

केन्द्रीय विद्यालय संगठन, कोलकाता संभाग
KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA SANGATHAN, KOLKATA REGION
द्वितीय प्री-बोर्ड परीक्षा / 2ND PRE-BOARD EXAMINATION 2025-26

कक्षा / CLASS – XII

अधिकतम अंक/MAX. MARKS – 80

विषय/SUB. - ENGLISH CORE (301)

समय/TIME – 03 घंटे/Hours

General Instructions

Read the following instructions very carefully and follow them:

- 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

(1) Travel, they say, broadens the mind, but who exactly are 'they'? These mysterious sages seem to know a thing or two about the transformative power of packing a suitcase and jetting off to distant lands. As Mark Twain wisely put it, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow mindedness." Indeed, leaving behind your familiar surroundings and completely involving yourself in a new culture is like enrolling in a crash course in the School of Life.

(2) Take, for instance, the confusing world of foreign languages. You might think you know how to navigate a city because you can book a hotel and call a taxi, but try finding your way through a maze of winding streets in an old European town. Suddenly, "Where is the train station?" seems sadly not enough. It's a humbling experience, much like realizing that 'piazza' is Italian for 'square' and not a type of pizza. But therein lies the beauty: each navigational blunder is a lesson, each wrong turn a new entry in your personal map of life.

(3) Then there are the historical landmarks. Visiting the Colosseum isn't just a chance to take an Instagram-worthy selfie; it's a real-life history lesson that textbooks can only dream of. As you stand in the shadow of this ancient arena, you might find yourself daydreaming about gladiators and emperors, only to be jolted back to reality by a selfie stick to the face. Travel has a way of making history real, even if it sometimes includes the odd bruise.

(4) Moreover, travel teaches resilience and adaptability. Missed flights, lost luggage, and questionable hotel rooms can turn even the most meticulously planned vacation into a comedy of errors. Yet, these are the moments that foster growth and creativity. Who knew you could fashion a comb out of a hotel toothbrush and a bit of resourcefulness.

(5) Travel is a passport to a world of knowledge, where every stamp tells a story and every journey is a chapter in the grand, unfinished novel of your life. So, next time you find yourself lost in a foreign city, remember: you're not just a tourist; you're a student of the world, and the curriculum is as vast as your curiosity.

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

- I. According to Mark Twain, how does travel influence people? 1
- II. How does the author use the metaphor of 'crash course in the School of Life' to interpret the value of travel? 1
- III. The comparison of 'navigational blunder' to a 'lesson', in the context of travel, primarily highlights : 1
 - A. the inevitability of getting lost while travelling.
 - B. the educational value of travel experiences.
 - C. the frustration of not knowing a foreign language.
 - D. the importance of planning every detail of a trip.
- IV. Provide one textual evidence with reference to paragraph (4) to prove that travel promotes creativity. 1
- V. The significance of historical landmarks in the context of travel, according to the passage, is _____ . 1
- VI. Give two instances of the author's resilience and adaptability during his travels. 2
- VII. Complete the analogy with one word from paragraph (4) : 1
fragility : weakness :: _____ : strength
 - A. adaptability
 - B. ingenuity
 - C. resilience
 - D. creativity
- VIII. How does the following statement define a traveler ? (paragraph (5)) 1
'You're not just a tourist; you're a student of the world, and the curriculum is as vast as your curiosity.'
- IX. Reflect on the author's perspective on travel as an educational journey. How does this viewpoint of the author challenge conventional forms of education? 2
- X. Complete the sentence suitably : 1
The author refers to travel as a passport to the world of knowledge because _____ .

2. Read the following carefully.

10

(1) At a time when younger people are privileging smartphones, television and video games over other sources of entertainment, a nearly 55-year-old museum housing thousands of dolls from across the globe is still maintaining its old world charm and attracting not only children and teenagers, but also visitors of all age groups. This is not surprising, as it actually transports you into a world where you can forget the woes of the present.

