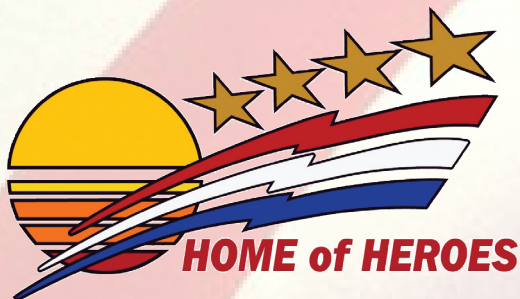


“What one word best describes the United States of America and why?”

**5th Annual
Pueblo Home of Heroes
Association Essay Contest
Winning Stories 2013**

**Sponsored by the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association and the
Pueblo City-County Library District**



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2013 Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest

**“What one word best describes the
United States of America and why?”**

March 2013

The Pueblo Home of Heroes Association in cooperation with the Pueblo City-County Library District is pleased to announce the winners of its fifth Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest.

The following guidelines were required:

All entries must be typed.

Elementary School level – grades 4 and 5: 300-500 words

Middle School level – grades 6-8: 400-700 words

High School level – grades 9-12: 500-1,000 words

The judges were: Doyle Cooper, Darren Cooper, Joann Fry, Andy Hauk, and Jim Stuart.

There were a total of 255 entries: 91 at the elementary level, 60 at the middle school level and 104 at the high school level.

The Pueblo Home of Heroes Association and the Pueblo City-County Library District wish to thank the teachers and parents for encouraging their students and children to participate in this essay contest. It was clear to the judges that the contest achieved its purpose of encouraging students to think about the foundation of our freedom and the ongoing cost in lives and effort to maintain this most precious right.

2013 Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest Honorable Mentions

Elementary School

Dustin Medina
Corwin International Magnet School - Ms. Jaime Quinn

Kristina Aguilar
Corwin International Magnet School - Ms. Jaime Quinn

Matalyn Craighead
Goodnight Elementary School - Mrs. Durning

Middle School

Ambyrlynn Javornick
Goodnight Elementary School - Mrs. Robson

Jacob Andersen
Goodnight Elementary School - Mrs. Robson

High School

Lizzy Manguso
Centennial High School - Ms. Vivoda

Michael Martinez
Centennial High School - Ms. Vivoda

Nick Johnston
East High School - Mrs. Koshak

2013 Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest Winners

Elementary School

- 1st place Anthony Guerrero-Diaz
Sunset Park Elementary School - Mrs. Galli
- 2nd place Caitlin Johnston
Belmont Elementary School - Mrs. Radford
- 3rd place Truman McCaw
Goodnight Elementary School - Mr. Shue

Middle School

- 1st place Cade Van Riper
Goodnight Elementary School - Mrs. Robson
- 2nd place Brooklyn Micheli
Goodnight Elementary School - Mrs. Robson
- 3rd place Allison Kelley
Goodnight Elementary School - Mrs. Robson

High School

- 1st place William Finley
Centennial High School - Ms. Vivoda
- 2nd place Lydia Grace Ryan
Home School - Mrs. Fryberger
- 3rd place Kayla Stalcar
Centennial High School - Ms. Vivoda

One Word to Describe America

By Anthony Guerrero-Diaz

When asked to describe America in one word, people have many different ways to describe it because America means so many different things to so many different people. The one word that I use to describe America is “courageous.”

The first reason why I feel America is courageous is because we have so many brave soldiers in our military – Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines – that never give up. They and their families have fought and sacrificed their lives and happiness not only for the American land and what it stands for, “Land of the free, home of the brave,” but for the American people who know they are blessed to have had these brave soldiers fight for their freedom and their families.

The second reason why I feel America is courageous is because America has been through many different wars, and even if we won the war or lost the war, the American people have always showed lots of courage to stay brave and strong not only during the time of war but always so they can show kids like me what courage is and what it means to be an American, to work hard to help show other countries that America is brave and will stand together.

The third reason why I feel America is courageous is because I feel safe here. When my dad was in Iraq, my mom, my brother and I watched the news a lot and I saw how in some places the kids my age lived and it scared me. Some of them didn't have homes or moms and dads. They carried guns and my mom said sometimes they had to do bad things to survive. They didn't get to go to school or just go play like I do; men with guns were always around. My mom always tells me that I should always be thankful for where I live and what I get to do because somewhere out there, there is a soldier that gave their life because they believed in this country and in me very much and wanted me to grow up to be happy and feel safe. It feels good to know that America is courageous enough to do what they can to keep me safe like my mom does.

The fourth reason why I feel America is courageous is because we have so many brave people here that are good and not mean and want to hurt other people. They value our home and are thankful and show faith for everyone. I always thought it was so cool when people we didn't even know would shake my dad's hand and tell him thank you for being so brave and fighting for us. Some would even hug my mom and me and when I asked why, my mom and dad told me because some soldiers that go overseas to help fight and protect the United States of America, have families like us that they have to leave behind to stay strong and brave and show lots of courage to go on with everyday life so the mommies and daddies that are overseas don't worry so much and just focus on protecting the USA and stay safe themselves. Like my mom always said we are all like one big family, when push comes to shove and someone hurts us, everyone puts their differences aside and we help and stick together and protect one another. So I had to show that I had a lot of courage and was brave enough to go on and help out while my dad was in Iraq. I wish everyone around the world was courageous and brave like we are here in America and that they did not want to start wars that hurt other people.



