

2024

Abitur

Original-Prüfung
mit Lösungen

**MEHR
ERFAHREN**

Gymnasium Bayern

Englisch



STARK

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Sachtext:	<i>I used to think social media was a force for good. Now the evidence says I was wrong.</i>	V 2
	Thema: <i>social media, the impact of the media on society</i> (Thema 3*)	
Literarischer Text:	<i>The Hate U Give</i> (Auszug aus <i>The Hate U Give</i> von Angie Thomas)	V 4
	Thema: <i>ethnic minorities in the US, police violence</i> (Thema 2)	

* Diese Angaben beziehen sich auf die für Ihre Abiturprüfung festgelegten Themenschwerpunkte (vgl. Vorwort).

Original-Prüfungsaufgaben

Abiturprüfung 2017

Listening:	<i>Alcatraz</i>	2017-1
	<i>Ancient Social Media</i>	2017-2
Textaufgabe 1:	Text: <i>Superhighway to Cycling Heaven – or Just a Hell of a Mess?</i>	2017-4
	Thema: <i>London, city life, environment</i> (Thema 4)	
Textaufgabe 2:	Text: <i>Prospect Park</i> (Auszug aus <i>Teacher Man</i> von Frank McCourt)	2017-8
	Thema: <i>relationships, diversity, violence</i> (Thema 1)	
Mediation:	Verpackungsfreier Einkauf? Nicht mit den Deutschen	2017-11
Lösungsvorschläge:		2017-14

Abiturprüfung 2018

Da die Prüfungsthemen 2018 nicht zu den neuen thematischen Eingrenzungen passen, ist dieser Jahrgang im Buch nicht enthalten.

Abiturprüfung 2019

Listening:	<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	2019-1
	<i>The Psychology of Money</i>	2019-2
Textaufgabe 1:	Text: <i>Detroit: The Most Exciting City in America?</i>	2019-4
	Thema: <i>Detroit: decline and revitalisation, American Dream</i> (Thema 2)	
Textaufgabe 2:	Text: <i>You'd Recognize the Name</i> (Auszug aus "Achates McNeil" von T. C. Boyle)	2019-8
	Thema: <i>parent-child relationship, fame</i> (Thema 1)	
Mediation:	Leitungswasser hat in der deutschen Tischkultur keinen Stellenwert	2019-11
Lösungsvorschläge:		2019-13

Abiturprüfung 2020

Listening:	<i>John Muir</i>	2020-1
	<i>Gentrification</i>	2020-2
Textaufgabe 1:	Text: <i>American Floods</i>	2020-4
	Thema: <i>climate change, global warming</i> (Thema 4)	
Textaufgabe 2:	Text: <i>Behold the Dreamers</i> (Auszug aus <i>Behold the Dreamers</i> von Imbolo Mbue)	2020-7
	Thema: <i>immigration, American Dream, gender relations</i> (Thema 1/2)	
Mediation:	Die Stützen der Gesellschaft	2020-10
Lösungsvorschläge:		2020-12

Abiturprüfung 2021

Listening:	<i>A Memorable Basketball Game</i>	2021-1
	<i>Monopoly</i>	2021-2
Textaufgabe 1:	Text: <i>Reflecting on When Colin Kaepernick First Took a Knee</i>	2021-5
	Thema: <i>race relations (USA)</i> (Thema 2)	
Textaufgabe 2:	Text: <i>The Sun Temple</i> (Auszug aus <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> von Jhumpa Lahiri)	2021-9
	Thema: <i>India, intercultural understanding</i> (Thema 4)	
Mediation:	150 Jahre Märchenschloss	2021-12
Lösungsvorschläge:		2021-14

Abiturprüfung 2022

Listening:	<i>Book Reviews</i>	2022-1
	<i>Baroness Trumpington</i>	2022-2
	<i>Sea Otters</i>	2022-3
Textaufgabe 1:	Text: <i>The Other Tech Giant</i>	2022-5
	Thema: <i>Wikipedia, digital devices, progress</i> (Thema 3)	
Textaufgabe 2:	Text: <i>A Love Story</i> (Auszug aus <i>An American Marriage</i> von Tayari Jones)	2022-9
	Thema: <i>personal relationships, dealing with difficulties</i> (Thema 1)	
Mediation:	Eine kleine Stadt für die Armen	2022-12
	Die Fuggerei denkt über die Zukunft nach	2022-13
Lösungsvorschläge:		2022-15

Abiturprüfung 2023 www.stark-verlag.de/mystark

Sobald die Original-Prüfungsaufgaben 2023 freigegeben sind, können sie als PDF auf der Plattform MyStark heruntergeladen werden (Zugangscode vgl. Umschlaginnenseite).



