



LIFE IN THE USA



Society

Introduction.

- People may move up or down the social ladder within their lifetime or from one generation to the next.



Social mobility in the UK and the US.



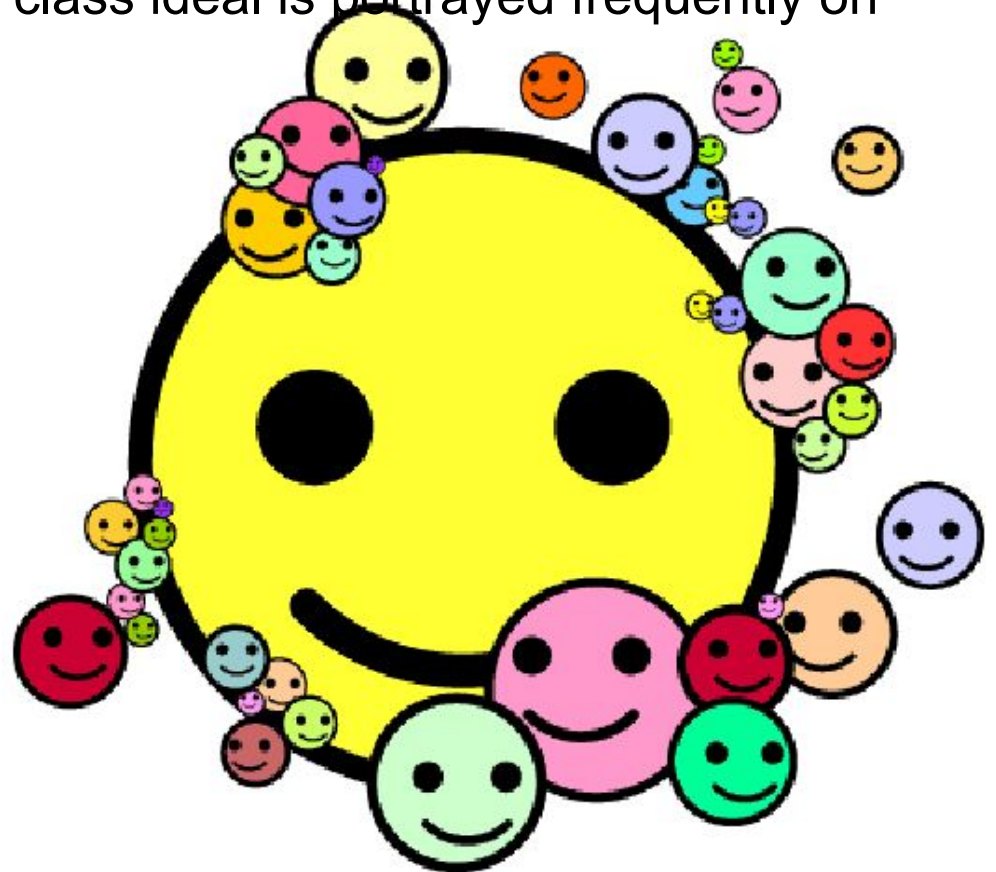
Can children of poor families become rich?



Researchers found that Britain appeared to have one of the worst records for social mobility in the developed world.

