



Stephen King – Fifty Years Scaring Us (C1 - Advanced)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you like horror stories? Why (not)?
2. Can you name any famous horror films?
3. Why do you think people enjoy being scared?
4. What do you know about Stephen King?

B – Listen and answer

Part 1

Read these statements. Then listen to Track 12 (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. Stephen King's novel *Carrie* was his first best-seller.
2. Canadian writer Bev Vincent's book about King is mainly a biography.
3. Vincent thinks Stephen King manages to get his readers to sympathise with his characters.
4. From the beginning, King wanted to avoid being categorised as a horror writer.
5. His first four novels published under a pseudonym weren't very successful.
6. King was influenced by his hard-working father and mother.
7. When King starts writing, he knows exactly how the story will develop.
8. Today's literary critics take Stephen King's writing seriously.

Part 2

Read these statements. Then listen to Track 13 (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. In *The Shining*, Jack Torrance finds a job as the manager of a hotel.
2. Randall Flagg is the hero of several of King's works.
3. In *Pet Sematary*, Gage Creed dies twice.
4. In *It*, Pennywise is a clown who helps a group of children eliminate the evil creature *It*.
5. Annie Wilkes, who appears in *Misery*, is said to be the character that King likes most.

C – Read and answer

Read the two articles about Stephen King and answer the questions.

1. How is Bev Vincent's book organised?
2. What two qualities of Stephen King's books make them so readable, according to Bev Vincent?
3. How was *Blaze* different from King's previous book *Carrie*?
4. What reasons did King have for writing under a pseudonym?
5. What three elements in his life have stopped him from becoming too conceited?
6. Where does Stephen King often set his stories?
7. Which scary character of King's developed from something he wrote before any of his novels?
8. Which scary character seems to be a kind, sympathetic person at the beginning of the novel?
9. Which scary character feeds on humans?
10. Which scary character kills his mother?

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 pronoun or the verb tense.)

1. Nobody likes Joe. He's too vain and _____.
2. Jazz music is a _____ of different musical styles, like blues, ragtime and spirituals.
3. Before the arrival of underground _____, there were frequent cholera epidemics in London.
4. Actors who often play the same kind of role risk being _____.
5. There's something moving about up in that tree, but I can't _____ what it is.
6. Paul wanted to eat at home; Anne preferred to eat out. After some discussion, Anne _____.

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 3)

Use the word in brackets to form a word that fits in the space given.

1. Stephen King's books contain _____ (RECUR) themes, characters and places.
2. These build a literary universe that becomes _____ (FRIGHTEN) familiar.
3. Bev Vincent says part of King's _____ (BRILLIANT) is in his characterisation.
4. King's stories don't all have a happy _____ (END).
5. King had the _____ (SATISFY) of knowing his books sold well even with a pseudonym.
6. Bev Vincent describes Stephen King as a modest and _____ (PRETENCE) person.
7. King creates his stories from an idea, without preparing an _____ (LINE).
8. He likes to joke that he has now _____ (LIVE) the critics that once disliked his books.

F – Write about it

Write about one of your country's famous living novelists. Include information about:

- his/her life;
 - what kind of novels he/she writes;
 - his/her best-known works;
 - any film or TV adaptations;
 - any literary awards.
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Answers: Stephen King – Fifty Years Scaring Us (C1 - Advanced)

B – Listen and answer

Part 1

1. F – His first best-seller was *The Shining*. 2. F – It's an analysis of all his books, as well as his life and influences. 3. T 4. F – At first he didn't mind. 5. T 6. F – He was influenced by his hard-working mother. His father left when he was two. 7. F – He writes without knowing how the story will end. 8. T

Part 2

1. F – He finds a job as a hotel caretaker. 2. F – He's the villain of several of King's works. He's not a hero. 3. T 4. F – Pennywise is one of the forms that the evil creature It takes. 5. T

C – Read and answer

1. It's organised in chronological order. 2. The stories are told in a compelling way and the characters are people that readers can relate to. 3. It wasn't a story about the supernatural or a horror story. 4. He wanted to break free from his usual formula and he was curious to see whether his books would sell without his name on them. He also wished to have all his books published. Publishers would only publish one or two of an author's books per year, and Stephen King wrote a lot more. 5. His mother, his wife and his life in Maine. 6. In the two fictional towns of Castle Rock and Derry. 7. Randall Flagg. 8. Annie Wilkes. 9. Pennywise/It. 10. Gage Creed.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. full of himself 2. blend 3. sewers 4. pigeon-holed/branded 5. make out 6. prevailed

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?

1. recurring 2. frighteningly 3. brilliance 4. ending 5. satisfaction 6. unpretentious
7. outline 8. outlived