Audio-Dateien

Abitur 2017
Abitur 2019
Abitur 2020
Abitur 2021
Abitur 2022
Abitur 2023

Auch auf die Audio-Dateien können Sie über die Plattform MyStark zugreifen.

Vorwort

Liebe Schülerin, lieber Schüler,

mit diesem Band können Sie sich gezielt auf das schriftliche **Abitur** im Fach **Englisch** in Bayern vorbereiten.

- Mit einer Auswahl an originalen Aufgaben der **Abiturprüfungen ab 2017** können Sie den „Ernstfall“ testen.
- Da sich die Vorgaben des Kultusministeriums ab dem Abitur 2020 geändert haben (z. B. Bewertung in Notenpunkten statt BE, meist zwei statt drei Fragen zum Text, drei statt vier *Composition*-Themen zur Auswahl), entsprechen die Originalaufgaben 2017 und 2019 nicht eins zu eins dem, was Sie in Ihrer eigenen Prüfung erwartet. Dennoch können Sie alle Aufgaben sehr gut zum Üben einsetzen.
- Ab dem Abitur 2024 werden die Textaufgaben zu den folgenden bundesweit festgelegten **Themenschwerpunkten** gestellt:

1) The individual and society	• Questions of identity: ambitions and obstacles, conformity vs. individualism • Chances and challenges for society: ethnic, cultural and social diversity, gender issues
2) Politics, culture, society – between tradition and change (<i>Bezugskultur: USA</i>)	• From past to present: American ideals and realities – freedom, equality and the pursuit of happiness • Current issues: questions of identity, political, cultural and social developments
3) The media	• The changing media landscape: traditional and modern media • The impact of the media on the individual and society: information, entertainment, manipulation
4) Global chances and challenges	• Working towards social, environmental and economic sustainability • International relations: conflict and cooperation, peacekeeping, migration

Um Ihnen die inhaltliche Vorbereitung zu erleichtern, haben wir im Inhaltsverzeichnis vermerkt, zu welchem der **Themenschwerpunkte** die abgedruckten Aufgaben jeweils passen. Zur weiteren inhaltlichen Vorbereitung dieser und weiterer Themen des Oberstufenlehrplans Bayern empfehlen wir außerdem unser ***AbiturSkript Englisch*** (Best.-Nr. 10546S1).

- Zu jeder Aufgabe wurden von unseren Autorinnen und Autoren vollständig auf Englisch ausformulierte **Lösungen** verfasst. Die Bearbeitungshinweise vor den Musterlösungen helfen Ihnen beim richtigen Beantworten der Aufgaben. Beachten Sie, dass es sich hier selbstverständlich nur um beispielhafte Ausführungen handelt und dass Sie auch mit anderen Ideen und Formulierungen erfolgreich sein können.
- Im Kapitel „**Hinweise und Tipps zum Abitur**“ zu Beginn des Buches sind alle wichtigen Fakten zum schriftlichen Abitur im Fach Englisch zusammengefasst. Außerdem finden Sie dort viele Tipps, die Ihnen helfen, Ihre Prüfung erfolgreich zu bestehen.

Viel Erfolg bei Ihrer Abiturprüfung!

Hinweise und Tipps zum Abitur

Allgemeine Hinweise und Tipps zum Abitur

Das Abitur im Fach Englisch kann sowohl als **mündliche Prüfung** (sog. Kolloquium) als auch als **schriftliche Prüfung** (sog. kombinierte Abiturprüfung) abgelegt werden. Dieses Buch beschäftigt sich nur mit der schriftlichen Prüfung und bezieht sich auf die Vorgaben für die Abiturprüfung 2024.

