

# **ELVIS PRESLEY**

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### I) ANTICIPATING

> The beginning of the video tape: "It is hard to believe that it has been almost a quarter of a century since the King of Rock and Roll, Elvis Presley, died at the age of 42.

On August 16, a celebration of his life and music is scheduled at Elvis' mansion, Graceland, in Memphis, Tennessee. But Tupelo, Mississippi is another southern American city remembering the late singer.

Margaret Kennedy tells us about the places and people close to Elvis. "

1) What do you know about Elvis Presley? Do you know any songs by Elvis Presley? 2) How old was he when he died? 3) Why was August, 16th 2002 important? 4) Who is Margaret Kennedy? What towns did she visit?

#### > Main characters:





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#### Who are they? Match the names to the photos:

James Ausborn: Elvis' boyhood friend – Reverend Frank Smith: Minister at Elvis' church – Suzanne Boone: Works with the redevelopment group planning a new center in Tupelo – George Booth: Works at Tupelo Hardware Store – Jack Curtis: One of the two Elvis impersonators in Tupelo – Wayne Hereford: Sings in a group called "The Lane Chapel Quarter"

#### II) READING COMPREHENSION

#### >> SCRIPT:

Elvis is having a longer career in death than he had in life. He still draws a crowd. Each year 600,000 people come to his house, Graceland. Some are loyal fans, others are just curious. They come to see the furniture, the things Elvis owned, everything that is Elvis. This is where he lived and died. Graceland is the cornerstone of tourism in Memphis.

But there's another house, in another place: Tupelo, Mississippi. Elvis was born in the front room in 1935 and grew up the only child of Vernon and Gladys Presley. The family had constant money troubles and moved to Memphis when Elvis was 13. But Elvis visited Tupelo often. He gave the town the money to buy back the house to build a park. Improvements are still underway with public and private money, like a new statue.

Reverend Frank Smith was the minister at Elvis' church. Reverend Frank taught him one of the first songs Elvis would sing.

Elvis got his first guitar at the Tupelo Hardware Store. George Booth says his father was running the place then. It hasn't changed much, even though newer, much bigger hardware stores have come to town.

"We're standing in front of the sales counter where Elvis and his mom, Gladys, shopped for a birthday present for Elvis when he was ten years old," says Mr. Booth. "They ended up buying a guitar, but Elvis came in thinking about a bicycle or a rifle."

The salesman, Forrest Bobo, years later documented his pivotal role in Elvis' career. "Mr. Bobo wrote this letter, and in it he says that the guitar cost \$7.75, Elvis

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### >> QUESTIONS:

- 1. Nobody likes Elvis any more.
- a) TRUE
- b) FALSE
- 2. What was the name of his house?
- a) Songland
- b) Elvisland
- c) Graceland
- 3. Where is Graceland located?
- a) In Houston, Texas
- b) In Washington, D.C.
- c) In Memphis, Tennessee
- 4. Why do fans go to Tupelo, Mississippi?
- a) Because Elvis was born there
- b) Because Elvis lives in this town
- c) Because it is a beautiful town
- 5. Elvis' family was very wealthy.
- a) TRUE
- b) FALSE
- 6. When did Elvis move to Memphis?
- a) In 1935
- b) In 1948
- c) In 1953
- 7. Elvis never went back to Tupelo.
- a) TRUE
- b) FALSE
- 8. Who is Frank Smith?
- a) He is a teacher
- b) He is the mayor of Tupelo
- c) He is a minister.
- 9. Why is Reverend Smith famous?
- a) Because he taught Elvis his first song
- b) Because he bought Graceland
- c) Because he is one of the two Elvis impersonators
- 10. When he was 10, Elvis decided to go into Bobo's shop to buy a guitar.
- a) TRUE
- b) FALSE

### **III) ORAL COMPREHENSION**

Here is the script of the tape. Fill in the gaps with these words:

born, churches, concerts, fans, friend, guitar, kid, mirror, music, performed, Restaurant, search, sing, site, Tupelo, young