(2) With over 7,500 dolls on display, Shankar's International Dolls Museum in the capital not only entertains children but also teaches them about art, culture and costumes of different cultures. The idea of dolls collection was born when eminent political cartoonist and journalist K. Shankar Pillai, better known simply as Shankar, received one as a gift from the Hungarian Ambassador in the early 1950s.

(3) "Shankar fell so much in love with the doll that he began to collect costume dolls whenever he visited any country. Soon, he was able to collect a good number of dolls as his visits to foreign nations were frequent. He began to exhibit the dolls across the country after he was able to collect a good number, but the frequent packing and unpacking was damaging the dolls. Then the idea emerged of a

permanent space for the dolls and that is how the museum was set-up. The museum is located in Nehru House on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg in the building that houses the Children's Book Trust, which was also set-up by Shankar. The museum began in 1965 with 1,000 dolls.

(4) Now there are more than 7,500 from over 85 countries. The museum has the largest number of costume dolls in the world. Divided into two equal halves, one section of the museum is dedicated to Western countries like the UK, the US, Australia and New Zealand, and also the Commonwealth of Independent States and the other half to Asian, African and Middle-Eastern countries, and also India. Several countries gifted dolls to the museum to represent their country's culture. Apart from those dolls received in exchange, there are a good number of dolls made at the workshop attached to the museum, including authentic Indian dolls in traditional attire. The dolls are sent as "return gifts" for the dolls gifted by various countries.

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

I. Give two possible ways why the information, mentioned in paragraph (4) could be beneficial. 2

II. What is the reason behind other foreign countries sending their traditional dolls as a 'gift' to the Shankar museum? 1

- A. To have a great business with India.
- B. To represent their tradition and culture.
- C. To repay the help they receive from India.
- D. To provide it to under-privileged children.

III. Although modern entertainment options like smartphones and video games are popular among younger people, why does the Shankar's International Dolls Museum continue to attract visitors of all age groups? 1

IV. Fill in the blank with the correct option from those given in brackets.

Shankar's deep affection for the doll he received from the Hungarian Ambassador inspired him to begin his collection which later became a hub of _____. (heritage/ modernity/innovation) 1

V. Read the following:

Shankar's International Dolls Museum, founded in 1965, showcases over 7,500 dolls from more than 85 countries, divided into sections representing Western and non-Western cultures. The museum, located in Nehru House, also features dolls made at an attached workshop. 1

Select the option that correctly identifies the significance of the museum's collection.

- A. The museum focuses solely on Indian dolls and their traditional attire.
- B. The museum's collection emphasizes Western dolls and their cultural representation.
- C. The museum highlights a global collection of dolls, emphasising both Western and Non-Western cultures.
- D. The museum features only dolls gifted by foreign countries to represent their culture.

VI. Analyse how might the differences in cultural representation between Western and Non-Western dolls at Shankar's 'International Dolls Museum impact visitors' understanding of global diversity and cultural heritage? 2

- VII. Complete the following suitably. 1
- Authentic Indian dolls in traditional attire were created, this may be due to
- VIII. Select the statement that is NOT related to this passage. 1
- A. Shankar's International Dolls Museum houses dolls from more than 85 countries.
 - B. The museum was established in 1965 with around 1,000 dolls.
 - C. The museum is located in Nehru House, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi.
 - D. The museum also displays modern digital art and interactive robots for children.
 - E. Many countries gifted dolls to represent their own culture.

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. You are Pavai/Pushkar, a class XII student of Excel Public School, Hawapur. As the President of 'Helping Hands', the social service club of your school, you have organised a musical show to raise funds for flood victims. Write a notice for your school notice board, giving necessary information about the programme. Do not forget to put your notice in a box.

OR

B. You are Anuradha/Anirudh, a resident of Avalon Apartments, Nilashahar. You plan to conduct a two-week course to help the children of your apartment complex to acquire good communication skills. Prepare a notice stating the objectives of the course, giving necessary details, and encouraging the children of the complex to join the programme. Do not forget to put your notice in a box.

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

A. The Camera Enthusiasts Club is organising a Photography Exhibition, 'Echoes of Light Series', presenting the works of upcoming artists. It will be held at the National Art Gallery and will be inaugurated by the renowned artist, Shri Neelesh Gautam. Draft an invitation card for the exhibition.