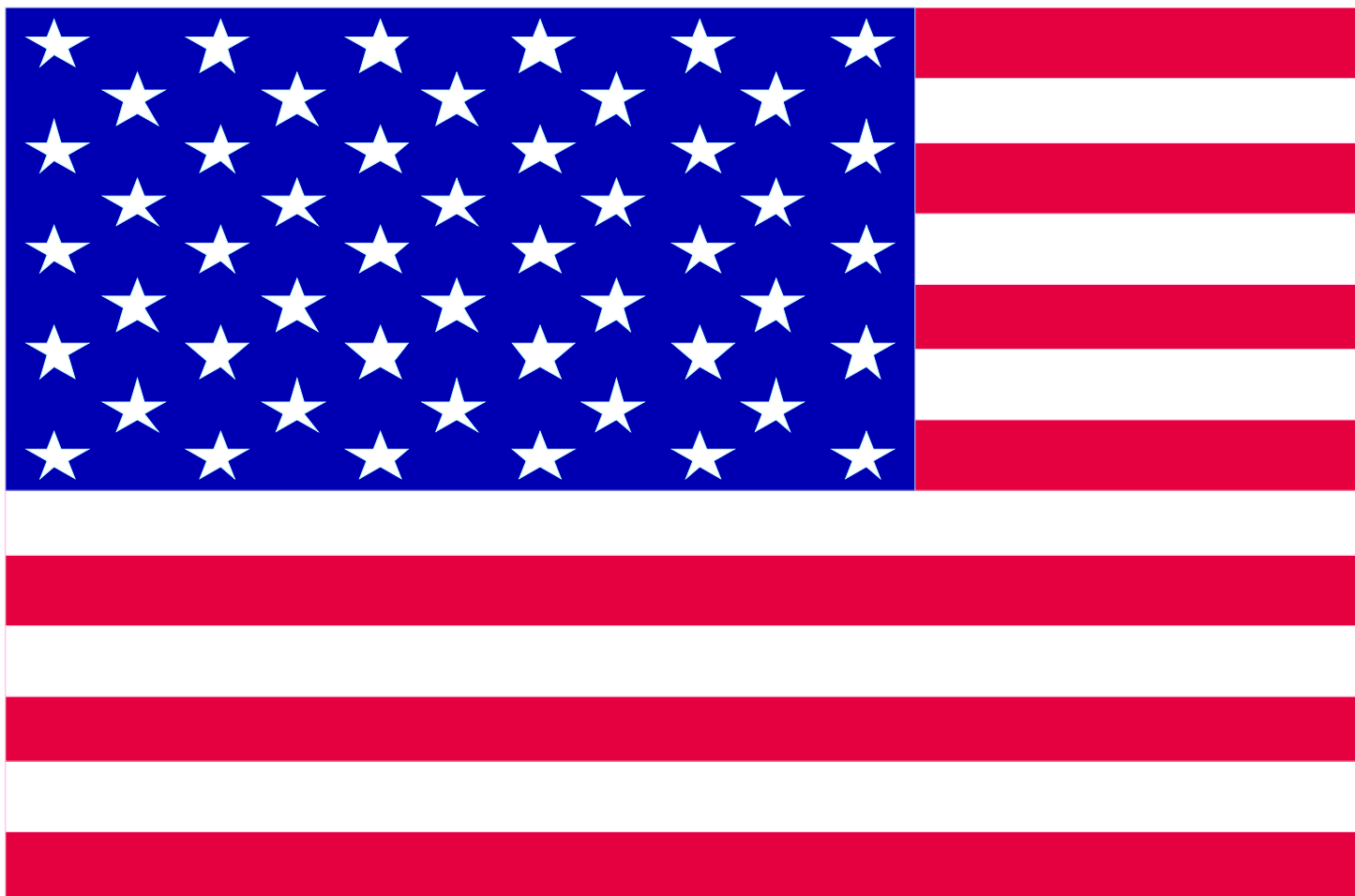
Proud American

By: Caitlin Johnston

I am a proud American. This past summer I had the opportunity to visit Washington D.C. and many different monuments. When I gazed at all of the amazing sights, I had a rush of excitement buzz through me and a sense of pride. I got to see the giant American flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write *The Star Spangled Banner*. My family also visited Arlington National Cemetery with miles and miles of rows of white gravestones. Then the Caissons, which are horse-drawn buggies, came trotting through. “Clip, clop, clip, clop,” went their hooves. I put my hand to my heart. They were bringing home another fallen hero. Also, we visited the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, and went to the Lincoln Memorial. I stood where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech. In my head, I could imagine the crowd staring at him, knowing this speech would change their lives. The word I found to describe this was “proud.”

The song *Proud to be an American* is true not only to me, but to America. Also in Washington D.C., I got to go to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Wow. Those guards stay there day in and day out. They stood there even during super storm Sandy, risking their lives to guard the tomb. When the changing of the guard started, I felt fortunate that as Americans, we are free. Later, we got to look at one of the segregated drinking fountains at the Smithsonian Castle. It was so small and it read “COLORED”. I felt really upset. Personally, I think people should not be separated by the color of their skin. In this world, we all have something in common. We are human, whether you are red, yellow, black, or white.

But in the land of the free and the home of the brave, we are proud of what we do, taking pride in our work and in our everyday lives. It is what we, as Americans, are destined to do. America is the proudest country I know. And that is why I believe that “proud” describes the United States of America.



The Best Word to Describe the United States: Courage

By: Truman McCaw

When John Wayne “The Duke” said, “Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway,” he picked the perfect word to describe our country: courage. Courage is the best word to describe our country because every day hundreds of men and women risk their lives for the freedom and safety for our country.

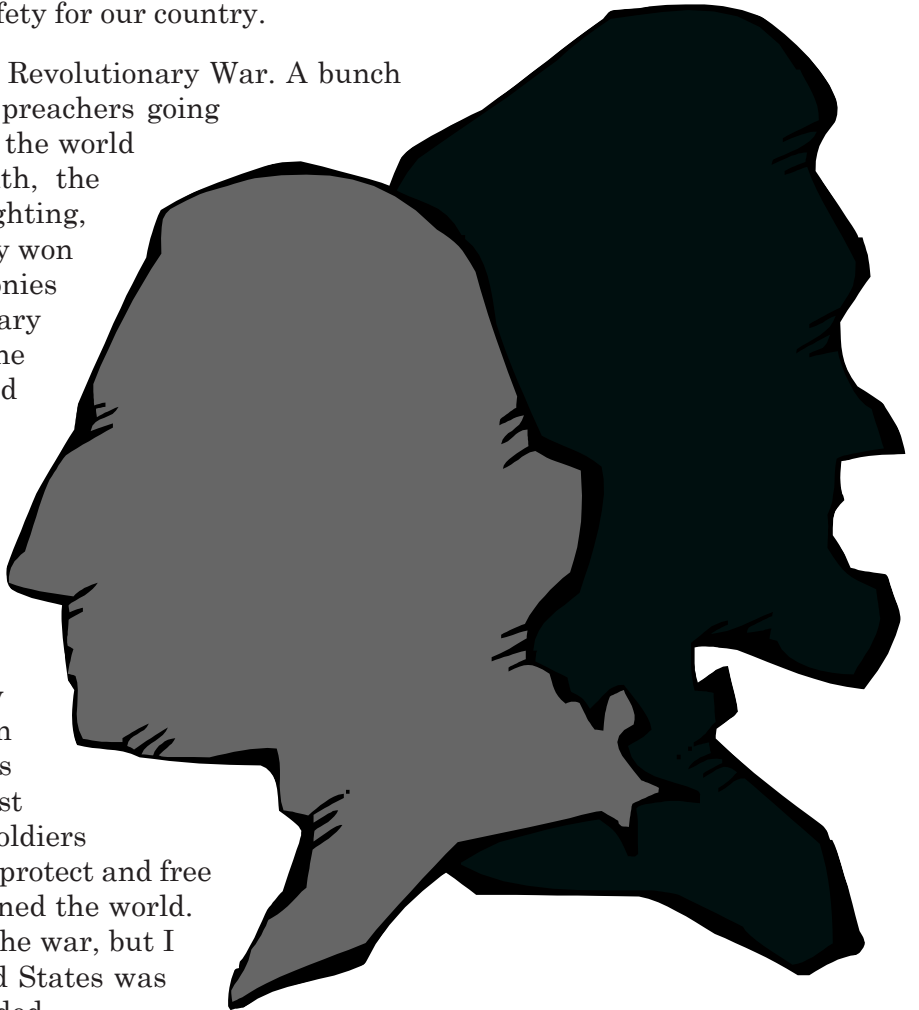
A great example of courage is the Revolutionary War. A bunch of farmers, blacksmiths, tailors, and preachers going against the most powerful military in the world is crazy. Facing almost certain death, the colonies gave it all they had and with fighting, fighting, and more fighting they finally won the war against the British. The colonies had defeated the most powerful military force in the world. The courage of the American soldier had won the war and set the stage for what America would become.