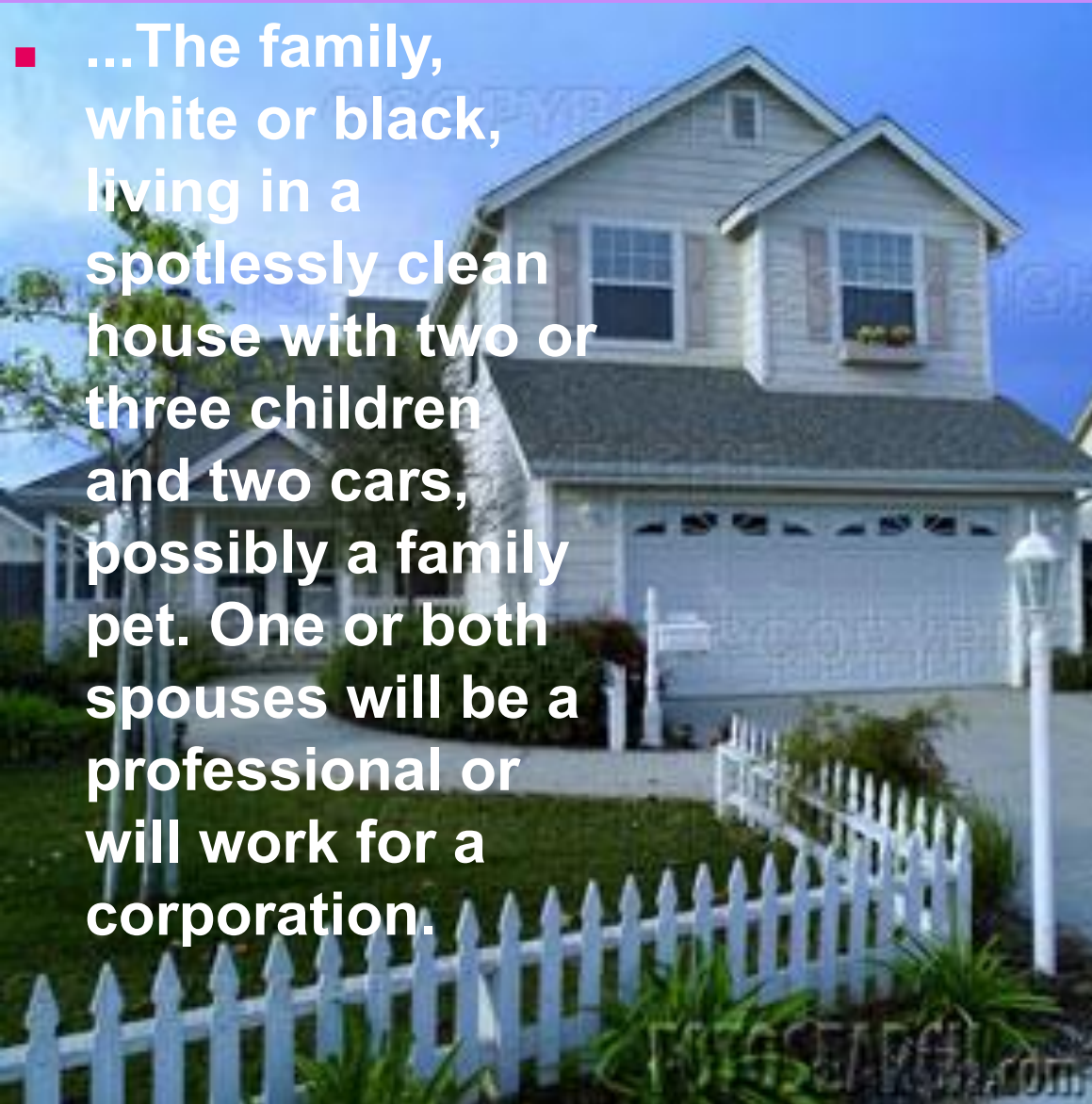
The Middle Class.

- The middle class is large. America is a middle class country.
- The middle class ideal is portrayed frequently on television.



The middle class ideal is...

- ...The family, white or black, living in a spotlessly clean house with two or three children and two cars, possibly a family pet. One or both spouses will be a professional or will work for a corporation.



- The more prosperous members of the middle class might have a vacation home, many televisions and electronic gadgets, motor boats or even airplanes.