Die schriftliche Abiturprüfung in Englisch besteht aus drei Teilen: dem **Hörverstehen**, dem **Schreiben** mit *Text comprehension and analysis (Questions on the text)* sowie *Composition* und der **Sprachmittlung**. Die Aufgaben zum Schreiben basieren auf einer Textgrundlage. Hier können Sie zwischen einem Sachtext und einem literarischen Text wählen.

Bearbeitungszeit

Die Bearbeitungszeit beträgt **315 Minuten**. Davon entfallen 30 Minuten auf den Prüfungsteil Hörverstehen. Die restlichen 285 Minuten können Sie sich zur Bearbeitung der Textaufgabe sowie der Mediation frei einteilen.

Erlaubte Hilfsmittel

Als Hilfsmittel sind sowohl **ein- als auch zweisprachige Lexika** zugelassen, nicht jedoch elektronische Wörterbücher. Bitte beachten Sie, dass Sie in der Prüfung nur die durch das Staatsministerium genehmigten Wörterbücher verwenden dürfen.

Prüfungsinhalte und Ablauf

Prüfungsteil Hörverstehen

Ihre Prüfung beginnt mit dem **Hörverstehensteil**. Hier werden Ihnen in der Regel **zwei bis drei authentische Hörtexte** vorgespielt. Sie können die Texte jeweils zweimal anhören und müssen dazu **geschlossene und halboffene Fragestellungen** beantworten (vgl. hierzu die möglichen Aufgabenformate auf S. IV/V). Die einfache Hörzeit wird normalerweise **5 Minuten pro Hörtext** nicht überschreiten. Textgrundlage für diesen Aufgabentyp können Radiobeiträge, Reden, Interviews, Ausschnitte aus Diskussionen

oder Gesprächen etc. sein. Die authentischen Aufnahmen können Herausforderungen aufweisen, die das Hörverstehen erschweren (z. B. Hintergrundgeräusche, wechselndes Sprechtempo, von der Standardsprache abweichende Varietäten). Nach 30 Minuten ist der Hörverstehensteil der Prüfung beendet und die ausgefüllten Arbeitsblätter werden eingesammelt. Sie können dann zwar nichts mehr ändern oder ergänzen, was aber den Vorteil hat, dass Sie sich jetzt voll auf die Prüfungsteile **Schreiben** und **Mediation** konzentrieren können.

Prüfungsteil Schreiben

Für den Prüfungsteil **Schreiben** stehen Ihnen **ein fiktionaler und ein nicht-fiktionaler Text von jeweils max. 1 000 Wörtern zur Auswahl**, also z. B. ein Romanauszug und ein Zeitungsartikel. Die Aufgaben dazu sind jeweils in *Text comprehension and analysis* und *Composition* unterteilt. Um auszuwählen, welche der Textvorlagen Sie bearbeiten wollen, lesen Sie sich beide Texte möglichst unvoreingenommen durch. Beziehen Sie bei Ihrer Entscheidung für einen der beiden Aufgabenvorschläge nicht nur die Textvorlagen, sondern auch die dazugehörigen Aufgabenstellungen mit ein.

Die *Text comprehension and analysis* (*Questions on the text*) umfassen ab dem Abitur 2020 **in der Regel zwei, selten drei umfangreiche Fragen** zum Text. Normalerweise wird eine der Fragen Ihr **Textverständnis** überprüfen: Sie müssen also Inhalte des Textes in eigenen Worten wiedergeben. Eine weitere Frage wird sich normalerweise der **Textanalyse** widmen, d. h., hier geht es darum zu erklären, wie Inhalte im Text ausgedrückt werden und zu welchem Zweck der Autor oder die Autorin bestimmte sprachliche Mittel einsetzt. Im Abschnitt „Prüfungs- und Aufgabenformen“ finden Sie nähere Informationen zu häufigen Fragestellungen in diesem Prüfungsteil.

Im Bereich *Composition* werden in der Regel **drei Themen** gestellt, die mit dem Text in einem mehr oder weniger engen thematischen Zusammenhang stehen und von denen Sie eines zur Bearbeitung auswählen. Eine dieser *Composition*-Aufgaben kann auch die Analyse und Interpretation eines Cartoons oder anderer visueller Vorlagen (Werbeanzeigen, Tabellen, Grafiken etc.) beinhalten. Welche Aufgaben hier sonst noch häufig sind und wie Sie mit diesen umgehen, können Sie ebenfalls im Abschnitt „Prüfungs- und Aufgabenformen“ nachlesen.

