



B.K. BIRLA CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

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



TERM 1 (2025-26)

ENGLISH

Class: XI
Date: 08.09.25
Admission no:

Time: 3 hr.
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 the specific instructions given for each part. Write the correct question number and part thereof in your answer sheet.
- Separate instructions are provided with each question/part, wherever necessary.
- Adhere strictly to the prescribed word limit while answering the questions.

SECTION A

READING SKILL

1. Read the following passages.

12

- 1 Having a sense of humour might mean having the ability to entertain other people by making them laugh, but it can also mean having a quick wit that is frequently employed to criticize other people with snide comments. Some might define the sense of humour as the ability to see humour in everyday life or as appreciating the cleverness of puns and other wordplay, and may think it entirely possible to possess a good sense of humour without ever having those around them become aware of it.
- 2 In any case, a sense of humour is a socially valued trait that almost all of us would prefer to have more, rather than less, of – akin to the way that we think about intelligence or good looks. A person with an undeveloped sense of humour lacks a social skill that puts him or her at a severe disadvantage in the hurly-burly of everyday social life.
- 3 Freud thought of humour as an outlet for forbidden impulses, and philosophers ranging from Aristotle to Descartes believed that we are amused by something when it makes us feel superior to other people.
- 4 Evolutionary psychologists believe that humour, along with other creative abilities, such as art and music, evolved as an honest signal of intelligence and genetic quality. The value of such a skill in defusing tense, aggressive situations and in managing alliances and friendships should not be underestimated either.

- 5 Schmoozing with a bunch of new people at a cocktail party is an opportunity to engage in light-hearted banter, and other people are grateful when someone is skillful enough to turn a stiff and awkward situation into fun. Cracking jokes, making witty remarks, and engaging in tongue-in-cheek observations about the social world can be like fishing for other minds that connect naturally with one's own. In other words, humour can be a device for connecting people who are operating on the same wavelength.
- 6 Observing the performance of other people in such situations tips you off as to who you might like to get to know better – and who might be best left behind, wallowing in indignation and blank stares. In short, a sense of humour is the Swiss Army Knife of social skills. Perhaps it is indeed a single instrument, but it contains an arsenal of tools – each exquisitely designed for a unique social purpose.

Answer the following questions, based on the given passage above:

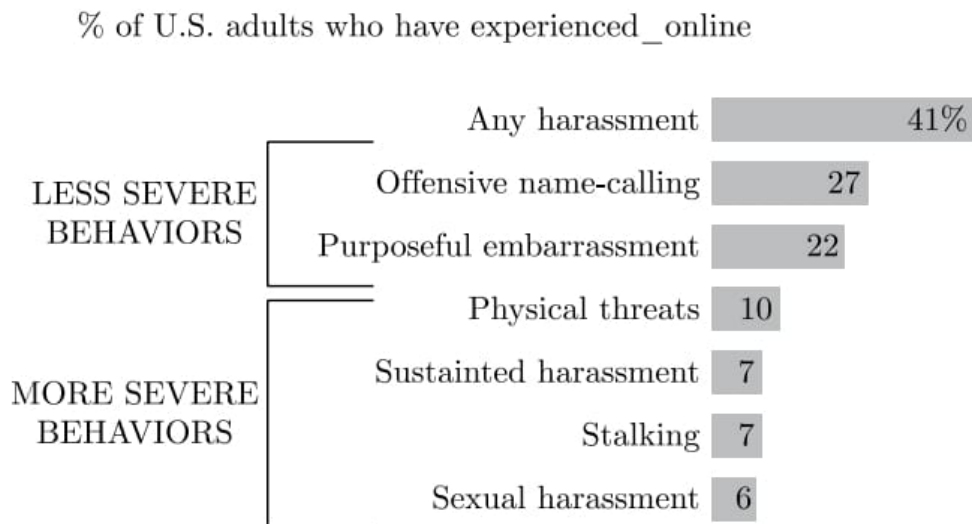
- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| I | How does the author prove in paragraph 1 that sense of humour is a double-edged sword? | 1 |
| II | Cite evidences from the passage to prove that sense of humour is a valuable tool to make someone's life better. | 2 |
| III | Complete the following sentence suitably with reference to paragraph 3: One significant advantage of humour is that it helps one _____. | 1 |
| IV | Provide ONE textual evidence with reference to paragraph 5, how a good sense of humour can be a great ice breaker. | 1 |
| V | Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank: According to evolutionary psychologists, people with a sense of humour can _____ (trigger/lighten) tense situation. | 1 |
| VI | Choose the correct option: “...humour can be a device for connecting people who are operating on the same wavelength. “By the phrase ‘same wavelength’ the author refers to: (A) people of age group (B) people who belong to same line of profession. (C) people having similar interests and attitudes. (D) people who are working in the same organisation | 1 |
| VII | Complete the analogy with one word from paragraph 6: advantage: benefit:: _____ : anger (A) situation (B) stare (C) indignation (D) arsenal | 1 |
| VIII | In the line perhaps” it is indeed a single instrument, but it contains an arsenal of tools...” What does the phrase ‘arsenal of tools’ refer to? | 2 |
| IX | Provide ONE textual evidence from the text which states lack of sense of humour may prove to be a handicap in one's life. | 2 |

