READING COMPREHENSION

1. **A) Read the following text about the life and work of Agatha Christie. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-H which one fits each gap. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.**

A However, it is for her detective stories that she is best known.
B This came as a great shock, and on 3rd December Agatha went missing.
C They remained happily married until her death in 1976.
D It was here that her lifelong fascination with the use of poisons began.
E This recklessness is what made the character so popular.
F Various other stories followed, with other principal characters, and Agatha's reputation grew.
G This is totally unlike Agatha, who was not exactly the tidiest of people.
H This, in turn, enables her to solve crimes which have baffled the police

Agatha Christie, the Queen of Crime

Agatha Christie was born in Torquay, Devon, on 15th September 1890, the youngest child of an American expatriate of independent means and his wife. Unfortunately, her father died of pneumonia in 1901. Agatha grew up in an upper-middle-class environment, which was later reflected in the settings of her books.

In 1914, World War I broke out and Agatha started work as a voluntary nurse in a dispensary in Torquay. (1) _____. On Christmas Eve 1914 she married Archie Christie, who at the time was on leave from the fighting in France. Dispensary work could become monotonous and Agatha started to while away the time by trying to write a detective story. She wanted to create one which was more challenging to the reader than the typical detective fiction available at the time.

Belgian refugees who were living in Torquay at the time provided the inspiration for her detective, Hercule Poirot, a former Belgian police officer with an extremely high opinion of his abilities. A curious figure with egg-shaped head and luxuriant moustache, Poirot, interested in logical deduction and psychology of the criminal, has a fanatical love of order and symmetry. (2) _____. In later years, she found the character extremely irritating and finally killed him off in Curtain, written in the forties but published in 1975.The result of her efforts during the war years was The Mysterious Affair of Styles, which was submitted to several publishers before being finally published in 1920. (3) _____.

Then in 1926 came the publication of a Poirot novel, The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, a masterpiece of misdirection, which made her reputation.

Despite this success, 1926 was not a happy year, as Agatha's mother died and Archie admitted that he loved another woman. (4) _____. An extensive police investigation followed. At one stage her husband was suspected of her murder. Finally, Agatha was found at a hotel in Harrogate, Yorkshire, claiming to be suffering from amnesia.

Realizing that her marriage could not survive, Agatha agreed to a divorce, and this was finalized in 1928. She still kept the name Christie professionally, even after her marriage to Max Mallowan, an archeologist, 1930. (5) _____ Agatha often accompanied her husband on his archeological expeditions in the Middle East, a setting which appears in several of her stories. 1930 is also significant as the year in which her other famous detective, Miss Jane Marple, first appeared in the novel Murder at the Vicarage. A shrewd and observant elderly lady, she uses her experiences of village life to understand human nature. (6) _____ St Mary Mead, where Miss Marple lives, has echoes of villages Agatha knew as a child.

Agatha Christie wrote romantic novels, under the pseudonym of Mary Westmacott, and some non-fiction. (7) ----------. It is claimed that, since 1920, more than a billion of her books have been sold in English and at least a billion in over 45 foreign languages. There is no doubt that, in term of popularity with readers, she merits her reputation as "The Queen of Crime".

1. **B) Decide whether the statements are T (true) or F (false). Account for false answers only.**

1. Agatha was born in a British family.
2. Agatha was eager to write a more thought-provoking type of reader.
3. Poirot seemed to be quite disorganized in his investigations.
4. Agatha only married once.
5. Romantic stories were never Agatha's type.