OR

B. You are Shreya/Shailish of D-159, Moti Vihar, Aarambagh. You have received an invitation to attend the inauguration ceremony of the newly opened furniture showroom of your friend, Karan. Write a formal letter of refusal, regretting your inability to attend the ceremony.

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

A. You have read several articles about the increasing concerns over climate change and its severe impact on the environment. Write a letter to the editor of a national newspaper, expressing your views on the issue. Highlight the importance of immediate action and suggest measures to combat climate change. You may use some of the given cues along with your own ideas to draft the letter. You are Surina/Sumant Kumar, a resident of 146A, Prem Nagar, Blue City.

- Issue of climate change : its growing relevance
- Consequences : in what ways we feel the impact
- The role of human activities
- Call for awareness and action
- Possible solutions

OR

B. You are Bina/Brijesh Mathur from A-45, 100 ft Road, Akashpur. You read the given advertisement and wish to apply for the post advertised. Write a job application along with your bio-data.

Jeevan Mala Hospital

Requires

2 full-time Physiotherapists for its Vayupur branch.

Qualifications : Certified physiotherapists from reputed institutions

- Minimum 5 years experience
- Strong communication skills desirable
- Package includes competitive salary, performance bonus, professional development

Apply to : hrjeevanmala@jmhospital.com

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

1x5=5

A. You are Ratika/Ritivik, the team leader of your school's community service club. Write an article for your school magazine on the significance of community service in fostering personal growth, social responsibility, and a better society. Highlight how community service helps in addressing social issues, building essential life skills, and promoting active citizenship. You may use some of the given cues along with your own ideas.

- Voluntary activities contributing to society
- Builds empathy and compassion
- Enhances teamwork and leadership skills
- Addresses societal issues – environment, poverty, etc.
- Develops responsibility – personal growth
- Encourages active citizenship

OR

B. You are Barkha/Krishiv, a student of Sarojini Model School, Green Meadow. Recently, you participated in a student exchange programme to Germany, where you explored the cultural, educational and social environment of the country. You visited museums and ate different kinds of food. Write a report for your school magazine describing the highlights of the exchange programme, your experiences and how it contributed to your personal and academic growth. You may organise your report by the following :

- Who – What – When – Where – Why – How

SECTION C

LITERATURE (40 marks)

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

1x6=6

A. *I looked again at her, wan, pale
as a late winter's moon and felt that
old familiar ache, my childhood's fear
but all I said was, see you soon, Amma,
all I did was smile and smile and smile ...*

I. The poem My Mother at Sixty-Six captures the _____ of the narrator.

1. happiness
2. fear

- 3. dismay
- 4. anxiety

Choose the most appropriate option :

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

II. Identify the phrase from the extract that suggests the following:

She was overwhelmed with emotion and could not speak much.

III. The word 'wan' in the given context nearly means

- A. pale
- B. old
- C. unwell
- D. anxious

IV. Explain the following statement with reference to the above extract :

All I did was smile and smile and smile.

V. Complete the following with the correct option.

The speaker's use of the word 'childish' suggests that she was _____ (playful / rebellious/ vulnerable).

VI. All of the following are true for the extract EXCEPT –

- A. The poet compares her mother's pale face to a late winter moon.
- B. Seeing her mother reminds the poet of her childhood fear.
- C. Despite her fear, the poet smiles and says, "Will see you soon."
- D. The poet's mother looks bright and cheerful, making her feel relaxed.

OR

B. When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will

lie Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.

The tigers in the panel that she made

Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid

I. What does the phrase 'terrified hands' suggest about Aunt's life?

II. Complete the following suitably.

The tigers' proud and playful movements reflect _____.

III. Examine briefly how the tigers in the panel contrast with Aunt's life experiences.

IV. Fill in the blank with the correct option from those given in the brackets.

The phrase 'still ringed' refers to both the literal _____ (shape of the embroidery panel / wedding band on her finger) and the figurative 'ring' of constraints and ordeals imposed by her marriage.

