



B.K. BIRLA CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

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

ANNUAL EXAMINATION - 2025-26

ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE

SET - 1

Class: IX

Date: 23.02.26

Admission no:

Time: 3 hrs

Max Marks: 80

Roll no:

General Instructions:

1. The question paper contains FOUR sections-READING, WRITING, GRAMMAR, and LITERATURE.
2. Attempt questions based on specific instructions for each part.

SECTION A: READING SKILLS (20 marks)

1. Read the following passage carefully:

10

The Silent Strength: Understanding the Lives of Invisible Hands

Every morning, as dawn breaks across our cities, thousands of workers wake up before most of us do. They are the cleaners, the waste collectors, the street vendors, and the domestic helpers—the invisible backbone of our society. Yet, society often overlooks them, treating them as background figures in the tapestry of urban life. To understand the true fabric of human dignity, we must turn our gaze toward these individuals who, despite their indispensable contributions, remain largely invisible and undervalued.

Consider the story of Ramesh, a sanitation worker in Delhi who has been collecting waste from the same neighborhood for thirty years. His hands, weathered and worn, bear witness to decades of labour. He arrives every morning at 4 AM, rain or shine, to ensure the streets are clean before residents wake up. Yet, most people who benefit from his work have never spoken to him, never learned his name, or asked about his family. He earns barely enough to feed his three children and ensure they attend school. His dream is simple: that his children might have a life less dependent on physical labour, even though his own sacrifice has made that possible.

The tragedy of such narratives lies not merely in economic disparity, but in the erosion of human recognition. These workers are not abstractions or statistics; they are individuals with dreams, struggles, and stories as complex as anyone else's. Many are skilled in ways we fail to appreciate—a street vendor's understanding of customer psychology, a domestic helper's expertise in household management, or a construction worker's mastery of structural knowledge. Yet their skills remain invisible because society has constructed hierarchies that devalue certain forms of labour.

Furthermore, these invisible workers face systemic barriers that perpetuate their marginalisation. Lack of formal education, limited access to skill development programmes, and discrimination based on occupation create cycles of poverty that are extraordinarily difficult to escape. The pandemic starkly revealed their vulnerability; many had no safety nets, no insurance, and no recourse when their income suddenly ceased.

However, pockets of change are emerging. Some cities are implementing dignity-focused initiatives: fair wages, workplace safety standards, and recognition programmes that celebrate essential workers. More

importantly, a growing number of individuals are consciously choosing to acknowledge and appreciate the humanity of those often rendered invisible.

The measure of a civilised society lies not in its monuments or wealth, but in how it treats those who build and maintain it. True progress requires us to see clearly, to acknowledge fully, and to value justly the contributions of those whose labour sustains our everyday existence. Until we recognise the dignity inherent in all work, our claims to civilisation remain incomplete.

A. Answer the following questions based on your understanding of the passage.

i. What is the central concern the passage raises about invisible workers?

- a) They earn too much money and create economic inequality
- b) They are treated as background figures and lack recognition despite their essential contributions
- c) They refuse to send their children to school
- d) They are not skilled enough to perform their duties properly

ii. Why does the passage describe Ramesh's story as a "tragedy"?

- a) Because he was involved in an accident while working
- b) Because he has worked in the same place for thirty years
- c) Because his children have failed in school
- d) Because the tragedy lies in lack of human recognition, not just economic hardship

iii. According to the passage, what skills do invisible workers possess that society often fails to appreciate?

- a) Advanced technical knowledge and academic qualifications
- b) Only the ability to perform routine, unskilled tasks
- c) Customer psychology, household management, structural knowledge—skills undervalued due to societal hierarchies
- d) Leadership and management capabilities

iv. What systemic barriers are mentioned as perpetuating the marginalisation of these workers?

- a) Government policies that provide too much support
- b) Lack of education, limited access to skill programmes, and occupational discrimination
- c) Their unwillingness to change their occupation
- d) The abundance of similar workers in the market

v. What does the passage suggest as evidence of emerging positive change?

- a) All workers have become wealthy
- b) The pandemic has created better employment opportunities for all
- c) The complete elimination of invisible workers in society
- d) Dignity-focused initiatives including fair wages, safety standards, and recognition programmes in some cities

B. Answer the following questions in one sentence each (approximately 15-20 words):

- i. What does Ramesh's daily routine reveal about his commitment to his work?
- ii. How does the passage distinguish between economic disparity and the "erosion of human recognition"?
- iii. What did the pandemic reveal about the vulnerability of invisible workers?
- iv. What does the passage suggest is the "true measure of a civilised society"?
- v. Name two dignity-focused initiatives mentioned as examples of emerging positive change.

