



B.K. BIRLA CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

SARALA BIRLA GROUP OF SCHOOLS
A CBSE DAY-CUM-BOYS' RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

ENGLISH CORE — Code No. 301
TERM 1 EXAMINATION (2026-27)

CLASS XII
SET B

Class: XII
Date: 02.09.26
Admission no:

Time: 3hr
Max Marks: 80
Roll no:

General Instructions

Read the following instructions very carefully and follow them:

- This question paper has 13 questions. All questions are compulsory.
- This question paper contains three sections:
Section A: Reading Skills,
Section B: Creative Writing Skills
Section C: Literature.
- Attempt all questions based on specific instructions for each part. Write the correct question number and part thereof in your answer sheet.
- Separate instructions are given with each question/part, wherever necessary.
- Adhere to the prescribed word limit while answering the questions.

SECTION A — READING SKILLS (22 Marks)

1. Read the following passage.

12

The clock shop on Elm Street had not changed in forty years, and neither, it seemed, had Mr. Ferreira. Every afternoon at four, twelve-year-old Sana let herself in through the narrow door, hung her school bag on the same brass hook, and settled onto the tall stool beside his workbench, where rows of dismantled clocks lay open like small, patient patients.

"Hand me the loupe," he said, without looking up, and she did, having learned months ago which drawer held which tool. She had come to him first out of curiosity, then out of habit, and now, without quite admitting it, out of something closer to affection.

That afternoon, he was working on an old carriage clock, its case dulled with age, brought in by a woman who said it had belonged to her grandmother. As Mr. Ferreira pried open the clock's base, something slipped out and fell to the workbench — a small, yellowed photograph, its edges soft with handling, tucked inside a fold of paper.

He went very still.

"Is it broken?" Sana asked, mistaking his silence for concentration.

He did not answer immediately. He turned the photograph over, and Sana saw, upside down, a young woman in an old-fashioned dress, smiling at whoever held the camera.

"I repaired a clock exactly like this one, sixty years ago," he said finally, his voice quieter than she had ever heard it. "For a woman who never came back to collect it."

Sana waited, sensing that something important was unfolding, though she did not yet understand what.

"I kept her photograph in a drawer for years," he continued, "telling myself I would return it if she ever wrote. She never did. I suppose someone, somewhere along the way, must have hidden it inside a clock very like this one — perhaps even this one — thinking it safer there than anywhere else."

He set the photograph down gently, as though it might still break after all these decades.

"Will you write to her family?" Sana asked.

Mr. Ferreira looked at the small photograph for a long moment, then carefully slid it back into its fold of paper. "Some things," he said, "are better returned than explained."

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

- I. Which detail in the passage shows that Sana had been visiting Mr. Ferreira's shop for some time? 1
- II. Complete the following with a suitable reason. Mr. Ferreira 'went very still' upon finding the photograph because _____. 1
- III. The writer conveys the growing bond between Sana and Mr. Ferreira through all of the following EXCEPT — 1
 - A. Sana's familiarity with the tools in the workshop
 - B. Sana's initial curiosity turning into affection
 - C. the description of the carriage clock's dulled case
 - D. Mr. Ferreira sharing a personal memory with Sana
- IV. What type of statement is "Some things are better returned than explained"? 1
 - A. warning
 - B. reflection
 - C. instruction
 - D. complaint
- V. Based on the passage, how can we tell that the photograph held deep personal significance for Mr. Ferreira? (Any one reason) 1
- VI. Which one of the following best explains the phrase "as though it might still break after all these decades"? 1
 - A) The photograph was physically fragile
 - B) The memory attached to the photograph still felt delicate to him
 - C) He was unsure whether it was authentic
- VII. Mr. Ferreira set the photograph down 'gently'. What does this gesture suggest about his feelings? 1
- VIII. What does Mr. Ferreira's decision not to explain further to Sana suggest about how he deals with the past? (Answer in about 40 words) 2
- IX. How does the discovery of the photograph shift the mood of the passage? (Answer in about 40 words) 2
- X. Complete the following with the most suitable option. The central idea of the passage is _____. 1
 - A. the daily routine of an old clockmaker and his apprentice
 - B. an unexpected discovery that reveals a quiet, long-held memory from the past
 - C. a young girl's growing interest in repairing clocks
 - D. the mystery behind an unclaimed clock left at a shop

2. Read the following carefully.

10

1 A survey was conducted among 1,800 college students across several cities to understand their preferences for different modes of daily commute, including public buses, metro/rail, and private vehicles (own car or two-wheeler). The study aimed to explore how convenience, cost and environmental concerns shape commuting choices among young adults, and what this could mean for future urban transport planning. Participants ranked their preference for each mode on a five-point scale.