(03:15) You don't have to (1) hard in Tupelo to find someone who likes to sing and play
(2). Wayne Hereford, who sings with a popular local group called the Lane Chapel Quartet, says townspeople are proud and amazed by Elvis' success.
"When I was growing up I couldn't believe – nobody could make me believe – that Elvis was (3) in Tupelo, Mississippi," recalls Mr. Hereford. "I just didn't want to believe that. I just didn't feel like a star of that magnitude could come from Tupelo. I'm saying (I thought that) as a (4)"
Black gospel music deeply influenced Elvis.
"They would have these tent meetings from what I've been told," says Mr. Hereford. "They said he would hang out around those. You know, black (5) traditionally have a lot of emotion going on."
(04:25)At Johnnie's Drive-In (6), where Elvis liked to go after school, I met Elvis' boyhood (7), James Ausborn. He well remembers those Black churches.
"There was one church that we went to that had real good, (8)" he says. "We'd go up there and the window had a broken place, and we'd peep in and listen to them sing on Sunday morning. If we didn't go to church ourselves, we'd listen to them (9)"
(04:53) Jack Curtis, who runs the local office of an insurance company, is too (10) to have known Elvis, but he knows what to do with a pair of sideburns.
"I'll just take this little (11) here, on the desk," he explains. "And you just kind of get them up in here like this. And you would normally have a little transparent glue, onion skin, that you would work with and you put them on and you got your little sideburns. And I got my little guitar here."
Jack is one of two Elvis impersonators in (12) "I got some of these moves right here," he says. "You got them that Elvis went down like this, honey. He did. And then he'd come back on this side."
Elvis gave two triumphant hometown (13) here. But there is little of that Tupelo left to see. Urban renewal has swept it away.
(06:28) Suzanne Boone works with the redevelopment group planning a new shopping and entertainment center to satisfy the desire of Elvis (14) to visit sites associated with him.
"When people come to visit Tupelo, they know he (15) here in 1956 and 1957," she notes. "And they want to see where did he stand, where did he sing. Over here in this area over which is now a parking lot, but that's where the grandstands were."
Tupelo seems a bit baffled about what visiting here means to Elvis fans. What started out as a trickle is now 60,000 visitors a year to the birth (16) It's been 54 years since Elvis moved away, but the influences that shaped him live on in Tupelo.

# IV) GRAMMAR

## > Habitual actions in the past

**WOULD** is used several times in the recording. Warning: it is NOT a conditional.

"They would have these tent meetings from what I've been told," says Mr. Hereford. "They said he would hang out around those."

> In spoken English, one often uses the modal "would" followed by the main verb to describe habitual, repeated actions in the past:

When we were kids, we would haze each other quite a bit.

When I was little, we would go camping a lot.

When my father was in school, they would slap children who didn't behave.

> You can also use "used to + verb" to put the emphasis on actions which were done in the past and are no longer done in the present.

When I was little, we used to go camping a lot.

When my father was in school, they used to slap children who didn't behave.

I used to work days, but now I work the night shift.

#### > EXERCISE:

Write a short paragraph about yourself, explaining what you used to do when you were young (/younger). You can use these words:

- 1. to have a lie-in
- 2. to go to school
- 3. to watch TV late
- 4. to have good marks
- 5. to travel all over the world
- 6. to practise sports
- 7. to meet your friends

### **V) VOCABULARY**

### Find the correct definitions.

A) a king	1) A man who is employed to sell merchandise in a store.
B) a crowd	2) To peek furtively; steal a quick glance.
C) a salesman	3) One who imitates the appearance, voice, or manner of a celebrity.
D) to believe	4) One that is supreme or preeminent in a particular group, category, or sphere.
E) to peep	5) Beard grown down the side of a man's face in front of the ears.
F) a sideburn	6) To have confidence in the truth or value of something.
G) an impersonator	7) A large number of persons gathered together.
H) to perform	8) A roofed stand for spectators at a stadium or racetrack.
I) a grandstand	9) To present a dramatic or musical work or other entertainment before an audience.

### **VI) ANSWERS**

> Anticipating: 1st row: Reverend Frank: Smith Minister at Elvis' church – George Booth: Works at Tupelo Hardware Store – Wayne Hereford: Sings in a group called "The Lane Chapel Quarter"

2nd row: James Ausborn: Elvis' boyhood friend – Jack Curtis: One of the two Elvis impersonators in Tupelo – Suzanne Boone: Works with the redevelopment group planning a new center in Tupelo

- > Reading Comprehension: 1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (c) 4. (a) 5. (b) 6. (b) 7. (b) 8. (c) 9. (a) 10. (b)
- > Oral comprehension: 1. search 2. guitar 3. born 4. kid 5. churches 6. Restaurant 7. friend 8. music 9. sing 10. young 11. mirror 12. Tupelo 13. concerts 14. fans 15. performed 16. site
- > Grammar: (examples) When I was young, I used to have a lie—in on Sundays. Then, I would play football with my friends and watch TV late. At school, I used to have good marks; I became a doctor. During my holidays, I would travel all over the world: I visited Spain, England and Germany. I used to practise a lot of sports. Now, I don't have enough time to practise them any more. My life is a bit different, but it is still funny.

> Vocabulary: a4 - b7 - c1 - d6 - e2 - f5 - g3 - h9 - i8

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