

## James Ellroy (C1)

### A – Before you start

*Answer the questions with a partner.*

1. Do you like reading novels?
2. If so, what kind? Have you got a favourite writer?
3. Have any best-selling novels been set in your home town or region? Which ones?
4. Have you read any novels by James Ellroy?
5. If so, what did you think of them?

### B – Listen and answer

*Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and complete them.*

1. Ellroy grew up in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. His childhood was troubled because his mother \_\_\_\_\_ when he was ten.
3. Between 1987 and 1992, he published a set of four novels entitled *L.A.* \_\_\_\_\_.
4. His novels have revealed the dark side of many \_\_\_\_\_ of the 1940s and 1950s.
5. He says that the key to understanding his novels lies in his own \_\_\_\_\_.
6. He compares the way he writes to the way \_\_\_\_\_ composed.
7. Two authors who inspired him are \_\_\_\_\_ and Dashiell Hammett.
8. He says he's 74 and \_\_\_\_\_ and intends to carry on writing.

### C – Read and answer

*Read the article and answer the questions.*

1. Why wasn't Ellroy's father an ideal parent for a boy who had lost his mother at an early age?
2. In what way was Ellroy's life unsettled when he was a young adult?
3. What does the article say about the vocabulary Ellroy uses in his novels?
4. In what way does he mix fact and fiction in his stories?
5. How did he find out the guilty secrets of many film stars?
6. Why does Ellroy think Los Angeles is worse today than the city described in his books?
7. Why is his attitude to Donald Trump lenient?
8. How does he see the future?

### D – Learn it! Use it!

*Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)*

1. Using the internet in some rural areas is \_\_\_\_\_ because there are no broadband services.
2. When you have to write a composition, it's best to start by making an \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We can't go on like this. The situation is \_\_\_\_\_. Something will have to change!
4. Don't go near the park at night. It's dangerous. The area is full of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Yesterday our dog found a rabbit hole and ran around it \_\_\_\_\_ and barking loudly.
6. When you're choosing a car, you have to \_\_\_\_\_ its fuel consumption.

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 1)

*Read the text and decide which word in brackets best fits each gap.*

James Ellroy was six when his parents <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*became/have/had/got*) divorced and he and his mother moved to a suburb of Los Angeles. Four years later his mother was found strangled on a roadside. The crime, <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*though/despite/yet/instead*) investigated thoroughly, was never solved.

From then <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*off/after/on/forward*), Ellroy started to go off the <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*rails/track/path/road*). He was expelled from school before graduating and, after a brief spell in the army, ended <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*with/on/up/in*) living on the streets of Los Angeles, where he drank heavily, <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*brought/took/had/ate*) drugs and spent his time reading crime novels.

After <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*been/be/to be/being*) jailed for burglary, he started working in a bookshop and later as a golf caddy and gradually <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*could/managed/enabled/succeeded*) to turn his life around. In 1981, at the age of 30, he published his first novel, *Brown's Requiem*.

**F – Write about it**

*Write about one of your country's best-selling living novelists. Include information about his/her:*

- biography;
- genre;
- best-known works;
- writing style.

## **Answers**

### **B – Listen and answer**

1. Los Angeles
2. was murdered
3. Quartet
4. Hollywood celebrities
5. biography
6. Beethoven
7. Raymond Chandler
8. healthy

### **C – Read and answer**

1. Because he wasn't a hands-on parent.
2. He drank heavily and became homeless.
3. It says he uses a lot of expletives.
4. He incorporates real-life characters and events, like J. F. Kennedy and his assassination, into his plots.
5. He heard about them from his schoolmates at junior high school. Many of them had parents who worked in the film industry.
6. Because it's uglier, it's overcrowded and it's hard to park there.
7. Because he says America got what it paid for (meaning America elected him) and he didn't do too much damage.
8. He says he's optimistic about it because life goes on.

### **D – Learn it! Use it!**

1. troublesome
2. outline
3. untenable
4. dope addicts
5. sniffing
6. bear in mind

### **E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?**

1. got
2. though
3. on
4. rails
5. up
6. took
7. being
8. managed