

KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA SANGATHAN REGIONAL OFFICE, JABALPUR

ENGLISH CORE- Code No. 301

PRE BOARD EXAMINATION 2025-26

CLASS-XII

Time allowed: 3 Hrs.

Maximum Marks: 80

General Instructions

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

SECTION A READING SKILLS

22 marks

1. Read the following passages.

(12)

The evening air was thick with the scent of rain, and the lamps along the platform glowed dimly through the mist. Jonathan stood near the edge, his suitcase at his feet, glancing every few seconds at the clock above the ticket office. The train to Waverley was late again—just as it had been the night before.

He was a man of careful habits, one who disliked uncertainty. Yet tonight, as the hands of the clock crept past eight, a curious restlessness stirred in him. Perhaps it was the journey itself, or the letter folded neatly in his pocket—the one written in his sister's familiar, hurried hand, summoning him home after so many silent years.

A porter shuffled past, humming softly and lighting the lamps. A group of soldiers laughed near the far bench, their voices rising and falling in bursts, like the flicker of the lanterns. Jonathan watched them absently, wondering at their easy companionship. The sound made his solitude sharper.

At last, the faint rumble of wheels echoed through the fog. The train emerged, steam billowing like breath into the cold air. Jonathan lifted his case, but hesitated. He could still return to the inn, pretend he had missed it, write to his sister tomorrow. Yet he knew that excuse had worn thin with time.

As he climbed aboard, a woman brushed past him, clutching a small basket. A child's toy—a wooden horse—fell from it and rolled beneath the seat. Jonathan picked it up and handed it to her. She smiled, a little breathless. "Thank you. It's his favourite."

Her kindness was brief, ordinary, yet it softened something inside him. He took his seat by the window. The train shuddered, then moved. Town lights slipped away into darkness.

He drew out the letter once more. The words were simple: "Come home. Mother is not well. We both need you."

Outside, the rain began again, tapping lightly against the glass—steady, persistent, like the ticking of time he had ignored for years.

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

- I. Which line shows Jonathan's impatience while waiting? **1**
- II. The writer describes the lamps and mist mainly to create a mood of _____. **1**
- III. Jonathan's hesitation before boarding the train suggests his —
A. excitement B. uncertainty C. anger D. confidence **1**
- IV. What type of statement is made in "Come home. Mother is not well."?
A. command B. request C. warning D. announcement **1**
- V. What detail indicates Jonathan's loneliness at the station? **1**
- VI. What does the child's wooden horse symbolize in the story? **1**
- VII. The repeated mention of rain and time suggests —
A. a dull environment B. Jonathan's regret and passage of time C. nature's indifference D. his desire for adventure **1**
- VIII. What does the encounter with the woman and child reveal about Jonathan's emotional state? (Answer in about 40 words) **2**
- IX. How does the author use setting and imagery to reflect Jonathan's inner conflict? (Answer in about 40 words) **2**
- X. Choose the most suitable main idea of the passage:
A. A man returns home after years of estrangement and self-reflection
B. A delayed train journey through a rainy night
C. A chance meeting between two travellers
D. The beauty of railway journeys **1**

2. Read the following carefully.

10

1. A recent nationwide survey conducted by the National Reading Foundation (NRF) examined the reading habits of 3,000 young people aged 16–25 across India. The objective was to study how digital technology and lifestyle changes have influenced the choice of reading materials and the time spent on reading. Respondents were from both urban and rural regions and represented diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds.

2. The study revealed that while 92% of the respondents still read something daily, the format and purpose of reading have undergone significant transformation. Digital reading, through blogs, news apps, and social media posts, dominates, while traditional print reading such as novels and newspapers has declined. Reading is often linked more to information gathering or entertainment rather than leisure or reflection.

