Social Mobility & the American Dream
According to you, what is the American dream?

How would you define the concept of “social mobility”?
Context

DEFINING THE AMERICAN DREAM
Hard work
immigrants
self-made man
self-sufficiency
opportunity
upward social mobility
white picket fence
prosperity
security
success
The phrase was coined by **James Truslow Adams (1878-1949)** in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*.

This is how he describes it: "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement."

Adams thought that the US had been too busy with riches/materiality. He believed Americans had forgotten about the deeper aspirations the nation was founded on.
“The American Dream” has always been about the prospect of success, but 100 years ago, the phrase meant the opposite of what it does now. The original “American Dream” was not a dream of individual wealth; it was a dream of equality, justice and democracy for the nation. The phrase was repurposed by each generation, until the Cold War, when it became an argument for a consumer capitalist version of democracy. Our ideas about the “American Dream” froze in the 1950s. Today, it doesn’t occur to anybody that it could mean anything else.

Sarah CHURCHWELL (source)
What it means nowadays

❖ Roots = 1950s, strategy for soft power

❖ Consumerist/free markets version

❖ Earlier version = principles of liberal democracy

❖ *Cambridge Dictionary*: “the belief that everyone in the US has the chance to be successful and happy if they work hard.”
“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Declaration of Independence, 1776
Listening
“Why the American Dream is a Myth” (pp.60-62)
“Obama on social mobility in America”
Speaking
Do you believe in social mobility?

You can, of course, discuss the French context.

Find arguments AND examples to illustrate your points.