



Yes! We Are Latinos

Written by Alma Flor Ada & F. Isabel Campoy

Illustrated by David Diaz

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This book celebrates the differences in appreciation of Latino cultures and their diverse backgrounds. It questions rather than reinforces various accepted stereotypes that frame Latinos in the U.S. Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy outdo themselves in finding and recording real-world experiences of Latinos and Latinas from all over the world who reside within the U.S. The authors further convey these experiences with

narrative poetic renderings that explain the experiences in an artistic, personal, and deeper manner. The cultural identities of Latinos are explained further by informational pieces from historical contexts of each Latino/a. Through reading the 12 narrative poems and the informational pieces the reader can gain an intimate look at the cultural roots of each Latino/a. Readers will come away with the knowledge that Latinos are of varied colors and races.

The introduction welcomes an audience that is dissimilar, not merely belonging to Latinos. The later content makes a powerful connection to each of the Latinos that are introduced. Each combination of narrative poetry and informational text reinforces each other. These narratives bring to the reader's attention larger issues of immigration, undocumented citizenship, slavery, and poverty. These issues are dealt with in manner that is both frank and sensitive. These narratives also celebrate the great achievements of Latinos.

Illustrations by David Diaz, Caldecott award winner, add an authentic Latino accent to the overall ambiance of the book. The illustrations are thought-provoking black and white lino cutouts that compare to woodcarvings and papel picado (Day of the Dead) of Latino folk art.

The authors and illustrator of this acclaimed book are well known and respected award-winners in the children's literature field. Alma Flor Ada is a renowned author of children's books and Professor Emerita at the University of San Francisco. She has devoted her life to advocacy for peace by promoting a pedagogy oriented to personal realization and social justice. Her work, in collaboration with F. Isabel Campoy, in promoting authorship in students, teachers, and parents is the content of their book *Authors in the Classroom: A Transformative Education Process* (2003). F. Isabel Campoy is an author of numerous children's books in the areas of poetry, theatre, stories, biographies, and art. As a researcher she has published widely on the importance of adding an awareness of Latino culture to the curriculum.

The manner in which the various Latinos are reflected in this book makes it a necessary accompaniment to novels about Latinos. It can be paired with *The Most Beautiful Place in*

the World by Ann Cameron (1993), *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan (2002), *The Color of My Words* by Lynn Joseph (2001), *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (1984) and the books of Francisco Jimenez. This book has the depth and breadth to be utilized as either an introduction or a deeper study of Latinos within the U.S. and around the world.

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