2. Read the following.

10

The Boy Who Refused to Forget

In a small village nestled between two mountains, there lived a boy named Arjun who had an unusual habit. Every evening, he would sit on his porch with a worn-out notebook and record the stories of the elderly people in his village. His parents didn't understand why a twelve-year-old would spend his precious free time listening to tales of the past when he could be playing cricket with friends. But Arjun had discovered something magical: every person carries an untold story, and once it disappears, it's gone forever.

The village was changing rapidly. Young people were moving to cities for better opportunities, leaving behind their grandparents and the village's history. Arjun realised that soon, when these elderly people passed away, entire worlds of knowledge—forgotten recipes, traditional agricultural methods, folk songs, and wisdom about living—would vanish with them. This thought deeply disturbed him.

One day, he approached his school principal with an idea: to create a "Memory Archive" where students would document the stories and skills of village elders. The principal dismissed it, saying it was impractical and that students should focus on textbooks. But Arjun didn't give up. He started alone, with just his notebook and his determination.

Over months, something remarkable happened. As Arjun interviewed villagers, they began to open up. Mrs. Sharma shared recipes passed down through seven generations. Mr. Gupta taught him forgotten irrigation techniques that could improve crop yield. An old artist named Kaka showed him traditional painting methods that were nearly extinct. The villagers, who had felt invisible and irrelevant in a modern world, suddenly felt valued and important.

Slowly, other students joined Arjun's project. They began to understand that their village held treasures more precious than anything money could buy. The initiative caught the attention of the district education officer, who helped establish the Memory Archive officially in the school library.

What started as one boy's determination became a movement. Today, many villages across the region have followed Arjun's model. But more importantly, Arjun learned something profound: progress doesn't mean forgetting where we came from. Sometimes, the most revolutionary act is simply to listen, to remember, and to ensure that human stories never die.

The greatest knowledge isn't always found in books—it's found in the hearts and minds of those who have lived longer and seen more. All we need to do is listen.

A. Answer the following questions based on your understanding of the passage.

i. Why did Arjun feel disturbed about the changes happening in his village?

- a) The village was becoming too crowded with people

- b) He was afraid that elderly people's stories and knowledge would disappear when they passed away
- c) Young people were playing cricket instead of studying
- d) The principal didn't allow students to leave school

ii. How did the villagers initially react when Arjun started documenting their stories?

- a) They were angry at him for wasting their time
- b) They refused to speak to him and ignored him
- c) They gradually opened up and began to feel valued and important
- d) They asked him to stop and go home

iii. What was the principal's initial response to Arjun's "Memory Archive" idea?

- a) He immediately supported the project with funding
- b) He thought it was impractical and felt students should focus on textbooks instead
- c) He asked Arjun to present it to the whole school
- d) He offered to help Arjun collect more stories

iv. What can be inferred about the "treasures" mentioned in the passage?

- a) The village had buried gold and jewels in the ground
- b) The elderly people had saved money for the village
- c) Traditional knowledge, skills, and stories were more valuable than material wealth
- d) The school library had valuable books hidden away

v. What message does the passage ultimately convey?

- a) Students should always obey their principals without question
- b) Technology and textbooks are more important than listening to elders
- c) Progress should include respecting and preserving the knowledge and stories of previous generations
- d) Young people should never move away from their villages

B. Answer the following questions in one sentence each (approximately 15-20 words):

- i.** What was Arjun's main reason for starting to document stories of elderly villagers?
- ii.** How did Arjun's determination help other students understand the importance of their village?
- iii.** Name any two skills or knowledge that villagers shared with Arjun through the Memory Archive.
- iv.** Why did the village elders feel "invisible and irrelevant" before Arjun's project?
- v.** According to the passage, where is the "greatest knowledge" actually found?

SECTION B WRITING SKILLS (24 marks)

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

3. You are Priya Sharma, Class X-B, Head of the school's Green Brigade Club. Your school is hosting a "Zero Waste Week" festival to promote sustainable living practices among students from neighbouring schools through workshops, art installations from recycled materials, and community composting demonstrations. You need permission to use the school playground, science labs, and art rooms for three days of activities.

