

Plan:

Leading question: How did the self-made man and American dream ideas blossom, becoming a cornerstone of the USA paradoxically now weakened?

Cornerstone = something that is essential, fundamental, or indispensable to something else.

I- The birth of these founding ideologies

-> **The American dream** (= ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American, allowing the highest aspirations and goals to be achieved) + **self-made man** (= person whose success is of their own making): ideas as old as the discovery of America (by the colonists) (linked with myths like El Dorado, or the conquest of the West).

-> Linked with the concept of Frontier = possibility to access “free” lands and gold while the population was going westward (formed the ideologies of self-reliance + self-made man).

-> Idea of the American dream has then been used to accelerate British settlers’ emigration to the United States + brought up when the United States became independent (“right to the pursuit of happiness”, Declaration of Independence of 1776) + spread thanks to the Enlightenment.

II- Presentation of a self made man : Steve Jobs

-> Born in 1955 in a working-class family.

-> Started Apple in a garage with his friend Wozniak.

-> Created the Apple One, their first device + the Apple Two and other revolutionary devices (the Macintosh, Ipad and iPhone).

-> Got pushed out of Apple by the board, founded NeXt and acquired Pixar THEN came back to save Apple from a difficult period and brought it to the 1st rank among the most valuable companies.

-> His sudden death in 2011 and all the tributes paid to him showcased his impact on the whole world not only in the digital sector (he’s considered one of the most iconic figures of the digital revolution).

III- Limits of the American dream and self-made man myths

-> The market saturation makes it nearly impossible for someone without external help to create companies or figure out new business ideas.

-> Merit isn’t the only success factor to take in consideration (luck, skin color, money, peers...).

-> Conditions to succeed are no longer the ones promoted at the founding of these myths (no free lands, no gold, no free labor).

-> The idea of the American self-made man is heavily romanticized + some successful people label themselves as self made-men to gain legitimacy, while their success is due to **nepotism** (= favoring family members or close people over others when making decisions, especially in job-related situations) or lucky circumstances.

