

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan

### Vocabulary Application Worksheet

**Directions:** Choose the option that *most appropriately* applies the underlined vocabulary term. You may find reference materials like dictionaries helpful.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word discordant?
- A. My friend’s discordant attitude makes everyone want to be her friend.
  - B. At almost seven feet tall, Giannis Antetokounmpo takes discordant steps.
  - C. My discordant aunt can’t help sharing her controversial opinions at family gatherings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word dutifully?
- A. Ms. Nixdorf’s elementary students listened dutifully.
  - B. The newborn slept dutifully throughout the night.
  - C. I dutifully searched the grocery store for specific brands of food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word lament?
- A. The entire class lamented the teacher’s assignment.
  - B. I lamented the loss of my sweet dog, who was with me for eight years.
  - C. Danielle lamented her therapist for advice on her relationship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word listlessly?
- A. The small boat traveled listlessly along calm waters.
  - B. The bodybuilder listlessly achieved a personal weightlifting record.
  - C. After a 12-hour plane ride, we listlessly walked to the baggage claim.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word mutter?
- A. “I don’t like this,” I muttered, not wanting to alert everyone to my dissatisfaction.
  - B. From all the way across the hotel’s hallway, I heard people mutter their plans for the evening.
  - C. A mutter of applause rang through the auditorium.



*Continue to the next page.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word nonchalantly?
- A. Desperate for an A on the exam, Sophie nonchalantly studied all night.
  - B. “I’ve been in this situation many times before,” I said nonchalantly, “so I know what to do.”
  - C. “Five hundred thousand dollars?!” Hazel nonchalantly shouted as she stared at her winning lottery ticket.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word prodigy?
- A. The conditions were prodigy for producing large numbers of sunflowers.
  - B. The devastating tornado left our family in a prodigy.
  - C. The middle schooler is a prodigy of musical talent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word shrilly?
- A. The monkey shrilly howled, and every zoo-goer could hear it.
  - B. The male opera singer shrilly struck a bass vocal note.
  - C. The National Weather Service shrilly issued a tornado warning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word sulky?
- A. Not being the center of attention made the young girl sulky.
  - B. The sulky texture of the blanket is comforting.
  - C. The sulky puppy wrestled with its littermates.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Which option *most appropriately* applies the word vaguely?
- A. Let’s plan to meet vaguely around 4:30.
  - B. I only vaguely understood the directions, so I made many mistakes.
  - C. Lost while driving, I traveled vaguely around the neighborhood.

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## “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan

### Close Reading Analysis Worksheet

**Directions:** Before you answer these questions, read the short story in full. Then, use the following questions as a means of revisiting the text for deeper understanding. For short answer questions, respond in complete sentences.



\_\_\_\_\_ 1. On **page two**, the narrator shares, “Soon after my mother got this 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 black fuzz. My mother dragged me off to the bathroom and tried to wet down my hair.” Which literary device is most evident in this passage?

- A. Situational irony
- B. Foreshadowing
- C. Dramatic irony
- D. Hubris

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the **first column of page three**, the narrator imagines herself as “Cinderella stepping from her pumpkin carriage with sparkly cartoon music filling the air.” Given the context of the fairy tale, which inference is most logical?

- A. The narrator wants to surprise and gain the favor of others
- B. The narrator feels worthless in relation to others
- C. The narrator has a tendency to behave arrogantly
- D. The narrator recognizes her goals are impossible to achieve

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. In the **first column of page three**, the narrator shares, “My mother and father would adore me. I would be beyond reproach.” The narrator’s phrasing implies what?

- A. The phrasing implies a tendency to misbehave
- B. The phrasing implies bitterness and resentment
- C. The phrasing implies a sarcastic attitude
- D. The phrasing implies a fear of rejection



*Continue to the next page.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the **second column of page three**, the narrator shares, “And after seeing my mother’s disappointed face once again, something inside me began to die. I hated the tests, the raised hopes and failed expectations. Before going to bed that night, I looked in the mirror above the bathroom sink and when I saw only my face staring back—and that it would always be this ordinary face—I began to cry. Such a sad, ugly girl! I made high-pitched noises like a crazed animal, trying to scratch out the face in the mirror.” What is this passage’s function? Choose the best answer.

- A. This passage introduces a theme that pervades the rest of the story—that people often sacrifice themselves for others’ benefit
- B. This passage serves as the inciting incident, triggering a conflict that drives the rest of the story
- C. This passage sheds light on the cultural differences between China and America

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. On **page four**, the narrator describes a nine-year-old Chinese girl as “proudly modest.” This phrase is an example of which literary device?

