

Zentralabitur 2022	Englisch – Berufliches Gymnasium – Nachschreibtermin	Material für Prüflinge
Prüfungsteil 2: Textaufgabe – Aufgabe II	eA	Prüfungszeit*: 240 Min.

*Die Prüfungszeit setzt sich zusammen aus 210 Minuten Bearbeitungszeit und 30 Minuten Auswahlzeit.

Aufgabenstellung

1. Outline the relationship between Asian Americans and white U.S. society as presented by Kang.
(30 %)
2. Analyze the stylistic means Kang uses to characterize Asian Americans.
(30 %)
3. In their blog section the *New York Times* has invited readers to share their thoughts on “Chances and Challenges of Multicultural Societies.” You have decided to contribute a blog entry in which you assess the role their original cultures play for migrants. As a starting point, you take the following statement by Asian-American writer Amy Tan: “There is this myth that America is a melting pot, but what happens in assimilation is that we end up deliberately choosing the American things – hot dogs and apple pie – and ignoring the Chinese offerings.”
Write the blog entry, also referring to the article at hand and materials studied in class, such as the movie *Gran Torino*.
(40 %)

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Material

Text: Excerpt from Jay Caspian Kang, “The Myth of Asian American Identity” (2021)

Every few months I come across assimilated Asian men venting on social media about the time one of their white neighbors in buildings just like mine in Brooklyn mistook them for delivery men, inevitably followed by a firm statement of their credentials: “I guess he didn’t know, I am a journalist/doctor/lawyer/hedge-fund manager!” It’s

5 embarrassing for both sides when this happens, but the implication has always felt so bizarre to me; the real offense is being mistaken for being poor. What sets modern, assimilated Asian Americans apart, when it comes to these sorts of differentiations made by so many immigrant groups, is that our bonds with our brothers and sisters are mostly superficial markers of identity, whether rituals around boba tea, recipes

10 or support for ethnic-studies programs and the like. Indignation tends to be flimsy – we are mad when white chefs cook food our parents cooked, or we clamor about what roles Scarlett Johansson stole from Asian actors. But the critiques generally stay within those sorts of consumerist concerns that do not really speak to the core of an identity because we know, at least subconsciously, that the identity politics of the

15 modern, assimilated Asian American are focused on getting a seat at the wealthy, white liberal table. Or, if we want to be generous, we fight about food and representation and executive-suite access because we want our children to live without really having to think about any of this – to have the spoils of full whiteness. We, in other words, want to become as white as white will allow. For the first three

20 decades of my life, this process felt inevitable. I tried on several different selves with wildly contradictory politics: a radical, a revolutionary Marxist in my teens, a Buddhist in my early 20s, followed by a bout of self-destruction and then a more stable period as a professional writer. During those phases, each of which was deeply felt, it never occurred to me that I wouldn’t end up fine. In retrospect, I don’t really know why I

25 believed that – things could certainly have gone wrong, and for a while in my 20s, they did – but because I knew all my middle-class Asian and white friends would be fine, it followed that I would be, too.

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On those rare instances when I would think about having a child, I assumed her life would be less complicated than my own. The stubborn optimism of the immigrant dictates that while your own life often shows just how quickly things can get catastrophically worse, American progress remains immutable. The second-generation immigrant envisions progress as an incline: Our immigrant parents push us halfway up the slope, we hike the rest of the way and then gently roll our own kids over the summit.

In March 2020, as Covid-19 spread through the Seattle area, my parents locked themselves down on the farm. When the president¹ started saying “China virus,” I FaceTimed them every night so they could see their 3-year-old granddaughter. They remained cheery and upbeat but admitted that people had started giving them a wide berth when they went to the supermarket, one they had shopped at for 15 years. My mother volunteers at a thrift store that mostly serves a population of white, octogenarian treasure hunters who talk endlessly about “Antiques Roadshow.”² These are her friends. When she told them she wouldn’t be working her shifts for a while because she didn’t want to scare the elderly shoppers, they thanked her for being so considerate. Perhaps there are first- and second-generation Asian Americans who would be appalled by such sentiments, but their pride has been purchased through the repeated wash of concessions. When the second generation “learns their history” – the Chinese Exclusion Act³ of 1882, the lynchings in Los Angeles’s Chinatown in 1871, the World War II internment of the Japanese – there’s a tendency to rebel against the meek who accept the abuse, seemingly content to squirrel their cash away. I’ve never really understood the intolerance for meekness. What is that forbearance but the solemn acknowledgment that our claims to citizenship are rooted in shallow ground – and the hope that the next generation will find the footing to stand up for itself?

In the spring of 2020, news outlets began publishing stories about attacks on Asian Americans, and my social media feeds were peppered with testimonials from actors, journalists and politicians who had been berated or assaulted. An Asian woman in

¹ the president – Donald Trump, the 45th president of the U.S.A. (2017-2021)

² Antiques Roadshow – a TV show in which people have their antiques appraised by experts

³ Chinese Exclusion Act – a law that explicitly forbade Chinese laborers to enter the U.S.A.

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her 60s knocked to the ground and kicked outside the lobby of a condo in New York City; another spat on in San Francisco [...].

60 After enough of these stories, I began to worry about my parents. They are some of the only Asian people on the south side of their island. Their immediate neighbors, mostly white senior citizens who still post passionately about Hillary Clinton⁴ and their animal rights organizations, posed little threat. But the middle and north sides of the island are rural in a way that is easily caricatured: populated with Trump flags and poor men in RealTree⁵ camo hats who idle their pickup trucks outside the gas
65 stations and weed dispensaries.⁶ I had visions of those trucks tearing up the farm's long dirt driveway and breaking through the gate. That's when the visions would end, the brain editing out the unspeakable parts.

My parents understood this and pointed out that their best friends on the island were Trump supporters. The people who kept their distance, they said, were invariably the
70 well-heeled Democrats.

When my sister and I were growing up, American politics never really entered our household. When, in 2016, my parents came out as rabid Bernie Sanders⁷ supporters, I could not figure out what had gotten into them. Their goal had always been to live in some comfort in their new country, regardless of the politics of their neighbors.
75 Ignore race enough, and maybe it would disappear.

(980 words)

Quelle: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/magazine/asian-american-identity.html>. Zugriff am 14.01.2022.

Hilfsmittel

Ein- und zweisprachiges Wörterbuch der Zielsprache

⁴ Hillary Clinton – U.S. politician with the Democratic Party, who ran for the office of president in 2016

⁵ RealTree – a U.S. company that produces camouflage clothing used e.g. for hunting

⁶ weed dispensary – a place where cannabis can be purchased legally

⁷ Bernie Sanders – independent U.S. politician affiliated with the Democratic Party, who campaigned for presidential candidacy in 2016