

Worksheet: Definition of an American by Australian dentist?

1. Describe your experience the first time you met an American. Who was it? How did you meet? How was he/she the same or different from you?

2. What is your definition of an American?

3. Read the article below which was supposedly written by an Australian dentist and posted on the internet as a result of an ad posted in a Pakistani newspaper offering a reward to kill an American (Source: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Today's Complex World; by Dr. Leo Parvis)

"An American is English, or French, or Italian, Irish, German, Spanish, Polish, Russian or Greek. An American may also be Canadian, Mexican, African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Australian, Iranian, Asian, or Arab, or Pakistani, or Afghan. An American may also be a Cherokee, Osage, Blackfoot, Navaho, Apache, or one of the many other tribes known as Native Americans.

An American is Christian, or he could be Jewish, or Buddhist, Muslim. In fact, [there are more Muslims in America than in Afghanistan]. The only difference is that in America they are free to worship as each of them chooses. An American is also free to believe in no religion. For that he will answer only to God, not to the government, or to armed thugs claiming to speak for the government and for God.

An American is from the most prosperous land in the history of the world. The root of that prosperity can be found in the Declaration of Independence, which recognizes the God given right of each man and woman to the pursuit of happiness. An American is generous. Americans have helped out just about every other nation in the world in their time of need. When Afghanistan was overrun by the Soviet Army 20 years ago, Americans came with arms and supplies to enable the people to win back their country. As of the morning of September 11, Americans had given more than any other nation to the poor in Afghanistan.

Americans welcome the best, the best products, the best books, the best music, the best food, the best athletes. But they also welcome the least. The national symbol of America, the Statue of Liberty, welcomes your tired and your poor, the wretched refuse of your teeming shores, the homeless, tempest tossed. These in fact are the people who built America. Some of them were working in the Twin Towers the morning of September 11, earning a better life for their families. I've been told that the World Trade Center victims were from at least 30 other countries, cultures, and first languages, including those that aided and abetted the terrorists.

So you can try to kill an American if you must. Hitler did. So did General Tojo, and Stalin, and Mao Tse-Tung, and every bloodthirsty tyrant in the history of the world. But, in doing so you would just be killing yourself. Because Americans are not a particular people from a particular place. They are the embodiment of the human spirit of freedom. Everyone who holds to that spirit, everywhere, is an American."

4. What surprised you the most about the article?