

# 10 Reasons the U.S. is Declining

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Is America in decline?

That's the position of Drs. Hershey Friedman of the City University of New York and Sarah Hertz of Empire State College.

In their paper – [“Is the United States Still the Best Country in the World? Think Again”](#) – the authors argue that America's ranking in the following 10 key areas show that its status as a world power is slipping.

## 1) Percentage of People Living Below the Poverty Line

U.S. Rank: 35<sup>th</sup> best out of 157 countries.

Among those with a lower poverty rate: Taiwan, Lithuania, China, Vietnam.

## 2) Children Living in Poverty

U.S. Rank: 34 out of 35 countries surveyed.

Among those with a lower % of children living in poverty: Australia, Canada, Japan.

## 3) Income Inequality

U.S. Rank: 4<sup>th</sup> worst in the world.

Only countries who are worse: Chile, Mexico, Turkey.

## 4) Middle Class (defined as Median Wealth per Adult)

U.S. Rank: 27<sup>th</sup> (median wealth per U.S. adult = \$38,786)

## 5. Happiness

U.S. Rank: 17<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries on the [2013 World Happiness Report](#).

## 6. GDP Per Capita

U.S. Rank: 14<sup>th</sup> out of 228 countries.

## 7. Education (based on the [international PISA test of 15 year-olds](#))

U.S. Rank in Reading: 17<sup>th</sup>

U.S. Rank in Math: 26<sup>th</sup>

U.S. Rank in Science: 21<sup>st</sup>

## 8. Health

U.S. Rank 33 out of 145 countries.

## 9. Prison Population

U.S. Rank: 1<sup>st</sup> out of 224 countries

Note: 2,217,000 people are incarcerated in the U.S. In China, it's 1,657,812 people. In Russia, 673,818 people.

## 10. Social Progress Index (social well-being based on 52 economic indicators such as literacy rates, access to clean water, personal safety, etc.)

U.S. Rank: 16 out of 133 countries.

Among those who best us: Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Austria.

The paper concludes:

“It is hoped that examination of the above statistics will make people aware of how much needs to be done if the United States wants to remain a world power. The first step, however, is to admit that change is needed. Americans are the most charitable people in the world so it should not be that difficult to convince them of the importance of providing jobs and livable wages to those that desire to be self-sufficient. To simply state that America is exceptional – there has been a growing debate between those that believe American is in decline (declinism) and those that feel American is special (exceptionalism) – and nothing needs to be done will ensure that we will become a second-rate power.”