



B.K. BIRLA CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

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

ANNUAL EXAM - 2025-26
ENGLISH SET1 (301)
MARKING SCHEME

Class: XI
Date: 16.02.26
Admission no:

Time: 3 hr.
Max Marks: 80
Roll no:

SECTION A – READING SKILLS

Q1. Passage on Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

I. (ii) developed missile technology for India

II. (iii) Humble and dedicated

III. (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A

IV. Dr. Kalam believed that dreams transform into **thoughts** and thoughts result in **action**.

V. Selling newspapers: Financial support :: Teaching students: **Nation-building / Spreading knowledge**

VI. How did Dr. Kalam's early life influence his values and character? (2 marks)

Dr. Kalam grew up in a financially modest family and supported his parents by selling newspapers. These experiences instilled in him values of honesty, discipline, humility, and perseverance, which shaped his character and guided him throughout his life.

VII. Why did Dr. Kalam consider himself a teacher and learner even while serving as President? (2 marks)

Despite holding the highest constitutional office, Dr. Kalam remained committed to learning and teaching. He frequently interacted with students, visited educational institutions, and believed that education and innovation were essential for national progress.

VIII. How does Dr. Kalam's journey inspire students? (2 marks)

Dr. Kalam's life shows that strong determination, hard work, and integrity can help overcome challenges. His journey from humble beginnings to becoming a scientist and President inspires students to dream big and contribute positively to society.

IX. True/False:

True

Q2. Passage on Changing Learning Patterns

I. (iii) 68%

II. (iii) Video-based learning

III. Why do students still prefer printed textbooks?

Many students believe that printed textbooks help them retain information better and allow deeper focus compared to digital resources.

IV. Two reasons for promoting a balanced learning approach: (2 marks)

- Excessive screen time has reduced students' attention spans.
- A blend of digital tools and traditional methods improves engagement and learning outcomes.

V. (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A

VI. Comparison of career preferences: (2 marks)

While 61% of students prefer skill-based learning in areas like AI and coding, 39% still favour conventional careers. This shows a shift towards modern, technology-driven careers while traditional paths remain relevant.

VII. How does blending learning methods improve outcomes?

Students who combine digital tools with reading and hands-on practice develop better critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and long-term academic performance.

VIII. Fill in the blank:

68% of senior secondary students rely on **digital resources** for academic support.

SECTION B – WRITING SKILLS

Q3. (Sample Notice)

Format: 1 Box, name of issuing authority- organisation/ agency (top centre), **NOTICE (centre)**, date of issue (aligned left) Authorisation name, designation & signature (bottom left)

NOTE-full credit if all aspects included. Partial credit (½ mark) if one-two aspects are missing. No credit if more than two aspects are missing.

Content: 2

Accuracy of Spelling and Grammar: 1

SUNSHINE PUBLIC SCHOOL, AGRA NOTICE

Date: 10 February 2026

Education Fair

All students of Classes IX and XI are informed that an **Education Fair** is being organised on **15 February 2026** in the school premises from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** Representatives from various colleges and universities will guide students about career options and courses. Interested students must register with their class teachers by **13 February 2026**.

Muskaan
Head Girl

Q4. A. (Attempted Option B – Formal Letter of Reply)

With the blessings of the Almighty and immense gratitude in our hearts

Mr. Abhishek Sharma

cordially invites you and your family to grace the auspicious occasion of the

Golden Jubilee Wedding Anniversary of his beloved parents

Mr. & Mrs. Sharma as they celebrate **50 glorious years of togetherness, love, and commitment.**

Date: Saturday, 15th June 2026

Time: 7:00 p.m. onwards

Venue:

The Grand Ballroom

Hotel Royal Heritage

Civil Lines, Jaipur

Your presence will add warmth and joy to this memorable celebration and will be deeply cherished by the family.

RSVP:

Mr. Abhishek Sharma

☎ +91-XXXXXXXXXX

B. Mrs. Sonali Gupta

Nutritionist

New Delhi

10 February 2026

The Principal

Radiant Public School

Jammu

Subject: Acceptance of Invitation to Address Students

Respected Sir/Madam,

I sincerely thank you for inviting me to address the students on forming healthy food habits. I am pleased to accept the invitation and confirm my availability on the scheduled date. I look forward to interacting with the students and sharing practical insights on nutrition and healthy living.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

Sonali Gupta

Q5. A. (Letter to the Editor)

Shantanu
Ghar B-94
Balimela Road
Malkangiri, Odisha – 764045

27 January 2026

The Coordinator
Each One Teach One
4Literacy
Ambaguda
Malkangiri, Odisha – 764045

Subject: Application for the Position of Volunteer

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter in response to the advertisement published in a local daily regarding the requirement of volunteers for the *Each One Teach One* campaign. I wish to offer my services as a volunteer for this noble initiative.

