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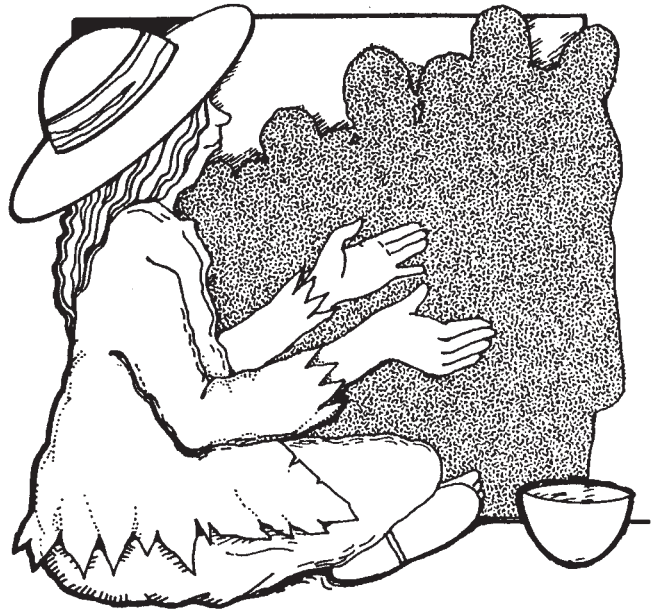
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The American Dream

There are several elements involved in “The American Dream.” Generally speaking, it is the ability to attain the “good life.” This might include owning your own house, having enough money so that you and your family can enjoy leisure time together, and giving your children the opportunity to go to college and have a better life themselves.

Kino’s world is quite different from those who live in the “city of stone.” The doctor, for instance, enjoys his breakfast of sweet biscuits and hot chocolate in his private chambers surrounded by high outer walls and “cool inner gardens” with the “splash of cooling water” bubbling in the fountains. Kino, on the other hand, merely “squatted by the fire pit and rolled a hot corncake and dipped it in a sauce” while inside a single room brush house.

As Steinbeck describes the trip of Kino’s family to the doctor, he shows that the reasons for these differences in lifestyle are twofold—poverty and prejudice. Kino’s poverty is shown, for example, when the beggars in front of the church note the poorness of the family’s clothes and by the fact that Kino has no money to pay the doctor. But it is not only the lack of money that causes the doctor to refuse treatment. He is obviously prejudiced against Indians whom he considers little better than animals, as evidenced when he says, “ ‘Have I nothing better to do than cure insect bites for “little Indians”? I am a doctor, not a veterinary.’ ”



In our own society there are vast differences between the “haves” and the “have-nots” as well. Kino’s big break in reaching his dream is the finding of the pearl. This would be similar to someone in our society winning a once-in-a-lifetime lottery.

From Dream To Reality

What would you include as essential in your American Dream?

In a paragraph, tell where you would live and describe your life in this dream.

- List as many ways as possible to insure that you reach this goal.
- Discuss briefly how members of all races in our society may reach their dreams.
- Are there any special obstacles that minorities might encounter? What are they?

Personification

Throughout this book you have been introduced to a variety of literary techniques which the author has used to great effect in his novel, *The Pearl*. Personification is one of those techniques.

Personification is giving human characteristics to something that is not human. John Steinbeck writes that, “The wind blew fierce and strong, and it pelted them with bits of sticks, sand, and little rocks.” Here, the suggestion is that the wind has the human ability to be “strong” and is able to pelt or throw “sticks, sand, and little rocks” at Juana, Kino, and Coyotito.

Another example, from the same page goes on to say “The sky was brushed clean by the wind and the stars were cold in the black sky.” The wind in this case gives us the picture of having a brush and cleaning up the sky. Also, it is not stars but people who are “cold.”

The author uses the technique of personification throughout this book to show that Kino and his family, as well as the environment, are all alive in his story. Each element is related equally to the other.

Your task is to explain the human qualities that the following examples of personification show us. Write out what each example means.

Example 1: “The wind cried and whisked in the brush, and the family went on monotonously, hour after hour.”

Example 2: “High in the gray stone mountains, under a frowning peak, a little spring bubbled . . .”

Example 3: “There wasn’t much left of it then anyway, for every time it fell over an escarpment the thirsty air drank it . . .”

Example 4: “The coyotes cried and laughed in the brush.”

Example 5: “The high sun streamed down on the dry creaking earth so that the vegetation ticked in protest.”
