Before you start

Look at the illustrations of the main characters in the story.
 Think of three adjectives to describe the characters based on how they look. As you read the story, check to see if you were right, and make changes as you find out more about them.



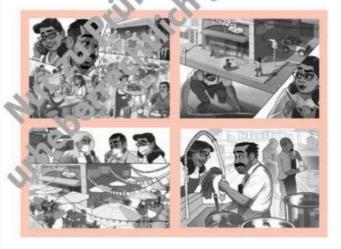
What does the American dream mean to you? Finish these sentences.



The American dream

In order to achieve the American dreem

- Clara's professor claims that the Arterican dr. In is now over. Do you agree?
- Look at the cover and "it lustration". Iow. What do you
 think the story is at jut



5. Read the story. Were you right?



Oscar looked around his Mex. can restaurant. Then he pressed his hands together and smile a Every table was occupied. There was a long line of people at the door. He heard Mari, his wife, talking to a cur omer on the phone. "Right now, the wait for a table is about as it ur," she sate politely. "It's very busy tonight."

Mariachis v. eyed and sang in the large, colorful dining room.
Servers e re ulty carried hot plates of tacos, enchiladas, and tamales.
Hung patrons were delighted. "Oh, this looks delicious!" said
Liv ta, a weekly regular, picking up her fork. "Oscar's has the best
V. xican food in the world!" Everyone at her table agreed. Oscar
felt proud. "I've arrived," he thought with satisfaction. "This is the
American dream... and I am really living it!"

Thirty years ago, Oscar was an eighteen-year-old immigrant from Mexico. At adult school in Southern California, his English

¹⁹ to occupy to be taken – 25 patron a restaurant customer – 25 delighted very happy – 28 proud feeling of satisfaction when you have done something good – 30 immigrant sb who has come from another country to live in a new country

teacher talked about the American dream. She believed that anyone – regardless of birthplace or class – could be successful in the U.S. "You can live the American dream," she declared, "if you work hard." At the time, Oscar was doubtful.

"But I am working hard," he thought, looking at his hands, red and rough from washing dishes at a Korean restaurant.

Naturally, Oscar wanted to believe his teacher. And his main goal like many other immigrants, was success. Still, it was difficult to imagine being truly successful. Reality was standing in from of a mountain of dishes and earning only minimum wage. At that time, his daily goal was survival.

At school, Oscar remembered writing something in his notebook. Using the present and positiveses, he write two positive sentences: "Today, I wish lishes. Yer on lay, I washed dishes." Then, in the future on one, he wrote a legative one: "Tomorrow, I won't washed hes." Oscal of the mean tomorrow as the very next dar. In fact, he washed dishes at the Korean restaurant for eight more more his. He meant it as a promise to himself. He wouldn't stay a moottom of the ladder forever. Tomorrow whenever to no row was – there were more opportunities.

In cin., Oscar's r'n, lish improved a lot. He found better jobs in our restaur res, and he never washed dishes again. In some places, Oscar to ked in the kitchens. In others, he worked as a busboy, e. ver, or cashier. Later, he became a manager. After worky, 'a restaurants for twenty years, he knew the business inside out. So, ten years ago, he got a business loan and opened his own Mexican restaurant – Oscar's – on Fourth Avenue.

Since Oscar's first opened, the business tripled in size. It now employed twenty-five people, plus four mariachi players. "I pinch

2 regardless of not depending on – 6 rough not soft, usually from working hard – 19 the bottom of the ladder the lowest position in a company – 22 to improve to get better – 26 to know sth inside out to be very familiar with sth – 27 business loan money from the bank to use to start a business – 30 Mariachi a traditional Mexican type of music

myself sometimes," Oscar said, walking toward Mari. "I'm afraid that I'll wake up... and be washing dishes again at the Korean restaurant."

"It is incredible," Mari replied, patting her husband's shoulder affectionately. "And I hope business stays this way," she added. "Next year, we'll have two daughters in college. It will cost a fortune."

"Don't worry about the money," answered Oscar, counting at least twenty people on Mari's waiting list "h's a drop on bucket. We worked hard and became since soful. We see iving the American dream."

How would you de ont Oscar's restaura ti

How did Oscar achieve his dream of owning a restaurant?

Think about it ...

Have you ever eaten at a Mexican restaurant? What did you eat? Would you go again?

In this chapter Oscar talks about the American dream. What is the American dream?

4 to pat to touch sb gently with the palm of your hand – 5 affectionately in a way that shows love – 6 to cost a fortune to be very expensive – 9 a drop in the bucket sth is small or insignificant.

Oscar and Mari had two daughters: Clara and Emma. Clara, twenty years old, was in her third year at a well-known university. Emma, three years younger, was in her last semester of high school. She had already been accepted to an excellent college and planned to start in the fall. Mari was right. Their schools would cost a fortune next year. But, thanks to the restaurant, Oscar and Mari could afford it. They were happy to support Clara's dream to become a dentist and Emma's to become a software engine.

Of course, this meant many years of expensive higher could not. But money was no object. They had more than enough - and could handle the expense.

Clara and Emma grew up at C., a.'s restaurant. When they weren't studying, they often werked there. As children in elementary school, they chan disables, we floors, and wiped off plastic menus. Late Chira and Emmant elped out in the kitchen, sometimes was hing dished the their father, it wasn't a job they partie and renjoyed. "Yet it's good for you," said Oscar, handing them they pairs of his ber gloves and pointing toward the sink. "Believe me, big as an as begin by scrubbing pots and pans."

Oscar, regularly ren moed his daughters that he was a living example of the Amarican dream. "I started with nothing here—al so utely nothing. And look at me now!" he said proudly, atting a hard on his chest, "I've gone from rags to riches!" Clara and Emara vere impressed by the efforts of both their parents, neither dorn into wealth. In comparison, their lives were quite provinged: a nice home, good schools, and no real worries about money. Washing dishes wasn't necessarily about survival. It also built character," according to their father. So, when asked, the girls put on their rubber gloves and did the job.

5 fall (American English) autumn – 10 money is no object the price of sth is no reason to worry – 11 expense cost – 14 to wipe off to remove sth, such as pieces of food, from sth – 18 to hand sb sth to give sb sth – 29 rubber elastic, stretchy material