I am 21 years old and a resident of Malkangiri. I am fluent in speaking, reading, and writing Odia and English. I have a keen interest in teaching and working for the upliftment of underprivileged children. Though I do not have prior teaching experience, I am eager to learn and willing to undergo the required training.

I assure you of my sincerity, dedication, and availability for one hour every week. I shall be grateful if given an opportunity to contribute to this meaningful cause.

Yours sincerely,

Shantanu

Add the profile details.

B. Sunil Baruah
City Heights
Guwahati

10 February 2026

The Editor
The Times of India
Guwahati

Subject: Disregard for Zebra Crossings and Traffic Rules

Sir/Madam,

Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I wish to draw attention to the alarming disregard for zebra crossings and traffic rules. Many pedestrians and drivers ignore basic road safety norms, leading to frequent accidents. Lack of awareness, impatience, and weak enforcement are major reasons behind this behaviour.

Strict penalties, public awareness campaigns, and road safety education in schools can help improve compliance. Respect for traffic rules is essential for ensuring public safety.

Yours sincerely,

Sunil Barua

Q6. A. The Importance of Volunteering Among Young Adults

Volunteering among young adults is essential for the growth and well-being of communities. Young people bring energy, fresh ideas, and enthusiasm, enabling social initiatives to reach wider audiences and create meaningful impact. Through volunteering, youth develop empathy, responsibility, teamwork, and leadership skills that shape their character beyond academics. Communities benefit from improved support systems, stronger social bonds, and innovative solutions to local problems. At the same time, volunteers gain confidence, practical experience, and a deep sense of purpose and belonging. Regular participation in service activities nurtures civic awareness and ethical values. In the long run, volunteering helps create socially responsible citizens who contribute positively, strengthen democratic values, and work collectively towards a more inclusive, compassionate, and resilient society for everyone.

B. 400 Literacy Volunteers Felicitated in Malkangiri

Malkangiri,

Jan

27:

The relentless efforts of 400 volunteers working with the NGO *4Literacy* in the district were highly appreciated by the District Collector, Shri V. Singh (IAS), at a special felicitation programme held in Malkangiri on Monday. The volunteers have been actively engaged in promoting basic literacy among underprivileged children through the *Each One Teach One* initiative.

Addressing the gathering, Shri V. Singh commended the volunteers for dedicating their time and energy to the cause of education and said that literacy is the foundation of social and economic development. He lauded their commitment to teaching children in remote and tribal areas of the district, often under challenging conditions.

The event was attended by NGO officials, local educators, and community members. Certificates of appreciation were distributed to the volunteers. The programme concluded with a pledge to continue working towards a literate and empowered Malkangiri.

— *Staff Reporter, The Odisha Bhaskar*

SECTION C – LITERATURE

Q7. A. (A – Photograph)

i. C) Holding hands

ii. B) A photograph

iii. Completed sentence: holding **their mother's hands**

iv. Theme: Nostalgia and passage of time

v. C) The poet's mother

vi. A photograph

B. The Portrait of a Lady

i. B) Short and fat

ii. The grandmother's face was described as a *criss-cross* of wrinkles.

iii. *wrinkled / wrinkles*

iv. She was *slightly bent* and her face was *full of wrinkles*.

v. The grandmother was *religious* by nature.

vi. The narrator feels this way because the grandmother had always looked the same—short, fat, bent, and wrinkled—and there was no image or memory of her ever being young, making it seem as though she had never changed with time.

Q8. A (Mother's Day)

i.D) All of the above

ii. B) I and III

iii. Doris shows disrespect and takes her mother for granted.

iv. Mrs Pearson's reply shows assertiveness and a reversal of submissive behaviour.

B- Address

i. The narrator was surprised because he noticed the changes immediately, even though he had been away only for a short time, and did not expect the familiar rooms to feel different so quickly.

ii. C) he noticed the absence of familiar objects

iii. C) reappeared unexpectedly after years

iv. The mother's reaction suggests that she was initially surprised by the narrator's sharp observation and was also slightly evasive, indicating that she was aware of the changes and the reasons behind them but had not spoken about them openly earlier.

Q9. A. (Discovering Tut)

I.B

ii. C

iii. C

iv. Tone: Descriptive

v. Tourists show curiosity, respect, and fascination.

vi. To emphasise physical confinement and historical significance.