Winning World War II was one of the most courageous things the United States has done. First of all, there was a very bad guy named Adolph Hitler. He was so powerful he could take over a country in a matter of days! Taking out an army would be easy for him. Millions of people died during the war against Germany, Japan, and Italy. The U.S. soldiers fought not only for our country, but to protect and free others from the evil Axis that threatened the world. The United States and its allies won the war, but I believe that the courage of the United States was the main reason World War II was ended.

It takes a lot of courage to win a war (as you can see from my last two paragraphs), but United States citizens of today are no less courageous. Law enforcement officers are very brave and courageous because every day they put their lives on the line and serve justice in your city. Also, firemen throw themselves into dangerous (and hot) situations to save lives, and their courage is rarely recognized. Even teachers and everyday citizens sacrifice for others and they stand up for what is right. Standing up to a bully is as courageous as all of these things, so even young people can exhibit this kind of character. Courage isn't just for war, it's also for everyday life.

When Harry S. Truman said, “Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better,” he inspired me to seize the freedom given to me by many courageous Americans before me and strive to make a better life for me and my family. Courage means a lot to some people, but to me, when I hear courage, I think of the United States of America.

Now, when you think about our country think of all the courageous things the U.S. has done. It is the foundation of all we are, all we do, and all we'll ever be.



America is Unique

By: Kristina M. Aguilar

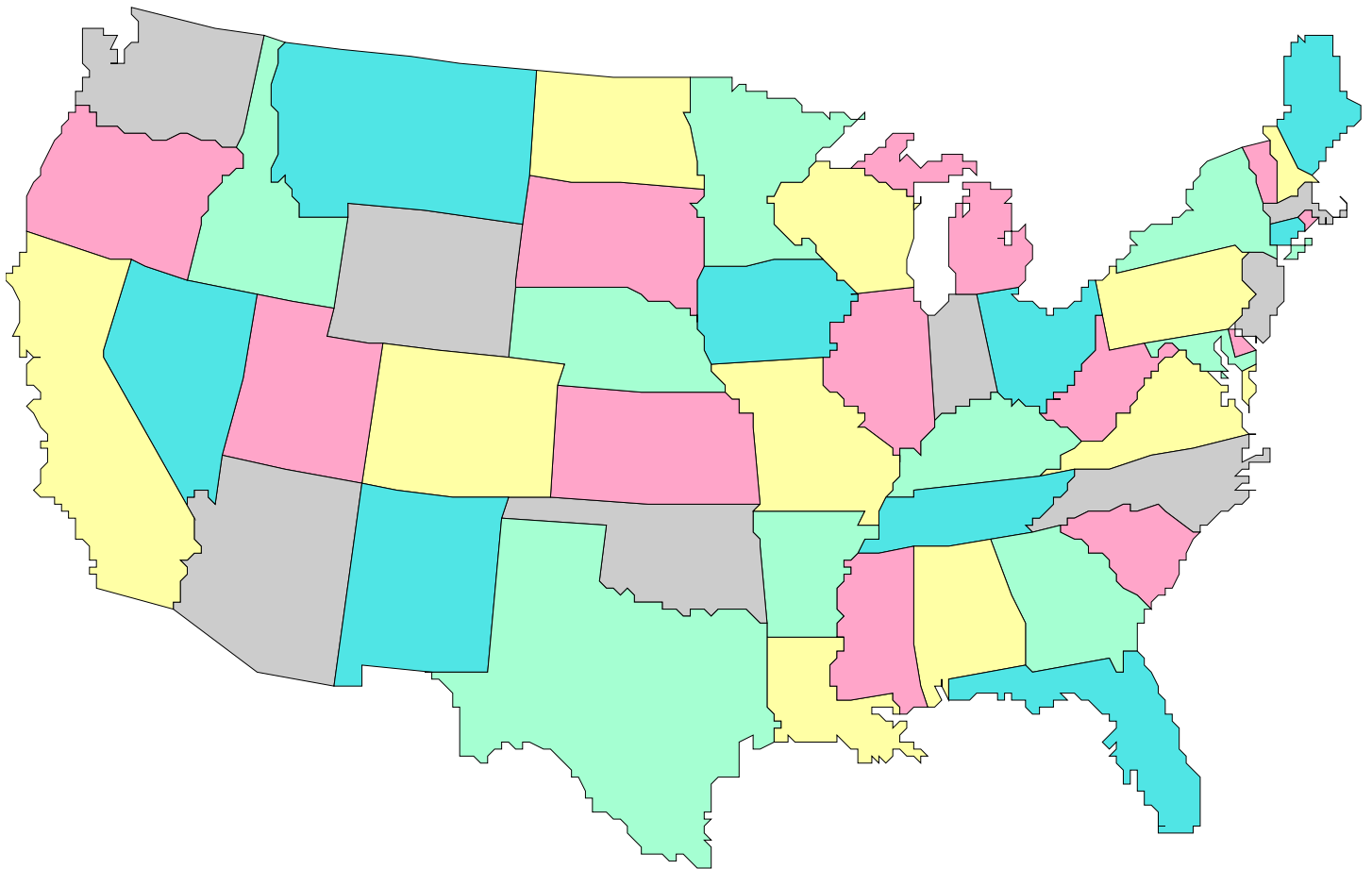
One word that would describe the United States of America is “unique.” There are many reasons for this.

Nobody will ever be born exactly alike. Each of us is a caterpillar who becomes a uniquely beautiful butterfly. We also have things other countries don't have. If we tried to be more special than others, everybody becomes more special, and the U.S.A becomes even more special! Not every country has the power to do this.

“All men are created equal,” wrote Thomas Jefferson. This is true. Even if we are nothing alike, we are equal. Other countries might be astonished by this and gasp in surprise. We can only explain, “We are created equal, even if we are unique.” Our land smiles a welcoming smile.

Can it be said our country is the luckiest of them all? Yes! Why? That is a silly question. Our country is the luckiest of them all! We are unique, rich, beautiful, and peaceful. No wonder people thought our roads were paved in gold, and we are called the “land of opportunity.” Everyone has an opportunity to go to school, get a good education, and have a good life. It is unfair and strange if a race of people do not get to go to school just because they are black, girls, or different. Here, it is good to be unique.