2. Read the following carefully. 10

- The internet offers anonymity that makes life easier for bullies. As both research and common-sense attest, allowing users to hide their identity abets abuse. If you use the internet, the odds are about even that you'll be mistreated there. A 2021 Pew Research report found that 41 per cent of US adults have personally experienced online harassment. Fifty-five per cent think it is a “major problem.” Seventy-five per cent victims say that their most recent experience was on social media. It is akin to driving in rush-hour traffic—exposing ourselves to regular abuse.

- 2 We mistakenly assume that cyber attackers follow conventional behaviour. People try to reason with trolls or appeal to their better nature in vain because they misapprehend a troll's true motives—attract attention, exercise control, and manipulate others. Online harassers are not considered 'well-adjusted.' A 2019 study found significant associations between trolling and psychopathy, Machiavellianism, sadism, and narcissism, in that order. In other words, strangers attacking you on social media or in person are severely damaged. But, we often have trouble understanding that and take online attacks seriously, as a form of self-criticism, that is hard to ignore.

**Roughly four-in-ten Americans have
personally experienced online harassment**



- 3 But somehow, online harassment seems more bothersome. Americans rate online political discussions as 50 per cent more negative than offline discussions. The reason is that once abusers enter an online space, they tend to take it over because all bullies have personality disorders. Trolls like trolling, without much threat of being beaten up, while moral people exit—all increasing the troll-to-normal ratio over time.
- 4 Even if you want to bid the online sewer a not-so-fond adieu, your circumstances might make doing so, too costly. And maybe you simply don't want to be forced off social media by the trolls, any more than you would placidly accept being forced off the playground because of menacing bullies who treat it as their exclusive property. But we are not helpless in the face of either online abusers or the ones flipping us off on the highway.
- 5 In the case of threats or hate speech, you may want to make your non-receipt more tangible by blocking the trolls, and reporting the abuse. This remedy is imperfect at best, unfortunately, given social-media companies' spotty record at enforcement of their own norms. Not receiving an insult (blocking and reporting an attacker) and ignoring trolls is crucial for stopping abuse. Deny them the reward they seek. Responding to a bully on the internet or in real life—remember, they are typically the same people—is proof that they seek dominance through aggression. Don't feed this monster, in person or online. When possible, meet aggression with deafening silence.

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

- I Infer if the author compares negotiating heavy traffic with the business of trolling directly or indirectly. Answer in about 40 words. 2

- II Which option DOES NOT substantiate the author's view about the unconventional social behaviour of the online abusers? 1
- (a) Trolls can be reasoned with and their better nature can be appealed to.
 (b) Online abusers are not considered 'welladjusted' individuals.
 (c) Online abusers are psychopaths.
 (d) They troll for sadistic entertainment.
- III What do the survey says about if you use the internet, the odds are about even that you'll be mistreated there? 1
- IV Identify the online abuser from the following three online users. 1
- (a) Sohna – My target is to just scroll down the things happening online.
 (b) Roshan – My target is to meet my foreign friends here.
 (c) Harsh – My target is to hurt, harass or upset someone else.
- V Which of the following displays the most likely reason for us feeling more bothered about online trolling than facing abuse in real life? 1
- (a) Those who get bothered by constant abuse exit social media.
 (b) Trolls invade and dominate online space without any fear of consequences.
 (c) Online political discussions are 50 per cent more negative than offline discussions.
 (d) We take online attacks as a form of selfcriticism that is hard to ignore.
- VI Quite a few solutions for 'dealing with trolls' have been proposed by the author. Pick out the only solution that displays an underlying irony as well as contradiction. Answer in about 40 words. 2
- VII Complete the sentence appropriately. 1
- The 2021 study attempts to enlighten the victims of online abuse by ____.
- VIII State TRUE or FALSE. 1
- Americans rate online political discussion as 50 per cent more positive than offline discussions.

