

# UNTERRICHTS MATERIALIEN

## Englisch Sek. II



The short story "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan  
eine Kurzgeschichte zu den Themen „*Ethnic and cultural diversity*“,  
„*The American Dream*“ und „*Growing Up*“

# Themenkreis „Short stories, fables and fairy tales“

## The short story “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan

by Rainer Jacob

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**Short story**

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**Kompetenzprofil**

- Niveaustufe: B2 (Europäischer Referenzrahmen)
- Kompetenzbereiche: *reading comprehension, speaking, writing, listening comprehension*
- Aufgabenformate: *Analysing a short story, working with a chart, plot scramble, creative writing, research, presentation, analysing a cartoon, cloze text, working with an interview*
- Medien: Kurzgeschichte, Diagramm, Cartoon, Video
- fachübergreifende Aspekte: Gesellschaft, Geschichte

**Bildnachweis:**

S. 16: © AA/ABACA; ddp/abaca press  
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S. 29: cartoonStock.com

## Survey of topics and methods

Main focus	Pre-reading activity	Working with the text	Creative writing	Cartoon analysis	Working with the graph	Listening comprehension	Further activity	Material
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding the short story</li> <li>■ Plot overview</li> <li>■ The identity of second-generation immigrants</li> </ul>	•	•						<p>Topic 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Short story "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan</li> <li>■ Photograph of Özil and Gündoğan with Özil</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gaining a more detailed understanding of the short story</li> <li>■ Analysing the narrative technique</li> </ul>		•	•					<p>Topic 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Short story "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conflicts between parents and children in general and in "Two Kinds"</li> </ul>	•	•	•				•	<p>Topic 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Short story "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan</li> <li>■ Cartoon: "At the genetic engineering lab"</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The history of Asian immigration to the USA</li> <li>■ Asian Americans as an ethnic group</li> </ul>		•		•				<p>Topic 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Two cloze texts</li> <li>■ Graph: "Asian Americans: percentage of the total U.S. population"</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Amy Tan's writing and background</li> <li>■ Connection between the author and her work</li> </ul>		•				•		<p>Topic 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interview with Amy Tan </li> </ul>



## Amy Tan: "Two Kinds"

My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to be in America. You could open a restaurant. You could work for the government and get government retirement. You could buy a house with almost no money down. You could become rich. You could become instantly famous.

5 "Of course you can be prodigy<sup>1</sup>, too," my mother told me when I was nine. "You can be best anything. What does Auntie Lindo know? Her daughter, she is only best tricky."

America was where all my mother's hopes lay. She had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China: her mother and father, her family home, her first husband, and two daughters, twin baby girls. But she never looked back with regret. There were so many ways for things to get better.

We didn't immediately pick the right kind of prodigy. At first my mother thought I could be a Chinese Shirley Temple. We'd watch Shirley's old movies on TV as though they were training films. My mother would poke my arm and say, "Ni kan" – You watch. And I would see Shirley tapping her feet, or singing a sailor song, or pursing her lips into a tiny round O while saying "Oh my goodness."

15 "Ni kan," said my mother as Shirley's eyes flooded with tears. "You already know how. Don't need talent for crying!"

20 Soon after my mother got the idea about Shirley Temple, she took me to a beauty training school in the Mission District and put me in the hands of a student who could barely hold the scissors without shaking. Instead of getting big fat curls, I emerged with an uneven mass of crinkly<sup>3</sup> black fuzz. My mother dragged me out of the bathroom and tried to wet down my hair.

25 "You look like Negro Chinese," she lamented, as if I had done this on purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> prodigy: a person, especially a young one, of exceptional talent or ability

<sup>2</sup> Shirley Temple: American child star (1928–2014)

<sup>3</sup> crinkly: having tight waves or curls

## Reading for the gist

### Pre-reading activity

1. What do you know about first, second and third generation immigrants and the challenges of integration they face? Share your thoughts with a partner.
2. Shortly before the World Cup 2018, two German football players of Turkish heritage, Mesut Özil and Ilkay Gündoğan, posed for a photo with the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan while the government is heavily criticised for violation of human rights. Although both players assure they had not intended to make a political statement, many people in Germany condemned the photo shoot with Erdoğan and questioned the footballers' loyalty to Germany and Western values.



