**Two Kinds - Tasks**

Answer the tasks below.

**Comprehension**

**Part 1**

1. Describe how the mother sees America.
2. What hopes does the mother have for her daughter?
3. How does the mother try to turn her daughter into a prodigy?
4. How does the daughter react to the mother’s efforts?
5. Why does the mother decide to pay for her daughter’s piano lessons?
6. Describe the daughter’s piano teacher.
7. Why does the daughter not improve her piano skills?
8. Why has Waverly Jon gained fame?
9. How does the protagonist’s mother react to Waverly’s fame?

**Part 2**

1. What preparations did the parents make before the talent show?
2. How did the daughter feel when she started playing at the talent show?
3. What happened during her performance?
4. How did the audience react to the daughter’s performance?
5. What was the mother’s reaction to her daughter’s failure?
6. What did the daughter believe that her fiasco would lead to?
7. Why is there a clash between mother and daughter?
8. What is the outcome of the clash?
9. What role did the piano come to play for the daughter later in life?

**Literary Analysis**

1. The short story is called “Two Kinds". How do you understand the title?
2. Which themes do you find in the short story?
3. **a.** Comment on the mother's language, giving some examples of her faulty English. What does this add to the text?  **b.** Can you make a sentence or two in her speaking style? Be creative and try saying it out loud!
4. In the first part of the story there is a scene in which the daughter sees herself in the mirror. What does she see? What thematic significance could this scene have?
5. Two strong-willed characters are pitted against each other in this story. What went wrong in the relationship between mother and daughter? Can you understand them?
6. In the conflict between mother and daughter the father is absent. Why do you think the father is not part of the conflict?
7. Read carefully the parts dealing with the mother’s earlier life in China. How have her earlier experiences shaped her ambitions for her daughter?
8. The daughter plays two pieces on the piano, “Pleading Child” and “Perfectly Contented”. How could these two titles be related to her own life?
9. How could “Two Kinds” be considered a short story dealing with typical multicultural challenges?

**Point of View**

Looking back as an adult, the author Amy Tan tells her story in the first person (“I” point of view). The conflict and tension between an overly ambitious mother and her rebellious daughter is very strong. We feel Jing-Mei's frustration, rage, spitefulness and final failure for not living up to her mother’s dreams and expectations in America.  
  
Select a part of the story that illustrates this conflict and rewrite it from the mother's point of view.

**Speaking**

1. Act out a typical dialogue between the mother and the daughter.
2. With a partner, imagine you both are in the audience at Jing-Mei's disastrous performance, and gossip about it afterwards over lemonade.
3. Be confident that you know what is implied in the expression Tiger Mother. Make a dialogue between a Tiger Mother and her son/daughter. Take turns.

**Essay Writing**

Write an essay on one of the following assignments.

1. Do you think parents should have a say in their children’s future plans? How much should children be allowed to decide for themselves?
2. Discuss this statement: “It is more difficult for immigrant children to find their identity than other children.”
3. Is it desirable to grow up without conflicts or are conflicts a necessary part of growing up? Finally, when do conflicts become destructive?
4. With close reference to the text, what details about the nature of first-and second-generation immigrants are presented in the story?

You may want to look into the characters in the text and the setting (historical context) of the Chinese immigrants. You may also look into the American Dream. Do read and do some research on these issues.

**YouTube link:**

1.<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgAk2JBBL5U> Two Kinds by Amy Tan Part One

2.<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Rgth2JEgZc> Two Kinds by Amy Tan Part Two

3.<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSHWplEDfoE> Two kinds Part Three

4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnI7aEGLHpc> "Two Kinds" Analysis

5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUMaOIE6C3g> A Conversation with

Amy Tan by Lawrence Bridges

6. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCBdoFMHpTU> The Joy Luck Club (fan)