

James Baldwin versus William F. Buckley Jr.

In 1965, American ex-pat, civil rights activist author James Baldwin debated conservative author, National Review founder William F. Buckley Jr. at Cambridge University. They parsed over this question: *“The American Dream: Is it at the expense of the American Negro?”* Mr. Baldwin took the affirmative position, while Mr. Buckley opposed the motion. Below is the link to the one-hour debate you are assigned to watch.



COURTESY MAGNOLIA PICTURES

https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip_151-sn00z71m54

Please WATCH the video and outline the arguments that Baldwin and Buckley make.

Prepare: take notes, understand the commentary of both men and be prepared to hold a socratic seminar (round table discussion) on the issues brought up in this debate. NO ONE will be asked to take one side or the other - we will be explaining the ARGUMENTS of both sides and examining the rhetorical strengths and weaknesses of each side in class in September.

If you are interested in either James Baldwin's or William F. Buckley's further arguments, I included two essays from them in this folder. The essay by Baldwin is probably one of the most widely read of his essay pieces.