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** **1x4=4**
- A. Your school is organizing a road safety awareness workshop for students of class IX – XII. As the head boy of your school, draft a notice informing the students about the workshop. Include other necessary details. You are Ashna/Ashish. Put your notice in a box.
- OR**
- B. Your school is organizing an Inter-House Science Model-Making Competition. As President of the Science Club, draft a notice to inform all House members from IX – XII about the competition and specify the number of registrations invited per house. Include other necessary details. You are Mitali/Mukesh. Put your notice in a box.
- 4 Attempt ANY ONE of the two (A) or (B) in about 50 words:** **1x4=4**
- A. Draft an invitation card on behalf of the Principal of J.B. Bhatia Public School for the launch of 'Yoga for Life' programme in the school. Mention a compelling highlight of the programme along with other necessary details.
- OR**
- B. You are the Cultural Secretary of your school. Your school is organising the 'Annual Cultural Evening – 2025' on 15th November. Draft a formal invitation in card format inviting the parents of all students to the event.

5 Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words **1x5=5**

- A You are Rukmini/ Raja of R-201, Fort Road, Chennai. You have just purchased a new house. You decide to have a house-warming ceremony and invite your cousin Balaji. Write the invitation in letter format giving all necessary details.

OR

- B You are Mrs. Savita Manjrekhar, a professor in English. You are invited to be one of the judges for the inter-school debate competition by the Principal of J.M. Public School, Cochin. Write a formal letter expressing your inability to accept the invitation.

6 Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words **1x5=5**

- A The cultural festival in Lorraine School, Kutch, was held recently to celebrate the school's achievements. As the senior editorial board member, Devaki Fernandes, write this article for the school magazine detailing various aspects of the festival. Write the article using your own ideas as well as the cues given.

- Organisation and significance
- Performances and exhibition
- Participant engagement
- Overall success.

OR

- B Digital communication tools have revolutionised the educational landscape. The introduction of online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and interactive tools has made education more accessible and engaging. You are Nooran Sheikh. Write an article for the monthly magazine edition of The Progressive Educator and discuss the role of digital communication in education. Write the article using your own ideas as well as the cues given.

- Student engagement
- Accessibility of education
- Teachers and students' roles
- Learning outcomes

SECTION C LITERATURE

7 Read the following extracts and solve the questions.

1x6=6

- A. All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera.
A sweet face, my mother's,
that was before I was born.
And the sea, which appears to have changed less.
Washed their terribly transient feet."

(A Photograph)

- I What does the phrase "smiling through their hair" signify in the poem? **1**
A. The girls who were photographed had their hair decorated
B. The photographed girls were wearing a mask
C. When the girls were smiling for the camera, their hair was covering their faces.
D. The hair of the girls in the picture was smiling as well
- II What has remained constant over time? **1**
A. The photo
B. The cardboard
C. The girls
D. The sea
- III Identify a term in the extract that describes something as "lasting only briefly"? **1**
A. Still
B. Transient
C. Changed

- D. Less
- IV What is the poetic device used in 'terribly transient' 1
- V What does the phrase "terribly transient feet" signify? 1
- VI The poet's mother's face is described as "sweet." What does this tell us about the poet's perspective? 1
- 8 Read the following extracts and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B). 4x1=4**
- A Well, it seemed to me stealing a horse for a ride was not the same thing as stealing something else, such a money. For all I knew, may be it wasn't stealing at all. If you were crazy about horses the way my cousin Mourad and I were, it wasn't stealing. It would not become stealing until we offered to sell the horse, which of course, I knew we would never do.
- (The Summer of a beautiful White Horse)*
- I What does these lines indicate about Mourad? 1
- (a) That Mourad had stolen the horse
- (b) That Mourad had bought the horse
- (c) That Mourad was planning to sell the horse
- (d) That Mourad wanted to harm the horse
- II Arrange the following events in the correct sequence as they occur in the story: 1
- a. Mourad wakes Aram early in the morning to show him the horse.
- b. Aram and Mourad ride the horse together.
- c. Aram recalls the Garoghlanian tribe's reputation for honesty.
- d. Mourad tells Aram they must return the horse to its owner.
- Options:**
1. a → c → b → d
2. c → a → b → d
3. a → b → c → d
4. c → b → a → d
- III From the extract, what can you infer about the narrator's moral reasoning? 1
- IV The narrator's use of the phrase "for all I knew" suggests: 1
- a) Complete certainty about the law
- b) Ignorance of cultural norms
- c) A lack of absolute moral clarity
- d) Defiance of authority

