</p> <p>“I remember how scared I was that the soldiers would pull my father or my uncle out of the car and I would never see them again.” (ll.21–23)</p>	<p><i>Childhood memories:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– living in fear of the army</li> <li>– being afraid of being separated from one’s family</li> <li>– feeling of helplessness</li> </ul>
	<p>“As a kid I saw socialist – the socialist country that Austria became after the Soviets left.” (ll.26–27)</p>	From his point of view, the situation in Austria did not improve very much after the Soviet occupation had ended.
	<p>“In school, when the teacher would talk about America, I would daydream about coming here.” (ll.29–30)</p> <p>“I would sit there and watch for hours American movies, transfixed by my heroes, like John Wayne.” (ll.30-32)</p>	As a boy he was attracted by the Wild West and its heroes, whom he knew from films.
	<p>“Everything about America seemed so big to me, so open, so possible.” (ll.32-33)</p>	America appeared attractive because, unlike his small home country, it offered vast open spaces and wonderful opportunities.
	<p>“Then I heard Nixon speak. He was talking about free enterprise, getting the government off your back, lowering the taxes and strengthening the military.” (ll.40–42)</p>	America, especially the Republicans, promised to give him the chance to make his dreams come true, e.g. to be financially successful.

**Task 1** aims at the content of the text (*Anforderungsbereich 1*).

**Outline** means that you have to give the main features, structure or general principles of a topic, without minor details. The topic is mentioned in the assignment: reasons for leaving Austria. Make sure you use your own words. Your English-English dictionary will help you to do so. Avoid quotations but add some line reference in brackets: (l.X) or (ll.X–Y).

2. Point out the speaker's attitude towards the (political) position of the (former) Soviet Union.

Aspects of the assignment	Phrases from the text you could have highlighted/could quote	Your own words/paraphrases (Use your dictionary!)
the past	"... the Soviets occupied part of Austria." (l.13)	oppression of country by the Soviet Union
	"... the fear we had when we had to cross into the Soviet sector." (ll.14-15) "... ship him back to the Soviet Union as slave labor." (l.17-18) "... how scared I was that the soldiers would pull my father ..." (l.21) "... lived in fear of the Soviet boot." (ll.23-24)	The Soviet Union is used as a symbol of fear and terror, injustice and modern slavery.
	"... the socialist country that Austria became after the Soviets left." (ll.26-27)	(negative) political influence on Austria
the present	"Today, the world no longer fears the Soviet Union ..." (l.24)	The Soviet Union has lost its political influence due to the increasing power of the USA.

**Task 2** also aims at the content of the speech (Anforderungsbereich 1).

**Point out** means that you have to find and present a certain aspect of the text.

## 3. Analyse how Schwarzenegger makes his speech effective.

Aspects of the assignment	Phrases from the text you could have highlighted/ could quote	Your explanation/analysis
relationship to the audience	"My fellow Americans" (I.1)	The speaker addresses the audience directly and tries to show them that he is one of them.
	<i>Paragraphs dealing with his past:</i> "When I was a boy ..." (II.13–14) "As long as I live – ..." (II.6–9)	He tells them two anecdotes from his past to bridge the gap between them (little Austrian boy who is scared of foreign soldiers/ becoming an American citizen).
	"I walked around with the American flag around my shoulder ..." (II.8-9)	He appeals to their sense of patriotism by mentioning the American flag.
rhetorical devices	"scrawny boy" – "Governor" (II.2+3) "socialism" (I.39) – "free enterprise" (I.40) "fear" (I.14) – "dreams" (I.35) "empty pockets" – "full of dreams" (I.35)	He makes use of antithesis to stress the difference between his old life in Austria and his new life in America.
	"dream" ( I.5, I.29, I.35) "proud" (I.8, I.10, I.11)	Repetition of key words makes the speech emphatic.
	"That is an immigrant's dream! It's the American Dream." (I.5)	He uses an image which stands for a whole range of positive ideas, e.g. freedom, individuality, success etc.
	"... full of dreams, full of determination, full of desire." (II.35-36)	Enumeration is combined with anaphora and alliteration to give emphasis

**Task 3** aims at the formal elements of the speech (*Anforderungsbereich 2*).

**Analyse** means that you have to describe and explain in detail certain aspects and/or features of the speech. Two of these aspects are mentioned in the assignment: rhetorical devices and the relationship to the audience. Short quotations from the text might be necessary. Never give your opinion in this *Anforderungsbereich*.

4. a) Arnold Schwarzenegger claims that what he has achieved is “an immigrant’s dream. It’s the American Dream” (I.5). Comment on this statement. You may take into consideration what you know about the American Dream.
- *Possible thesis:* Arnold Schwarzenegger is the embodiment of the American Dream.
  - Evidence:* His achievements reflect different elements of the American Dream:
    - His rise from a poor Austrian boy to a famous Hollywood star illustrates the economic dream of success and prosperity: from rags to riches.
    - His election as Governor of California shows that personal dreams of self-fulfilment can still come true in America.
  - Background information about the American Dream (→ see Fact file):
    - Origin of the term: coined by James Truslow Adams in 1931; idea itself goes back to early settlers who left Europe for political, religious and economic reasons.
    - Elements of the Dream: freedom, individualism, optimism, hard work, progress, patriotism.

**Tasks 4 a)** aims at an evaluation of the text (*Anforderungsbereich 3*).

**Comment** means that you are expected to state clearly your opinion and to support your views with evidence. In this assignment the topic in question is the American Dream in general and Arnold Schwarzenegger’s achievements in particular.

4. b) Imagine you are an immigrant and have just listened to Schwarzenegger’s speech. Write a formal letter to him either congratulating him on his speech or criticising it.

Your text should

- follow the rules for writing a formal letter.
- introduce the writer and the reasons why he/she is writing.
- be connected to ideas/issues put forward by Schwarzenegger in his speech, such as:
  - European history after World War II
  - American patriotism
  - the political ideals of the Republican Party
  - the international role of the United States in peacekeeping
- clearly structure your train of thought.
- use mainly formal English.

**Task 4 b)** aims at an evaluation of the text by reflecting on its topic in a different type of text (*Anforderungsbereich 3*).

That means that you are expected to observe the conventions of the new type of text (here: formal letter).

You could, for example, write in the role of an Austrian immigrant and start like this:

*1st September 2004*

*Dear Sir,*

*As a native-born Austrian, I feel I simply have to protest about the way you portrayed our home country in your speech at the Republican National Convention last night. ...*

4. c) People are afraid of what they do not know. Give your personal opinion.
- Think of your personal definition of fear (you may use the dictionary for help).
  - Think of situations that have frightened you (new school, new surroundings, new medical treatment, etc.).
  - List reasons that led to this fear (having to give up familiar things, needing energy to start something new, lack of experience, lack of motivation, prejudices, negative influence of other people, etc.).
  - Find examples (e.g. from history or your personal experience) where it is possible that fear prevented a situation from developing positively.
  - Present your opinion with reference to the given examples/the given topic (you may concentrate on one or two situations and describe them).
  - Draw your conclusions (you may support or contradict the given statement).

**Task 4 c)** also aims at *Anforderungsbereich 3*.

Since this task is about your own personal thoughts, you may focus on individual aspects which seem important to you. However, you should keep in mind that your comment is expected to be plausible.