

## I. Comprehension

► Briefly summarize the main events leading up to the situation Guy and Major Carruthers find themselves in.

**Tip:** Der Arbeitsauftrag lautet "Briefly summarize." Fasse dich also so kurz wie möglich.

Bevor du mit deinem eigentlichen Text beginnst, kannst du ein Brainstorming machen, um dir den Inhalt der beiden Kurzgeschichten (vor allem im Bezug auf den Arbeitsauftrag) noch einmal ins Gedächtnis zu rufen. Auch Notizen können hilfreich sein.

In the short story "The Force of Circumstance" by William Somerset Maugham, Guy, a colonial administrator in Borneo, used to live with a native woman and has three children with her. After a while he travels to England to find a wife, breaking it off with the native woman. He meets Doris, and she agrees to marry him and to move to Borneo with him, but he fails to tell her about the native woman, who keeps coming to Guy's house to try to talk to him. When Guy finally breaks down and tells his wife about the native woman, she is shocked, and after a period of several months she comes to the conclusion that she cannot live with him anymore and returns to England.

In the story „The Second Hut“ by Doris Lessing, Major Carruthers, a former British soldier, attempts to run farm in Southern Rhodesia. Since he has neither the experience nor the mindset he would need, things do not go well, at all. The farm is failing, and Mrs Carruthers falls ill and does not leave her bed anymore. Carruthers decides to employ an Afrikaner named Van Heerden as his foreman, who runs the farm effectively but is hated by the native workers. When they are forced to build a hut for Van Heerden's large family on their days off, they burn the building as soon as it is completed, and one of Van Heerden's children dies in the fire.

► Compare how Guy and Major Carruthers arrive at their decisions and cope with them. Consider their feelings and thoughts throughout the given texts.

**Tip:** Bei dieser Aufgabe ist es wichtig, mit den beiden vorgegebenen Texten zu arbeiten und diese in deine Ausarbeitung mit einzubeziehen. Du kannst zum Beispiel daraus zitieren oder deine Aussagen am Text belegen.

Guy in "The Force of Circumstance" agreed to take the native woman into his house because he was lonely and it was convenient: a native boy offered to bring her to him, and he only had to allow her to stay. When Doris leaves, Guy has had several months to think about what to do, but apparently he has no idea how to react when she actually departs. He eats dinner and has drinks, like he used to do with Doris, and he reads a British magazine. He also goes for a walk in the jungle with his gun and dresses in native clothes again, just like before Doris ever arrived. It seems as if he weighs his options, wondering whether he feels like a Briton or like a native. First and foremost, he is lonely again and feels sorry for himself, and like the first time, he only reacts when he is made an offer. Thus, when the half-caste boy, his own son, offers the return of his mother to the house, Guy agrees to take the native woman back into his house. While this may seem shallow and insensitive, his tears betray the anguish he probably feels: he wants the native woman back to escape the loneliness, but he misses Doris and the life he might have had with her.

Major Carruthers in „The Second Hut“ stubbornly refuses to admit defeat and to return to Europe until the fire consumes Van Heerden's newly built hut and kills one of his children. At first, he is shocked by the events, first the fire and the native's aggression towards Van Heerden, then the death of a child and finally the premature birth of the latest child of Van Heerden's. Faced with this situation and the Afrikaner's acceptance of it, Carruthers slowly begins to realize how very different this man is from himself, and how unsuited he is to living and thriving in Africa. After Van Heerden leaves him to take



care of his wife, Carruthers finally decides to do the only thing he can for his own wife, so he gives in and writes a letter to his brother, asking for a job back in England, admitting that he is unable to keep living in Africa.