**Exercise 1**

**Crime, Crime Writers and the Detective Novel**

*Answer the questions with reference to the short biographies which follow.*

**Which crime writer**

... was influenced by a non-English author? 01. .................

... made a lot of money in Hollywood? 02. .................

... was a successful playwright? 03. .................

... wrote books which were the essence of the heyday of crime fiction? 04. ............

... had a good grip of the details of everyday living? 05. .................

... created the typical style of the American crime story? 06. .................

... was influenced by her career as a thespian?` 07. .................

... features an upper-class hero? 08. ................. 09. .................

... features a European detective? 10. ................. 11. .................

... wished his hero was dead? 12. .................

... gave up detective fiction for more serious pursuits? 13. ............ 14. ..............

... had a hero with a code of honour? 15. .................

... moved from reason to mysticism? 16. .................

DETECTIVE STORY WRITERS

**A.**

**Agatha Christie** (1890-1976) was born in South-West England. She enjoyed a quiet, middle-class childhood that set the keynote for her adult life and personality. There was no encouragement for biographers to link her life with her work. The more than 80 books she produced made her beyond doubt the most famous detective novelist of the century. Her very first novel in 1920 introduced the Belgian private detective, Hercule Poirot. In 1930, she introduced the shrewd and gentle Miss Marple, whose fictional career rivalled Poirot's in length and popularity. Her books epitomise the so-called Golden Age of detective fiction of the 1920s and 1930s. The novels have little in the way of setting or characterisation, but centre exclusively on ingenuity of plot. Of the several short stories she adapted for the stage, The Mousetrap, first produced in 1952, was hugely successful.
**B.**

**Ngaio Marsh** (1899-1982) was born and brought up in Christchurch, New Zealand. After leaving university, she worked in the theatre, first as an actress and then as a producer. Her first novel in 1934 introduced Superintendent Roderick Alleyn of Scotland Yard. The settings of her novels are often theatrical and her plots show a tight dramatic construction. She wrote more than 30 novels. She also wrote travel books and two books on play production. Her autobiography is mainly about her life in the theatre.
**C.**

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** was born in Edinburgh and was brought up as a Catholic. However, by the time he had finished his medical studies at Edinburgh University he had given up Catholicism. Much of his writing reflects the scientific rationalism he adopted until his later conversion to spiritualism. He practised as a doctor at the seaside resort of Southsea where the lack of patients gave him plenty of opportunity to write. The first of the Sherlock Holmes stories was published in 1887, but his real popularity did not begin until the publication of a collection of the stories in 1992. Doyle resented being identified solely as the creator of Sherlock Holmes. His life reflected many interests and he was a versatile writer who dealt also with historical and science fiction. In fact, he disliked his hero so much, he made a desperate attempt to kill him off. The last years of his life were spent in an indefatigable defence of spiritualism.
**D.**

**Raymond Chandler** (1888-1959) was born in Chicago but brought up in England. The first part of his life was taken up with journalism and business until he started to write fiction at the age of 45. The Big Sleep, published in 1939, introduced his most famous character, the disillusioned but chivalric detective, Philip Marlowe. Chandler is perhaps the best-known and most read of the American hard-boiled school of detective story writers.
**E.**

**Dashiell Hammett**(1894-1961) was born in Maryland and served in the United States army during World War I. Afterwards he went to work for the Pinkerton Agency in San Francisco as a private detective. His experiences served him well when he turned to writing. A first book of collected short stories was published in 1944. His most famous book, The Maltese Falcon, was made into a successful movie, as were the rest of his novels. He made and spent several fortunes as a movie scriptwriter. His writing is spare and realistic and suited his material perfectly, the underworld of American gangsterism. Hammett invented what has been called the hard-boiled school of crime fiction. His heroes are not merely tough; they confront violence with full knowledge of its corrupting potential.
**F.**

**Dorothy Sayers**(1893-1957) was born in Oxford and brought up in East Anglia. After studying at Oxford, she worked variously as a schoolteacher, publisher's reader and copywriter at an advertising agency, she became a full-time writer in 1931. By this time she had begun her series of detective novels about the elegant and apparently light-hearted Lord Peter Wimsey which was to make her one of the most popular writers of the day. The later novels in the series introduce a new note of seriousness. She also wrote 11 short stories with the commercial traveller Montague Egg as the detective, and contributed introductions to two collections of detective stories. Although she served as president of the Detection Club from 1949 until her death, she had by then abandoned detective fiction for a sequence of radio plays about the life of Christ and for translations of Dante into English.
**G.**