Prüfungsteil Sprachmittlung

Im Prüfungsteil **Sprachmittlung** müssen Sie den **Inhalt eines deutschen Ausgangstextes** unter Berücksichtigung spezifischer Vorgaben (**inhaltlicher Rahmen, Adressat*in, Textsorte**) **auf Englisch** wiedergeben. Als Richtwert gilt, dass ein Ausgangstext von maximal 650 Wörtern auf etwa ein Drittel des ursprünglichen Umfanges komprimiert wird. Schlagen Sie auch hier im Absatz „Prüfungs- und Aufgabenformen“ nach, wie Sie bei der Mediationsaufgabe am besten vorgehen.

Leistungsbewertung

Die schriftliche Abiturprüfung wird nach einem Teilnotensystem bewertet. Das heißt, für jeden Prüfungsteil erhalten Sie Notenpunkte von 0 bis 15 Punkten. Über die folgende prozentuale Gewichtung der einzelnen Teilnoten wird Ihre Gesamtnote ermittelt:

Abiturprüfung 2020
Bayern ■ Englisch



LISTENING COMPREHENSION

(20 %)

Task 1: John Muir

17 BE

You will have two minutes to study the tasks below. Then you will hear the recording twice, with an interval of two minutes to complete the tasks. After the second listening, you will have two minutes to finalise your answers.

You will hear part of a report about John Muir. While listening, do the tasks. You need not write complete sentences.

1 Muir's first contact with the Yosemite valley (2)

year	
Muir's occupation	

2 Information about the valley (2)

predominant types of trees	
height of Half Dome from the bottom of the valley to its summit	

3 Muir's childhood (2)

father's character	
role of nature	

4 A new start (3)

state Muir's family emigrated to	
<u>two</u> interests	• •

5	A life-changing moment		(2)
	injury he suffered		
	what he turned to		
6	Life in California		(2)
	what he used to do when there was a storm		
	concrete reason his work turned angry		
7	Muir's views on trees in Yosemite		(2)
	reason why the trees have survived so long		
	US government's responsibility		
8	Muir's political activism and his personal appeal		(2)
	key demand advocated by Muir		
	how he tried to win over the President		

Task 2: Gentrification

10 BE

You will have two minutes to study the tasks below. Then you will hear the recording twice, with an interval of two minutes to complete the tasks. After the second listening, you will have two minutes to finalise your answers.

You will hear a report about gentrification. While listening, do the tasks. You need not write complete sentences.

- 1 Where is Archway? (1)

Text 2 Behold the Dreamers

The Cameroonian Jonga family – father Jende, mother Neni and their son Liomi – were reunited in New York about two years ago. Now, jobless and dispirited, Jende wants to go back to their hometown Limbe in Cameroon.

- 1 She would not be leaving. Never. She would not be returning to Limbe.

For years she had stayed in her father's house doing nothing but housework, first too grief-stricken and shamed to return to school after dropping out and then losing her daughter; later – when she was ready to return, four years after the baby's death –
5 unable to do so because her father didn't think it was worthwhile paying for an almost-twenty-year-old to attend secondary school. [...]

By her late twenties, all she could think about was America.

It wasn't that she thought life in America had no ills – she'd watched enough episodes of *Dallas* and *Dynasty* to know that the country had its share of vicious people
10 – but, rather, because shows like *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *The Cosby Show* had shown her that there was a place in the world where blacks had the same chance at prosperity as whites. [...]

Which was why, on the day Jende shared with her Winston's offer to buy him a ticket so he could move to America and eventually bring her and Liomi over, she had
15 wept as she composed a five-paragraph email of gratitude to Winston. She began watching American movies like *Stepmom* and *Mrs. Doubtfire* not only for leisure but also as advance preparation, envisioning a future in New York where she would finish her education, own a home, raise a happy family. Though she'd been surprised to learn upon arrival that not many blacks lived like the ones in the sitcoms, and virtually no
20 one, black or white, had a butler like the family in *The Fresh Prince*, the realization had done little to change her impression of what was possible in America. [...]