Those are the reasons “unique” fits our country. We are all totally different. We are as different as steel, gold, and diamond. Those minerals are different, yet equally precious. Look around. Is everyone black, white, Hispanic, or tanned? I do not think that is really possible. It is not really possible to be in a room with people exactly like you. I like this fact since I like to know there is nobody like me. If there were people like me, I would get pretty bored soon. We all make up this land called the U.S.A. I guess this country is truly and honestly the land we have come to know as “America the beautiful.”



Hope

By Matalyn Craighead

Hope – the United States of America is full of it and millions see it and come to seek it. With ideas blooming and new jobs being created, we can safely say that hope is being planted in the hearts of our world's people. There are new ideas sprouting every day and hundreds of new jobs every week. Our country is filling up with hope.

Doctors are discovering new medicines and working on a cure for cancer. Ideas of the future, of how things can be better are becoming a reality. And what drives them to do this? Hope. Hope that they can make a better community, a better country, and a better world here in the United States of America.

America is where hope is and it shines through to other countries. Why do you think so many immigrants (legal and illegal) come to America? They come because they have hope – hope that they can get a job, support their family, and have a better life. Our country is so full of hope, people from all over the world come to get it. Don't you see? These immigrants come to America because they desire to watch their children grow up in the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

Even in times of despair, our country had hope. “We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope,” as Martin Luther King, Jr. said. In times of hardship and economic failure, we stuck together, we kept our hope close to our hearts and shared it with one another. Those who lived through the great depression, World War I, and World War II had hope, hope that life would get better and the wars would be over. We stuck together then, and if it is ever needed, we will stick together again. We will always stick together.

So, as the scholar Martin Luther said, “Everything that is done in this world is done with hope.”



Limitless

by Dustin Medina

Its breathtaking sites and beautiful views are limitless. The opportunities available to you are also limitless. You might be surprised to see how generous the people can be, especially in time of need or crisis. This land of limitless possibilities is the United States of America!

If you visit the United States you will find a limitless amount of beautiful places that will take your breath away. The majestic Rocky Mountains are home to many amazing and interesting plants and animals. The vivid colors and outdoor activities are limitless. The Grand Canyon in Arizona has layers of rocks that stack up like a birthday cake. Let's not forget the gigantic Statue of Liberty and the buildings that touch the sky in New York City. Plus, never forget the sunset on the sandy beaches of Hawaii. The United States has limitless amounts of beauty wherever you look.

The United States of America gives us limitless opportunity. People from around the world come to the United States to have the opportunity to be free as a bird. It provides a good education where you can learn to be as smart as a fox. You have the opportunity to be whatever you want to be when you grow up.

Many people that live in the U.S.A. show limitless amounts of generosity, especially in time of need or crisis. People come together to support one another and keep each other safe during disasters like Katrina or 9/11. The people in the United States showed limitless generosity when they donated supplies to help the victims of Hurricane Sandy and the tsunami victims in Japan. Our generosity fills up the U.S.A. like jellybeans fill up a jar.

As you can see, "limitless" is the best word that describes the United States. It has limitless beauty, opportunities and generosity. As President Obama said, "America's possibilities are limitless, for we possess all the qualities that this world without boundaries demands: youth and drive, diversity and openness, an endless capacity for risk and a gift of reinvention."



Brave

By Cade Van Riper

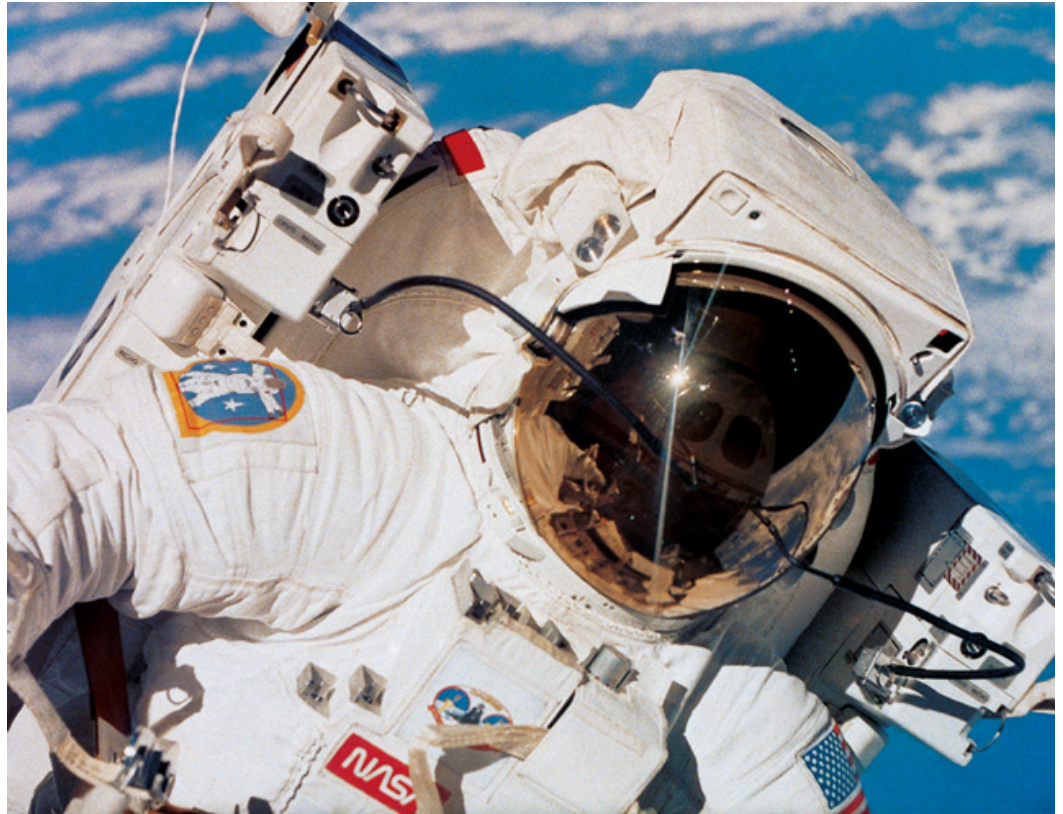
One word that can be used to describe the United States of America is “brave.” I think the United States of America is brave for many reasons and I have listed some of these reasons in this paper. Anyone can be brave no matter what age they are. The Webster Dictionary defines brave as having or showing courage. When I hear the word brave the first thing I think of is the United States of America.

Some of the people that I know are brave are the men and women that serve in America’s armed forces. These brave soldiers leave their families and head into unknown lands to face enemies that want to kill them and yet they go anyway. That is being brave. They protect us from many different threats allowing us to go on with our lives without even thinking about the things that might happen. There are even soldiers that watch outer space searching for objects that might endanger the earth such as an asteroid that might be on a collision course with our planet.