3. The data collected is summarized below:

Type of Reading Material	Average Daily Time Spent (in minutes)	Percentage of Youth Engaged
Social Media Content	45	82%
News Articles/Online Blogs	25	67%
E-books or Digital Novels	20	41%
Printed Books (fiction/non-fiction)	15	29%
Newspapers/Magazines	10	24%

4. The findings highlight a growing shift towards fast, concise, and image-rich content, reflecting a global trend of shorter attention spans. Interestingly, rural youth, though less digitally connected, showed slightly higher engagement with printed material compared to urban youth. Experts suggest that while digital reading increases accessibility, it may reduce comprehension and critical thinking due to fragmented attention.

5. The study concludes that educational institutions must promote balanced reading habits—encouraging deep reading along with digital literacy—to strengthen analytical and reflective skills among students. Libraries, teachers, and parents play a vital role in integrating technology without losing the joy and discipline of sustained reading.

Answer the following questions, based on your reading of the the above passage.

I. What was the main objective of the survey conducted by the National Reading Foundation?

1

II. Fill in the blank with the correct option.

Digital reading has largely replaced _____ forms of reading among youth.

A) reflective B) printed C) academic D) professional 1

III. Based on the data table, which type of reading material engages the least number of young readers? 1

IV. What does the phrase “fast, concise, and image-rich content” suggest about the reading preferences of today’s youth? 2

V. With reference to paragraph 4, why might digital reading reduce comprehension and critical thinking? 2

VI. Suggest any two ways educational institutions can encourage balanced reading habits, as discussed in the passage. 1

VII. “Rural youth showed slightly higher engagement with printed material.” What does this reveal about the influence of technology on reading habits? 1

VIII. Which of the following aspects is NOT addressed in the passage? 1

A) Gender differences in reading habits

B) Role of schools and parents in promoting reading

C) Impact of digital reading on comprehension

D) Urban-rural reading pattern differences

SECTION B CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS (18 marks)

3. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words 1x4=4

A. You are Ritika Sharma, Cultural Secretary of Sunrise Public School, Delhi. Your school is organising an Inter-School Music and Dance Competition to celebrate Cultural Harmony Week. Write a notice inviting entries from students of Classes XI and XII. Include details about the event date, venue, categories, and last date for registration. Put the notice in a box.

OR

B. You are Aditya Verma, President of the Readers’ Forum, City Library, Lucknow. The library is launching a “*Readathon Challenge*” to promote reading habits among youth. Write a notice informing members about the event, rules for participation, prizes, and registration details. Put the notice in a box.

4. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words. 1x4=4

You are Aarav Mehta, Head Boy of Starlight Public School, Pune. Your school is organising an Inter-School Debate Competition on “Artificial Intelligence: Boon or

Bane?" Draft a formal invitation inviting the Principal of Bright Future School to act as a judge for the event. Include all necessary details.

OR

You are Sanjana, living at 27, Green Park, New Delhi. You are turning 18 and plan to host a small get-together and movie night at your home to celebrate the occasion. Write an informal invitation to your close friend Nisha, inviting her to the celebration.

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

1x5=5

A. You are Aarohi Menon, a student of Class XII, residing at E-27, Nehru Nagar, Bengaluru. Write a letter to the Editor of The Daily Herald, expressing concern over the rising use of AI tools among students for academic work. Highlight how over-reliance on technology can affect creativity, critical thinking, and originality in learning. Suggest measures schools can take to promote responsible and ethical use of technology.

Use your own ideas and the following cues:

- Increasing dependence on AI tools for homework and essays
- Decline in analytical and creative writing skills
- Importance of digital ethics and awareness programs
- Role of teachers and parents in guiding responsible use

OR

B. You are Rishabh Tandon, a Commerce graduate from Indore University, currently living at 23, Lake View Apartments, Indore. You have come across the following advertisement in The Career Journal for the post of Finance Assistant at Bright Wave Solutions Pvt. Ltd. Write a letter applying for the post, including your bio-data.

ADVERTISEMENT

Bright Wave Solutions Pvt. Ltd. is looking for a **Finance Assistant** with strong analytical and accounting skills, proficiency in MS Excel, and knowledge of Tally.