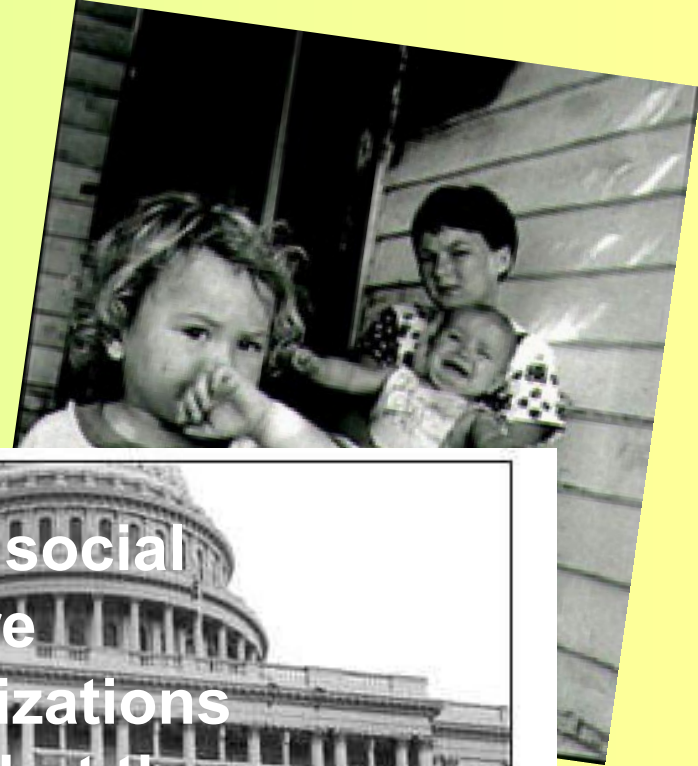
Families Are Changing

- *Of course, these are stereotypes.*
More than half of American marriages end in divorce. People often live together without being married. Divorced people also remarry and mix children of previous marriages to form rather large households. All these living arrangements are becoming acceptable to the vast American middle class.



The Lower Class

The American lower class is made up of the poor. Poverty, though difficult to measure, is a real problem in the United States.



Major social welfare organizations exist, but they, like the government, have had little success in eradicating poverty.

