

Summary – from  
"letter iii: what is an  
american" by john  
crevecoeur



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Summary - From " Letter III: What Is an American? " by John Crevecoeur 1.

Part one: The author imagines himself an Englishman who has come to settle in America (in 1783). Through the eyes of this English settler, the author describes what he would see upon coming to America and how different it would be from Europe. Unlike in Europe, America has a far smaller gap between rich and poor and titles, based on class and honor, (such as prince, duke or lord) are non-existent. For the most part the people living in America are farmers and live in comfortable but modest houses.

It is clear from the author's words that he thinks America is great place to live. 2. Part two: Describes the mixture of people who have settled in America. As immigrants from England, Scotland, France, Holland, Germany and Sweden pour into America, the country has become a melting pot of many different cultures. Struggling to make ends meet, people have come to America from their respective countries in Europe in search of a better opportunity and a new life where they might be able to be treated fairly and regarded as citizens under the law (unlike in their old countries).

Since many of these immigrants left their countries due to poverty or persecution, they have no attachment to their previous homes and consider themselves to be truly American. 3. Part three: The author defines exactly what it means to be an American. According to his definition an American is a European or a descendent of an European. Therefore, America is the only place in the world where a person may have parents and grandparents all from different cultural backgrounds. The author then goes on to say that an American is one who has given up the old for the new and is motivated by hard work and opportunity to improve his life.

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