You are going to read an article about a flight in a very fast aeroplane. For questions **1-6**, choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

My fastest ever plane ride

Reporter Matt Rudd goes on an extraordinary plane ride

In The Red Bull Air Race, twelve pilots take it in turns to race through a series of pylons between 15 and 25 metres high, negotiating sharp turns, barrel rolls and loops on the way, all at speeds of up to 370 km per hour. I was invited to find out what it feels like to take part.

An hour before the flight, I had to sign two forms. The first confirmed that I was in good health, the second that I would empty all my pockets, because tiny objects can become very dangerous during the flight. I also learnt that I would have to try to stay orientated throughout. 'The horizon is your best friend,' I was told, 'the pilot will explain in which direction you have to look.' I was also asked to promise that when I was flying upside down, I would 'completely relax. Try and enjoy the view.' Half an hour before the flight, I had a safety briefing in which I was told not, under any circumstances, to touch anything.

By the time we were taxiing down the runway, my legs up in front of me, feet trying not to touch the incredibly important steering pedals, hands trying not to rest on any of the many important switches within reach, my mind had made itself up. Ignoring all instructions received, I would not relax and enjoy the flight. This is the cruel paradox of high-speed acrobatic flying. In order to survive it without passing out, you have to keep calm and focused. You have to tense up at the right time and you have to relax at the right time. Panicking is a bad idea. None of this was of particular comfort as we began accelerating down the runway.

Dario, the pilot, and I reached the end of the runway. There we were in the Zivko Edge 540, upsettingly one of the world's fastest acrobatic planes, ready to go. The plane took off and two seconds later we banked sharply to the right. It was an instant, violent manoeuvre and I felt the air squeeze out of my lungs. I looked up at the horizon, tensed everything and emitted short gasps as I sank down into the seat. For a split second I weighed 6.2 times my normal weight. And then we levelled out. We turned another sharp left and dived, leaving my stomach at 2,000 metres and my lungs scrunched up on the roof of the plane. Seconds later, we were 10 metres off the ground, aiming for the alarmingly small space between two pylons. They passed at 400 km per hour but my whoop of momentary excitement was <u>stolen by a sharp right turn. We hadn't even</u> (*line 55*) <u>done any acrobatics yet</u>. (*line 56*)

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For two minutes, I was allowed to fly the plane, my hand shaking so much the plane shook too… it's that responsive. And then (*line 59*) after that Dario said something. And I said, 'Can you repeat that?' But instead of replying, he did a barrel roll, a full lateral 360° turn.

'Are you okay?'

'Yup.'

'Have you had enough?'

'No,' I lied.

Then he did a loop, flying the plane up and over, turning a full circle in the air. Now, I am aware that many people would find this exciting. The sort of people who enjoy rollercoasters. However, I just thought it was (*line 71*) a bit much. At the top of the loop, as we were flying upside down, I heard a small voice shouting, 'Relax, relax, look up.' Then I looked up and saw some fields.

The flight was over in 10 minutes. It had been 'soft' compared to what the pilots endure when they race. As if to illustrate the point, Dario got out some sandwiches the minute we landed and merrily tucked in. I didn't eat for hours and that night I did the loop the loop over and over again in my sleep.

1 How did Matt feel as the plane started moving along the runway?
- **A** annoyed that there were so many rules to follow
- **B** surprised that he had to sit in a rather awkward position
- **C** convinced that he was going to be unable to behave as required
- **D** anxious that he had not been adequately prepared for the experience

2 Why does Matt say We hadn't even done any acrobatics yet in lines 55 and 56?
- **A** to justify his impatience
- **B** to express his disappointment
- **C** to explain why he felt so relieved
- **D** to emphasise how apprehensive he felt

3 What does responsive mean in line 59?
- **A** eager
- **B** sensitive
- **C** active
- **D** helpful

4 In the fifth paragraph, Matt wants the pilot to think that
- **A** he understands the technical terms.
- **B** he needs a break.
- **C** he is feeling fine.
- **D** he had expected to roll.

5 What does it refer to in line 71?
- **A** turning a full circle
- **B** being aware
- **C** finding this exciting
- **D** enjoying rollercoasters

6 What is implied about the pilot in the final paragraph?
- **A** He finds Matt's reaction amusing.
- **B** He wants to demonstrate that he is tougher than Matt.
- **C** He feels unusually hungry after the flight.
- **D** He is completely unaffected by their experience.

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