2 The sample included students from both metropolitan and smaller cities, ensuring diversity in access to transport infrastructure. Data was collected through online surveys and short in-person interviews at college campuses. The results are represented in the table given below.

Preference Scale	Public Bus (%)	Metro/Rail (%)	Private Vehicle (%)
Not preferred	15	10	20
Less preferred	20	15	15
Neutral	25	20	20
Preferred	25	30	25
Highly preferred	15	25	20

3 Public buses were valued for their affordability and wide coverage, though many respondents cited overcrowding and unpredictable timing as drawbacks. Metro and rail services were preferred for their speed and reliability, particularly among students commuting longer distances. Private vehicles appealed to those prioritising comfort and flexibility, despite higher costs and concerns about traffic congestion.

4 The survey highlighted certain challenges. Students in smaller cities reported limited access to metro or rail networks, making them more dependent on buses or private vehicles. Many respondents also expressed concern about the environmental impact of increasing private vehicle use, even as they acknowledged its convenience.

5 The findings offer useful insight for city planners and educational institutions seeking to promote sustainable commuting habits among young people. Future studies could examine how expanding metro networks to smaller cities might shift commuting preferences, and whether incentives for carpooling or cycling could reduce reliance on private vehicles.

Answer the following questions, based on the given passage.

I. What was the main purpose of the survey conducted among 1,800 college students? 1

- A. To compare the cost of different vehicles available to students
- B. To explore commuting preferences and the factors influencing them
- C. To determine the safest mode of transport for students
- D. To assess the traffic conditions in metropolitan cities

II. Fill in the blank with the correct option from those given in brackets. The study ensured diversity in access to transport infrastructure to make the findings _____ (representative / convenient / affordable). 1

III. Fill in the blank with reference to the given table. The mode of transport for which city planners primarily need to improve access in smaller cities is _____. 1

IV. Based on the table, which of the following statements best reflects the correct trend in commuting preferences? 1

- A. Public buses have a higher percentage in the 'Highly preferred' category than metro/rail.
- B. Private vehicles are less preferred than public buses in the 'Not preferred' category.

- C. Metro/rail has a higher percentage of respondents marking it 'Highly preferred' compared to public buses.
- D. Public buses and private vehicles are equally 'Preferred'.
- V. Priya lives in a smaller city with limited metro access and needs a flexible, comfortable way to travel to college daily. Why might a private vehicle suit her better than public transport, based on the passage? (Ref: Paragraphs 3 & 4) 2
- VI. When the researcher states that students 'acknowledged its convenience' despite environmental concerns, what does this suggest? 1
- A. Students were unaware of environmental issues
- B. Students experienced a conflict between convenience and environmental responsibility
- C. Students preferred public transport exclusively
- D. Environmental concerns had no impact on students' choices
- VII. How might expanding metro networks to smaller cities influence commuting habits among students, as suggested in paragraph 5? (Answer in about 40 words) 2
- VIII. Select the option that is NOT addressed in this study. 1
- A. The purpose of the survey
- B. The impact of income levels on vehicle ownership
- C. Challenges related to limited transport infrastructure
- D. The method used for data collection
- E. Suggestions for promoting sustainable commuting

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS (18 Marks)

All the names and addresses used in the questions are fictitious. Resemblance, if any, is purely coincidental.

3. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words 4

A. You are Rehan Kapoor, Secretary of the Sports Committee, Hillcrest Public School, Shimla. The school is organising Annual Sports Day trials next week. Write a notice in about 50 words informing students and inviting participation. Include all the necessary details. Put your notice in a box.