Qualification: B. Com / M. Com

Experience: 1–2 years preferred (freshers may apply)

Contact: HR Manager, Bright Wave Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Indore

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

1X5=5

A. You are Tanya Kapoor, a student of Class XII, Bluebell Senior Secondary School, Pune. You feel that while technology connects people globally, it has also made real

human connections fragile. Write an article for your school magazine on the topic that we are connected yet alone. It is a Paradox of Social Media.

Use your own ideas and the following cues:

- Increased online interaction but emotional isolation
- Impact on friendships, family bonds, and communication skills
- Need for balance between online and offline life
- Role of digital mindfulness and responsible usage

OR

B. You are Amaan Sheikh, Cultural Secretary of Riverview International School, Dehradun. Your school organised a unique event called “*Night Under the Stars*” – an open-air astronomy and music festival for students and parents. Write a report for the school magazine describing the event, its highlights, and participants’ response.

Use your own ideas and the following cues:

- Organisation and purpose of the event
- Activities: stargazing, telescope workshops, student band performances
- Student and parent participation
- Learning outcomes and concluding remarks

SECTION C LITERATURE (40 marks)

7. Read the following extracts and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B).

(1x6=6)

A. *Now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still.*

For once on the face of the Earth

let’s not speak in any language,

let’s stop for one second,

and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment

without rush, without engines,

we would all be together

in a sudden strangeness.

(Keeping Quiet)

I. What is the poet’s intention behind asking everyone to “keep still”? (1)

II. Complete the following appropriately:

The phrase “without rush, without engines” symbolically suggests the poet’s appeal for _____. (1)

III. How does the poet's use of the expression "an exotic moment" create an atmosphere of universality and harmony? (1)

IV. Fill in the blank with the correct option:

The word "strangeness" here primarily implies a feeling of _____ (discomfort / unfamiliar peace / collective confusion / social isolation). (1)

V. What change in human behaviour does the poet expect as a result of this moment of silence? Chose the correct option: (1)

- a) People will understand the importance of material success.
- b) Humanity will introspect and develop mutual understanding.
- c) Society will value language diversity more deeply.
- d) Individuals will seek personal entertainment.

VI. All of the following statements are true about the extract, EXCEPT – (1)

- a) The poet criticizes human haste and mechanical living.
- b) The appeal for stillness is equated with passivity and inactivity.
- c) The idea of silence is linked to global unity.
- d) The poet envisions peace arising from collective reflection.

OR

*B. Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching:*

(A Thing of Beauty)

I. What does the expression "wreathing a flowery band" metaphorically suggest about human connection with nature? (1)

II. Complete the sentence suitably:

The contrast between "flowery band" and "inhuman dearth" emphasizes the conflict between _____. (1)

III. How does the poet's choice of imagery evoke both hope and despair in the extract? (1)

IV. Fill in the blank with the correct option:

The phrase "unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways" refers to _____. (1)

- (a) the poet's disillusionment with industrial progress
- (b) the moral and emotional decline of mankind
- (c) the excessive admiration of material pleasures
- (d) the lack of natural beauty in human life

V. Which of the following best interprets the poet's purpose in this extract? (1)

- a) To glorify the endless cycle of human suffering.
- b) To show that beauty offers solace amidst despair.
- c) To suggest that happiness lies in material possessions.
- d) To reject nature as a source of inspiration.

VI. All of the following are true for the extract, EXCEPT – (1)

- a) The poet presents beauty as a life-sustaining force.
- b) The repetition of dark imagery suggests hopelessness.
- c) The contrast between beauty and gloom deepens the emotional impact.
- d) The tone reflects optimism despite human suffering.