Write a formal application to the Principal (not more than 50 words) requesting permission to use these school facilities, mentioning the dates (15th-17th February), purpose, and expected participants (120 students from 5 schools). **4M**

4. Your community recently transformed an abandoned playground into a "Community Skill Garden" where local youth learn sustainable farming, rainwater harvesting, and organic composting through hands-on sessions led by local farmers and retired agricultural experts.

Write a factual description (not more than 100 words) of this community garden initiative. **5M**

5. Attempt any ONE of the following in about 120 words: **7M**

A. Many urban apartment complexes lack accessible green spaces, forcing children to play on dangerous roadsides or remain indoors with screens, contributing to childhood obesity and poor mental health. As Aarav Patel, 16, Green Valley Apartments, Bengaluru, write a letter to the editor of The Hindu (not more than 120 words), addressing:

The loss of safe play spaces and rise in screen addiction among children

Health consequences (obesity, anxiety, poor motor skills development)

Importance of community green spaces as essential urban infrastructure

Recommendations for Resident Welfare Associations and municipal authorities to create safe play zones

OR

B. Single-use plastics continue to choke city drainage systems during monsoons, causing flooding and health hazards despite plastic bans. As Kavya Reddy, 16, Lakeview Colony, Hyderabad, write a letter to the editor of Deccan Chronicle (not more than 120 words), discussing:

Persistent plastic pollution despite government bans and cleanup drives

Environmental impact on water bodies, wildlife, and public health

Need for community-level alternatives (cloth bags, steel containers, bulk buying)

Urgent call for local plastic audits and reward systems for zero-plastic households

6. Attempt any ONE of the following in about 150 words: **8M**

A. You are Vikram Singh, Class X. Your school partnered with local NGOs to create "Solar Study Rooms" in nearby slums, providing solar-powered lights, fans, and charging stations for children's evening studies. Write an article for your school magazine titled "Lighting Dreams: How Solar Energy is Transforming Slum Education" (not more than 150 words), exploring:

The darkness barrier preventing evening study in energy-poor communities

How solar-powered study rooms enable continuous learning after sunset

Real impact stories (first-generation learners, improved exam results)

Scalability challenges and the role of student volunteering

Sustainable Development Goal connections (clean energy, quality education)

OR

B. You are Ananya Joshi, Class X. Your locality started "Grandparents' Wisdom Circles" where senior citizens teach traditional life skills (storytelling, herbal remedies, financial wisdom, conflict resolution) to teenagers through weekly gatherings. Write an article for your community newsletter titled "Generations Connected: Rediscovering Wisdom in Grandparents' Stories" (not more than 150 words), discussing:

The knowledge gap between digital-native youth and traditional wisdom keepers

Specific skills taught and their relevance in modern life

Emotional benefits (reduced loneliness among elders, rooted identity for youth)

Breaking age stereotypes and building intergenerational bonds

Model for sustainable community knowledge preservation (SDG intergenerational equity)

SECTION C GRAMMAR (10 marks)

7. Fill in the blanks (i) – (iii) with the appropriate option from those in brackets. (3×1=3 M)

School sports academies play a vital role in talent development and are essential to India's dream of (i) _____ (**win/winning/wins**) more Olympic medals. In competitive sports, success often (ii) _____ (**depends/depended/depending**) on early identification and nurturing of young athletes. Progressive schools now (iii) _____ (**have introduced/has introduced/introduced**) specialised coaching programs starting from Class VI.

8. The following paragraph has not been edited. There is one error in each line. Write the error and its correction in the space provided. (1 × 4 = 4 M)

	Error	Correction
Discipline at public life ensures	(a) _____	_____
peace and harmony, who in turn	(b) _____	_____
offer the required impetuous	(c) _____	_____
from the nation's progress.	(d) _____	_____

9. Do as directed. (1 + 2 = 3 marks)

i. Rearrange the following jumbled words/phrases in the given dialogue to create a meaningful sentence. (1 mark)

ARJUN: Teacher, what makes our village special?

TEACHER: (i) for its / is famous / traditional crafts / and folk dances / our village / rich agricultural heritage / and we take pride in preserving.

ii. Report the conversation given below by filling in the blanks to complete the following paragraph.

(2 marks)

Priya: Ravi! Did you see the community garden blooming this morning?

Ravi: Yes, the sunflowers are taller than the children now!

Priya asked Ravi (i) _____. Ravi replied (ii) _____ than the children now. Then, Priya mentioned that the vegetable beds were ready for harvest next week.

