
Work Sample from a student at Northern Virginia Community College in 2023

What is my relationship to America?

As a Pakistani-born American, my relationship with America is a beautiful blend of my Pakistani heritage and this incredible country's opportunities and values. It's a unique connection where I feel deep gratitude for the opportunities and freedom I have received while cherishing the cultural traditions and values I grew up with in Pakistan. America has welcomed me with open arms, allowing me to embrace my dual identity and contribute to the diverse tapestry of this great nation. I am proud to call myself a Pakistani-born American, and my background enriches my experiences and perspectives in this beautiful, fantastic country.

What does your family celebrate and remember about our American origin story?

My family's most significant holidays are:

Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

Essential holidays in Pakistani culture.

American Christmas and other holidays.

It's a beautiful blend of traditions and festivities. Christmas reminds us of an Eid al-fitter as we share. During Eid, we get together with family and friends to celebrate the end of Ramadan, a month of fasting and spiritual reflection, like an ester. We dress up in traditional Pakistani attire, exchange gifts, and enjoy delicious feasts with dishes like biryani, kebabs, and sweet treats like sheer Kurma. It's a time of joy, gratitude, and togetherness.

On the other hand, we also embrace the festive spirit of American holidays like Christmas. We decorate our home with lights and ornaments, exchange gifts, and indulge in classic holiday traditions like decorating a Christmas tree, singing carols, and enjoying a festive meal together. It's a time of spreading love and cheer.

Have I read any children's books that connect to my family's experience? Which ones?

A few great books come to mind when it comes to children's books that connect to our family's experience. "A Place Where Sunflowers Grow" by Amy Lee-Tai is a beautiful story about a Japanese American family's experience during World War II. "The Name Jar" by Yangsook Choi

Exploring Common Roots

Exploring Common Roots by Early Childhood Educators
from the Exploring Common Roots team, part of the 2023
cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

is another lovely book that explores themes of identity and acceptance for a Korean girl in America.

These books can help children understand and appreciate different cultures and experiences, including their family's background. I have also read "The Family Book" by Todd Parr. It celebrates all kinds of families and highlights the importance of love and acceptance. It's a colorful and engaging book that kids will enjoy.