A DRIVE IN THE MOTOR-CAR

One amazing morning our whole family got ready to go for our first drive in the first motor-car we had ever owned. This new motor-car was an enormous long black French automobile called a De Dion-Bouton which had a canvas roof that folded back. The driver was to be that twelve-years-older-than-me half-sister (now aged twenty-one) who had recently had her appendix removed.

She had received two full half-hour lessons in driving from the man who delivered the car, and in that enlightened year of 1925 this was considered quite sufficient. Nobody had to take a driving-test. You were your own judge of competence, and as soon as you felt you were ready to go, off you jolly well went.

As we all climbed into the car, our excitement was so intense we could hardly bear it.

"How fast will it go?" we cried out. "Will it do fifty miles an hour?"

"It'll do sixty!" the ancient sister answered. Her tone was so confident and cocky it should have scared us to death, but it didn't.

"Oh, let's make it do sixty!" we shouted. "Will you promise to take us up to sixty?"

"It'll do sixty!" the sister answered. "I've been told it can do sixty."
"We shall probably go faster than that," the sister announced, pulling on her driving-gloves and tying a scarf over her head in the approved driving-fashion of the period.

The canvas hood had been folded back because of the mild weather, converting the car into a magnificent open tourer. Up front, there were three bodies in all, the driver behind the wheel, my half-brother (aged eighteen) and one of my sisters (aged twelve). In the back seat there were four more of us, my mother (aged forty), two small sisters (aged eight and five) and myself (aged nine). Our machine possessed one very special feature which I don’t think you see on the cars of today. This was a second windscreen in the back solely to keep the breeze off the faces of the back-seat passengers when the hood was down. It had a long centre section and two little end sections that could be angled backwards to deflect the wind.

We were all quivering with fear and joy as the driver let out the clutch and the great long black automobile leaned forward and stole into motion.
"Are you sure you know how to do it?" we shouted. "Do you know where the brakes are?"
"Be quiet!" snapped the ancient sister. "I've got to concentrate!"
Down the drive we went and out into the village of Llandaff itself.

Fortunately there were very few vehicles on the roads in those days. Occasionally you met a small truck or a delivery-van and now and then a private car, but the danger of colliding with anything else was fairly remote so long as you kept the car on the road.

The splendid black tourer crept slowly through the village with the driver pressing the rubber bulb of the horn every time we passed a human being, whether it was the butcher-boy on his bicycle or just a pedestrian strolling on the pavement. Soon we were entering a countryside of green fields and high hedges with not a soul in sight.

an extract from Roald Dahl’s 'Boy'
Underline the answer which fits best

1. a) The car was manufactured in (France, England, the USA).
   b) The author had (two, three, four) younger siblings.
   c) The car was (red, grey, black).

Answer the following questions, using full sentences

2. Why did the author describe that morning as 'amazing' (line 1)?

3. What year did this story take place?

4. What did the female drivers used to wear in those days?

5. Why can we say that it wasn't raining that day?

6. How many persons were riding in the car?

7. The car described, had one special feature not present in today's cars. What was it?

8. Why was it difficult for a driver to collide his/her car in those days?

Say if the following sentences are True or False, giving a reason for your answer.

9. Roald Dahl's family had never owned a car before.

10. In those days, drivers had to do a strict test before getting a driving license.

Give the meaning of the following words as used in the passage:

11. a) recently
    b) breeze

Find words in the passage meaning the same as:

12. a) trembling
    b) person