

Do you want to practise for five hours or six?

Amy Chua brought up her daughters the Chinese way...



Your 12-year-old daughter is delighted. She got an A-minus in maths, second prize in a history competition, and top marks in her piano exam. Do you a) say Well done!, give her a hug, and tell her she doesn't need to practise the piano today, and can go to a friend's house, or b) **(1) ask why she didn't get an A in maths**, why she didn't get first prize in the history exam, and tell her she'll be punished if she doesn't do her piano practice?
If you chose a), you are definitely not Amy Chua.



A lot of people wonder why so many Chinese children are maths geniuses and musical prodigies. Amy Chua explains why in her book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. It is a book which caused great controversy among parents when it was first published. **(2)** _____, Chua married a man who she met at Harvard University, and when their two daughters were born she was determined that they would be as successful as she was.

Her system had strict rules. Her two daughters were expected to be number one in every subject (except gym and drama) and **(3)** _____. Playing with friends and TV was forbidden. Music was compulsory.

The system seemed at first to be working. From a very early age her daughters Sophia and Lulu were outstanding pupils and musical prodigies. At 13 Sophia played a piano solo at the Carnegie Hall in New York, and at 12, Lulu a violinist, was the leader of a prestigious orchestra for young people. Chua chose maths and music for her daughters, but it seems that they could have excelled in anything.

(4) _____.

Eventually Chua realized that she was pushing her daughters too hard. Lulu had always rebelled the most, and when she was 13 she refused to co-operate at all. After a series of violent arguments, Chua decided to give her daughters a little more freedom, and Lulu immediately gave up violin lessons and took up tennis. **(5)** _____.

Many people have been shocked by the book.

(6) _____. She once sent her daughter Lulu, aged three, into the garden without her coat when it was -6° because she had behaved badly at her first piano lesson.



However, the girls do not seem to resent their mother. Sophia said that she herself chose to accept the system, and after the book was published she wrote an article defending her mother. Lulu says that although she no longer wants to be a violinist, she still loves playing the violin.

(7) _____. Sophia is now studying law at Harvard, and Lulu is doing well at high school and winning tennis trophies.

Interestingly Chua, who was brought up in a family of four girls, has no idea whether she could apply her Chinese parenting system to boys. **(8)** _____.

Adapted from The Times