Some other people that are brave are firefighters and police officers. Firefighters risk their lives on a daily basis rushing into burning buildings to save trapped people. They do their very best to try and put out the fire and save people’s property always risking more than they get back. Then there are the police officers. They are brave because they try to protect us from gang members, drug dealers and other people that are up to no good. Sometimes they even go undercover to find evidence so that they can arrest people. When they do this they are extremely vulnerable and at risk.

There are also the people that travel into outer space. These people would climb into a rocket ship and go for one heck of a ride. The space shuttle traveled at 17,500 miles per hour and the astronauts were stuck inside with no way to escape if something goes wrong like it did on Jan. 28, 1986. Yet even after that tragedy there was never a shortage of astronauts. People were always willing to sign up and become an astronaut.

There are many brave Americans. I have listed just a few of them here that are brave. I could write about the cowboys, the miners, and all of the other Americans that take risks both physically and financially. So the next time you think of the word “brave”, I hope that you do like I do and think of the United States of America.



Opportunities

By Brooklyn Micheli

Many words come to my mind when I think of the United States of America, but the one word that stands out the most is “opportunities.” The USA is the one place where the land is full of hope and freedom. Everyone is able to speak their mind. People are faced with opportunities every day, some good and bad. We have to make the choice to provide for our families and ourselves. The United States is not just any place, it is one of the places we are proud to call home.

People from all over the world come to the United States for a new beginning; a new life, a place to take chances, a land to be free. Since the beginning, people have been coming to the United States to escape their old lives and start fresh. There are many job options here. Everyday new opportunities come to life. You can get an education, it doesn't matter if you are 21 or 61. There are colleges spread out all over, anywhere from California to New York. There are religious colleges and athletic colleges. Scholarships are given away every year for what you work hard to achieve.

The people of the United States have the opportunity to believe and do what they choose. Christianity, Roman Catholic, Muslim, and Judaism are religions we as Americans have the choice to believe. No person in the United States has the authority to tell a person what to believe. We are free. We are united. We are brave. We are equal.

We are able to marry who we want and wear what we choose. Nobody can pick your husband. We express ourselves through what we wear. In the U.S. we can wear anything from ski jackets to tank tops. In other countries women are forced to wear clothes that cover every inch of them. We are not looked down on if we wear shorts. There are many choices we face every second of the day – where we go, who we see, what we do.

“Opportunities,” is a word not used in our daily lives. This word is more than just a word, it is what gives our country essence. Even though many people that live in the country often forget how lucky they are, they do remember how irreplaceable the United States of America is. We live in a place where not only can we be free, but where we also have the option to live the way we please. We are not only a united country, we are a country full of opportunities. We are the United States of America.



Freedom in the U.S.A.

By: Allison Kelley

There are many words to describe the United States: people, proud, love, technology, and many more. I think the perfect word to describe the U.S. however, is “freedom.” Ever since we won the Revolutionary War in 1783, we’ve had rights no other countries had. Now they’re following our example. We have freedom of speech, freedom of religion and no gender segregation. These are some of the things that make this country special because we had these rights first and they’re still improving.

One of the greatest types of freedom is freedom of speech. We can protest the government’s decision. If the government makes a law that we don’t like, we can protest against it while in other countries the ruler’s choice goes without complaint. The people can also speak on matters. No matter what the discussion, no matter where you rank in the economy you have the right to converse about it. Best of all, we can write what we want. If we write a book that a company or the government doesn’t like, we have the right to sell it in stores. Freedom of speech is a great right but there are even better ones.

Freedom of religion is one of the first rights we had that encouraged people to come to the United States. The government can’t tell us what religion to be. No matter what religion we are we don’t have to change, unlike in earlier times and in some countries today where the ruler dictates the religion of the country. All citizens can have the same jobs and attend the same schools as people of another religion. Say you’re a Christian, a Muslim could attend the same school as you. In some countries if you were a different religion than most of the country you would be given a hard time and may not have the same rights as the others. Finally, we can worship when and where we please. In some countries the only place you worship is in a church in your home. In our country a religious group may not worship at a church, they may worship in queer places like a funeral home. We even have religious schools. These rights are wonderful but the best is yet to come, especially for women.

The right that gave the best equality in our country is no gender segregation. Women have the right to vote. Until the early nineteen hundreds, men were the only ones who could vote. Eventually women got sick of it and stood up for themselves. When the 1920s approached, women won their right to vote. In some countries today men are still the voters and women are fighting for their rights. We’re lucky to live in America. Women can also get the same jobs as men. In earlier times in our country and in some countries today, all women do is cook, clean, and take care of their children. Today in our country, women can get the same jobs as men and vice versa. These are great parts of gender segregation. Another is that women can play the same sports as men. Last year the Olympics came around. It was a great competition for both men and women. While some countries had no women competing at all, others had an exciting debut of women competing for the first time. For America, half of our medal haul was from women. The best part of no gender segregation is that women can attend school and learn alongside men. Today, every child is required to attend some type of school instead of only men. In some countries today, only men learn and in rural countries most children don’t learn. Freedom of speech and religion are great but no gender segregation unites us as a country.

Through freedom we’ve come together as a country and won wars. Although countries are following our example there are still people with fewer rights than us. That could be changed. Who knows, maybe one day we’ll all have the same rights. Until then I think “freedom” is the best word to describe our country. Can you think of a better word? Maybe not, “freedom” could be the best there is.



Hope

By Jacob Andersen

There are many words that describe America, and almost all of them are good, such as freedom, full, grateful, pride and most of all, happy. But I think the word that best describes America is “hope.” This is true for many reasons, such as how we give hope to other countries in their times of poverty and disaster, giving them resources. Also, children in the USA have many options in what they would like to be when they grow up. Finally, our country just seems to be having a bright future.

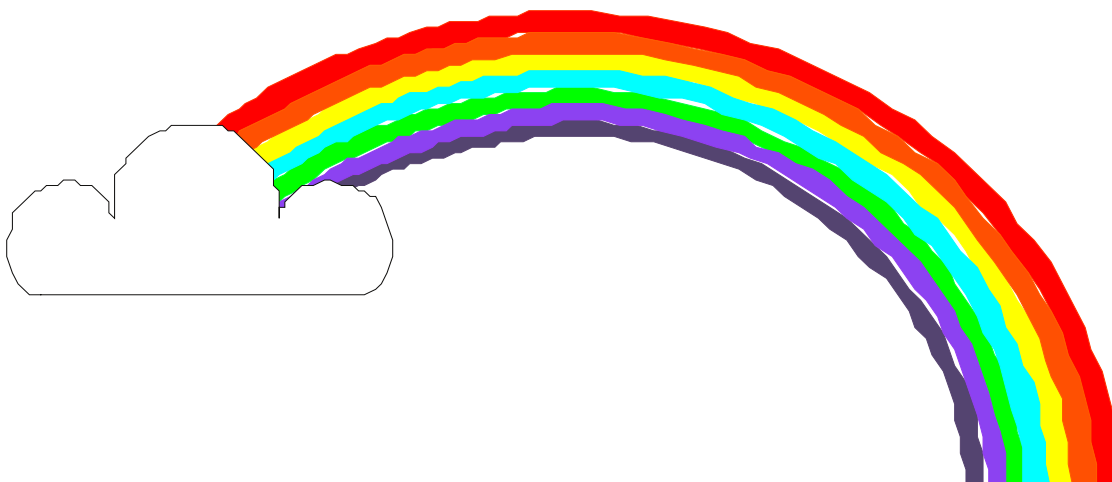
Remember when the earthquake occurred in Haiti and how we helped its inhabitants by giving them shelter, food, and of course, hope? Or how about the tsunami in Japan? That’s what I mean when I say that we give hope to other people in other countries.

