

## People and Places in Chicago – Test 2

### 1 Reading comprehension: Al Capone

#### Al Capone

Chicago is famous for many places and many people, but the most famous of all is Al Capone. Even children know the name of this gangster. And the name is always linked to the city of Chicago.

But Al Capone was not born there – he was born in Brooklyn, New York, and he had six brothers and two sisters. His family had come from Italy and was very poor. At that time, the beginning of the 20th century, being a young boy in New York was not a very easy life.

Although he was quite clever, he left school after eighth grade and worked in different areas. At the same time he also became a member of a famous youth gang. When he was only 15 years old he had already joined a very dangerous and well-known crime gang. In 1917, when he was only 18 years old, people gave him his nickname “Scarface”, after he had been hurt with a knife in a street fight. At that time he also killed a man for the first time, but the police couldn’t do anything, because nobody wanted to say anything against him.

When the situation became too dangerous for him in New York, he moved on to Chicago, where he soon became one of the most important gangsters.

In the 1920ies Chicago offered many opportunities for gangsters like Al Capone. In 1920 the brewing and selling of alcohol was completely forbidden in the USA, but the people never accepted this “prohibition”. And the government didn’t do much to make this law accepted in public.

Alcohol was produced and sold everywhere for very much money, and the government didn’t do much to control every street or river or bar. So there were a lot of gangsters who earned a lot of money by selling alcohol illegally – and one of them was Al Capone.

He became the boss of a famous and very powerful gang, and soon he became a symbol of organized crime. He was a very charming person and a good friend of the highest police officers, he was the first gangster who used the newspapers to present himself in a very good light, and he often gave money to poor people, so he was seen as a kind of modern Robin Hood. He also loved to give huge parties. For the public, he was a friendly and nice businessman who sold furniture and washed dirty clothes – he was the first gangster who invested his illegal money in laundry\* services. (And the expression “money laundering” is still used today.) And he was very fair towards the men who worked for him.

But in “business” he was very brutal and cold-blooded. He killed many men when they tried to fight him, but the police could never do anything against him – and sometimes the police didn’t want to do anything, because he had given them a lot of money.

It was only in 1931 that the police could arrest him and he had to go to prison for ten years – but not because he had killed many men, but because he hadn’t paid his taxes\*. Moreover, in 1933 alcohol became legal again. The government realized that the prohibition of alcohol didn’t have the effects they had wanted: there were still many people who drank, and many people even became ill or died when they drank the illegal (and bad) alcohol. And it was due to the prohibition that mafia families or organizations like Al Capone’s gang had become so powerful.

But his name is still well-known and very famous today. He is mentioned in many films and books. There is, for example, a book about a boy who is bullied at school, and when he tells his father about this, his dad cries out: “But we are not in Chicago!”

\* Laundry = Wäscherei; taxes = Steuer

I. In each set of three sentences one is correct. Tick off the correct sentence!

1.  Everybody knows who Al Capone was.  
 Al Capone is only famous in Chicago.  
 Al Capone is known only by children.
2.  Al Capone was part of the government in Chicago.  
 Al Capone committed many crimes in Chicago.  
 Al Capone worked as a barkeeper in Chicago.
3.  His parents had eight children.  
 His parents had nine children.  
 He had eight brothers.
4.  He only went to school for nine years.  
 He left school after the seventh year.  
 He left school after eight years.
5.  Growing up in New York was very hard at that time.  
 Al Capone didn't have hard times in New York.  
 Growing up in New York was quite easy at that time.
6.  Al Capone was born in 1999.  
 Al Capone was born in 1899.  
 Al Capone was born in 1901.
7.  He hurt somebody badly in a street fight.  
 After a bad street fight he had a huge scar in his face.  
 He killed somebody with a knife and cut a scar into his face.



II. Fill in the missing words.

When Al Capone was wanted by the police in New York, he \_\_\_\_\_ to Chicago.