"But what you gonno do?" Fatou asked as she braided Neni's hair.

"I don't know," Neni said. "I really don't know."

Fatou turned Neni around by the shoulders and pressed her head down so she could
25 finish a cornrow. "Marriage," Fatou said, "is a thing you want. But when you gonno get it, it bring you all the thing you no want."

Neni scoffed. Fatou couldn't stop herself from making up a new proverb on the spot; she could never prevent herself from being a one-woman book of odd opinions.

"No matter what woman in this country do," she went on, "we African woman
30 musto stand behind the husband and be following them and say yes, yes. That what we African woman musto do. We no gonno say to husband, no, I no gonno do it."

"So you do everything Ousmane asks you to do, eh?"

"Yes. I do. Everything he want, I do. Why you think we got seven childrens?"

"Because Ousmane said so?"

35 "What you think? What woman no crazy wanno suffer like that seven time in one life?"

Neni laughed, but the afternoon would be one of the few times she would laugh about her plight with a friend. Most times, she would shake her head in bewilderment, which was what she did two days later when Betty stopped by [...].

40 “What does he mean life is too hard here? If life was not hard for us back home why did we leave our countries and come here?”

“He thinks it’s better for a person to suffer in their own country than to suffer somewhere else.”

45 “Ha! Please, don’t make me laugh. He really thinks suffering in Cameroon is better than suffering in America?”

Neni shrugged. “You’ll regret it if you go back home, I’m telling you right now,” Betty said. “Why are you guys acting like little children? Life is hard everywhere. You know that maybe it will get better one day. Maybe it will not get better. Nobody knows tomorrow. But we keep on trying.”

50 “You know how hard things have been. Ever since he lost his –”

“What about the money you got from Mrs. Edwards?”¹

“Sssh,” Neni said. She looked out of the kitchen to make sure Liomi wasn’t nearby. “Jende says we cannot use the money” she whispered. “He’s hidden it in a separate bank account and says we’ll only touch it when worse comes to worst.”

55 “Why does he get to decide how to spend the money?”

“Ah, Betty, there’s no need for you to put it like that.”

With her mouth half open and her nose flared, Betty looked like Neni, moving her eyes slowly up Neni’s face, from chin to forehead and back down, twice.

“Neni?” she said, cocking her head.

60 “Eh?”

“Did you march to that woman’s house that day and earn that money for yourself?” Neni nodded.

“Is that money Jende’s money or both of your money?”

“It’s both –”

65 “Then tell your husband it’s your money, too, and you want to use it to stay!”

“What kind of talk is that?” Neni said. “You think I’m an American woman? I cannot just tell my husband how I want something to be.”

“Why not?”

“You don’t know what kind of man Jende is. He’s a good man, but he’s still a man.”

70 “So you’re going to go back to Cameroon?”

“I don’t want to go!”

“Then don’t go! Tell him you want to stay in America and keep trying. There are one million things you have to do before you start thinking about packing your things – you get your papers first. [...]”

75 The woman knew all about trying. Thirty-one years in this country and Betty was still trying, and Neni couldn’t understand why. Betty had come here as a child with her parents and gotten her papers through them. She had been a citizen for over a decade, and yet here she was in her early forties, working two jobs as a certified nursing assistant at nursing homes, stuck in nursing school. Neni couldn’t understand how that was possible. If she were a citizen, she would be a pharmacist in no more than five years. A pharmacist with a nice SUV and a home in Yonkers or Mount Vernon [...].

(995 words)

From: Imbolo Mbue, Behold the Dreamers, 4th Estate, 2016, pp. 311–315

Annotation

- 1 Desperate for money to make ends meet, Neni blackmailed Mrs. Edwards, for whom she had previously worked as a temporary home help.

Text comprehension and analysis

35 %

Complete the following tasks using your own words as far as is appropriate.
Quote correctly.

- 1 Outline Neni's perception of America before she moves there and the reality that now confronts her. (20 %)
- 2 Analyse how Fatou and Betty react to Neni's problem, also taking into consideration how gender roles are depicted. (15 %)

Composition

20 %

Choose **one** of the following topics and write a coherent text laying out your ideas.