- A. Oxymoron
- B. Invective
- C. Hyperbole
- D. All options are correct

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Through the **first four pages**, the author provides a lot of information about the protagonist and her mother. Which statement is most accurate?

- A. The mother has a negative outlook on the world and projects it onto her daughter
- B. The mother exhibits the determination she feels her daughter lacks
- C. The daughter is frustrated with the hypocrisy of her mother
- D. The mother resents her daughter for having an easier life than she had

7. Revisit your answer to the previous question. Support the claim with several supporting details.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Which of the following excerpts (all from **page four**) contains an example of figurative language?

- A. He had lost most of the hair on his head and he wore thick glasses and had eyes that always looked tired and sleepy.
- B. And her fingers felt like a dead person's, like an old peach I once found in the back of the refrigerator, the skin just slid off the mat when I picked it up.
- C. I soon found out why Old Chong had retired from teaching piano. He was deaf.
- D. Our lessons went like this. He would open the book and point to different things, explaining their purpose: "Key! Treble! Bass! No sharps or flats! So this is C major! Listen now and play after me!"

9. **Pages four and five** address the circumstances surrounding the narrator's piano lessons. What is ironic about these piano lessons? Identify two specific instances of irony. Be sure to explain *why* these details are ironic.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 10. What is true about the **second full paragraph of page five**?

**So maybe I never really gave myself a fair chance. I did pick up the basics pretty quickly, and I might have become a good pianist at that young age. But I was so determined not to try, not to be anybody different that I learned to play only the most ear-splitting preludes, the most discordant hymns.**

- A. This paragraph emphasizes that the protagonist and her mother have grown closer
- B. This paragraph reinforces the protagonist's status as a dynamic character
- C. This paragraph implies that the protagonist struggles to be introspective.

D. This paragraph reveals that the protagonist has learned to appreciate her mother's point of view

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. In the **first column of page five**, Auntie Lindo and the protagonist's mother discuss their daughters' hobbies and accomplishments. What does this interaction imply about the two mothers? Choose the best answer.

- A. This interaction implies that they are skeptical of their children's talents
- B. This interaction implies that they believe it is inappropriate to publicly delight in their children's talents
- C. This interaction implies that they have become less engaged in their children's extracurriculars

12. Consider the significance of the fact that Jing-mei will play a song titled "Pleading Child" (**page five**) for the talent show. Based on the title, why is this choice fitting for Jing-mei? Explain.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 13. In the **second column of page five**, the narrator shares, "When my turn came, I was very confident. I remember my childish excitement. It was as if I knew, without a doubt, that the prodigy side of me really did exist. I had no fear whatsoever, no nervousness. I remember thinking to myself, *This is it! This is it!* I looked out over the audience, at my mother's blank face, my father's yawn, Auntie Lindo's stiff-lipped smile, Waverly's sulky expression." This passage reflects:

- A. Jing-mei's sincere earnestness
- B. Jing-mei's desire to trick her mother into thinking she will excel
- C. Jing-mei's tendency to be sarcastic
- D. Jing-mei's disappointment in the audience's reaction



*Continue to the next page.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 14. In the **first column of page six**, the narrator shares how she “realized how many people were in the audience, the whole world it seemed.” This is best considered an example of which literary device?

- A. Euphemism
- B. Verbal irony
- C. Oxymoron
- D. Hyperbole

\_\_\_\_\_ 15. When Jing-mei finishes her performance, she observes her mother and describes her as “stricken” (**page six, column one**). What is the intended effect of this word choice?

- A. To suggest Jing-mei’s mother will seek retribution against her
- B. To suggest Jing-mei has achieved what she set out to do
- C. To suggest Jing-mei’s mother feels sickened by what she witnessed
- D. To suggest Jing-mei finds her mother’s reaction slightly humorous

\_\_\_\_\_ 16. In the **second column of page six**, the mother says there are “only two kinds of daughters... Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind!” The mother seems to view Jing-mei’s independent streak as:

- A. Personal rejection
- B. Rejection of her traditional Chinese values
- C. An insult to the memories of those she has lost
- D. All options are correct

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. In the **first column of page seven**, the narrator expresses, “I did not believe I could be anything I wanted to be. I could only be me.” While at first this statement may seem to suggest a lack of freedom, there is arguably nothing freer than simply being oneself. This best reflects which literary device?

