The Hodgeheg

*Max is a young Hedgehog. He hears his Ma and Pa talking about how dangerous the road is. Max is sure there must be a safe way to cross the road. He decides to find out how to do it.*

He slipped out of the garden at dusk, ambled along the path by the side wall of number 5A, and crept under the front gate. Immediately, he found himself in a sea of noise.

It was evening rush-hour and the home-going traffic was at its heaviest. Cars and motorbikes, buses and lorries thundered past, terrifyingly close it seemed to him, as he crouched outside the gate, and he was confused and dazzled by the lights. The street lamps too lit up the place like day, and Max, nocturnal by nature, made for the darkest spot he could find, in the shadow of a tall litterbin, and crouched there with a hammering heart.

Gradually he grew a little more accustomed to the din and the glare, and, though he dared not move, he began to observe the humans, for numbers of pedestrians passed close by him. They were all walking on the narrow road on which he sat, a road raised above the level of the street itself by about the height of a hedgehog.

‘They’re safe,’ said Max to himself, ‘because the noisy monsters aren’t allowed up here.’

He looked across the street and could see that, at the far side of it, there were other humans also walking safely on a similar raised road. He did not, however, happen to see any cross the street.

‘But they must cross somewhere,’ said Max. ‘There must be a place further along the street.’

A part of him, for he was very young, said that he would find out about that another time and that it would be nice to creep back under the gate to his family. But then another part of him determined to set off to see if he could find this human crossing-place.

**Understanding the text**

1. What time of day did Max leave the garden?
2. Where did Max make for?
3. Max saw lots of humans. What were they walking on?
4. Where were the pedestrians ‘safe’?
5. What was Max looking for?

**Looking at the Language**

1. The traffic ‘**thundered past**’. Does this mean the traffic was:
2. Quiet? b. noisy?
3. What does the phrase ‘crouched there with a hammering heart’ tell you about how Max was feeling?
4. Find the word in the passage that tells you Max slept during the day.
5. What are the
6. Noisy monsters? b. raised roads?
7. ‘**A part of**’ Max wanted to go home.

What words could you use to describe how this part of Max felt?

**Exploring story settings**

1. What is the setting for this part of the story?
2. Max found himself in a ‘**sea of noise**’. Explain this phrase in your own words.
3. Why was it so light in the street?
4. Was the scene busy or quiet? Give reasons for your answer.
5. How do you think you would feel if you were in Max’s situation?

**Taking it further**

1. Do you think Max goes home or looks for the human crossing-place?

Describe what you think happens in the next part of the story.