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How Do Americans Define the American Dream in 2015?

BY VANITY FAIR

There's nothing dreamlike about how Americans perceive the American Dream. Nothing surreal, or vague, or involving harried white rabbits in waistcoats. The American Dream, we seem to feel, is a simple, connect-the-dots matter; it makes perfect sense.

We have nothing against successful careers or wealth or fame, but far more of us believe that the American Dream is about giving our kids a better life. And two-thirds of us think that our lives are better than our parents', which means *the system works*. (Incidentally, more of those polled said that the American Dream is best embodied by Steve Jobs—even more than chose Kim Kardashian.)



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There's no mystery about how to achieve this American Dream: through education. (So say 47 percent, as opposed to the 9 percent who feel "being born wealthy" is the smart thing to do.) Nor is there anything really mysterious about the political divide in how we view those traditional aspirants to the American Dream, immigrants: 45 percent of Democrats say immigrants mostly help the United States; 53 percent of Republicans say they mostly hurt it.

Finally, for all the griping, we lean toward the view that the American Dream is more robust right now than at any time in the past.