He started to sell alcohol \_\_\_\_\_, because at that time alcohol was completely forbidden. Many people didn't accept this, so they bought alcohol and spent a lot of money on it – and the government couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ them, because they couldn't control every \_\_\_\_\_ in the cities. So Al Capone had the opportunity to become the boss of \_\_\_\_\_. Everybody in Chicago knew him, because he didn't \_\_\_\_\_ from the reporters and he was seen in the newspapers very often. He was also very successful in making good friends with \_\_\_\_\_, and due to this many important people \_\_\_\_\_ him.

## III. Complete the sentences.

1. Many people in Chicago liked him a lot, because he \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In public he looked like a normal businessman who \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The expression “money laundering” is still used today for people  
who \_\_\_\_\_.
4. In 1931 he was caught by the police because he \_\_\_\_\_.
5. You can see that he is still very famous today, because \_\_\_\_\_.

**2 Vocabulary: the Black Socks scandal**

Fill in the missing words. The German translations are given below in the box, but not in the correct order.

angeben • einkaufen • gegen ... spielen • hintereinander •  
Nachteile • Niederlage • schwören • Verantwortung

Chicago is famous for its sports teams and the city sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ with its baseball and basketball teams. The White Socks, for example, are a big name in baseball. But there was also a scandal about this team and they were sometimes even called “Black Socks” after that. In 1919 they \_\_\_\_\_ Cincinnati – and they suffered a spectacular \_\_\_\_\_. Because they had won ten games \_\_\_\_\_ before, this was a great surprise to everybody. But soon the bosses of the team found out that this was the \_\_\_\_\_ of eight of the players – they had gambled about the match and made a lot of money. Of course they weren’t supposed to play after that – and of course they \_\_\_\_\_ that they had done nothing, but this didn’t help them. The scandal brought great \_\_\_\_\_ for the team, too, because it took a long time to find new good players and to \_\_\_\_\_ them, which also cost them a lot of money. But today the White Sox are an awesome team again – and even Barack Obama is a great fan of theirs.

### 3 Grammar: simple past/present perfect

Fill in the verb in the simple past or in the present perfect.

Tony and Marvin are working on a Wendella boat.

**Tony:** Hi Marvin, (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (you – already – clean) the floors this morning?

**Marvin:** Yes, and it was necessary, too. Yesterday some tourists (2) \_\_\_\_\_

(walk) around with dirty shoes.

**Tony:** Look! There is our new leaflet about the history of the Wendella boats!

**Marvin:** I (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (see) it ~~already~~. The boss (4) \_\_\_\_\_

(give) me one last week. And I like it much better than the old one!

**Tony:** And the pictures are all new – a friend of mine (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (take) them

last year. Just look at the skyline!

5

### 4 Grammar: present perfect progressive

Fill in the verb in the present perfect simple or the present perfect progressive.

John (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (just – finish) his work for today at the huge ferris wheel on Navy

Pier. He must still tidy up. He (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) there for eight years, so he knows

what he must do. Today he (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (find) a bag in one of the cabins. It

(4) \_\_\_\_\_ (do) turns on the wheel for hours! Thanks to that it is very difficult to

give it back. He (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (not – clean) the floor of the entrance yet, but he

(6) \_\_\_\_\_ (clean) the cabins – for two hours! So he's very tired now.

6

### 5 Grammar: mixed tenses

Fill in the verb in the correct tense.

Chicago is also famous for Blues music. Every year a big festival takes place near Lake Michigan.

Many famous bands (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (invite) this year, and most of them are very happy

to come. Last year some bands (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (not – play), because the weather was

really bad. When the festival (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (start), it

(4) \_\_\_\_\_ (rain) very hard, so many people just (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (leave). But the year before that the weather (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (be) great.

Karl wants to go there this year. He (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (find) a leaflet with the program, and he (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (read) it right now. He (9) \_\_\_\_\_ (buy) the tickets next week, and he is sure he (10) \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a good time. Laura

(11) \_\_\_\_\_ (come), too, although she doesn't like Blues music very much. But she will enjoy the festival anyway.

11

**6 Text production: email**

Nick's friend Taylor from New York has asked him to write an email about his new host brother Karl. Nick wants to tell him about one place they have visited together, one difference between American and German schools and what he thinks about soccer.

Write Nick's email (about 150 words).

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