



**I AM AMERICA**  
**By Charles R. Smith Jr.**

**Grade/Class/Subject:** Pre K - 2

**Content Standards:**

LA.1.1.7.1 The student will identify a text’s features (e.g., title, subheadings, captions, illustrations), use them to make predictions, and establish a purpose for reading.

LA.1.1.6.5 The student will relate new vocabulary to prior knowledge.

**Content Objective(s):** Meets *Multicultural Education* for primary grades.

Student will identify the pictures and describing words used by the author to show how boys and girls who are Americans are different, yet alike.

**Language Objective(s):** In writing, student will describe themselves using words from the key vocabulary list.

**Grouping Configurations:** Whole class, partners.

**Story Synopsis:** Rhyming words, and the accompanying photographs that represent children of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds enhance the powerful poem in this one-of-a-kind book. The playful images and touching poetry work together to tell the story of America. Each unforgettable face and each strikingly beautiful line of verse will move children and parents alike. Photographer/poet Charles Smith, Jr. brings his unique artistic style to this patriotic and poignant portrayal of America's children.

<b><u>Key Vocabulary</u></b>						
America	cheeks	bandana	jazz	Catholic	Amish	Latino
American	freckled	backwards	hip-hop	Protestant	Asian	African
diverse	olive skin	rhythm	rock and roll	Muslim	Italian	Polish
proud	dimples	blues	grunge	Jewish	Indian	
soft-spoken	grin	country	ice cream smiles	Mormon	Irish	
almond eyes	baggy	soul	candy cane licks	Quaker	Greek	

**Supplementary Materials:**

**Lesson Sequence**

**Introduction: Building Background**

- 1) Hold up a map of the United States and explain that people who live in America are called Americans.
- 2) Hold up a copy of the book and ask students to make predictions based on the title and pictures printed on the cover of the book.
- 3) Tell them the author’s purpose for writing this book was to show how boys and girls who live in America are different, yet the same. He does this by using pictures and by using describing words that rhyme.

4) Create a flipchart using the Promethean board or a blank sheet of chart paper. Print the Key Vocabulary words on the chart and explain to the students that these are some of the describing words the author uses.

**Modeling/Guided Instruction:**

1) Using some of the key vocabulary words listed on the flipchart, describe yourself.

2) Now, ask the students to look at the word list and describe themselves using some of the key vocabulary words on the flipchart.

3) Draw a Venn Diagram on chart paper or a Promethean Board. Ask two students to stand on either side of the chart stand or Promethean board. Ask students to list how the two children are different, yet alike. Begin by asking students to read their own descriptions. Then chart the answers to the following questions on the Venn Diagram:

- What physical characteristics are the same? Different?
- What are the religious affiliations and the nationalities of the two children?
- What kind of music do they both like to listen to?
- What kind of clothes do both like to wear?

4) Explain that the author's purpose in writing this book is to show how Americans are different, yet also alike.

5) Students will participate in a Line Reading Activity.

- Choose the same number of students to read, as there are pages in the book. Assign a page to each student to read.
- Have the Line Readers stand in front of the class in a line and read the story a page at a time.

**Review/Assessment:**

Students will be assigned a partner. They will read the descriptions they have written about themselves to each other. They will see how they are different, yet alike by completing a Venn diagram based on their written descriptions.