SECTION D: LITERATURE TEXTBOOK (26 MARKS)

10. Read the given extract and answer the questions briefly, for ANY TWO extracts, of the three, given. **2x4=8**

A. For about nine seconds he had me rattled, and I came mighty near getting cold feet and trying to sell him some plate-glass. But I got my nerve back pretty quick. He asked me to sit down, and I told him everything. I told him how I followed his daughter from Cincinnati, and what I did it for, and all about my salary and prospects, and explained to him my little code of living -to be always decent and right in your home town. At first, I thought he was going to throw me out of the window, but I kept on talking. Well, that got him to laughing and I'll bet that was the first laugh those ancestors and horsehair sofa had heard in many a day.

i) Select the option that matches the expression with the meaning correctly.

Column A

- I. getting cold feet
- II. dead on my feet
- III. get your feet wet

Column B

- a. to be exhausted
- b. to become used to a new situation
- c. carried away by someone on an emotional level
- d. feeling nervous about something

- A. I-c, II-b, III-a
- B. I-d, II-a, III-b
- C. I-a, II-c, III-d
- D. I-b, II-d, III-c

ii) Select the option that lists the statements which can be a part of one's 'code of living'.

- 1. Keep your word.
- 2. Never quit on yourself or your family.
- 3. Think about the future and ignore the present.
- 4. Focus on materialistic possessions.
- 5. Stay true to yourself.
- 6. Look back and wonder about your decisions.

- A. 1, 3 and 6
- B. 2, 4 and 5
- C. 2, 5 and 6
- D. 1, 2 and 5

iii) “I’ll bet that was the first laugh those ancestors and horsehair sofa had heard in many a day.” The tone of the speaker is

- A. satirical.
- B. ironical.
- C. humorous.
- D. sarcastic.

iv) Which option best describes the sequence of the speaker’s emotions in the given extract.

- A. nostalgia-friendliness-jitters-disappointment
- B. curiosity-nostalgia-fear-mild sadness
- C. jitters-confidence-apprehension-delight
- D. shyness—friendliness-excitement-nostalgia

B. *“I shall be telling this with a sigh*

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.”

i. Why does the speaker mention telling the story “with a sigh”?

ii. What does the phrase “Somewhere ages and ages hence” suggest about the timeline of the speaker’s storytelling?

iii. How does the speaker describe the road chosen?

iv. What is the significance of the phrase “that has made all the difference”?

C. “Maid: They might take you on for eight days, Madame. That would mean eight hundred francs. It’s really money for nothing. You would only have to peel potatoes one minute and make an omelette the next, quite easy.

Juliette: But how kind of you. ... Thank God I’m not quite so hard up as that yet!

Maid: Oh, Madame, I hope you are not angry with me?”

i. What opportunity does the maid present to Juliette?

ii. Why does Juliette express gratitude that she’s not quite so hard up?

iii. What would Juliette need to do to earn the mentioned amount?

iv. How does Juliette respond to the maid’s suggestion?

11. Answer the following six questions in about 30–40 words each.

(2 × 6 = 12 marks)

- i. Why was the grandmother in tears?
- ii. Why do you think Charles Hooper's appointment as Assistant National Sales Manager is considered to be a tribute to Duke?
- iii. Why did Corporal Turnbull take revenge on Private Quelch by assigning him permanent cookhouse duties?
- iv. Will no one tell me what she sings? Why does the poet ask this question? What, according to the speaker, might be the theme of the girl's song?
- v. With eyes severe and beard of formal cut, full of wise saws and modern instances." Which stage is this? State the reason for this kind of behaviour.
- vi. Why did Bill think of trying out a job as an instructor?

12. Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions in about 150 words.

(1 × 6 = 6 marks)

In both "Villa for Sale" and "The Bishop's Candlesticks," characters face tempting situations that test their true nature. How do Mrs. Al Smith and Gaston in "Villa for Sale" use clever tricks and quick thinking to get what they want, compared to how the Convict and Bishop in "The Bishop's Candlesticks" respond to temptation with kindness? Discuss with examples from the plays and explain what these moments teach us about human nature.

OR

"Best Seller" and "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read" show characters who discover true value beyond money and appearances. How does John Pescud's real-life romance challenge his views on storybook love, similar to how the grandmother's learning journey changes her confidence? Compare their motivations and the happy surprises they experience, using specific examples from both stories.

..... *ALL THE BEST*