



B.K. BIRLA CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

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

ANNUAL EXAM - 2025-26

ENGLISH SET2 (301)

MARKING SCHEME

Class: XI
Date: 16.02.26
Admission no:

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

SECTION A – READING SKILLS

Q1. Nelson Mandela Passage

I.(ii) chose reconciliation over revenge

II. (iii) Moral courage

III. (iii) A is true but R is false

Mandela did not allow hatred to guide his actions.

IV. Mandela believed that education was the most powerful **weapon** to change the world.

V. Apartheid : Injustice :: Reconciliation : **Peace / Harmony / Unity** (any one)

VI. Mandela's early life exposed him to racial discrimination under colonial rule. These experiences shaped his strong sense of justice and equality, motivating him to actively oppose apartheid and fight for human rights.

VII. Mandela's choice of forgiveness is remarkable because after suffering 27 years of imprisonment, he still chose reconciliation instead of revenge, helping heal a deeply divided nation.

VIII. Mandela promoted dialogue, forgiveness, and cooperation, which helped unite people of different races. His leadership focused on healing past wounds rather than deepening divisions.

IX. **False** – Mandela did not support violence as the primary means to achieve equality.

Q2. Urban Gardening Passage

I. C. It decreases carbon emissions and minimises packaging waste

II. B. Growing awareness of ecological responsibility and self-sufficiency

III. Psychological benefits (any two):

- Reduced stress levels
- Improved focus
- Better emotional well-being

IV. A. Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A

V. Urban gardening strengthens community bonding as neighbours exchange **seeds, plants,** and cultivation techniques.

VI. a) It helps students understand ecological balance and sustainable food systems.
b) It instils responsibility towards nature and promotes environmentally conscious behaviour.

VII. Option A

A-4, B-3, C-1, D-2

VIII. Urban gardening reduces carbon emissions by cutting transportation needs and lowers household food expenses by growing fresh produce, promoting both sustainability and economic savings.

SECTION B – WRITING SKILLS

Q3. Notices

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

A. Career Guidance Seminar (Sample Answer)

**GREEN VALLEY SCHOOL
NOTICE**

Date: 10 February 2026

This is to inform all students of Classes XI and XII that a **Career Guidance Seminar** will be organised on **18 February 2026 at 10:00 a.m.** in the school auditorium. Renowned career counsellors will guide students on career choices and higher education options. Attendance is compulsory.

Riya
Head Girl

B. (Sample Answer)

**Cleanliness Drive
NOTICE**

The Eco Club is organising a **Cleanliness Drive** on **20 February 2026** from **8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** Students of Classes IX–XII are encouraged to participate. Interested students may register with the undersigned.

Neha
Secretary, Eco Club

Q4. A. Formal Invitation Card (BOX)

Mr. Arjun Mehta requests the pleasure of your presence at the **Graduation Ceremony of his daughter** on **22 February 2026 at 5:00 p.m.** at City Convention Hall, New Delhi, followed by dinner.

B. Acceptance Letter

Ms. Kavita Sharma
New Delhi

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to accept your invitation to speak on 'Youth and Social Responsibility' at your school function. I look forward to interacting with the students.

Yours sincerely,
Kavita Sharma

Q5. Letter Writing (120–150 words)

A. Job Application – Freelance Content Creator

Receiver's Address

Date:

Sender's Address

Subject:

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my interest in the position of **Freelance Content Creator**, as advertised on the online job portal. I am Ananya Sharma, a graduate student residing in Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, and I believe my skills and academic background make me a suitable candidate for this role.

I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to your organisation and grow as a content creator. I would be grateful if you consider my application. I am willing to share writing samples or attend an interview at your convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Ananya Sharma

Indirapuram, Ghaziabad

(Add all the relevant details)

B. Letter to the Editor – Noise Pollution

Receiver's Address

Date:

Sender's Address

Subject:

Respected Editor,

I wish to draw the attention of the concerned authorities and the general public to the alarming rise in noise pollution in urban areas through the columns of your esteemed newspaper. I am Ayana Bose, a concerned citizen, deeply worried about its harmful impact on health and the environment.

Excessive noise caused by traffic, construction activities, loudspeakers, and public events has become a daily menace. Continuous exposure to high noise levels leads to stress, sleep disorders, hearing loss, hypertension, and reduced concentration, especially affecting children and senior citizens. Despite existing regulations, there is poor enforcement of noise control laws.

To curb this problem, strict implementation of noise pollution rules is essential. The use of loudspeakers beyond permitted hours should be banned, silent zones near schools and hospitals must be respected, and awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate citizens. Promoting the use of electric vehicles and soundproof construction methods can also help reduce noise levels.

I hope the authorities will take immediate steps to address this issue in the interest of public health.