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

(4×1=4)

A. *"I have killed the hundredth tiger. My vow has been fulfilled," the Maharaja was overcome with elation. Ordering the tiger to be brought to the capital in grand procession, the Maharaja hastened away in his car. After the Maharaja left, the hunters went to take a closer look at the tiger. The tiger looked back at them rolling its eyes in bafflement. The men realised that the tiger was not dead; the bullet had missed it. It had fainted from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. The hunters wondered what they should do. They decided that the Maharaja must not come to know that he had missed his target. If he did, they could lose their jobs. One of the hunters took aim from a distance of one foot and shot the tiger. This time he killed it without missing his mark.*
(The Tiger King)

I. What does the Maharaja's reaction to the tiger's supposed death reveal about his character and priorities as a ruler? (1)

II. Complete the sentence suitably:

The hunters' decision to remain silent despite knowing the truth reflects their _____.

III. How does the author use irony in this situation to criticise the Maharaja's obsession with power and pride? (1)

IV. Choose the correct option to complete the statement:

The description of the tiger fainting rather than dying primarily serves to highlight—

- a) the humour in human error
- b) the futility of blind arrogance
- c) the bravery of the Maharaja's men
- d) the skill of the royal hunters (1)

OR

B. *We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judewin said, 'We have to submit, because they are strong,' I rebelled.*

'No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!' I answered. I watched my chance, and when no one noticed, I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes — my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees, I crawled under the bed, and huddled myself in the dark corner. (Memories of Childhood)

I. What does the narrator's reaction to Judewin's advice reveal about her sense of identity and resistance? (1)

II. Complete the sentence suitably:

The exchange of moccasins for squeaking shoes symbolises _____. (1)

III. How does the narrator's act of hiding under the bed serve as a metaphor for her emotional and cultural struggle? (1)

IV. Choose the correct statement that best interprets the narrator's defiance:

- a) It reflects her ignorance of the situation.
- b) It symbolises her rejection of forced assimilation.
- c) It indicates her dependence on her friends.
- d) It shows her fear of physical punishment. (1)

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

(1x6=6)

A. I started for school very late that morning and was in great dread of being scolded, especially because M. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles, and I did not know the first word about them. For a moment I thought of running away and spending the day out of doors. It was so warm, so bright! The birds were chirping at the edge of the woods, and in the open field back of the sawmill the Prussian soldiers were drilling. It was all much more tempting than the rule for participles, but I had the strength to resist and hurried off to school.

When I passed the town hall, there was a crowd in front of the bulletin-board. For the last two years, all our bad news had come from there — the lost battles, the draft, the orders of the commanding officer — and I thought to myself, without stopping, “What can be the matter now?”
(The Last Lesson)

I. Select the option that best reflects Franz’s internal conflict in this extract. (1)

- A. Curiosity about the news vs. fear of punishment
- B. Joy of freedom vs. duty toward learning
- C. Anger at the invaders vs. guilt of negligence
- D. Interest in war vs. interest in grammar

II. Fill in the blank with the most appropriate word:

The tone of the narrator in the line “What can be the matter now?” best conveys his sense of _____. (1)

III. What does the reference to “Prussian soldiers drilling” symbolise in the context of the extract? (1)

IV. Which of the following best explains the contrast between Franz’s surroundings and his thoughts? (1)

- 1. Nature’s beauty vs. human oppression
- 2. Joy of childhood vs. burden of fear
- 3. Carefree morning vs. strict discipline
- 4. A student’s duty vs. external control

Select the most suitable option:

- A. 1 and 3
- B. 2 and 4
- C. 1 and 2
- D. 3 and 4

V. In what way does this extract serve as foreshadowing for the events that follow in the story? (1)

VI. Complete the following sentence suitably:

The crowd at the bulletin-board contributes to the mood of _____ and prepares the reader for _____. (1)

OR

B. This settlement was adopted unanimously by the commission. Gandhi explained that the amount of the refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had been obliged to surrender part of the money and, with it, part of their prestige. Therefore, as far as the peasants were concerned, the planters had behaved as lords above the law. Now the peasant saw that he had rights and defenders. He learned courage.

Events justified Gandhi's position. Within a few years the British planters abandoned their estates, which reverted to the peasants. Indigo sharecropping disappeared.