- A. Dramatic irony
- B. Paradox
- C. Hubris
- D. Situational irony

\_\_\_\_\_ 18. The narrator shares, “And for all those years, we never talked about the disaster at the recital or my terrible accusations afterward at the piano bench. All that remained unchecked, like a betrayal that was now unspeakable. So I never found a way to ask her why she had hoped for something so large that failure was inevitable” (**page seven, column one**). The tone of this passage is best described as:

- A. Impassive
- B. Exasperated
- C. Remorseful
- D. Nostalgic

19. In the **first column of page seven**, the narrator ponders an upsetting question: Why had her mother “given up hope” for her? Given the details provided on **page seven**, take a stance. Had her mother truly “given up hope”? Support your claim with textual details.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 20. Revisit the opening line of the story: “My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to be in America.” Given the mother’s portrayal throughout the story, readers may deduce what? Choose the most accurate option.

- A. The mother assimilates quickly into American society, embracing the values of the United States while purging the painful memories of her unfulfilling life in China
- B. The mother’s attempts to help her daughter embrace American values are met with derision
- C. The mother (seemingly unknowingly) faces her own internal conflict—one in which her belief in American ideals is in contrast to her approach to raising her child

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#### Reading Comprehension Quiz



- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The narrator, Jing-mei, has a mother who believes that America:
- A. Struggles to understand her ancestral culture
  - B. Has unreasonable expectations of immigrants
  - C. Is as good a country as her home country
  - D. Is where you can be anything you want to be
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The mother had come to America in 1949 from which country?
- A. Japan
  - B. India
  - C. Vietnam
  - D. China
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The mother’s first goal for Jing-mei was to:
- A. Help her become a talented painter like Frida Kahlo
  - B. Help her become a young entertainer like Shirley Temple
  - C. Help her become a skilled chess player like Bobby Fischer
  - D. Help her become a famous gymnast like Amy Chow
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What did the mother do for a living?
- A. She cleaned people’s houses
  - B. She bagged groceries
  - C. She delivered newspapers and magazines
  - D. She was a nanny
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What did the mother do with the magazines she collected?
- A. She used them to teach Jing-mei the English language
  - B. She gave them away as birthday and holiday gifts
  - C. She used them to gather information and test Jing-mei
  - D. She used their pages to cover holes in the walls
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What starts making Jing-mei feel angry?
- A. Constant teasing from her schoolmates
  - B. High expectations placed on her
  - C. The belief that her sisters are treated better
  - D. Conversations about college

*Continue to the next page.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The mother becomes obsessed with which musical instrument?
- A. The guitar

- B. The piano
- C. The violin
- D. The saxophone

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. While watching a young girl play this instrument on television, the mother:
- A. Strongly criticizes the little girl
  - B. Says she is prettier than Jing-mei
  - C. Wishes the young girl were her daughter
  - D. Rushes for a tape to record the performance
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. According to the mother, Jing-mei:
- A. Will never amount to anything
  - B. Is smarter than her sisters
  - C. Is too confident and, therefore, unladylike
  - D. Does not give satisfactory effort to tasks
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. What is true about Mr. Chong?
- A. Mr. Chong is blind
  - B. Mr. Chong is dying
  - C. Mr. Chong is deaf
  - D. Mr. Chong is paralyzed
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The mother's friend Lindo has a daughter who is known for what?
- A. Being an exceptional poet
  - B. Being an exceptional chess player
  - C. Being an exceptional tennis player
  - D. Being an exceptional singer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. What is the title of the piece Jing-mei performs for the talent show?
- A. "Sweet Child of Mine"
  - B. "Problem Child"
  - C. "Pleading Child"
  - D. "Wild Child"
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. True or false: Jing-mei receives a long and loud round of applause for her talent show performance.
- A. True
  - B. False

*Continue to the next page.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. After the talent show, the mother:
- A. Apologizes to Jing-mei for her stubbornness
  - B. Kicks Jing-mei out of the house
  - C. Congratulates Jing-mei with a thoughtful gift

D. Silently goes right to her room

\_\_\_\_\_ 15. According to the mother, only one kind of daughter can live in her house.  
What kind of daughter can live in her house?

- A. A “compassionate” daughter
- B. An “obedient” daughter
- C. An “independent” daughter
- D. A “creative” daughter

\_\_\_\_\_ 16. Jing-mei expresses anger toward her mother by:

- A. Calling her mother the ugliest woman in the world
- B. Slapping her mother across the face
- C. Bringing up the babies her mother lost in China
- D. Destroying her musical instrument

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. As a result of this anger-fueled interaction:

- A. Jing mei’s lessons stop
- B. Jing-mei does not speak to her mother for almost a year
- C. Jing-mei is sent to a girls’ boarding school
- D. All options are correct

\_\_\_\_\_ 18. True or false: In the resolution, Jing-mei expresses regret that she and her mother never came to accept each other for their differences.

- A. True
- B. False