Yours sincerely,

Ayana Bose

Q6. Article / Report

A. Article: Time Management

The Importance of Time Management for Students

By Soham Sahani, Class XII-B

Time management refers to the ability to plan and utilise time effectively to accomplish tasks without stress. For students, it is a crucial life skill that helps balance academics, extracurricular activities, and personal well-being. Proper time management enables students to stay organised, meet deadlines, and achieve their goals efficiently.

Poor time management often leads to procrastination, last-minute cramming, anxiety, and poor academic performance. Students may feel overwhelmed when assignments pile up, resulting in lack of sleep, reduced concentration, and loss of motivation. Over time, this can negatively affect both mental health and self-confidence. To develop effective time management skills, students should create realistic study schedules, prioritise tasks, set achievable goals, and avoid

distractions such as excessive screen time. Using planners, breaking tasks into smaller steps, and maintaining discipline are also helpful strategies.

Effective time management brings numerous benefits. It reduces stress, improves academic performance, builds self-discipline, and leaves time for relaxation and hobbies. Ultimately, students who manage time well grow into responsible, confident individuals prepared for future challenges.

B. Report: Blood Donation Camp

Blood Donation Camp Organised by Local NGO

By a Reporter, The Daily Herald

A Blood Donation Camp was organised by a local NGO, *Life Savers Foundation*, at the Community Hall in the city on Sunday. The camp was held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in collaboration with the City Civil Hospital to address the shortage of blood in local hospitals.

The event was inaugurated by the Chief Medical Officer, who highlighted the importance of voluntary blood donation. A team of trained doctors and nurses conducted medical check-ups to ensure donor safety. More than 150 volunteers, including college students, office-goers, and residents, enthusiastically participated in the camp.

Strict hygiene and safety measures were followed throughout the programme. Donors were provided with refreshments and certificates of appreciation. The NGO members also created awareness about the life-saving importance of regular blood donation. The camp concluded successfully, collecting over 120 units of blood, contributing significantly to community welfare.

SECTION C – LITERATURE

Q7. A. Father to Son

- i. The father
- ii. Support and old age
- iii. Helplessness
- iv. Through emotional disconnect and lack of communication
- v. **(b) helpless**
- vi. Generation gap and emotional alienation

B. The Portrait of a Lady

- i. **(b) religious**
- ii. Sacred religious texts
- iii. softly
- iv. Praying
- v. **(b) peaceful**
- vi. A disciplined, prayer-filled routine

Q8. A. Mother's Day

- i. **C. Consistent self-respect and firmness**
- ii. Apologies would undo the change achieved
- iii. Firm and commanding
- iv. Stern looks and firm tone

B. Tale of the Melon City

i. B. To follow tradition and remain practical

- ii. A lifeless object is made king
- iii. He gave a foolish answer
- iv. Blind obedience and lack of reasoning

Q9. A. The Laburnum Top

i. With the arrival of the goldfinch, the previously silent and still Laburnum tree suddenly becomes lively. The bird's presence fills the tree with movement, sound, and energy.

ii. The poetic device used is **alliteration**, seen in the sudden, smooth flow of action, and also **enjambment**, which conveys swift movement from one line to the next.

iii. Suddenly

iv. The bird breaks the tree's silence. The once quiet Laburnum tree becomes noisy and animated with chirping and fluttering, replacing stillness with sound.

v. The bird symbolises **life, vitality, and energy**, bringing joy and movement to an otherwise lifeless and silent tree.

vi. The poet contrasts stillness and movement by first describing the tree as silent and motionless, and then showing sudden activity and liveliness when the bird arrives, highlighting the sharp transformation caused by its presence.

B. Silk Road

i. C. To shield eyes from glare

- ii. Because it has many salt flats left by an ancient ocean
- iii. Remains of the ancient Tethys Ocean

iv. C. Lively and industrious

- v. To avoid delays in travel
- vi. Completely smooth and worn out

Q10. Short Answers (Any Five)

i. How does the poet describe the loss of innocence in 'Childhood'?

The poet describes the loss of innocence as the moment he realises that adults are hypocritical and that the world is driven by materialism and false values. This awareness marks the end of childhood and the beginning of self-understanding and maturity.

ii. What challenges did the narrator face during the sea voyage in 'We're Not Afraid to Die...'??

