

III. Composition

► 1. Comment on the idea of Britishness as maintained by Doris (*The Force of Circumstance*) and Major Carruthers and his wife (*The Second Hut*).

Tipp:

Bei dieser Aufgabe bietet es sich an, die beiden Kurzgeschichten noch einmal im Hinblick auf die Aufgabenstellung durchzugehen und im Text die Stellen zu markieren, die dir bei der Ausarbeitung helfen werden.

Anschließend kannst du deine Ideen stichwortartig festhalten und sie danach in einen Fließtext umwandeln.

Auch bei dieser Aufgabe gibt es unzählige Möglichkeiten, sie zu bearbeiten. Die hier gezeigte Lösung ist eine davon.

Guy, the protagonist of William Somerset Maugham's short story "The Force of Circumstance," is the administrator of a small colonial outpost in Borneo. He grew up in the colonies, but considers himself a Briton. His wife Doris, however, has only moved from England to Borneo after her marriage to Guy, and tries to re-create her familiar world in their new home: she changes the decorations in their house in a decidedly British style, discarding the native shields, parangs etc. that Guy had put up, leads the leisurely life of a gentlewoman and awaits her husband with drinks and a game of tennis when he returns home from work. The idea of Britishness that is conveyed here is one of routines and pastimes that seem out of place in Asia, and of keeping one's distance from the natives and their way of life.

Doris does not show any interest in learning the language of the natives or in meeting any of them. Most importantly, when she learns that Guy used to live with a native woman before he met her, it seems that her biggest problem is not the fact that there was a woman in his life before her, but rather that he was with a dark-skinned native woman. Finally she comes to the conclusion that she cannot stay with him and in Borneo, and takes the next ship back to England.

In the story "The Second Hut" by Doris Lessing, the idea of Britishness is represented by Major Carruthers and his wife, who try to run a farm in the colony of Southern Rhodesia. Carruthers wants to see himself as a gentleman farmer, but things are not going well: the farm is not making any profit, the farmhouse is run-down, and Major Carruthers and his family are clearly not adapting well to life in Africa. She has taken to bed, unable to face the daily strain of running the farm any longer, like the stereotype of the Victorian lady who faints whenever something unpleasant happens, and he is aging prematurely, relying on tonics to keep him healthy. However, they possess silver tea things and keep a piano in the hall, and Major Carruthers refuses to ask his brother back home in England for help. His pride and determination to face adversity seems to be an important part of what he considers his Britishness. He is also shocked when he gets to know the Afrikaner Van Heerden and his family, whom he treats in a friendly way, but considers to be almost beastlike in their poverty and simplicity. Refinement, culture and setting oneself apart from the others seem to be at the heart of what is received as Britishness – and in both stories, these qualities are in the long run incompatible with a success life in the colonies.

► 2. Describe the postcard and comment on what it reveals about how the British colonizers wanted to be seen.

Tipp:

Beschreibe im ersten Schritt nur, was du auf der Postkarte **siehst**. Gehe dabei **objektiv** vor und füge noch keine Interpretationen ein. Diese folgen erst im zweiten Teil der Aufgabe.

Bei deiner Beschreibung kannst du Ausdrücke verwenden wie "in the center," "on the left / right hand side," "in the foreground / background," etc.

The postcard entitled "Christmas in India" from 1881 displays a scene set during the British Raj. In the center of the picture you can see a white family sitting on a veranda. The mother is reading, the father is holding his daughter in his arms and one child is sitting on the floor playing with a turban and a drum. They are dressed in their European clothes and all of them seem relaxed and happy.

On the right hand side, an Indian servant dressed in his traditional costume is serving drinks. On the left hand side one can see a second Indian servant, who is kneeling on the floor and waving a big fan. In the background, an Indian woman is taking care of the family's white baby.

None of the family members have eye contact with any of the servants.

Tipp:

Nun folgt der Teil, in dem du das Bild interpretieren und kommentieren kannst. Du kannst dabei die einzelnen Eindrücke, die du oben festgehalten hast, Stück für Stück durchgehen und so einen strukturierten Kommentar entwerfen.

The picture reveals a lot about how the British colonizers wanted to be seen. First, the white family is displayed in the center of the picture. This expresses a certain superiority of the colonizers. In addition, they are relaxed while the Indian servants are working. This again reflects this superiority and a certain stability: everything is under control.

Furthermore, the white family is celebrating Christmas and is dressed in their "British" clothes. This suggests that – although far away from their homeland – they stick to their traditional British values and a civilized way of living. Similarly, the letter or newspaper the woman is reading shows that they are still in contact with their British home country.

Lastly, the lacking eye contact reveals a clear distinction between colonizers as the masters and natives as the servants. Nevertheless, the servants seem quite happy and even take care of the family's baby. Thus, the picture shows that – according to the whites – even the natives are happy with their situation and that they welcome the colonizers as the bringers of peace, stability and civilization.

► 3. “...emphasis on recognizing and respecting diverse cultures.” (l. 28/29) – a first step towards a segregated country or a necessary means to reach true multiculturalism? Discuss the question with reference to the USA.

Tipp:

Überlege dir im ersten Schritt eine kurze Einleitung, die zum Thema hinführt. Dabei sollten die wichtigsten Begriffe (hier z.B. “segregation” und “multiculturalism” fallen. Vergiss außerdem nicht, die eigentliche Fragestellung zu formulieren und auf die nun folgende Diskussion hinzuweisen.

From the late 1960s to today, the American society underwent an important shift from segregation to multiculturalism. Different ethnic groups and cultures are now treated equally and are no longer separated from each other.

A recent debate in Great Britain raised the question whether an “emphasis on recognizing and respecting diverse cultures” would favor segregation rather than multiculturalism. In the following, this question shall be discussed with reference to the USA.

Tipp:

Beginne nun mit der eigentlichen Diskussion. Du kannst zunächst die Begriffe “segregation” und “multiculturalism” kontrastieren und die wichtigsten Unterschiede herausarbeiten. Versuche dabei, zunächst **objektiv** zu bleiben und deine eigene Meinung erst im letzten Teil einzubringen

In both systems, segregation and multiculturalism, people are aware of the differences between the single ethnic groups. Thus, diverse cultures are “recognized” in both systems.

In the times of segregation, however, the American society was divided into two major groups: colored people and white people. These two groups were separated from each other and had different shops, different cafés and even different schools.

State and economy, however, were primarily ruled by white people. In consequence, colored people did not have the same chances as white people.

Only when the Civil Rights Movement with figureheads such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King constantly called for more social justice and more social equality, this system was changed.

In today’s multicultural society, everybody has the same chances and the same rights. White people are no longer thought to be “superior” to other ethnic groups.

Therefore, in a segregated society, diverse cultures are not really “respected,” while in a multicultural society, they are “respected.”

Tipp:

Im Schluss kannst du nun eine persönliche Wertung einbringen: wie stehst du zu dem Statement? Inwiefern spiegelt sich deine Meinung in der Amerikanischen Geschichte wieder?

I think that an “emphasis on recognizing an respecting diverse culture” can indeed favor segregation if people do only “recognize” diverse cultures.

If, however, people really “respect” diverse cultures and are open-minded and tolerant, then this emphasis can favor multiculturalism.