We also trade with other countries. This helps both countries benefit by them having a steady income. Lastly, we have teamed with other countries in times of war, such as France, England, and Russia. When it comes to generosity, the USA doesn’t come up short.

Another way to use the word hope to describe America is how children in the U.S. have many job opportunities in what they would like to be when they are of age. They can get a good education in the field of work they would like to pursue. They can finish college, and prepare for the future of their career. And if they decide they want to have a family, they are given many opportunities to have a good income and be able to take care of their children. Finally, it’s how even people who don’t have a home to live in can still be supported by charities and other organizations to help them get better financially. In the USA, it’s possible for everyone to have a great future.

Finally, the word hope can describe America’s future as very hopeful. We are developing new technology every day. Shoot, it seems a new Iphone comes out every week. Also, America (in comparison with other poorer countries) seems to be economically sound. Everyone has at least a meal a day. Finally, we are always figuring out how to conserve and use energy more efficiently. Some examples of this are windmills, dams and solar power.

America can be described in many different sentences, paragraphs, and even full books, but I think the best single word to say what this country is capable of is “hope.” As I have stated in this essay, hope is something we use, give, have, and take care of.



Freedom

By Ambyrlynn Javornik

Freedom is one word that comes to mind when I think of the United States. In the United States, we the people have the freedom of speech. I could say anything I want in front of a crowd as long as it's appropriate. Also, we have the freedom to vote for a president and many other things.

In the United States, we the people have the freedom to say what we think about. If we don't like something, we can say what we think about it. Also, if we don't like something the government or the president is doing we can say what we think about it. We may or may not get our way but at least we speak our mind.

Also in the United States, we the people have freedom of religion. People can choose what religion they want and the government can't do or say anything about it because we have the freedom of religion. Also, we the people have freedom to get baptized. In the United States you can get baptized as a Christian or Catholic it doesn't matter, we have the freedom to do it.

In the United States, we the people have the freedom to bear arms in our house. People have the freedom to bear arms for protection of themselves and family. But in the United States, you have to have a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

In the United States, people have the freedom to vote for laws. Eligibility to vote in the United States is determined by both the federal and state law. Then only citizens can vote in the United States elections, and even though it hasn't always been like that. In the absence of a federal law or constitutional amendment, then each state is given considerable discretion to establish qualifications for suffrage and candidacy with its own jurisdiction.

I am glad to live in the United States of America and to be one of their citizens because of the freedom. The United States of America is one of the best countries to live in. We the people should be thankful for living in such a wonderful free country. Also, people don't realize how much we take for granted in our country. The United States of America has given us, the people, so much and without them, we wouldn't be able to go to school, work or live the lives we are now. So we the people should thank our country for everything it does for us.



Heroism

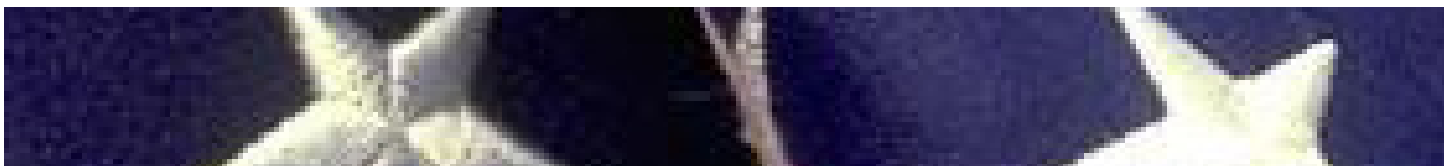
By William Finley

One word that best describes the United States of America is “heroism.” Through the sacrifice of our service members, America has shown heroism by liberating oppressed peoples, leading efforts to establish free markets around the globe, and defending hopes and ideas of freedom everywhere.

America has become the leader in heroic efforts to liberate oppressed peoples. From the very beginning of the nation’s history, America has fought for liberation. The Revolutionary War, the Civil War and the conflict in Vietnam serve as examples of the liberation efforts taken by the United States throughout the ages. The Revolutionary War was fought by the American colonists in order to rid the colonies of the oppressive rule of the British crown. Nearly 100 years later a civil war broke out amongst the not-so-united states over states’ rights, specifically laws concerning slavery. As the dust settled after nearly five years of brother-against-brother bloodshed, America once again became united. During the course of this war, America abolished slavery. This was a major statement to the rest of the world as the modern age was beginning to connect all the corners of the world. Yet another hundred years passed and the United States now fought communism and the spread of Marxist ideas throughout the world. The United States would assume the leadership position among the world powers and became a symbol of liberty because of its role in the freeing of peoples and groups both foreign and domestic.

During the 20th century, the United States and other countries began a new kind of conflict never before seen. As the curtain closed on World War II, another curtain beckoned the rise of the cold war. A war fought with the threat of nuclear capabilities, with the United States on one side advocating capitalism and the freedom of individuals to risk and compete for a profit, and opposite of them loomed the USSR and a rising coalition of communist-minded thinkers. Communism had taken root in the USSR and the foundations laid down by Lenin and Marx had begun to spread throughout Asia. Many soldiers were sent overseas in multiple arenas at different times during this new-age war to combat the enslaving socialist philosophies that had started to define countries abroad. Korea and Vietnam became the major stages of warfare during this time. The war efforts in these locations were extensive and the price paid in blood was too much to bear. After forty years of heroism, the selfless sacrifice of American soldiers became physically manifested when the Berlin Wall was torn down and the United Soviet Socialist Republic collapsed soon after.

