

# I'M AN AMERICAN: FOLD & SHARE

Have you read *I'm an American*? This activity invites you to explore your Identity, Beliefs, and Actions in the way the children did in Darshana Khiani's acclaimed book. All of these discoveries will be folded into a familiar papercraft and shared with others. What do we share besides calling ourselves Americans? Let's find out!

## YOU ARE ONE OF 330 MILLION AMERICANS!

**Like all Americans**, you have family or adopted family that made a journey to this country or are indigenous to this country. That family history is part of your unique identity. *For example, the Chinese American girl in *I'm an American* has family that came from China 150 years ago.*

"This nation will always be made up of Indigenous people and immigrants of the past, present, and future. We believe differences make us stronger."  
—Darshana Khiani, *I'm an American*

**Like all Americans**, you have beliefs. You share beliefs with Americans of all different family histories and identities. *For example, the Chinese American girl believes in democracy because her ancestors were not allowed to vote.*

"Our beliefs are the threads that tie this country together." —Darshana Khiani, *I'm an American*

**Like all Americans**, you and/or your family act on your beliefs in ways you think will make your family or your community safer and happier. *For example, the Chinese American girl's family helps register voters.*

"Together we make this country great."  
—Darshana Khiani, *I'm an American*



If family "differences make us stronger," then sharing our differences makes us stronger.

If beliefs "tie this country together," then sharing our beliefs make us more connected.

If actions can make our family and community safer and happier, then when we take action together we are making "this country great."

This activity asks you to write and share who you are, what you believe, and how you act or can act to support your community and your beliefs.  
Ready?

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## THINKING & WRITING

**Understanding and sharing** who you are, what you believe in, and how you will act to bring others safety and happiness are activities you will do for the rest of your life. Why not start today?

*Later in the activity you will be sharing your Thinking & Writing with others. You do not have to share identities you are not ready to share.*

1) Choose 4 words that tell us about your **Identity**.

*For example, one of the girls in the book *I'm an American* would choose "Filipino" and "Mexican." She might also choose "Big Sister" and "Teammate" because those are parts of herself she is proud of.*

2) Write each **Identity** word you choose in spaces 1-4 on the *I'm an American Template* (Page 6).

*NOTE: For easy reading later, write all your text in the same direction as the number printed in that section.*

3) Choose 8 things that you **Believe** in.

*For example, the Muskogee girl in *I'm an American* says she believes in Perseverance. She might also believe in Animal Rights, Clean Water, Friendship, Family, BLM, Libraries, and Ice Cream.*

4) Write each **Belief** word or phrase you choose in spaces 5-12 on the *I'm an American Template*.

5) Choose 8 **Actions** that match your **Beliefs**.

This can be one small or big thing you or others can do to make that Belief stronger or more resilient.

*For example, the girl in *I'm an American* with two dads believes in the Freedom to Express Yourself. In the picture of her, she has made a sign to express herself.*

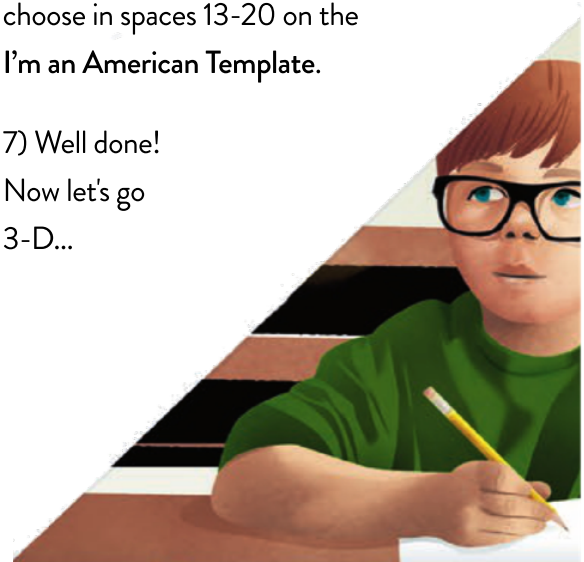
*For example, if you believe in Dog Rescue, you could have an Action of "Volunteering @ Shelter."*

If you cannot think of Actions for every belief, do not worry! Actions can be hard to imagine. Leave it blank and there will be time to discuss actions with a partner.

6) Write each **Action** word or phrase you choose in spaces 13-20 on the *I'm an American Template*.

7) Well done!

Now let's go 3-D...



# I'M AN AMERICAN: FOLD & SHARE

## FOLDING THE PAPERCRAFT

Let's transform your Thinking & Writing exercise into a shareable 3-D paper object. This papercraft with its squares and triangles was inspired by the intricate geometry in the illustrations created by Laura Freeman for *I'm an American*.

You may recognize these folds as the steps to make a traditional Fortune Teller papercraft. If you get stuck on any steps, it may help you to see the step-by-step photos and videos on wikiHow's article, "How to Fold and Use a Paper Fortune Teller."

Scan the QR Code to find your way there.

