

SOLUTIONS

Senior Secondary School Examination 2026 (XII)

ENGLISH CORE (Subject Code- 301)

(PAPER CODE: 1/5/1)

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS:

Maximum Marks: 80

- The answers given below are suggestive. Any independent interpretation should be discussed with the HE before awarding marks.**
- No marks shall be deducted for exceeding the word-limit.**
- If a spelling error is recurring, it should be penalized only once.**

	SUGGESTED VALUE POINTS		
	SECTION A READING SKILLS	Steps	22 marks
	NOTE: The objective of the reading section is to focus on testing a candidate's ability to comprehend. No mark(s) should be deducted for mistakes in usage and grammar, spelling or word-limit. Full marks may be awarded if a student has been able to identify the core ideas. If a student literally lifts a portion of the given passage as an answer to a question, no mark(s) to be deducted for this, as long as it is relevant.		
1.	Answer the following questions, based on the above passage.		12 marks
i.	According to paragraph 1, what impact has robotics had on healthcare operations? Mention any two.		
Ans.	revolutionizing the way medical procedures are executed / patients are managed / hospital operations are streamlined / makes healthcare more precise, efficient, and accessible / enhances workflow efficiency / improves clinical outcomes (any two)	Step 1: 0.5 mark Step 2: 0.5 mark	1
ii.	What does the use of the phrase 'from surgical theatres to outpatient clinics' convey about the scope of robotics in healthcare? (Paragraph 1).		
Ans.	widespread or wide range of application or usage or function across various healthcare settings / extensive or varied use in healthcare / expanding role from surgical precision to hospital automation and personalized patient care	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	The phrase 'superior visualization, refined control and pinpoint accuracy' emphasizes the advanced capabilities of robotic systems in surgery. (Paragraph 2) Choose the correct response from the two options (A) or (B) to complete the following sentence.		

	This highlights that robotic-assisted surgery primarily enhances _____. (A) the mechanical speed of operations with minimal supervision. (B) the precision and safety of complex surgical procedures.		
Ans.	(B) the precision and safety of complex surgical procedures.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iv.	(iv) How does the writer emphasize the benefits of robotic-assisted surgery? (Paragraph 2) (A) highlights how robotics can replace surgeons in all types of procedures (B) shows how advanced systems improve accuracy and reduce patient trauma (C) suggests robotic surgeries are faster but less reliable than traditional ones (D) claims that robotics will eliminate the need for doctors in the future		
Ans.	(B) shows how advanced systems improve accuracy and reduce patient trauma	Step 1: 1 mark	1
v.	Complete the following suitably with one reason, with reference to paragraph 3. Today, rehabilitation therapy is a more individualized and effective process because _____.		
Ans.	Robotic exoskeletons and motion-guided therapy systems / robotics enable real time monitoring / adaptive treatment planning	Step 1: 1 mark	1
vi.	Complete the analogy with one word from paragraph 4. necessary : essential : : emergence : _____ (A) advent (B) automation (C) detection (D) intervention		
Ans.	(A) advent	Step 1: 1 mark	1
vii.	Support with evidence from paragraph 4, how robotics are being deployed to help maintain strict sanitation protocol.		
Ans.	- used in room disinfection - contactless - service delivery / food delivery / medicine delivery - reducing exposure risks by maintaining stringent hygiene protocol (any two)	Step 1: 1 mark Step 2: 1 mark	2
viii.	Why is there a need to develop assistive robots? (Paragraph 5)		
Ans.	- medication reminders - vital sign monitoring - provide social engagement - offer physical and emotional support - help combat loneliness / cognitive decline (any two)	Step 1: 1 mark Step 2: 1 mark	2

ix.	The integration of robotics into healthcare according to the given text is ironic because _____. (A) very few patients register for robotics-assisted therapy (B) the country is not equipped to provide robots in villages (C) it has resulted in an increase in human isolation (D) human interaction has been enhanced with the use of AI		
Ans.	(C) it has resulted in an increase in human isolation	Step 1: 1 mark	1
x.	Which of the following best explains why robotics is considered a catalyst for innovation in healthcare despite its challenges? (Para 7) (A) Robotics merges technological precision with patient-centred care, improving both efficiency and empathy in healthcare delivery. (B) It eliminates human involvement in healthcare, making systems fully automated and cost-effective. (C) Although robotics comprises emotional connection, it is not favoured in spite of being faster than traditional care. (D) The high cost and complexity of robotics are outweighed by its ability to make healthcare impersonal but scalable.		
Ans.	(A) Robotics merges technological precision with patient-centred care, improving both efficiency and empathy in healthcare delivery.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
Passage 2			
2.	Answer the following questions, based on the given passage.		10 marks
i.	Complete the following suitably: In the introduction, the author links deforestation with the global environment to highlight _____.		
Ans.	loss of biodiversity / climate change / irreversible consequences / harmful impact on indigenous tribes	Step 1: 1 mark	1
ii.	What would the following be classified as? These communities face not only the loss of their physical homes but also the erosion of their cultural identity. Select the appropriate response. (A) Primary purpose (B) Secondary objective (C) Method of analysis (D) Research outcome		
Ans.	(D) Research outcome	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	What does the phrase 'aligned with seasonal forest rhythms' suggest about the Arava's cultural practices and way of life? (Any two points) (Paragraph 2)		
Ans.	• ceremonial and cultural practices deeply connected with nature / seasonal cycles of nature	Step 1: 1 mark Step 2: 1 mark	2