OR

B. You are Aditi Menon, a member of the Student Council, Lakeview International School, Kochi. During the recent Annual Fest, several items were found unclaimed. Draft a notice in about 50 words informing students about the lost-and-found collection point and how to claim their belongings. Put your notice in a box.

4. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words 4

A. As the Head Boy, Kabir Anand, of Northfield Public School, Indore, draft an invitation for the school's Annual Day function, inviting Mr. Sanjay Deshmukh, a distinguished alumnus, to be the Chief Guest. Provide the essential details in about 50 words.

OR

B. You are Meenal Sinha, residing at 17, Rose Avenue, Lucknow. You have been invited to judge an inter-school quiz competition at your former school, Springdale Public School. Write a formal reply in about 50 words, accepting the invitation and expressing your gratitude.

5. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words**5**

A. You are Farhan Ali, residing at 6, Model Town, Amritsar. Write a letter to the editor of The Morning Post, highlighting the problem of traffic congestion near school zones during peak hours. Draft the letter using your own ideas.

OR

B. You are Simran Bedi from 23, Civil Lines, Jaipur. You have come across the following advertisement in The Weekly Times for the post of Social Media Manager at a growing lifestyle brand. Write a letter expressing your interest in the position. Include your bio-data along with the application.

Join Vivid Lifestyle Co.

We are looking for creative individuals with:

- Strong understanding of social media platforms and trends
- Basic graphic design or content creation skills
- Ability to work under tight deadlines

Educational Requirements: Graduate in Mass Communication, Marketing, or related field

Experience: Not mandatory, but an active social media portfolio is an advantage

Interested candidates should send their applications with a resume.

Contact:

Vivid Lifestyle Co.

Address: 5, MI Road, Jaipur

6. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words**5**

A. Mental health awareness among teenagers has become an important concern in schools today. You are Ananya Bhatt. Write an article for the school magazine of Riverside International School discussing the importance of mental health awareness among students. Write the article using your own ideas

OR

B. The Annual Sports Day was recently held at Crestwood Public School, Coimbatore. As the senior editorial board member, Rohan Pillai, write a report for the school magazine detailing various aspects of the event. Write the report using your own ideas.

SECTION C — LITERATURE (40 Marks)**7. Read the following passages and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B).****6**

A. Read the following description based on the poem 'Keeping Quiet' by Pablo Neruda and answer the questions that follow.

The poet invites everyone, everywhere, to pause together in complete stillness and silence, setting aside the usual rush of activity, even if only for a short while. He suggests that this shared moment of quietness — free from the noise of movement, machines, and haste — might allow people to reflect honestly on their lives, and could even offer a rare sense of unity among people who are otherwise divided. He is careful to clarify that he is not calling for total inactivity or death, but for a brief, deliberate pause that might help humanity reconnect with itself and with the earth.

I. What does the poet's call for a shared silence suggest about his view of everyday human activity? 1

II. Complete the following with the correct option. The poet's tone in inviting this stillness is best described as _____ (demanding / reflective / mocking). 1

III. How does the poet's clarification that he does not mean 'total inactivity or death' shape the reader's understanding of his message? 1

IV. Complete the sentence. The central idea highlighted in this part of the poem is the value of _____ as a path to self-reflection and unity. 1

V. What can be inferred about the poet's attitude towards constant activity and haste? 1

- a) He believes it is essential for progress
- b) He believes it prevents genuine self-reflection
- c) He is indifferent to how people spend their time
- d) He believes only physical stillness matters

VI. All of the following are true for this part of the poem EXCEPT — 1

- a) The poet calls for a pause that is temporary, not permanent.
- b) The poet suggests that stillness could create a sense of shared humanity.
- c) The poet insists that all human activity should stop forever.
- d) The poet connects the idea of quietness with honest self-reflection.

OR

B. Read the following description based on the poem 'A Roadside Stand' by Robert Frost and answer the questions that follow.

The poet describes a modest roadside stand set up by a poor rural family, hoping to earn a little money from passing city travellers. Despite their hopeful wait, most cars speed past without stopping, and those that do pause are usually looking for directions rather than intending to buy anything from the stand. The poet reflects with quiet frustration on how the wealthier, urban world remains largely indifferent to the struggles of such rural families, offering promises of development and relocation that rarely translate into real, meaningful help.