- 1 "Immigration is not just a link to America's past; it's also a bridge to America's future." (George H. W. Bush, 41st President of the United States)
Comment on this statement.
- 2 Quota systems can help rectify women's under-representation in prominent positions, and make it entirely normal for women to take up leading roles in various fields. Do you think this kind of affirmative action is a justifiable measure?
- 3 Describe briefly, analyse and comment on the cartoon.



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introduction starting with, “John Muir had been born in the Scottish town of Dunbar” (l. 10).

- 4 The relevant paragraph immediately follows the information Mary Colwell provides about the Muir family (cf. ll. 19–22).
That two different interests are described can also be concluded from the sentence structures: “John [...] But [...] he also [...]” (ll. 20–22).
- 5 The keywords “life-changing moment” (ll. 30/31) only follow the description of what happened to John Muir. So, it is not enough to merely wait to hear the keywords, but you also have to concentrate on the description leading up to it.
- 6 Muir’s “particular love of storms” and his reactions to this weather phenomenon are described in lines 35 to 37.
You might be tempted to see the whole description of the time (“America’s gilded age. This was a period of huge economic growth, fuelled by westward expansion and massive destruction of natural resources”, ll. 39–41) as a reason for John Muir’s anger. However, a very “concrete reason” is mentioned in lines 41 and 42.
- 7 Once more, an extract from John Muir’s own writings will provide you with the correct solutions (cf. ll. 43–48).
“Uncle Sam” (l. 48) is used here as a synonym for the US government.
- 8 You should have no trouble spotting the relevant passage for this table, as President Theodore Roosevelt is clearly mentioned. The whole paragraph starting “John Muir led calls ...” (cf. ll. 49–52) describes Muir’s aims and strategies.

1 Muir’s first contact with the Yosemite valley

year	1869
Muir’s occupation	shepherd

2 Information about the valley

predominant types of trees	pine and oak
height of Half Dome from the bottom of the valley to its summit	nearly a mile

3 Muir’s childhood

father’s character	violent / very strict / abusive / religious / pious
role of nature	escape from violence at home / real freedom / not as threatening as situation at home / balm

4	A new start	
	state Muir's family emigrated to	Wisconsin
	<u>two</u> interests	• exploring (uncharted) forests • engineering / machines
5	A life-changing moment	
	injury he suffered	went blind (in one eye)
	what he turned to	inventions of God / nature
6	Life in California	
	what he used to do when there was a storm	went right into the middle of it
	concrete reason his work turned angry	sawmills were built in Yosemite / westward expansion causing the destruction of trees reached Yosemite
7	Muir's view on trees in Yosemite	
	reason why the trees have survived so long	God has saved them from natural disasters / God has cared for them
	US government's responsibility	to save them from fools / people who cut them down / lumber companies
8	Muir's political activism and his personal appeal	
	key demand advocated by Muir	to turn places like Yosemite into national parks
	how he tried to win over the President	took him into Yosemite on a camping and lobbying trip

Transcript 2 Gentrification

- 1 **David Baker:** Gentrification – the process of neighbourhoods rapidly going up markets is occurring in cities right across the UK.
- Male speaker:** It's a pretty grey morning here in Archway in North London and there's a huge amount of construction going on around us and a huge amount of traffic
- 5 driving round that construction because this is an area that's really going through a transformation. On our left here a big ...

The assignment shows quite clearly on which parts of the text you should focus your analysis, namely on Fatou's (cf. ll. 22–38) and Betty's (cf. ll. 40–79) respective reactions to Neni's conflict. Before going into the analysis of what they advise Neni to do, how they express their attitudes and what these reveal about gender roles in general, you can start by summarising the conflict Neni finds herself in. For the analysis, remember to not only summarise the two women's opinions, but to also show how they are expressed in the excerpt at hand. Use appropriate quotations to find evidence for your points. As Neni herself remains indecisive, her reaction to the contrasting pieces of advice could be a fitting conclusion.