V. If a student were to interpret the word 'prancing' in a real-world context, which of the following would it best represent?

- A. An employee working under the pressure of deadlines.

- B. A soldier standing firm and ready for battle at the frontier.
- C. A child playing freely in a park, unburdened by responsibilities.
- D. A bird trapped in a cage, longing to be free and fly high.

VI. What does the poet imply about the art in the line 'The tigers in the panel that she made will go on prancing'?

- A. Art is a timeless expression that outlives its creator, continuing to embody their spirit and desires.
- B. The tigers symbolise Aunt Jennifer's fleeting empowerment, which will fade over time.
- C. The panel is a temporary escape for Aunt Jennifer, offering solace only during her lifetime.
- D. The permanence of the tigers in the panel contrasts with the transient nature of Aunt Jennifer's struggles.

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

1x4=4

A. "Then certainly I can allow nothing to happen to you," the General said with anxiety. His long pale Japanese face became expressionless, which meant that he was in deep thought. "You cannot be arrested," the General said, closing his eyes. "Suppose you were condemned to death and the next day I had to have my operation?"

I. What can be inferred about the narrator's attitude towards the general's situation?

II. "You cannot be arrested." What could be the reason for this?

- A. Harbours an American soldier
- B. He was a soldier
- C. He needed to treat the soldiers
- D. The General might need an operation

III. Describe the general's facial expression when discussing his situation.

IV. Dr. Sadao's feelings at this point would be of _____. (anxiety/relief)

OR

B. MR LAMB : I'm not fond of curtains. Shutting things out, shutting things in. I like the light and the darkness, and the windows open, to hear the wind.

DERRY : Yes. I like that. When it's raining, I like to hear it on the roof.

MR LAMB : So you're not lost, are you ? Not altogether? You do hear things. You listen.

I. The fact that Mr. Lamb is keeping windows open suggests that he is _____ to nature.

II. "So you're not lost, are you?" What is Mr. Lamb saying to Derry in this line?

III. Choose the correct option to complete the following statement.

Derry's feelings in this extract move from:

- A. bitterness → reluctance → friendliness
- B. shyness → reluctance → disappointment
- C. curiosity → nostalgia → disappointment
- D. curiosity → openness → eloquence

IV. What does this passage reveal about the life of Mr. Lamb?

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

1x6=6

A. *“Since you have been so nice to me all day long, as if I was a captain, I want to be nice to you, in return, as if I was a real captain — for I do not want you to be embarrassed at this Christmas season by a thief; but you can give back the money to the old man on the roadside, who has the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers. The rattrap is a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in this world’s rattrap if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself. “Written with friendship and high regard, Captain von Stahle.”*

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

The literal meaning conveyed by the line *“the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers”* is that the money pouch is a _____ (temptation/redemption)

II. Why did the peddler write with friendship and high regard?

1. He was deeply touched by the ironmaster’s and Edla’s kindness.
2. He wanted friendship with Edla and Ironmaster as they were wealthy and lived in a manor house.
3. He wanted to express gratitude for being treated with dignity, even though he was a poor, homeless man and a thief.
4. He had undergone a spiritual transformation because of Edla.
5. He felt true friendship and respect for Edla, who believed in him and gave him a second chance to reform.

Select the most suitable option.

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

III. What does the peddler’s gesture in the above extract mainly symbolize?

- A. His attempt to escape from the ironmaster’s house safely.
- B. His realization that kindness can bring out the goodness in a person.
- C. His fear of being handed over to the police.
- D. His plan to trick the ironmaster into believing he is a captain.

IV. The line from the extract that correctly captures the real essence of being a real captain as understood by the rattrap seller is ‘ _____ ’

V. What does the writer emphasise the peddler’s understanding of his situation by the terms *‘from a rat’* and *‘raised to captain’*?