Do you think it was right to criticise the players? Justify your opinion.

### Working with the text

3. Read the short story "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan.
  - a) Decide which of the following paragraphs (1–4) summarises the story.
  - b) Underline the incorrect passage(s) in the other paragraphs.

	<p>Jing-mei, a young Chinese girl in her teens, emigrated from China to America with her ambitious mother, who believes in the American Dream and wants her daughter to become famous. However, Jing-mei rebels and, although she practises hard, a public piano recital ends in a catastrophe. Jing-mei refuses to ever play the piano again.</p>
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2)	The narrator of the story is Jing-mei, a young Chinese girl, whose parents emigrated with their children from China to San Francisco. The girl's mother is keen on making her daughter a star and insists on Jing-mei taking up piano lessons, after she has seen a young Chinese boy on the Ed Sullivan Show. However, Jing-mei's appearance on TV is a disaster and she gives up playing the piano for good.
3)	Jing-mei, a young Chinese girl, looks back on her childhood and remembers how her ambitious mother tried everything to make her a success in American society. Believing in the American Dream, Jing-mei tries her talents at all sorts of activities. However, a public piano recital proves that she is a total failure.
4)	Jing-mei, the narrator of the story, is a young Chinese girl, whose parents emigrated from China to San Francisco. Her mother is convinced that America offers opportunities for all and, therefore, tries everything to make her daughter succeed in society. Initially, Jing-mei is quite happy to go along with her mother's plans, but she gradually realises that she is just not good enough to be the star her mother wants her to be and rebels.

### Plot scramble

4. Establish the order of events in the story "Two Kinds". Number the events below in the correct order.

① Jing-mei gets a new hairstyle to look like Shirley Temple.

Jing-mei takes part in a talent show.

Jing-mei offends and hurts her mother.

Jing-mei fails tests to become a young genius.

Jing-mei starts piano lessons with Mr. Chong.

Jing-mei and her mother get new inspiration from the Ed Sullivan Show.

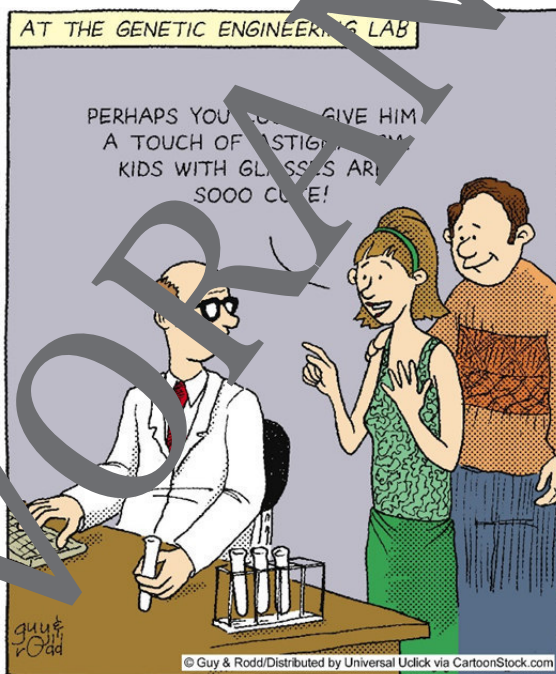
## The conflict between the generations

### Conflicts between mothers and daughters

1. Collect frequent reasons for frictions between mothers and daughters
  - a) ... when the daughters are teenagers and still living at home.
  - b) ... when they are grown-up and have moved out.
2. Analyse the influence of the mother's Chinese background on the conflict with her daughter in the short story "Two Kinds".

### Cartoon analysis

3.
  - a) Describe the cartoon below.
  - b) Interpret its message and relate it to the message of the short story "Two Kinds".



**astigmatism:**  
an eye condition that  
causes blurred vision

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