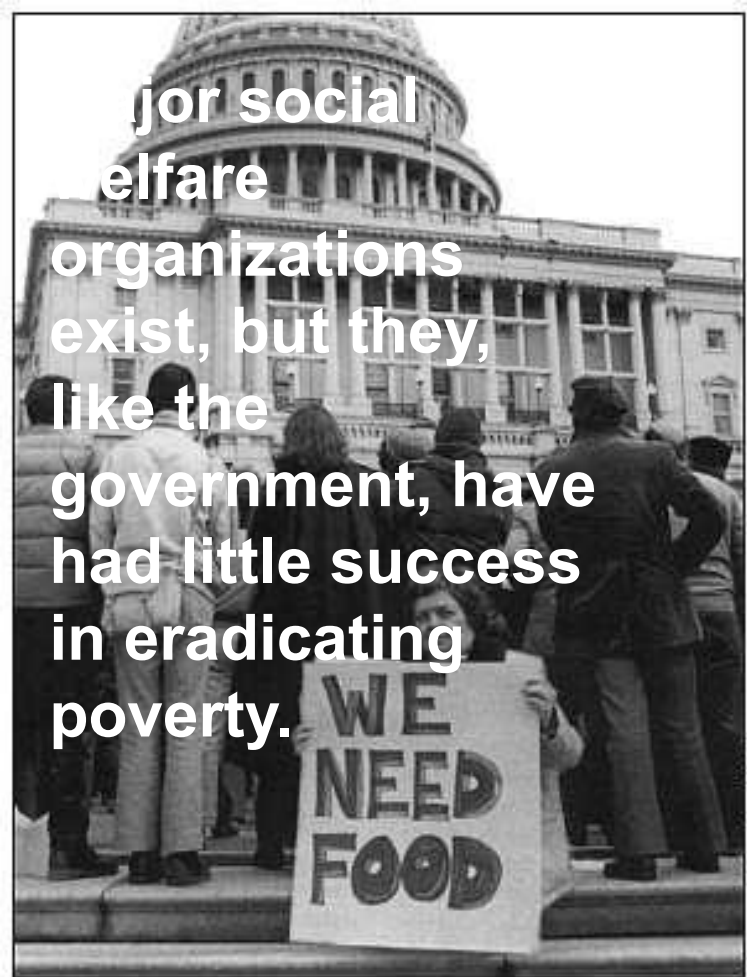
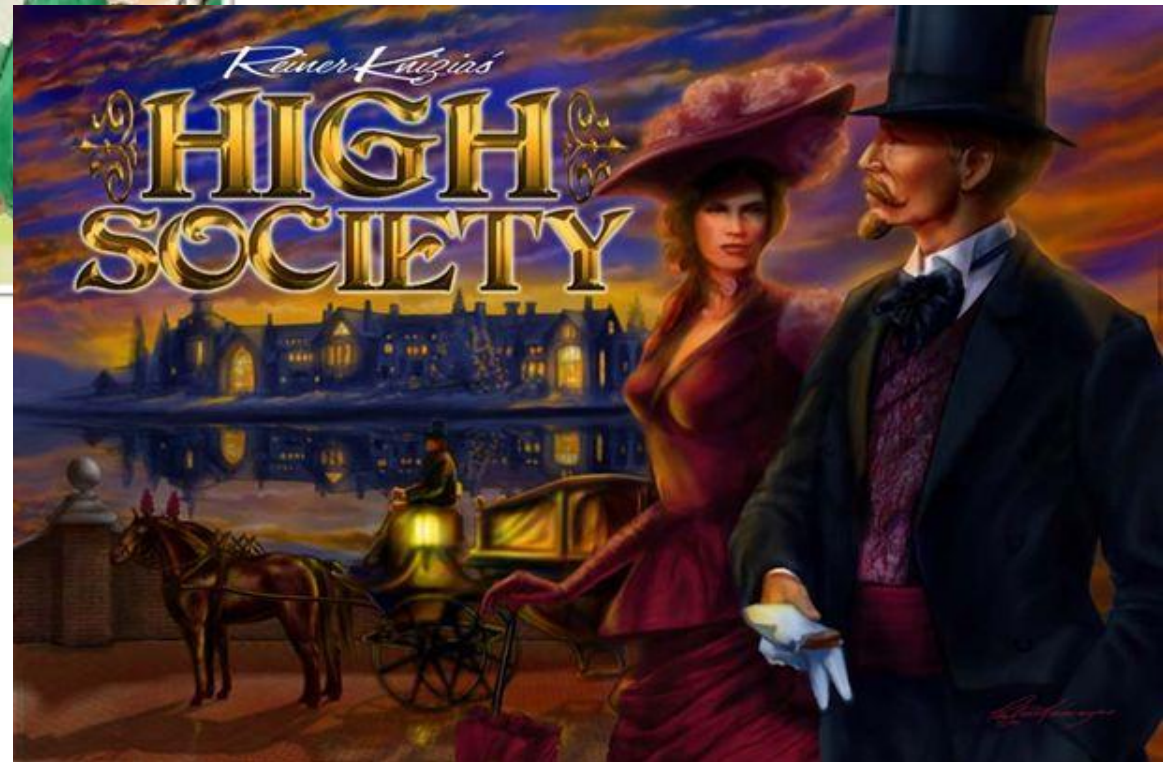


Photo: Martha Tabor

The Upper Class

- A small upper class “high society” exists, though most Americans have little contact with these people.



The Upper Class



They are wealthy people, mostly in the Northeast, who can trace their family lines back to the English or Dutch Colonial days.

Society people attend many sporting and formal evening events designed to raise money for charities.

Conclusion...



■ Many Americans live with the belief that their tradition of social mobility has made them a classless society. Most of them prefer to refer to themselves as “middle class.”

■ The very rich control corporations and have some political power, but the lifestyle and values of the very wealthy do not have much impact on the country in general. The upper classes are not given as much respect by the general population as they are in many other countries.

■ America is a middle class nation.