VI. What might be the significance of setting the story’s events during Christmas? Justify your opinion.

OR

B. Film-making must have been and was so easy with a man like Subbu around and if ever there was a man who gave direction and definition to Gemini Studios during its golden years, it was Subbu. Subbu had a separate identity as a poet and though he was certainly capable of more complex and higher forms, he deliberately chose to address his poetry to the masses. His success in films overshadowed and dwarfed his literary achievements-or so his critics felt. He composed several truly original 'story poems' in folk refrain and diction and also wrote a sprawling novel Thillana Mohanambal with dozens of very deftly etched characters. He quite successfully recreated the mood and manner of the Devadasis of the early 20th century. He was an amazing actor-he never aspired to the lead roles-but whatever subsidiary role he played in any of the films, he performed better than the supposed main players. He had a genuine love for anyone he came across and his house was a permanent residence for dozens of near and far relations and acquaintances.

I. Why does the writer feel that Subbu gave 'direction and definition' to Gemini Studio?

II. Fill in the blank with a correct option from those given in the brackets, based on the information in the extract.

He also wrote a sprawling novel Thillana Mohanambal with dozens of very _____ (vaguely drawn/skilfully portrayed/ popular) characters

III. What might have been the most likely reason that Subbu satisfied himself and never aspired for lead roles though he was an amazing actor?

IV. Complete the following suitably.

The phrase from the extract that Subbu wrote for common people is _____.

V. What does the line "His success in films overshadowed his literary achievement" suggest about the person being described?

- A. He was equally famous for both writing and acting.
- B. His achievements in literature were greater than in films.
- C. His fame as a filmmaker was so great that people overlooked his literary talent.
- D. His critics appreciated his literary work more than his films.

VI. What role did Subbu play in the success of Gemini Studios during its golden years?

- 1. He managed the studio's finances efficiently
- 2. He was the creative force giving direction and definition to it
- 3. He acted in films produced by Gemini Studio.
- 4. He was a film critic for the studio
- 5. He was responsible for the marketing of its movies

Select the most suitable option.

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

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

5x2=10

- I. Gandhi makes it clear that money and finance are a secondary aspect of the struggle in Champaran. Comment on aspect that you think was most important for Gandhi. (Indigo)
- II. What does the reference to fishermen not harming whales and the man gathering salt looking at his hurt hands signify in the poem? (Keeping Quiet)
- III. Deduce why the act of M. Hamel writing "Viva La France!", on the blackboard, is considered symbolic. (The Last Lesson)
- IV. The people left in 'utter bafflement' after the English poet's speech. Mention two things the speaker could have kept in mind before addressing an audience to avoid such a reaction. Give your rationale for it. (Poets and Pancakes)
- V. What vicious circle are the bangle-makers trapped in? (Lost Spring)
- VI. Artists, singers and musicians have a different perception of beauty as compared to people who are in other professions. Comment. (A Thing of Beauty)

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

2x2=4

- I. Bama's innocence was lost when she came face to face with the ugly truth of racial discrimination. Do you think children who have a difficult childhood become even more resolute than children who have a comfortable one? (Memories of Childhood)
- II. Antarctica is unlike any other place on Earth. Justify the statement. (Journey to the end of the Earth)
- III. The Maharaja justified his actions based on the maxim: 'You may kill even a cow in self-defence,' so there would be no objection to killing tigers in self defence.' Do you think it is right to justify our actions in this way? Elaborate. (The Tiger King)

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

1x5=5

A. Gandhi said, "The real relief for them is to be free from fear." (Indigo)

Roosevelt knew when he said, "All we have to fear is fear itself." (Deep Water)

Analyse the status of share-croppers and plight of William Douglas in the light of the above statements.

OR

B. Both Aunt Jennifer and Sophie's mother represent women who live restricted lives shaped by their social and domestic circumstances. Compare and contrast their characters, bringing out how each deals with her situation.

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

1x5=5

A. Describe how the writer keeps the suspense of who Sam was, till the last line of the story. How does he do it? Substantiate with reference to the text.

OR

B. An anti-climactic ending is one which subverts the expectations of the readers. In the story 'The Tiger King', the ending has the same effect on the readers. Write in 120-150 words the instances which led to an anti-climactic ending for both the Tiger King and the story.