	- lifestyle symbiotically tied / life is interdependent with their natural surroundings / nature - peaceful coexistence with nature / rainforest - reflects deep ecological integration - harmony between their culture and environment (any two)		
iv.	Paragraph 3 includes the words — ‘encroached’ and ‘impact’. Classify the following sentences as ‘encroached’ or ‘impact’. Sentence 1: Illegal logging operations, cattle ranching and agricultural expansion have been systematically clearing forest area. Sentence 2 : Plant species vital for medicine disappeared and waterways pollution compromised health.		
Ans.	Sentence 1 – encroached Sentence 2 – impact	Step 1: 1 mark	1
v.	Give two points to support how Arava’s diet and lifestyle reflects ecological integration.		
Ans.	Diet: consists of local forest sourced fruits, nuts, wild game and fresh water fish Lifestyle: their shelters are constructed from indigenous materials / sustainable resource management / ceremonial practices are aligned with nature or seasonal forest rhythms (any two – one from each aspect/part)	Step 1: 0.5 mark Step 2: 0.5 mark	1
vi.	Analyse how indigenous communities face both physical loss and erosion of cultural identities.		
Ans.	Physical Loss: encroachment of their ancestral lands / forced displacement / loss of physical homes / medicinal plants disappearing / traditional hunting grounds shrinking / pollution of waterways – compromising health and access to clean water Cultural Loss: destruction of sacred sites within the forests harms their spirituality / traditional knowledge becomes less relevant in deforested landscape / breakdown of community structures (any two – one at least from each aspect/part)	Step 1: 1 mark Step 2: 1 mark	2
vii.	Which statement most accurately captures the fundamental message conveyed by the passage? (A) Deforestation has contributed to changes in diet and health patterns among forest dwellers.		

	(B) Environmental degradation causes irreversible spiritual and economic damage to modern societies. (C) Indigenous tribes are impacted by deforestation, losing their environment, traditions, identity and culture. (D) The efforts to preserve forests must prioritize biodiversity over tribal welfare.		
Ans.	(C) Indigenous tribes are impacted by deforestation, losing their environment, traditions, identity and culture.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
viii.	According to the given table, which two social or cultural impacts of deforestation are rated as most severe? (A) forced displacement and increased poverty (B) destruction of sacred sites and cultural erosion (C) breakdown of community structure and heightened conflict (D) vulnerability to diseases and loss of identity		
Ans.	(A) forced displacement and increased poverty	Step 1: 1 mark	1
	SECTION B CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS		18 marks
	OBJECTIVES: - To test the ability to think logically and express clearly. - To use a style appropriate to the given situation. - To plan, organize and present ideas coherently.		
3.	Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in about 50 words :		1x4=4 marks
	Distribution of marks Format-1 Content – 2 Expression– 1 FORMAT- Name of issuing authority- organization / agency, NOTICE, heading, date of issue, signature, name, designation (bottom left), all enclosed in a box - No mark for Format if Content is irrelevant or missing. - Full credit of 1 mark if all aspects are mentioned. - Partial credit of ½ mark if any of the aspects is missing. EXPRESSION- grammar, spelling, punctuation, organisation and coherence of ideas		
	NOTICE WRITING		
(a)	Your school is planning to conduct an inter-class panel discussion on the topic ‘Ethical Use of Social Media’ to sensitise students about responsible online behaviour. You are Pragya/Paras, the head of the Organising Committee of Green View Public School. Write a notice to inform students and also invite registrations from classes XI and XII. Include all necessary details. Put your notice in a box.		