You could structure your answer in the following way:

introduction: Neni's conflict: husband wants to leave America for Cameroon (cf. ll. 42/43), Neni wants to stay but feels obliged to be obedient to her husband (cf. ll. 66–69, 71, 80/81)

analysis: contrasting reactions of Neni's two friends

- **Fatou** as the personified role model of an obedient African wife
 - attitude: unthinkable to disobey husband (cf. ll. 29–33)
 - language and her own conviction characterise her as an “African woman” (cf. e. g. ll. 29–31)
 - humorous allusion to having children only for her husband's sake (cf. ll. 35/36)
 - “one-woman book of odd opinions” (l. 28): confidence in her own convictions
- **Betty** as a “modern American woman”
 - attitude: gender equality when it comes to money and joint decisions (cf. ll. 63–65)
 - standard American English, working woman (cf. ll. 78/79)
 - reactions to Neni's reluctance: anger (cf. ll. 57, 72), scorn for Jende's decision (cf. ll. 44/45)
 - manner of speaking: interrupting Neni (cf. ll. 50/51, 64/65), asking lots of (sarcastic) questions (cf. ll. 40/41, 44/45, 47, 51, 55, 61, 63, 68, 70)

conclusion: Neni caught between tradition and wish to follow her own dreams (cf. ll. 1, 66/67)

After being made redundant, Neni's husband Jende wants to return to Cameroon because he thinks it will be easier there than in America to come to terms with their reduced circumstances (cf. ll. 42/43). This resolve puts Neni in a difficult position as on the one hand she hates the idea of going back to Limbe and would rather stay in New York where she optimistically expects her luck to turn given the opportunity (cf. ll. 71, 80/81). On the other hand, she still sees herself in the traditional role of an African woman who does not question her husband's decisions (cf. ll. 66–69).

introduction

Neni's conflicting feelings are mirrored in two of her friends' attitudes. Fatou is the personified role model of an African wife. She does not dispute a husband's right to make decisions concerning his family without asking his wife's opinion. Voicing a different point of view or even contradicting her husband does not cross her mind (cf. ll. 29–31). This conviction of “stand[ing] behind the husband and [...] following them” (l. 30) or, as she puts it blandly, “Everything he want, I do” (l. 33), as well as her language (cf. ll. 22, 25/26, 29–31, 33, 35/36) show her as an “African woman” and she clearly identifies as such and contrasts this to a “woman in this country” (cf. ll. 29–31).

analysis:

contrasting attitudes of Neni's two friends

Fatou as personified role model of obedient African wife

While this attitude is limiting and oppressive from a European perspective, Fatou herself seems to have accepted her life. She even makes light of it, when she ironically describes having children as a mere favour to her husband (cf. ll. 35/36).

Fatou confident in and humorous about her role

Neni's other friend Betty is similarly convinced of her own attitude, which is in stark contrast to Fatou's. She is a hard-working and determined woman (cf. ll. 78/79), speaks standardised American English and does not conform to the traditional gender roles of the African community. Instead, she seems to have embraced the more emancipated roles women have in American society.

Betty as representative of “modern American women”

Not only does she ridicule Jende's conviction that a hard life in Cameroon is better than a hard life in America (cf. ll. 44/45) most eloquently, but she also firmly believes in gender equality where the use of jointly earned money is concerned. To her mind, Neni has to have as much say in how to spend their savings as Jende (cf. ll. 63–65).

gender equality

When Betty sees Neni waver over whether to allow her husband to dominate her, as tradition demands, or to stay firm in her wish to remain in America as opposed to Jende's decision, she is exasperated and disgusted at her friend's lack of self-confidence (cf. ll. 57, 72). Her anger and determination can be clearly seen in her way of talking to Neni. Betty repeatedly interrupts her friend (cf. ll. 50/51, 64/65) and asks lots of questions (cf. ll. 40/41, 44/45, 47, 51, 55, 61, 63, 68, 70), which illustrate her refusal to just bow to tradition.

anger and scorn in answer to Neni's indecision

Despite her rebellious thoughts, Neni herself does not seem to be ready yet for ridding herself of traditional gender roles when she answers Betty “What kind of talk is that? [...] You think I'm an American woman? I cannot just tell my husband how I want something to be” (ll. 66/67). So, despite her outspoken avowal that “She would not be leaving. Never. She would not be returning to Limbe.” (l. 1), Neni has neither Betty's independence to follow her own dreams nor can she meekly accept her husband's wishes, as Fatou suggests.

conclusion



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www.stark-verlag.de
info@stark-verlag.de

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