America has come to be known as a home of heroism, defending the hope and idea of freedom around the globe. Backtracking to the 1940s would reveal a strong Nazi party that had charismatically led Germany into a conquest of Germany’s European neighbors. Hope seemed lost and freedom a distant idea for those caught in the vicious Nazi war campaigns and attempts of genocide. When Europe nearly reached the point of destruction, the United States came to answer the call of heroism. American soldiers were soon thrown into the fray in two different theaters, each on the opposite end of the world. After several years of brutal warfare in Europe and the Pacific, the American liberators returned home after gaining victory on both fronts. The United States saved the world and gained a reputation as heroes performing acts of valor, which became an engraved image that has become the United States. This same mindset is still at play today in violent Middle Eastern countries where ruthless dictators hold control over subjects that are merely insects in the eyes of these rulers. Constant car bombs and horrifying stories of battles fought between multiple radical groups plague the news reports coming from these regions. This generation of Americans witnessed the 9/11 attacks and live in terror of another attack. America has fallen prey to the weapon of terrorism and has led a coalition of forces to combat it. While fighting this terrorism abroad, the U.S. has also managed to instill a new hope in these long impoverished and crushed countries, supplying the means of democracy wherever its forces go. America has affirmed its position as hero and protector of freedom in the modern world.



One word that best describes the United States of America is “heroism.” American forces have led the effort against terror and oppression, acted as the catalyst for democratic thought as they participate in conflicts abroad and have enforced the security of freedom in the modern world. This nation has set the example for heroism. The American men and women at arms have been the driving force behind the reputation the U.S. bears today. It is because of this heroism that the United States is the most powerful state to ever be established on this earth.



A Diverse Nation

Lydia Grace Ryan

Describing a nation consists of looking at its people. The word that best portrays Americans is the word that describes America. When I observe the people in my hometown Pueblo, Colorado; I know which word describes this nation.

I believe that word is “diversity.” America would not be the country it is if all its citizens were the same. Diversity is the word that describes the nation’s people, ideas, freedom, rights, history, and heroes. The amazing thing about America is that, no matter which WalMart I walk into, I find black hair, blonde hair, and baseball caps. A pacifist and a sharpshooter might live across the street from each other. America would not be America without pacifists, or without sharpshooters. It is the wide array of diverse people which makes America the nation it is.

Views also define a nation. A place with great ideas is a great country. America wouldn’t be a wonderful nation without a wide array of unique ideas. Every election, some people embrace one extreme and some commit to another. The compromise is an amazing country that tolerates all people. My hometown, Pueblo, Colorado, is a wonderful place to live. I think a lot of what makes Pueblo so great is its diversity. Four Medal-of-Honor recipients have come from Pueblo. They earned this award for their courageous deeds in battle and their willingness to serve America. My five-year-old sister also comes from Pueblo. She likes to hang on monkey bars and eat ice cream. I come from Pueblo, too. I like to write, drive, and sing the national anthem. We all have different views, but America, as a free country, embraces us all.

Every day I hear about freedom. I hear people talk about how glad they are that they’re free. What saddens me is how many of these people proceed to complain about what other people have the right to do! I believe that freedom and diversity go together. First, we had the freedom to become a diverse nation. Now, America is such a diverse nation that if the government tried to take away religious freedom or passed a





discriminatory law, there would be no end to the protests! Different groups of Americans protect all our rights. Freedom is protected by diversity; no person who loves freedom should complain about how their neighbors are different than they are. The building blocks of America are 315 million different people, and America's foundations are the rights these people want in their lives.

Rights allow America to be the diverse nation it is. America is a unique nation full of different religions, cultures, races, ideals, and goals. This gives America an amazing advantage over other nations. Some Americans are war heroes. America also has amazing artists, physicists, and engineers. America has religious leaders and athletes winning the Olympics. Because of the rights needed by diversity, America is shaped by a wide array of extraordinary people.

Since the first white settlers came to the New World, America has been a diverse nation. Immigrants, slaves, and warriors have all written their stories in our nation's history. The word, diversity even tells the story of my family. Some of my ancestors were Cherokee; some were pacifist Quakers who left Ireland in the 1600s. I have ancestors who fought on both sides of the Civil War. I am descended from farmers, trappers, teachers, servants, and plantation owners. Diversity doesn't just describe America in its current state. It also describes American history.

I am proud to live in Pueblo because of the many Medal-of-Honor recipients who have come from my town. I am pleased that my hometown is called the "Home of Heroes." Yet as amazed as I am by our Medal-of-Honor recipients, I believe this town has produced more than four war heroes. I think every veteran that has left Pueblo to fight for America is a hero. I am impressed by our veterans' sacrifices. I would like to thank every one of our veterans for protecting the diversity and freedom American citizens enjoy.

Though America has an amazing military, heroes don't always come from the armed forces. I think Pueblo is full of teacher heroes, library, and mom heroes. I think Pueblo is full of small business heroes, waitress, and police heroes. One of the amazing things about living in a diverse nation is that America has room for heroes of all kinds. The USA wouldn't be the amazing country it is without heroes of every size, shape and color.

Yes, "diversity" is the best word to describe America. It doesn't just describe the government. Diversity portrays the people of our nation. It explains the history of America. Diversity also describes the philosophy of America; that 315 million different people should be free to live as they wish. I am proud to reside in a diverse country like America, where I can be the person I want to be.

America the Beautiful

By Kayla Stalcar

America the beautiful can be described in many words, however, “freedom” is the best overall word to describe the United States of America. In America people have the first amendment. People also have the right to their own lifestyles. Another reason “freedom” is the perfect word to describe America is because people come to America so they can be their own person.

Our first amendment begins with the word freedom. The freedom of speech allows people to speak how they want, for the most part. The freedom of assembly allows people to gather almost anywhere, peacefully. The freedom of religion says people can practice their own beliefs. Finally, the freedom of petition allows people to speak their minds about something they feel strongly about.

People have the freedom to make their own lifestyle choices. No matter who they love; men or women, they are able to marry them. People are allowed to choose the schools, no matter if the school is close to them or not, and they may attend them if accepted. After schooling people are able to continue into whatever career path they would like to go into. People are also able to live where ever they would like to.

People also love to come to America. Immigrants come to America to find a better life for themselves and their families. Most come for the main law we have that they do not have, and that is freedom. They also come to find more jobs. In America there are more opportunities than in other countries. Americans have so many opportunities to improve our lifestyles.

America has many reasons for freedom to be the best word to describe our country. America has schooling, marriage, jobs, amendments, and people admiring our freedom. All countries are unique in their own way, but freedom is the reason why we stand out from all the rest.



The American Essence

By Lizzy Manguso

One word that explains the greatness America exudes is “opportunity.” Not only do we see this in everyday citizens through our democracy, we also view this as the image that makes the U.S. so sought after and so great.

The word “opportunity” is defined as a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. This describes America in an infinite amount of ways. This dream that our founding fathers put forth for our country is still very much alive today. If one is able to utilize their surroundings, they will find that the sky is their limit. For example, our president, Barack Obama, came from an average middle class family; however, he didn’t let this stop him from becoming a strong man with the ambition to lead our country. This word opportunity not only applies to the extraordinary cases, like President Obama, but to the everyday person as well.

Opportunity applies to everyone in America, from the young woman in the high-rise apartment to the old man on the street. Every day, anyone can seize the opportunity to better for both themselves and their situation. Every citizen is gifted with the ability to strive to become anything and everything his or her heart desires. This exemplifies one of the many great things about democracy. Our government allows everyone to be opportunistic throughout each person’s life. This is what enables the bright young people to open their dream business or the brave men and women that willingly and honorably fight for America. This chance for the everyday man eventually form the image of our country.