**Margery Allingham** (1904-66) was born in London and educated at Cambridge. She made her reputation with a series of detective stories beginning with The Crime at Black Dudley in 1930 and ending with The Fashion in Shrouds in 1938. Her hero, Albert Campion, is a light-hearted aristocrat, but from the start Margery Allingham showed an unusually strong grasp of characterisation and a Dickensian eye for the idiosyncrasies of London life.
**H.**

**Nicholas Freeling,** born in 1927, worked throughout Europe as a hotel and restaurant chef before becoming a full-time writer in 1960. His immersion in European rather than British culture gives his work not just its characteristic locations but its wry prose style. Love in Amsterdam (1962) began a series of novels featuring the Dutch detective Van der Valk. His work is modelled on the example of the French novelist, Simenon, and he shared Simenon's sharp sense of place. The Long Silence in 1972 killed off Van der Valk, although Freeling revived him in 1989. Later novels featured a French detective.

**Exercise 2**

### PRACTICE PASSAGE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   | The Alaska pipeline starts at the frozen edge of the Arctic Ocean. |
|   | It stretches southward across the largest and northernmost state in |
|   | the United States, ending at a remote ice-free seaport village nearly |
|  | 800 miles from where it begins. It is **massive** in size and extremely |
| (5) | **complicated** to operate. |
|   | The steel pipe crosses windswept plains and endless miles of |
|   | delicate tundra that tops the frozen ground. It weaves through |
|   | crooked canyons, climbs **sheer** mountains, plunges over rocky |
|   | crags, makes its way through thick forests, and passes over or |
| (10) | under hundreds of rivers and streams. The pipe is 4 feet in diameter, |
|   | and up to 2 million barrels (or 84 million gallons) of **crude** oil can |
|   | be pumped through it **daily**. |
|   | Resting on H-shaped steel racks called "bents," long sections of |
|   | the pipeline follow a zigzag course high above the frozen earth. |
| (15) | Other long sections **drop out of sight** **beneath** spongy or **rocky** |
|   | ground and return to the surface later on. The pattern of the |
|   | pipeline's up-and-down route is determined by the often harsh |
|   | demands of the arctic and subarctic climate, the tortuous lay of the |
|   | land, and the **varied** compositions of soil, rock, or permafrost |
| (20) | **(permanently** frozen ground). A little more than half of the pipeline |
|   | is **elevated** above the ground. The remainder is **buried** anywhere |
|   | from 3 to 12 feet, depending largely upon the type of terrain and |
|   | the properties of the soil. |
|   | One of the largest in the world, the pipeline cost approximately |
| (25) | $8 billion and is by far the biggest and most expensive construction |
|   | project ever undertaken by private industry. In fact, no single |
|   | business could raise that much money, so 8 major oil companies |
|   | formed a consortium in order to share the costs. Each company |
|   | controlled oil rights to particular shares of land in the oil fields and |
| (30) | paid into the pipeline-construction fund according to the size of its |
|   | holdings. Today, despite **enormous** problems of climate, supply |
|   | **shortages,** equipment **breakdowns**, labor disagreements, treacherous |
|   | terrain, a certain amount of mismanagement, and even theft, the |
|   | Alaska pipeline has been completed and is operating. |

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. The passage primarily discusses the pipeline's
	1. operating costs
	2. employees
	3. consumers
	4. construction
2. The word "it" in line 4 refers to
	1. pipeline
	2. ocean
	3. state
	4. village
3. According to the passage, 84 million gallons of oil can travel through the pipeline each
	1. day
	2. week
	3. month
	4. year
4. The phrase "Resting on" in line 13 is closest in meaning to
	1. Consisting of
	2. Supported by
	3. Passing under
	4. Protected with
5. The author mentions all of the following as important in determining the pipeline's route EXCEPT the
	1. climate
	2. lay of the land itself
	3. local vegetation
	4. kind of soil and rock
6. The word "undertaken" in line 26 is closest in meaning to
	1. removed
	2. selected
	3. transported
	4. attempted
7. How many companies shared the costs of constructing the pipeline?
	1. 3
	2. 4
	3. 8
	4. 12
8. The word "particular" in line 29 is closest in meaning to
	1. peculiar
	2. specific
	3. exceptional
	4. equal
9. Which of the following determined what percentage of the construction costs each member of the consortium would pay?
	1. How much oil field land each company owned
	2. How long each company had owned land in the oil fields
	3. How many people worked for each company
	4. How many oil wells were located on the company's land
10. Where in the passage does the author provide a term for an earth covering that always remains frozen?
	1. Line 3
	2. Line 13
	3. Line 19
	4. Line 32