I. What does the family's hopeful wait at the roadside stand suggest about their circumstances? 1

II. Complete the following with the correct option. The poet's tone towards the indifference of passing travellers is best described as _____ (celebratory / critical / neutral). 1

III. How does the detail of cars stopping only to ask for directions contribute to the poem's message? 1

IV. Complete the sentence. The extract highlights the theme of _____ faced by rural communities in the face of urban development. 1

V. What can be inferred about the poet's view of promises made to rural families regarding development? 1

- a) He believes such promises are always fulfilled
- b) He believes such promises are largely hollow and self-serving
- c) He is indifferent to the family's situation
- d) He believes rural families do not need any assistance

VI. All of the following are true for this part of the poem EXCEPT — 1

- a) The poet highlights the gap between rural hardship and urban indifference.
- b) The family's roadside stand largely fails to attract genuine customers.
- c) The poet portrays the wealthier travellers as actively hostile towards the family.
- d) The poem critiques empty promises of development made to rural people.

8. Read the following passages and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B). 4

A. Read the following description based on the essay 'Deep Water' by William Douglas and answer the questions that follow.

After being knocked into the deep end of the pool by a boy who thought it a joke, young Douglas sank repeatedly, swallowing water and gripped by sheer terror each time he tried and failed to reach the surface for long enough to breathe properly. The experience left him with a deep-seated fear of water

that persisted for years afterward, affecting him even in calm situations near lakes and rivers, until he made a determined decision, much later in life, to systematically train himself to overcome it, refusing to let the fear continue to control him.

- I. What does Douglas's repeated sinking and struggling suggest about the intensity of his fear? 1
- II. Complete the sentence suitably. Douglas's fear of water persisted for years because _____. 1
- III. What does Douglas's later decision to systematically train himself reveal about his character? 1
- IV. Complete with a suitable option. Douglas's eventual triumph over his fear primarily illustrates that _____ 1
- a) fear can never truly be overcome
 - b) determined, deliberate effort can help a person overcome deep-seated fear
 - c) avoiding water permanently was his best option
 - d) fear of water is unique to children alone

OR

B. Read the following description based on the essay 'Memories of Childhood: The Cutting of My Long Hair' by Zitkala-Sa and answer the questions that follow.

Having been taken from her home to a boarding school where she felt like a stranger among unfamiliar customs, the young narrator overhears that her long hair, which held deep personal and cultural significance for her, is to be cut short like the other girls'. Determined to resist what she experiences as a violation of her identity, she hides beneath a bed, only to be discovered, dragged out, and forcibly restrained while her hair is cut — an experience she describes as leaving her feeling as though she had lost her sense of self entirely.

- I. What does the narrator's decision to hide suggest about her feelings towards the haircut? 1
- II. Complete the sentence suitably. The narrator experiences the cutting of her hair as a loss of _____. 1
- III. What does being 'dragged out' and 'forcibly restrained' reveal about the power dynamics at the school? 1
- IV. Complete with a suitable option. The narrator's account of this incident primarily reflects — 1
- a) her enthusiasm for adapting to a new culture
 - b) the trauma of cultural suppression experienced by Native American children
 - c) a minor disagreement about school rules
 - d) her indifference to her own traditions

9. Read the following passages and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B). 6

A. Read the following description based on the essay 'Indigo' by Louis Fischer and answer the questions that follow.

When Rajkumar Shukla, a poor sharecropper from Champaran, persistently follows Gandhi to convince him to visit the indigo farmers suffering under exploitative British planters, Gandhi initially hesitates, being occupied elsewhere. Shukla's quiet, unwavering persistence, however, eventually moves Gandhi to agree, and once in Champaran, Gandhi begins patiently gathering the peasants' accounts of forced indigo cultivation and unfair treatment, recognising that the sharecroppers' suffering had gone largely unheard and unaddressed for a long time.