B. Silk Road

i. "I" refers to **Nick Middleton, the narrator of *Silk Road*.**

ii. The narrator caught a cold due to **breathing through his mouth in the cold, high-altitude climate.**

iii. Aggravate

iv. The narrator consulted **the doctor at the medical college in Darchen.**

v. C). **insufficient oxygen intake caused by breathing difficulty at high altitude**

vi. B). **struggling to breathe normally**

Q10. All the value points to be considered)

i. Hypocrisy of adults regarding love (Childhood):

Adults preach love, kindness, and selflessness, yet their actions are often driven by selfishness, jealousy, and material gain. This contradiction between what they say and what they practice makes children question the sincerity of adult values and morals.

ii. Preparations for the world voyage (We're Not Afraid to Die...):

The narrator refitted the boat *Wavewalker* over sixteen years, strengthening it for rough seas. He tested it thoroughly, stocked sufficient food, water, tools, spare parts, and medicines, and carefully planned the route to ensure safety during the long voyage.

iii. Comparison of the bird's movement (Laburnum Top):

The bird's movement is compared to a lizard. The comparison is based on the bird's quick, smooth, and alert motion as it enters the tree, similar to how a lizard swiftly climbs and moves along branches.

iv. Father's anguish in *Father to Son*:

The father feels deeply hurt and helpless due to the emotional gap between him and his son. Despite living under the same roof, they remain strangers, unable to understand each other, which causes the father pain, regret, and longing for reconciliation.

v. Popularity of Tibetan mastiffs in China's imperial courts (Silk Road):

Tibetan mastiffs were prized in Chinese imperial courts because of their large size, strength, and fierce loyalty. They symbolised power and prestige and were considered excellent guard dogs, capable of protecting palaces and valuable property.

vi. Professor Gaitonde conveyed his regrets to the organisers of the Panipat Seminar because he had experienced a strange and unsettling adventure in an alternative reality. After returning to his own world, he felt mentally disturbed and confused by the incident. As a result, he was not in a proper state of mind to attend or participate in the seminar, and therefore sent his regrets to the organisers.

Q11. All Value points to be considered.

i. Aram's mixed feelings (The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse):

Aram was delighted to see his dream of riding a horse come true, as it was a rare and beautiful white horse. At the same time, he was frightened because he knew the horse was stolen, which went against his family's honesty.

ii. Susan and her mother's tension (Birth):

Susan and her old mother were tense because Susan was undergoing a difficult childbirth. The condition of both the mother and the newborn was critical, and the outcome was uncertain, creating anxiety and fear throughout the night.

iii. Architect turning the tables (The Tale of the Melon City):

The architect cleverly argued that the faulty arch was built according to the king's exaggerated gestures and commands. By shifting the blame onto the king himself, he saved his life and forced the king to take responsibility for the execution order.

Q12. A. Parallel between rain and music (*The Voice of the Rain*)

In *The Voice of the Rain*, Walt Whitman draws a beautiful parallel between rain and music through words like “rise,” “descend,” “resemble,” “song,” and “reborn.” Rain rises invisibly from the earth as vapour and returns as showers to nourish life. Similarly, music originates silently in the poet's soul, takes form as a song, and returns to soothe and enrich human hearts. Both follow a continuous cycle—rain sustains nature, while music sustains the human spirit. Just as rain cleanses, refreshes, and gives life to the earth, music heals emotional dryness and brings comfort and joy. The poet suggests that both rain and music are eternal, self-renewing, and essential forces that connect nature and humanity through harmony and rhythm.

B. Letter by Khushwant Singh's grandmother (*The Portrait of a Lady*)

My dear sister,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. Life here in the village is peaceful, and my days are spent happily with my grandson. We wake up early and walk together to the school. While he studies, I sit in the temple nearby, reading scriptures and offering prayers. In the afternoons, I spin the wheel and feed the sparrows, who have become my constant companions.

Though times are changing and my grandson grows up fast, I find joy in simplicity and routine. His innocence and curiosity bring warmth to my heart. I feel content living a disciplined and prayerful life, close to nature and faith. Old age has taught me patience, devotion, and acceptance, and I thank Waheguru for these quiet blessings.

With love,
Your affectionate sister

Q13 A. Letting go of past memories and possessions (*The Address*)

I agree that it is not easy to let go of past memories and possessions, as shown in *The Address*. The narrator searches for the belongings her mother had left with Mrs Dorling during the war, believing they would reconnect her to her lost past. However, when she finally sees the objects, she realises they are merely material things that cannot bring back her mother or the warmth of their old home. Instead of comfort, they only revive painful memories. This experience teaches that clinging to possessions can trap us in sorrow rather than heal us. True growth comes from accepting loss and moving forward. The story helped me understand the importance of emotional strength and detachment, showing that memories live in our hearts, not in objects.

B. Why Mourad and Aram took and returned the horse (*The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse*)

Mourad and Aram took the white horse because of their deep love for horses and Aram's long-standing dream of riding one. They did not see their act as theft, as their Garoghlanian family

values honesty, and they believed borrowing was different from stealing. Mourad treated the horse kindly and used it only for riding. However, their conscience eventually troubled them, especially after meeting John Byro, the horse's owner, who trusted their family's honesty. Realising they had done wrong, they returned the horse secretly. Their action shows that integrity and moral values ultimately guide their decisions, even when temptation is strong.