

Call Me American

(Adapted for Young Adults)

Written by Abdi Nor Iftin

Ember

978-1-984897-13-8 | Trade Paperback

272 pages | \$9.99 | Lexile: 900L



OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This is the true story of a young Somali immigrant. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to learn about birthdays in Somalia, write an objective summary and compare and contrast the main character's birthday to that of his sister's birthday.

LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will be able to determine the central idea of the included nonfiction article.
2. Students will construct an objective summary of a nonfiction article.
3. Students will identify the similarities and differences of two characters' birthdays.

MATERIALS NEEDED

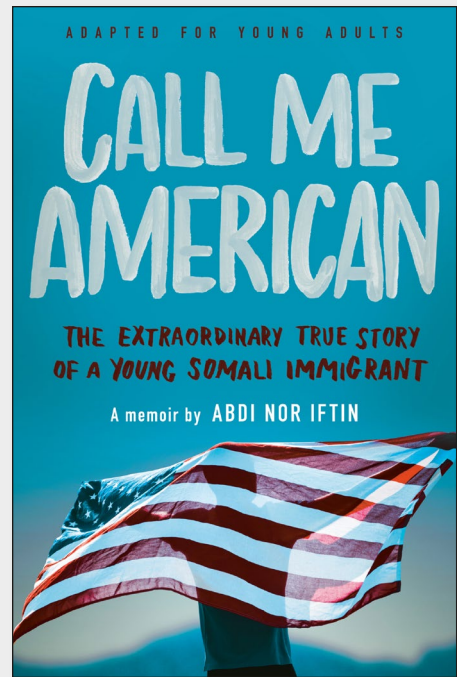
- *Call Me American (Adapted for Young Adults)* by Abdi Nor Iftin pages 5-8 and pages 53-54
- Article: Why so many Somali-Americans celebrate their birthday on Jan. 1: [tinyurl.com/3bwmhzhw](https://www.tinyurl.com/3bwmhzhw)
- Readers Response Worksheet
- Compare and Contrast Worksheet

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Determine the Objective Summary of the news article and prepare students to understand birthdays in Somalia.

Finding Your Place in the World:

*Lessons for Reading
and Writing*



SUMMARY

In Somalia, Abdi Nor Iftin grew up amidst a blend of cultures. His mother entertained him with vivid folktales and bold stories about her rural, nomadic upbringing. As he grew older, he spent his days following his father, a basketball player, through the capital city of Mogadishu. But when the threat of civil war reached Abdi's doorstep, his family was forced to flee to safety. Nicknamed Abdi the American, he developed a proficiency for English that connected him.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION (cont'd)

The guided worksheet will provide support for students as they read the article. Review the explanation of birthdays provided by Abdi Nor Iftin on pages 5 and 6. Consider reading the pages to the students or providing students with a copy to read independently:

- Students should read pages 5 and 6 from *Call Me American* by Abdi Nor Iftin
- Students should read Why so many Somali-Americans celebrate their birthday on Jan. 1
- Students should complete a notes sheet: Readers Response Worksheet
- Students can team up with their classmates to compare their Objective Summaries and discuss their findings.

Introduce *Call Me American* by Abdi Nor Iftin

Have students read pages 6-8 and pages 53-54 or read aloud to students. Abdi identifies how his birthday differs from that of his sister because of the war-torn environment. Complete the Compare and Contrast Chart citing first each character's birthday experiences. Using specific details, write a response to the statement: War changes every aspect of life.

Discuss the student discoveries as a class or have students discuss in groups. How are they the same? How are they different? What can the students infer caused the differences?

Key ideas for Abdi Nor Iftin's Birthday:

- "The moment I appeared, Maryan ran down the street to break the good news to my dad that a boy was born"
- "My dad took a day off from work and partied with his friends, buying them qat leaves"
- "He visited us, as a guest in his own house"
- "Forty days, the amount of time a woman is supposed to remain chaste after labor"
- "Mom was still sleeping under the neem tree, near clay bowls and glass jars full of porridge and orange juice"
- "The women perfumed the rooms of the house and swept the yard bent over, using a short broom"
- Sheikhs "circled the jhimbaar in the yard where I was lying next to mom"
- "Camel meat and sweet milk together are called duco, a blessing for the newborn"

Key Ideas for Abdis Nor Iftin's Sister's Birthday:

- "Khadija called us orphans because we had no dad"
- "My new baby sister was born during the Four-Month War"
- Khadija helped Mom deliver in the middle of the night using a flashlight"
- "Mom did not have people visit, or bring herbs, food and clothes"
- "There was no rest for forty days"
- "Mom was forced to go out and find food for us"

Reader Response Questions for Informational Text

Article: **Why so many Somali-Americans celebrate their birthday on Jan. 1**

- Who is the author?
- What is the topic or subject of this informational text?
- What do we know about the author through their writing?
- Are they reliable or trustworthy?
- What qualifies the author to write this information?
- What is the author's purpose for writing this piece?
- Did you learn any NEW vocabulary words? Write an objective summary of the assigned reading section: _____

- Something I wondered about while I read:
 - How does the author feel about the topic?
 - What is your opinion about this article? Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

- Three things I learned by reading this passage:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Compare and Contrast: Abdi's Birth and Abdi's Sister's Birth

Directions: Abdi identifies how his birthday differs from that of his sister because of the war-torn environment. Complete the Chart citing first each character's birthday experiences. Using specific details, write a response to the statement *War changes every aspect of life.*

Abdi's Birthday Details	Abdi's Sister's Birthday Details
War changes every aspect of life:	