- I. Which of the following best reflect Shukla's approach in persuading Gandhi to visit Champaran?
- 1. Aggression
 - 2. Persistence
 - 3. Bribery

4. Patience
5. Deception — Select the most suitable option. 1
- A. 1 and 3
 - B. 2 and 4
 - C. 3, 4 and 5
 - D. 1, 2 and 5
- II. Fill in the blank with a correct option from brackets. Gandhi initially responds to Shukla's request with _____ (enthusiasm / hesitation / refusal), being occupied with other matters. 1
- III. How did Gandhi's approach to gathering the peasants' accounts reflect his method of working? 1
- A. He acted quickly without listening to their grievances.
 - B. He patiently listened to their accounts before taking action.
 - C. He relied entirely on the planters' version of events.
 - D. He ignored the sharecroppers' suffering altogether.
- IV. What might have been the most likely reason the sharecroppers' suffering had gone unheard for so long? 1
- V. Justify that Shukla's persistence, rather than any dramatic event, was the true trigger for Gandhi's involvement in Champaran, based on the extract. 1
- VI. Complete the following suitably. Gandhi's decision to patiently gather the peasants' accounts before acting suggests that _____. 1

OR

B. Read the following description based on the story 'The Tiger King' by Kalki and answer the questions that follow.

Having been prophesied at birth that he would one day be killed by the hundredth tiger he hunted, the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram becomes obsessed with killing exactly one hundred tigers before any tiger can kill him. As tigers in his own state grow scarce, he continues his hunt with growing recklessness, determined to defy the prophecy through sheer will and royal authority, even as those around him grow increasingly anxious about the lengths to which his obsession is driving him.

- I. Which of the following best reflect the Maharaja's state of mind as described in the extract?
- 1. Calm acceptance
 - 2. Obsessive determination
 - 3. Genuine fear
 - 4. Indifference
 - 5. Recklessness — Select the most suitable option. 1
- A. 1 and 4
 - B. 2, 3 and 5
 - C. 1, 2 and 3
 - D. 4 and 5
- II. Fill in the blank with a correct option from brackets. The Maharaja continues his hunt with growing _____ (caution / recklessness / indifference) as tigers become scarce. 1
- III. How did those around the Maharaja feel about his continued obsession? 1
- A. They fully supported his determination.
 - B. They grew increasingly anxious about his behaviour.

C. They were indifferent to his actions.

D. They openly opposed him.

IV. What might explain why the Maharaja chooses to defy the prophecy through sheer will rather than caution? 1

V. Justify that the Maharaja's obsession reflects a deeper conflict between fate and human arrogance, based on the extract. 1

VI. Complete the following suitably. The Maharaja's determination to kill exactly one hundred tigers suggests that _____. 1

10. Answer any five of the following six questions in 40-50 words each: 10

I. How does the narrator's account in 'The Last Lesson' convey the emotional impact of losing the right to learn one's own language?

II. What does Saheb's story in 'Lost Spring' reveal about the cycle of poverty faced by ragpickers?

III. How does the imagery in 'My Mother at 66' convey the speaker's fear of ageing and loss?

IV. Based on 'A Thing of Beauty', how does Keats connect beauty with the human need for hope?

V. What impression do we form of the peddler's character through his interactions in 'The Rattrap'?

VI. How does the depiction of the make-up room in 'Poets and Pancakes' reflect the larger culture of Gemini Studios?

11. Answer any two of the following three questions in 40-50 words each: 4

I. What does Charley's growing preoccupation with the third level suggest about his feelings towards modern life, in 'The Third Level'?

II. How does Sadao's decision to help the wounded soldier reflect his professional and personal values, in 'The Enemy'?

III. How can first-hand educational expeditions like the one described in 'Journey to the End of the Earth' change a young person's understanding of environmental responsibility?

12. Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words 5

A Compare how 'The Last Lesson' and 'Lost Spring' each portray the loss of opportunity experienced by children, and discuss what both texts suggest about the value of things often taken for granted.

OR

B Compare the quiet resilience of Edla in 'The Rattrap' with the quiet ambition of the office boy in 'Poets and Pancakes'. What do both characters suggest about kindness and aspiration in the face of limited circumstances?

13. Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words 5

A Analyse how the narrative technique used in 'Interview' (through the accounts of Umberto Eco and others) shapes the reader's understanding of fame and achievement.

OR

B Discuss how Charley's psychological need for escape drives the events of 'The Third Level', and what this suggests about the story's central theme.