

Worksheet – *West Side Story* (2021): “America”

A. Look at the title and the context.

West Side Story tells the story of Puerto Rican migrants and their children living in New York in the 1950s.

What could the characters have positive and negative opinions about America?

B. First viewing – What can you see?

Watch the scene :

1. Tick the elements you notice.

A group of men		A confrontation	
A group of women		dancing	
Puerto Ricans characters		A flag	
American characters		A happy atmosphere	
Street/urban setting		A tense atmosphere	
A party			

2. What is the general mood of the scene?

Choose and justify:

joyful – peaceful – ironic – tense – confrontational – optimistic – pessimistic

3. Who seems to have different opinions about America?

C. Second viewing – Listen to the lyrics

4. Who says what?

Complete the table.

Themes	Women : positive aspects of America	Men : negative aspects of America
opportunities		
freedom		
discrimination		
Money/wealth		

5. RECAP : Complete the sentences

For the women, America is a place where...

For the men, America is a place where...

6. The American Dream

The American Dream is the idea that everyone can achieve success through freedom, hard work and opportunities.

Does the scene present the American Dream as... ☐ a reality ☐ an illusion ☐ a mixture of both

Justify your answer with two elements from the scene.

1.

2.

D. Third viewing : Focus on the cinematography and choreography

Watch the scene again.

7. How do the following elements contribute to the meaning of the scene?

Elements	Your observations	Effect/meaning
music		
dance		
Colours/costumes		
Interaction between men and women		

8. CONCLUSION : What does the “America”scene reveal about the American Dream?

Choose one of the following statements and **explain** your opinion.

- A. “America is a land of opportunities.”
- B. “The American Dream is not accessible to everyone.”
- C. “You can be both Puerto Rican and American.”
- D. “America is both a dream and a disappointment.”