Ans.	Suggested value points: • name of the event • date, time, venue, purpose • number of students to register • target classes • invite registrations • deadline for registration • contact information (inputs given in the question may be included) (any other relevant point)	Step 1: Format-1 mark Step 2: Content-2 marks Step 3: Expression- 1 mark	4
	OR		
(b)	Your school is celebrating ‘Wellness Week’ to promote healthy lifestyles. As the Cultural Secretary of Little Valley School, write a notice for the school bulletin board to inform students of classes IX to XII about a poster-making competition on the theme ‘My Mental Health, My Priority’. Include other necessary details. You are Mahima/Manish. Put your notice in a box.		
Ans.	Suggested value points: • name of the event • date, time, venue, purpose • other details – theme, part of ‘Wellness Week’, etc. • invite participation • target classes • deadline for registrations • contact information (inputs given in the question may be included) (any other relevant point)	Step 1: Format-1 mark Step 2: Content-2 marks Step 3: Expression- 1 mark	4
4.	Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in about 50 words.		1x4=4 marks
	Distribution of marks Format-1 Content – 2 Expression– 1 • No mark for Format if Content is irrelevant or missing. • Full credit of 1 mark if all aspects are mentioned. • Partial credit of ½ mark if any of the aspects is missing. EXPRESSION- grammar, spelling, punctuation, organisation and coherence of ideas		
	INVITATION LETTER (INFORMAL)		
(a)	You are Sonali/Sohum of Kalka Apartments, Jeevgarh. Your housing society is organising a Folk Dance Festival. It will showcase India’s vibrant folk heritage through group and solo performances. Draft an informal invitation letter inviting your friend to the event. Include all necessary details.		
Ans.	Format: Informal letter: Sender’s address, Date, Salutation, Complimentary Close, Sign/Name Suggested value points:	Step 1: Format-1 mark	4

	- name of the event and theme - date, time and venue - informal and friendly tone (inputs given in the question may be included) (any other relevant point)	Step 2: Content-2 marks Step 3: Expression- 1 mark	
	OR		
	INFORMAL REPLY		
(b)	You are Aarti/Aarav of 132, Shivaji Nagar, Meetnagar. Your friends have invited you to watch a live cricket match on 27th November, 2025 at the Naoroji Stadium. Unfortunately you have already agreed to volunteer on the same day at a community clean-up drive. Write an informal letter regretting your inability to accept the invitation.		
Ans.	Format: Informal letter: Sender's address, Date, Salutation, Complimentary Close, Sign/Name Suggested value points: - express thanks / acknowledge the invitation with the name of the event, date, time, venue - decline invitation with reason - best wishes - informal and friendly tone (inputs given in the question may be included) (any other relevant point)	Step 1: Format-1 mark Step 2: Content-2 marks Step 3: Expression- 1 mark	4
5.	Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in 120 - 150 words.		1x5=5 marks
	Distribution of marks: Formal Letter Format-1 Content – 2 Expression– 2 FORMAT –Sender's address, Date, Receiver's address, Subject and Salutation/ Salutation and Subject, Complimentary Close, Sign/Name - No mark for Format if Content is irrelevant or missing. - Full credit of 1 mark if all aspects are mentioned. - Partial credit of ½ mark if any of the aspects is missing. EXPRESSION - grammar, spelling, punctuation, organisation and coherence of ideas		
	LETTER TO EDITOR		
(a)	Plastic pollution has become a serious environmental hazard across the country. Write a letter to the editor of a national daily, expressing concern about the rising plastic pollution and suggesting effective measures to control it. You may use the cues given below along with your own ideas. You are Riya Verma/Raju Verma of 56 Nehru Nagar, Nazarshahar. – excessive use of single-use plastics		

	– chokes drainage systems – lack of public awareness – improper garbage disposal and waste management – need for eco-friendly alternatives – role of schools, media and civic bodies		
Ans.	Suggested value points: Problem: excessive use of single-use plastics / lack of recycling / weak enforcement of bans / lack of public awareness / improper garbage disposal and waste management / chokes drainage systems Solutions: promote cloth/jute bags and biodegradable options / need for eco-friendly alternatives / proper segregation of garbage / run awareness campaigns through schools and media / enforce strict penalties for illegal plastic use / support community-level clean-up initiatives. (inputs given in the question may be included) (any other relevant point) (any four points with at least one from both parts)	Step 1: Format-1 mark Step 2: Content-2 marks Step 3: Expression- 2 marks	5
	OR		
	JOB APPLICATION		
(b)	You are Kavya/Mehul from Lakeview Apartments, Jheelpur. You come across the following advertisement for the job of a graphic designer at PixelCraft Studios, a creative designing firm and wish to apply for the post advertised. Write your application along with your bio-data. PixelCraft Studios Invites Applications for Graphic Designer Job Responsibilities : – Create visual Content for digital campaigns, websites and branding – Collaborate with marketing team on design concepts – Ensure design consistency and creativity Qualification : – Degree/Diploma in Graphic Design or Fine Arts – 2 – 4 years experience in a creative agency preferred Skills Required : – Proficiency in Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign) Apply within 10 days to the Creative Director PixelCraft Studios 14, Green Park, Jheelpur		

