



## Zadie Smith (C1 -Advanced)

### A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you like reading historical novels? Why (not)?
2. Do you think historical novels are more difficult to write than novels set in the present?
3. If so, why?
4. How do you think novelists create their characters?
5. Have you ever tried writing a novel? If so, what kind?

### B – Listen and answer

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen to the two parts of the article (without reading) and complete them.

PART ONE

1. Sadie Smith's first novel *White Teeth* was a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. It was set in Willesden, London, between the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Her latest novel *The Fraud* is about a real 19<sup>th</sup> century legal case called the Tichborne \_\_\_\_\_.
4. One of the main characters is Andrew Bogle, a man from \_\_\_\_\_ who was once a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Another character is Eliza Touchet, a \_\_\_\_\_ who manages her cousin's house and family.
6. Smith says her story is set in the 19th century because her London surroundings are all \_\_\_\_\_.
7. She names two great periods of reform in England: the 1830s and the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. In *The Fraud* Smith attempts to show how \_\_\_\_\_ played a key role in British history.

PART TWO

9. Smith says she drew inspiration from the novels of Charles Dickens and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. She mentions the novel *Demon Copperhead* which was based on \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Smith says she wants to remind her readers of the capacity of human beings to \_\_\_\_\_.
12. She also says she would find it difficult to write a book that has no \_\_\_\_\_ in it.

### C – Read and answer

Read the two parts of the article and answer the questions.

1. What does the article tell you about Willesden, the area where Zadie Smith grew up?
2. What characteristics of Smith's latest novel are different from or similar to her previous novels?
3. What part do Roger Tichborne, Arthur Orton and Andrew Bogle play in the story?
4. Who is the main focus of the novel?
5. What did Zadie Smith enjoy most about writing the novel?
6. What does she think of the performance of the last Conservative government in Britain? Why?
7. What does the title *The Fraud* refer to besides Arthur Orton's claim to be Roger Tichborne?
8. What does the publication of *The Fraud* and *Demon Copperhead* show about Charles Dickens?
9. What are the risks of being present on online platforms, according to Smith?
10. Where does Zadie Smith she think she got her sense of humour from?

## 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. Over eighty people were invited to the reception but less than forty \_\_\_\_\_.
2. *Robinson Crusoe* is the story of a man who is \_\_\_\_\_ and survives for years on a desert island.
3. In the exam, you have to write a composition on one of the three \_\_\_\_\_ you are given.
4. Please stop drumming your fingers on the table. It's extremely \_\_\_\_\_.
5. There are \_\_\_\_\_ in our garden fence and our neighbour's dogs keep coming through them.
6. The hotel is luxurious, although it looks rather \_\_\_\_\_ from the outside.

## E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 2)

Complete the text. Use only one word in each space.

Zadie Smith's first stage play, which debuted in 2021, was *The Wife of Willesden*. She wrote it when she <sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ out that the borough where she was raised had been picked as the 2020 London Borough of Culture. The play is based on *The Wife of Bath's Tale* from *The Canterbury Tales*, written by Geoffrey Chaucer at the end of the 14th century. Smith had <sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ the tales from Middle English to modern English during her studies at Cambridge University. In her play, Smith replaces the pilgrimage to Canterbury made by Chaucer's characters <sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ a drinking tour of London pubs, while the Wife of Bath becomes Alvita, a black British woman who, <sup>4</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ born in Jamaica, now lives in Willesden. Alvita, <sup>5</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ her counterpart in Chaucer's story, has had five husbands, with <sup>6</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ she has had varying experiences, some of which very traumatic. Most of the play is taken up with Alvita talking to people in a pub before <sup>7</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ them the story of a man in 17th century Jamaica who is found <sup>8</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ of rape and is given a rather unusual punishment: going and finding what women really want.

## F – Write about it

Write about a high-profile legal case or trial that took place in your country. Mention:

- what the case or trial was about;
  - who was involved;
  - why it was given a high profile;
  - what the outcome was.
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## Answers: Zadie Smith (C1 - Advanced)

### B – Listen and answer

1. bestseller
2. 1970s – 1990s
3. Trial
4. Jamaica – slave
5. widow
6. Victorian
7. 1950s – 60s – 70s
8. Jamaica
9. George Eliot
10. David Copperfield.
11. read
12. humour

### C – Read and answer

1. It's a working-class neighbourhood in north-west London, with a multicultural community.
2. It's different from her previous novels because it's a historical novel. But it's similar to previous novels because it's set in Willesden.
3. Roger Tichborne is a rich aristocrat who is shipwrecked and disappears on his way to Jamaica. Arthur Orton is an English butcher who some years later claims he is Tichborne. Andrew Bogle is an ex-slave who says he once knew the Tichmore family and confirms Arthur Orton's story.
4. The main focus of the novel is Eliza Touchet.
5. She enjoyed imagining what her characters' lives were like.
6. She thinks it was shocking because they did so little for the people.
7. It also refers to cases in which working-class people don't get a fair trial, or a man's success depends on a woman's sacrifice, or people become wealthy as a result of slave labour.
8. It shows that Dickens' work is still relatable for people today.
9. The risks are that you can become too reactive to the opinions of others and you can spend too much time in an online world of soundbites and simplified narratives.
10. She thinks it may run in her family, since she grew up with it and her brother is a comedian.

### D – Learn it! Use it!

1. turned up
2. shipwrecked
3. topics
4. annoying
5. gaps
6. unremarkable

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

1. found
2. translated
3. with
4. though/although/while
5. like
6. whom
7. telling
8. guilty