(Indigo)

I. Fill in the blank by choosing the correct option from those given in the brackets. (1)

Gandhi considered the refund amount to be less important than the landlords' surrender because it symbolised the _____.

(economic gain / moral victory / end of indigo cultivation)

II. Select the option that best represents the shift in power highlighted in the extract.

(1)

A. From planters to British officials

B. From peasants to landlords

C. From landlords to peasants

D. From Gandhi to the commission

III. What does the phrase "lords above the law" reveal about the social hierarchy before Gandhi's intervention? (1)

A. The landlords were accountable to the government.

B. The landlords exploited the peasants without restraint.

C. The peasants held equal rights under the law.

D. The British authorities strictly controlled the landlords.

IV. Which line from the extract best shows the long-term impact of Gandhi's leadership on the peasants? (1)

- A. "The amount of the refund was less important..."
- B. "Events justified Gandhi's position."
- C. "The planters had behaved as lords above the law."
- D. "This settlement was adopted unanimously."

V. Complete the sentence suitably: (1)

The peasants' realization that they had rights and defenders marks the beginning of their journey from _____ to _____.

VI. What broader idea does the disappearance of indigo sharecropping symbolise in the context of India's freedom struggle? (1)

- A. The end of colonial trade monopoly and social injustice.
- B. The peasants' rejection of agricultural work.
- C. Gandhi's retreat from active politics.
- D. The British government's complete withdrawal from India.

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

(5x2=10)

- I. How does the peddler's transformation in 'The Rattrap' highlight the redemptive power of compassion and trust?
- II. What does Sophie's fascination with Danny Casey in Going Places reveal about her outlook towards life and reality?
- III. In 'The Interview', how does Umberto Eco's perspective on his writing process challenge the traditional notion of time management and creativity?
- IV. What does Aunt Jennifer's act of creating tigers on her tapestry symbolise about her inner desires and unexpressed emotions? (Aunt Jennifer's Tigers)
- V. In what way, Robert Frost uses the contrast between the rural poor at the roadside stand and the indifferent city dwellers to highlight social injustice and the growing divide between urban prosperity and rural deprivation? (A Roadside Stand)
- VI. Discuss, how Anees Jung in 'Lost Spring' portrays the loss of childhood innocence through the lives of street children like Saheb and Mukesh?

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

(2x2=4)

- I. What makes the author use the stark and pristine landscape of Antarctica to make students reflect on the fragility of Earth's ecosystem and the urgent need for sustainable living? (Journey to the End of the Earth)

II. How does Mr. Lamb's attitude towards life challenge Derry's belief that physical appearance determines one's happiness and social acceptance? (On the Face of It)

III. Dr. Sadao's internal conflict between his duty as a doctor and his loyalty to his country highlight the moral dilemmas faced by individuals during wartime. Elucidate. (The Enemy)

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

(1x5=5)

A. How does the poem "My Mother at Sixty-Six" by Kamala Das go beyond a personal moment of separation to reflect universal emotions of love, fear, and the inevitable passage of time? Discuss how the poet's use of imagery and tone deepens the theme of human mortality.

OR

B. Drawing inspiration from "Deep Water" by William Douglas, explain how the author's journey from fear to courage can be applied to real-life situations where individuals confront psychological or emotional challenges. How does his experience serve as a lesson in resilience and self-mastery for today's youth?

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

(1x5=5)

A. "The Third Level" by Jack Finney uses the idea of escapism through time travel to comment on human anxiety in the modern world. Discuss how Charley's longing for the third level reflects deeper psychological needs and the universal desire to escape the pressures of contemporary life.

OR

B. Pearl S. Buck uses a balanced and objective narrative technique in "The Enemy" enhance the moral complexity of the story. Discuss how her descriptive realism, third-person point of view, and calm tone help readers understand Dr. Sadao's inner conflict and evoke empathy for both the Japanese and the American characters.

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