Ans.	Cover letter: - reference to the advertisement - suitability for the post - offer candidature Bio-Data/ Resume / CV: - personal details - qualifications - experience - skills / hobbies / achievements - references Note- no marks to be deducted if the Bio-data/ Resume/ CV is included in the covering letter (inputs given in the question may be included)	Step 1: Format-1 mark Step 2: Content-2 marks Step 3: Expression- 2 marks	5
6.	Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in 120 - 150 words.		1x5=5 marks
	Distribution of marks: Format-1 Content – 2 Expression- 2 FORMAT-1 - Title and by-line - No mark for Format if Content is irrelevant or missing. - Partial credit of ½ mark if any of the aspects is missing. EXPRESSION- grammar, spelling, punctuation, organisation and coherence of ideas		
	ARTICLE WRITING		
(a)	India is facing an increasing water crisis due to overuse, pollution and poor conservation policies. Water scarcity is becoming a serious concern. Write an article for ‘Nature’ Magazine on the need to conserve water and promote sustainable practices. You are Devina/ Dev. You may use the cues given below along with your own ideas. – why is water conservation important? – causes of water scarcity – effective water-saving methods – how can individuals, communities and government help solve the problem?		
Ans.	Suggested value points: - importance of water conservation – without it life is not possible - causes of water scarcity - over extraction / wastage / poor planning - effective water-saving methods - rainwater harvesting / fixing leaks promptly / no water wastage / use water judiciously - role of individuals, communities and government - awareness campaigns in schools, colleges and neighbourhoods / strict laws	Step 1: Format-1 mark Step 2: Content-2 marks	5

	and punishment for polluting rivers and lakes / community-level water conservation drives (inputs given in the question may be included) (any other relevant point) (any four points)	Step 3: Expression- 2 marks	
	OR		
	REPORT WRITING		
(b)	You are Mansi/Manas of Class XII C, student reporter of your school magazine. Your school recently organized an inter-school science exhibition in the school auditorium. Write a comprehensive report on the event including details of the theme, participation, exhibits and the outcome of the event. You may organise your report by using the following cues. Who – What – When – Where – Why – How		
Ans.	Suggested value points: • What – name and theme of exhibition • When – day, date, time, • Where – venue of event • Why – purpose of the exhibition • Who – chief guest, judges, invitees, number of schools/students participating • How – important guests / details of participants/ description of innovative exhibits / judgement criteria, winners, prizes / overall response from students, teachers and visitors ☐ (inputs given in the question may be included) ☐ (any other relevant point)	Step 1: Format-1 mark Step 2: Content-2 marks Step 3: Expression- 2 marks	5
	SECTION C-LITERATURE		40 marks
	NOTE: The objective of this section is to test a candidate's ability to understand and interpret the prescribed text through short and long answer type questions. Long answer type questions have been set to test the students' understanding of the text and their ability to interpret, evaluate and respond to the issues raised therein. Hence, no particular answer can be accepted as the only correct answer. All presentations may be accepted as correct with consultation of the HE, if they have been duly supported by the facts drawn from the text. The student should be able to justify his / her viewpoint. In the Inter-textual questions reference to both the texts must be included.		
7.	Read the following extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the given two, (a) or (b) :		1x6=6 marks
(a)	Driving from my parent's home to Cochin last Friday morning, I saw my mother, beside me,		