Because of this unique chance of opportunity that this country offers, it has become the poster child of freedom and independence. This is how the term “American dream” came about, because here in America, anything is possible. For this same reason, immigrants move here to start a new life. It is very evident to them that they have as much opportunity to achieve their American dream as anyone else. Because of this wonderful right we have, our country is full of motivated people, fighting for whatever their heart yearns for. This opportunistic mindset of our country clearly makes the U.S. a desirable and worthwhile place to call home.

Through America’s self-determination and democratic government, the U.S. will always instill an image of opportunity for the entire world. Opportunity not only provides an image for the nation, but a mindset for its citizens.



Freedom of Expression

By Nick Johnston

“America, land of the free, home of the brave,” yet one vital word has yet to be mentioned in song or poetry. America is the greatest country in the world because of its brilliant freedom of expression.

The United States Constitution reads. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” This has since been referred to as the freedom of expression. The right to freedom of expression without government interference has been included in the Bill of Rights since the 1700s when it was written by James Madison, and has been an underappreciated privilege by many Americans. If I could describe America in one word I would undeniably use the word expression.

Picture this. You step outside on a brisk morning in a pair of Superman pajamas, and you pick up the local newspaper. You want to check what time the symphony is playing at the college, to see if you had time to go rally at the court house with your friends to get additional funding for a new zoo exhibit. Then you remember you have a date later that night that you haven’t prepared for. You forgot to make the reservations at the fancy seafood place that you would like to take your special someone to. You want to make a good impression, so you plan on giving her a piece of art that you had made recently. The following morning you would go to church and have the rest of the afternoon off. It seems like a normal weekend for many, but citizens don’t value the fact that they can lawfully do all of these things. I would like to break it down, in hope that you realize how fortunate you are for expression.

To start, in a country without expression, you would be breaking the law for wearing Superman PJs in public. It seems a little ridiculous, though America is one of the lucky countries allowed to wear what they desire without government discretion or control. As you unroll the paper, all you see is a blank page. This seems like a prank at first, yet you then realize that part of freedom of expression is the freedom of the press. All of your information gone, because of no journalism, photography or expression. No weather reports, sports, or news stories would be able to be read by the public. All in a civilization without expression. Let me elaborate.

As you plan on attending the afternoon’s symphony you remember that music is a form of expression, and is restricted in this example world. Just envision a country without music. Culturally, music has been a huge part of our society since the beginning of time. Tribal rituals, parades, and for personal entertainment are just a few instances. To realize the size of this impact consider the awkward silences that have been solved with the car radio, or the inspiration and livelihood that music provides to its immense audience. This would all vanish without the power of your first amendment rights.

Currently anybody in the U.S. has the right to petition and assemble peacefully. That new exhibit that you wanted at the zoo was pushed aside because that funding was put towards a new lane on a highway without a say from the public. Normally this would cause havoc, yet in a world without petition, your voice would be prevented from being heard. This is yet another prime example of a world without expression. As you fancy yourself for your special evening it appears that conveying your love to this individual would be restricted in a world ridden of expression. A person who you potentially want to spend the rest of your life with is unable to, merely because it isn’t allowed. Finally you make it to dinner, and taste the succulent shrimp and lobster. You want others to try this meal you just savored so you open your Facebook page on your computer. An “access denied” screen opens. Expression of any medium is illegal in this world so any Internet communication is denied. Even though you can’t openly share it, you still have feelings for this girl. The painting of the sunset you had made earlier that week has become a contraband item. It seems absurd, yet any form of visual sharing, art, poetry or music is a type of expression.

Your Saturday was not all you had hoped for whereas your ability to share any sentiment was unsuccessful. Surely your Sunday would be better, if only. You take your bible, and jump in your car and head to the chapel to take advantage of your religious freedoms. When you reach the church you see a sign on the door

saying, "Closed." It takes only seconds to realize that there are two parts to the freedom of expression. Within the first amendment is the freedom of religion. Freedom of religion is largely unacknowledged, until the day it is not within your grasp.

The fact of the matter is that expression is often just taken as an expectation rather than a gift. Having a warm bed every night is one example. You just expect it to be there, and you never could truly understand its value unless you didn't have it on a chilly night.

When asked to describe the United States in one word, often the first things that would naturally come to mind are freedom, bravery, hope, love and peace, though those are only words that scratch the surface of America the beautiful. Expression had to be one of the core principles considered when the founding fathers wrote the Constitution because it pertains to every action made by every American on a daily basis.



The Word that Proves itself through History

By Michael Martinez

Throughout history, America has been labeled rebellious, land of the free, a world power, but the one word that describes it best is courage. Some say that it is freedom, opportunity, patriotism, so on and so forth; these words all fall under the word “courage.” Without courage, you cannot have any of these other things. Courage is the word that has constantly proved itself all throughout the history of America. America is based upon the pure principle of courage.

Courage is best demonstrated through the wars that have happened in history. America has citizens willing to go into the military to risk their lives for their country. They are willing to bear arms for the rights guaranteed to us by the constitution written when America was founded. The sacred rights that we, as citizens, uphold and defend despite that it might cost our lives. Never once in history have we backed down from our ordeals. World War I, World War II, Vietnam War, Civil War, the list goes on. But the point of the matter is that this takes courage. In order for someone to stand up for something, they have to possess the courage to do so. The soldiers who do this are the greatest example of the one word that defines America.

The morality of the word courage is displayed in everyday life and in what citizens look up to. In America, we as Americans have a multitude of options for us to go with our lives, but it takes courage to go for any of them. Some of America’s most respected professions (soldiers, police officers, firemen, emergency response people), the people in that profession all carry courage. They do what some people would not because their courage carries them through their job. Children when young use people in these jobs as role models for themselves. Most children all wanted to be the same exact thing, usually a policeman, firefighter, or doctor. But what they wanted was to have courage, and be someone. Courage can get you anything in life, but you have to go for it.

America was founded on the principle of courage. When America was first founded, it took courage to go where no man had ever gone before. When immigrants came here, it took courage to get away from everything they knew, to come here and risk everything. When America broke away from Britain, it took an immense amount of courage. Britain was the leading world power, and we as 13 colonies had the courage of a lion to defy their rule and declare independence. Today, the monument of courage is the Statue of Liberty. It is sign of courage knowing that you made it to America. Your past is behind you, and you now have to gather your courage and forge yourself a new life.

America’s definition can be described as almost anything you choose, but the word that best fits America is courage. This is demonstrated through the courage of the soldiers fighting for America and what we stand for. The morality of courage is what gets *you* places in America; courage is also used for an example profession wise. America is founded upon the principles of courage, so why wouldn’t it still describe America today?