OR

- B "It was probably a mistake to go to the address in the first place. I was not at all sure that the woman I was looking for lived there. From the moment she opened the door and looked at me, I had the feeling that I was not welcome. She kept staring at me in a cold and formal way. I recognized her at once—it was Mrs. Dorling. She was wearing my mother's green knitted cardigan, which she had taken during the war."
- (The Address)*
- I Find from the extract the word that is the antonym of *warm*. 1
- II Mrs. Dorling was wearing _____ when the narrator saw her at the door. 1
- III Arrange the following events in the correct sequence as they happened in the story: 1
- a. The narrator visits Mrs. Dorling's house for the first time.
- b. The narrator recognizes Mrs. Dorling wearing her mother's cardigan.
- c. The narrator feels unwelcome as Mrs. Dorling opens the door.
- d. The narrator doubts whether she should have visited the address.
- Options:**
1. a → c → b → d
2. d → c → b → a

3. $d \rightarrow c \rightarrow b \rightarrow a$
4. $d \rightarrow c \rightarrow b \rightarrow a$

IV **Assertion (A):** The narrator immediately recognized Mrs. Dorling when she opened the door. 1

Reason (R): Mrs. Dorling was wearing the narrator's mother's green knitted cardigan.

- A. Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- B. Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- C. A is true, but R is false.
- D. A is false, but R is true.

9 Read the following extracts and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B) 1x6=6

A. When my parents were comfortably settled in the city, they sent for us. That was a turning-point in our friendship. Although we shared the same room, my grandmother no longer came to school with me. I used to go to an English school in a motor bus. There were no dogs in the streets and she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of our city house.

(The Portrait of a Lady)

- I What event is described as the turning-point in the narrator's friendship with his grandmother? 1
- II Which type of school did the narrator attend after moving to the city? 1
- III Identify one factor that symbolises the growing emotional distance between the narrator and his grandmother in the city. 1
- IV What detail in the passage suggests that the city environment was different from the village in terms of street life? 1
- V What does the act of feeding sparrows reveal about the grandmother's personality and adaptability? 1
- VI Examine the use of contrast in this passage to highlight the narrator's changing life. 1

OR

B He was just a teenager when he died. The last heir of a powerful family that had ruled Egypt and its empire for centuries, he was laid to rest laden with gold and eventually forgotten. Since the discovery of his tomb in 1922, the modern world has speculated about what happened to him, with murder being the most extreme possibility. Now, leaving his tomb for the first time in almost 80 years.

(Discovering of the Tut: The Saga Continues...)

- I What does the phrase "laden with gold" reveal about ancient Egyptian burial customs for royalty? 1
- II How might the long period of the tomb being sealed contribute to speculation about his death? 1
- III What position did he hold in Egypt's history? 1
- IV What was the political status of the family to which he belonged? 1
- V Who is referred to as "the last heir of a powerful family" in the passage? 1
- VI In the phrase "laden with gold," the word 'laden' most closely means: 1
 - A) Decorated with
 - B) Covered in
 - C) Overwhelmed by
 - D) Heavily filled with

10 Answer any five of the following six questions in 40-50 words each: 5x2=10

- I How does the change in the narrator's education affect his relationship with his grandmother? 2

- II Why did the narrator feel a “wave of relief” upon seeing Ile Amsterdam, despite being physically exhausted? 2
- III How does the juxtaposition of modern scientific investigation and ancient beliefs create a sense of mystery around Tutankhamun? 2
- IV How does the poet use the contrast between past and present to convey the theme of loss in A Photograph? 2
- V How did the children display courage during the voyage, and what does it reveal about their personalities? 2
- VI What changes were observed in her behaviour towards the end of the chapter The Portrait of a Lady?" 2
- 11 Answer any two of the following three questions in 40 -50 words each :** **2x2=4**
- I What traits of the Garoghlanian tribe are revealed through the boys’ handling of the horse? 2
- II Why did the narrator decide not to take back her belongings from Mrs. Dorling’s house? 2
- III Mention four familiar things that Mrs. S’s daughter noticed at Mrs. Dorling’s house. 2
- 12 Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words.** **1x5=5**
- A . In 'The Portrait of a Lady', the grandmother’s silence is not a void but a powerful form of communication.

OR

- B . In 'We're Not Afraid to Die... if We Are All Together', the father's statement 'We're not afraid to die if we can all be together' is a pivotal moment. What deeper philosophical meaning does this phrase convey beyond a simple act of courage?
- 13 Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words** **1x5=5**
- A Aram says, “We didn’t steal the horse. But if we were found out, it would be called stealing.” Discuss how this statement reflects the themes of innocence and morality in the story.

OR

- B The narrator visits Mrs. Dorling in search of her belongings. Describe the contrast between her memories of the objects and her present experience of seeing them in Mrs. Dorling’s house

*****ALL THE BEST*****