The narrator faced a violent storm that severely damaged the ship, injured crew members, and caused waterlogging. Despite exhaustion, fear, and limited resources, the family showed courage, teamwork, and resilience to survive the life-threatening ordeal at sea.

iii. How does the author use images of sunlight and nature after the grandmother's demise? (Portrait of a Lady)

After the grandmother's death, the author uses images of winter sunlight and sparrows to create a serene yet sorrowful atmosphere. Nature appears subdued, mirroring the emptiness and silence in the house, emphasising the deep sense of loss.

iv. **Why were Tibetan mastiffs considered valuable in royal Chinese courts?** (Silk Road)
Tibetan mastiffs were prized for their massive size, strength, and fierce guarding abilities. Their rarity and association with Tibetan royalty made them symbols of power and prestige, which is why they were highly valued in Chinese royal courts.

v. **How does ‘Discovering Tut: The Saga Continues’ highlight human curiosity about the past?**

The chapter highlights human curiosity through detailed scientific investigations of Tutankhamun’s mummy. Modern technology is used to uncover historical truths, showing humanity’s desire to understand ancient civilizations, mysteries of death, and life beyond time.

vi. **How does contrast help convey the theme of loss in ‘Photograph’?**

The poet contrasts her mother’s joyful childhood captured in the photograph with her present grief. This contrast highlights the passage of time and irreversible loss, helping the reader understand how memories preserve happiness even as life moves towards absence and death.

Q11. Short Answers (Any Two)

i. **Why was Aram morally conflicted after seeing Mourad with the horse?** (The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse)

Aram was morally conflicted because stealing was against the Garoghlanian tribe’s values of honesty. Though tempted by the horse’s beauty and adventure, his conscience told him it was wrong, creating a struggle between desire and moral upbringing.

ii. **How does the author show the importance of memories over material possessions in ‘The Address’?**

The author shows that memories hold greater value than material possessions when the narrator refuses to reclaim her mother’s belongings. She realises that emotional memories cannot be replaced or recovered through objects, and clinging to them only prolongs pain and loss.

iii. **How did public opinion influence justice in ‘The Tale of the Melon City’?**

Public opinion dictated justice as decisions were made according to the crowd’s convenience rather than logic. Responsibility for the king’s death was shifted repeatedly until the weakest—the melon—was blamed, highlighting the absurdity and mob-driven nature of justice.

Q12. Long Answer

A. ‘Voice of the Rain’ as a symbol of renewal

In ‘The Voice of the Rain’, Walt Whitman personifies rain as a living entity that speaks about its eternal journey in nature. The rain describes itself as rising from the land and sea in the form of vapour, forming clouds, and then returning to the earth to give life. Through this cycle, rain symbolises renewal, continuity, and regeneration. It nourishes seeds, revives dry land, and helps plants grow, thus sustaining life. The poet highlights that rain never returns in vain; its purpose is always fulfilled. By giving rain a voice, Whitman emphasizes its importance and dignity in the natural order. The poem draws a parallel between rain and poetry, suggesting that like rain, poetry also originates, spreads meaning, and returns enriched through human experience. Thus, rain becomes a powerful symbol of creativity and renewal.

B. Alternative realities in ‘Adventure’

Professor Gaitonde’s experience in ‘Adventure’ challenges the idea that history follows a single, fixed course. Through a sudden shift in reality, he finds himself in an alternative world where the Marathas won the Battle of Panipat, altering India’s political and social history. This experience introduces the concept of alternative realities, suggesting that history depends on choices and chance events. The author uses the theory of catastrophe and parallel worlds to explain how a small change can lead to a completely different outcome. Professor Gaitonde’s confusion between the two realities highlights the fragility of historical certainty. His experience ultimately proves that history is not rigid but shaped by possibilities. The chapter encourages readers to question accepted narratives and understand that multiple versions of history could exist depending on circumstances.

Q13. Long Answer

A. Dr Andrew Manson’s challenges during the childbirth (Birth)

On the night of the childbirth, Dr Andrew Manson faces a series of intense challenges that test both his medical skill and moral responsibility. The baby is born lifeless, and the mother is exhausted and fragile. With no advanced medical equipment available, Andrew must rely solely on his knowledge and presence of mind. He struggles to revive the infant using artificial respiration, working continuously for over half an hour despite fatigue and uncertainty. The harsh weather and isolation further add to the difficulty of the situation. These challenges highlight Andrew’s professional competence, as he applies his training effectively under pressure. More importantly, they reveal his deep sense of duty and compassion. His refusal to give up, even when hope seems lost, shows his dedication to saving life and upholding the ethical responsibilities of a doctor.

B. Values guiding Mourad and Aram’s decision to return the horse

Mourad and Aram return the horse despite enjoying their adventure because they are guided by strong moral values inherited from the Garoghlanian tribe. Although the tribe is poor, it takes great pride in honesty and integrity. Aram, in particular, feels uncomfortable knowing that keeping the horse would mean theft. When John Byrodi recognises his horse, the boys realise that their joy cannot come at the cost of another man’s loss. Respect for truth, conscience, and community values ultimately outweighs personal pleasure. Their decision reflects their moral maturity and reinforces the idea that true happiness comes from doing what is right. By returning the horse, the boys uphold their tribal code and prove that ethical values are more powerful than temptation.