"Hotel California", by Eagles

1. **Discussion**

a. Have you ever heard this song? Do you like it?
b. Do you know any other songs by this band?
c. What do you know about the meaning of the song?
d. Does the hotel described in the song really exist?

2. **Read the following article. What surprised you the most?**

5 Things You Might Not Know About The Eagles' 'Hotel California'

"Hotel California" is arguably the Eagles' most iconic song. The hit tune was a billboard chart-topper; it sold over 16 million copies in the U.S. alone and was on the Billboard Hot 100 chart for 19 weeks, peaking at No. 1. In 1977, the song won a Grammy award for Record of the Year.

Here are five facts that you might not know about The Eagles' "Hotel California."

1. Glenn Frey was the mastermind behind the song's lyrics

The late Glenn Frey penned the lyrics for the hit song along with band members Don Henley and Don Felder.

2. The song is about "excess in America"

While there have been many theories that contemplate what the song represents, the Eagles' band members have revealed in multiple interviews that the true meaning behind "Hotel California" is a commentary on the hedonism and self-indulgence of America.

"It's basically a song about the dark underbelly of the American dream and about excess in America, which is something we knew a lot about," Henley said in a 2002 interview with "60 Minutes."

In 2005, Henley further explained the meaning of the song to Rolling Stone magazine, which placed "Hotel California" at no. 49 on its list of the 500 greatest songs of all time: "We were all middle class kids from the Midwest," Henley said. "'Hotel California' was our interpretation of the high life in L.A."

3. "Hotel California" originally had a different name

According to journalist-turned-director Cameron Crowe, "Hotel California" was almost named something entirely different.

In 2003, Crowe revealed in "Conversations with Don Henley and Glenn Frey," which was part of the liner notes for the Eagles' compilation album "The Very Best Of," that "Hotel California" was originally going to be titled "Mexican Reggae."

4. "Hotel California" was declared a song that shaped rock and roll

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, named "Hotel California" as one of the songs that shaped rock and roll.

The Eagles were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998, and all seven former and present members of the group performed "Hotel California" together on stage.

5. There is a playful nod to the band Steely Dan in the song

The line "They stab it with their steely knives, but they just can't kill the beast," is a playful jab to rock band Steely Dan.

Frey revealed in the liner notes of "The Very Best Of" that they alluded to the "Do it Again" rock band in "Hotel California" after Steely Dan made an Eagles reference in their song "Everything You Did."

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3. **Are these sentences true or false? Correct the false ones.**

a. The song was written by all members of the band.

b. The song criticizes a certain lifestyle.

c. The song originally had a different name.

d. People in Ohio agree "Hotel California" was irrelevant for the history of rock.

e. The song makes a reference to an album from another band.

4. **What do these numbers refer to in the text?**

- 1977:
- 16.000.000:
- 19:
- 49:
- 1998:

Listening: Listen to the song and do the exercises.

5. **Choose the correct word**

*On a dark **dessert/desert** highway, cool wind in my **hair/head***

*Warm **smell/spell** of colitas, rising up through the **lair/air***

*Up ahead **in/on** the distance, I saw a shimmering **light/flight***

*My head grew **happy/heavy** and my sight grew dim, I had to stop **for/from** the night*

*There she **stool/stood** in the doorway; I heard the **mission/vision** bell*

*And I was **thinking/saying** to myself, "this could be Heaven or **this/these** could be Hell"*

*Then she **light/lit** up a candle and she **showed/choked** me the way*

*There **was/were** voices down the corridor, I **thought/caught** I heard them say...*

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6. **Complete the chorus with the missing words**

Welcome to _____ Hotel California...

_____ a lovely _____, such a _____ face...

Plenty _____ room at _____ Hotel California...

_____ time of _____, you can _____ it here

7. **Re-order the sentences**

____ *How they dance in the courtyard, sweet summer sweat.*

____ *Wake you up in the middle of the night just to hear them say...*

____ *So I called up the Captain, "Please bring me my wine"*

____ *Some dance to remember, some dance to forget*

____ *Her mind is Tiffany-twisted, she got the Mercedes Benz*

____ *And still those voices are calling from far away,*

____ *She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys she calls friends*

____ *He said, "We haven't had that spirit here since nineteen sixty nine"*

8. **Fill in the gaps with the missing <u>verb forms.</u>**

Mirrors on the ceiling, the pink champagne on ice

And she _____, "we _____ all just prisoners here, of our own device"

And in the master's chambers, they _____ for the feast

They _____ it with their steely knives, but they just _____ (2) the beast

Last thing I _____, I _____ (2) for the door

I _____ to find the passage back to the place I _____ before

'Relax,' _____ the night man, "we _____ (2) to receive.

You _____ (2) out at any time you like, but you _____ never _____!"

9. What are some theories about the meaning of this song?

Do some research and share your findings with the class.

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