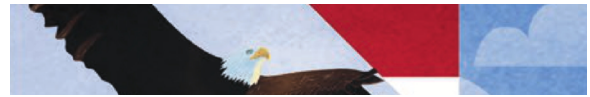


## STEPS

1) Cut out the square on the *I'm an American* Template on the dotted line.

2) Place the template face down on the table (so the writing is facing the table).

3) Peak underneath the template until you find the corner marked with a **2**. Have that corner point towards your body. Pull that corner up to the corner marked with a **4**. With corners touching, fold the paper into a perfect triangle and crease the fold with your finger.



4) Unfold the template so it flat again (with the writing facing down).

5) Now, peak underneath the template until you find the corner marked with a **3**. Pull that corner up to the corner marked with a **1**. With corners touching, fold the paper into a perfect triangle and crease the fold with your finger. Perfect!

6) Unfold it again. You'll be left with two diagonal creases that make the letter X.

7) Now we are going to fold it in half. Peak underneath for the side of the template marked with the numbers **7** and **8**. Pull those across until they meet the side marked with **11** and **12**. With the edges touching, fold the paper into a perfect rectangle and crease the fold with your finger.

8) Unfold the template so it's flat again. Peak underneath for the side of the template marked with the numbers **5** and **6**. Pull those across until they meet the side marked with **9** and **10**. With the edges touching, fold the paper into a perfect rectangle and crease the fold with your finger.

9) You are doing great! Unfold and look at your template's blank side. See how you now have eight lines or creases all meeting in the middle? Yes? Keep your eye on that center meeting point. It is important for the next steps.

Onto to Page 4...

# I'M AN AMERICAN: FOLD & SHARE

## FOLDING THE PAPERCRAFT (CONT.)

10) Peak underneath for the corner marked **2**, again. Pull it towards the center point. Connect the tip of the **2** triangle to the center point where all those creases meet. See how that makes a triangle? Good! Fold the crease with your fingernail to make a nice sharp fold.

11) You got this! Repeat this action with corners **3**, **4**, and **1**. Now, see how you have a smaller square containing four triangles? (This looks very much like Laura Freeman's design for the book!)

12) Okay, now flip the whole template over so sections **13-20** are facing up. Do you see how you now have a new center point where eight lines meet?

13) Repeat what you just did. Peek underneath and find the corner marked **7** and **8**. Pull it towards the center point marked **15** and **16**. Fold that crease!

14) Repeat all the way around until you have made a smaller square with four folded triangles.

15) Almost there. Peak underneath and find **1** and **4**. Fold it towards **3** and **2** to make the square a rectangle. Crease well.

16) Unfold. Now Peak underneath and find **3** and **4**. Fold it towards **1** and **2** to make the square a rectangle. Crease well. And...unfold.

17) Here's the tricky part! You may need a friend who has made a Fortune Teller to help. Ready?

18) Do you see how **1**, **2**, **3**, and **4** have a loose corner? Take your left hand and slide your thumb under the **2** corner and your pointer finger under the **3** corner.

Now take your right hand and slide your thumb under the **1** corner and your pointer finger under the **4** corner.

19) See those four points sticking up? Bring all four points together by bringing your fingers together. Magnificent! Now let's see how to share it...



# I'M AN AMERICAN: FOLD & SHARE

## SHARING & CARING

Why share this 3-D piece that you have created?  
Inspired by quotes from **I'm an American**, this is why sharing can be empowering:

If family “differences make us stronger,” then sharing our differences makes us stronger.

If beliefs “tie this country together,” then sharing our beliefs make us more connected.

If actions can make our family and community safer and happier, then when we take action together we are making “this country great.”

## STEPS

1) Find a partner to share your **I'm an American: Fold & Share** with.

2) Place your index fingers and thumbs into the open spaces beneath the Fold & Share.

3) Show your partner your 4 Identities.

4) Ask them, “What **Identity** do you share with me? Or what one are you curious about?”

5) When they pick one, say, “I’m an A-mer-i-can” while opening and closing the Fold & Share on each syllable. This action will reveal four of your Beliefs.

6) Ask your partner, “What **Belief** do you share? Or what one are you curious about?”

If they do not share any of those Beliefs or want to see more, open and close the Fold & Share to open your other set of Beliefs.

7) When your partner chooses a Belief, tell your partner why you believe it. *For example, the Jewish boy in **I'm an American** may say that he believes in Freedom of Religion because his ancestors were attacked for practicing their faith in Russia.*

8) Open up the flap and share your **Action** that supports that Belief.

9) Ask your partner, “Do you think this **Action** will make people happier and safer?” Talk about the Action. Maybe your partner has another idea.

If you did not write an Action, ask your partner, “Do you have an idea for an Action?”

10) Switch places and repeat the activity.

11) When you are finished, discuss with your partner:

- a. What you discovered about each other.
- b. How you are different.
- c. What things you share.

Remember,  
you are  
**BOTH**  
Americans!





# I'M AN AMERICAN: FOLD & SHARE: TEMPLATE

The Thinking & Writing exercise on Page 2 will provide the content for each of the spaces on this template.

Spaces 1-4: Identities   Spaces 5-12: Beliefs   Spaces 13-20: Actions related to Beliefs