	doze, open mouthed, her face ashen like that of a corpse and realized with pain that she was as old as she looked ... (My Mother at Sixty-six)		
i.	What underlying concern does the poet have while recalling the memory of the drive with her mother? (A) A reflection on the irreversible passage of time and looming mortality (B) A moment of nostalgia for shared childhood memories (C) A comparative portrayal of mother as youthful and old (D) A symbolic reference to the generational divide between them		
Ans.	(A) A reflection on the irreversible passage of time and looming mortality.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
ii.	What does the phrase 'ashen like that of a corpse' suggest about the mother's frailty?		
Ans.	approaching death / sign of ageing / dull and pale / weakness	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	Complete the following suitably: The image of the mother like 'a corpse' and the subsequent realisation symbolizes _____.		
Ans.	approaching death / mortality of life / transience of life / inevitability of death	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iv.	Select the correct option from those given in brackets, to fill in the blank. The speaker's use of the word 'doze' suggests that the mother was _____. (pained/exhausted)		
Ans.	exhausted	Step 1: 1 mark	1
v.	Why has the poet placed the word 'pain' in a separate line?		
Ans.	to highlight or emphasise the speaker's emotion / emphasise the difficulty in accepting mother's approaching death (any other relevant point)	Step 1: 1 mark	1
vi.	Read the assertion and the reason below, with reference to the given extract. Choose the correct interpretation of the following. Assertion : The poet attempts to mentally shield herself from her mother's physical decline. Reason : She is emotionally unprepared to confront the inescapable reality of her mother's ageing. Choose the correct option: (A) The assertion is supported but the reason is ambiguous.		

	(B) The assertion lacks clarity, while the reason is clearly expressed. (C) Both the assertion and the reason are strongly implied in the text. (D) Neither the assertion nor the reason can be supported by the text.		
Ans.	(C) Both the assertion and the reason are strongly implied in the text.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
	OR		
(b)	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: yes, in spite of all, Some shape of beauty moves away the pall From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon, Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon (A Thing of Beauty)		
i.	Select the option that does <i>not</i> agree with the ideas as conveyed in the above given extract: (A) Beauty in nature offers comfort during times of despair. (B) Even in a world of sorrow, beautiful things continue to heal us. (C) The poet suggests that man-made inventions promote the Earth's natural beauty. (D) Natural elements like the sun, moon and trees are our sources of hope.		
Ans.	(C) The poet suggests that man-made inventions promote the Earth's natural beauty.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
ii.	Complete the following suitable: In the line, 'of the inhuman dearth of noble natures', the phrase 'dearth of' refers to _____.		
Ans.	lack of / scarcity of / shortage of / less of	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	Select the phrase that suggests the following: despite our feelings of sadness and depression		
Ans.	Spite of despondence	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iv.	Choose the correct option and fill in the blank. The tone of the poet in the above extract is _____. (ironic and cynical/reflective and reassuring)		
Ans.	reflective and reassuring	Step 1: 1 mark	1

v.	In the context of the poem, the word ‘pall’ most closely means: (A) a dense fog that obscures light. (B) a metaphorical shroud symbolizing grief. (C) an ornamental veil signifying delight. (D) a supernatural entity haunting humans.		
Ans.	(B) a metaphorical shroud symbolizing grief.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
vi.	Based on the given extract, state in one sentence, your views on the simple joys of beauty.		
Ans.	beauty has the power to remove darkness and negativity / has healing or soothing power / helps one cope with troubles of life (any other relevant word or phrase)	Step 1: 1 mark	1
8.	Read the following extracts and answer ANY ONE of the given two, (a) or (b):		1x4=4 marks
(a)	The corridor I was in began angling left and slanting downward and I thought that was wrong, but I kept on walking. All I could hear was the empty sound of my own footsteps and I didn’t pass a soul. Then I heard that sort of hollow roar ahead that means open space and people talking. The tunnel turned sharp left; I went down a short flight of stairs and came out on the third level at Grand Central Station. For just a moment I thought I was back on the second level, but I saw the room was smaller, there were fewer ticket windows and train gates, and the information booth in the centre was wood and old-looking. And the man in the booth wore a green eyeshade and long black sleeve protectors. (The Third Level)		
i.	What initially made the narrator uncertain about the corridor he was walking through? (A) The corridor changed direction unexpectedly. (B) Dim lights and strange signs. (C) The walls echoed with unfamiliar voices. (D) The floor felt uneven and unstable underfoot.		
Ans.	(A) The corridor changed direction unexpectedly.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
ii.	The ‘hollow roar’ that the narrator heard signifies _____.		
Ans.	open spaces and people talking	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	Complete the sentence: The narrator’s realization that he was not on the second level was triggered by _____.		
Ans.	the smaller room / fewer ticket windows and train gates / the information booth was made out of wood and old looking / the man	Step 1: 1 mark	1

	in the booth wore a green eyeshade and long black sleeve protectors or was dressed differently		
iv.	Read the assertion and the reason below, with reference to the given extract. Assertion : The narrator got confused about his location in the Grand Central Station. Reason : The third level of the Grand Central Station was smaller than the second level. Choose the correct option: (A) Both the assertion and the reason are true and the reason is the correct explanation of the assertion. (B) Both the assertion and the reason are true, but the reason is <i>not</i> the correct explanation of the assertion. (C) The assertion is true, but the reason is false. (D) The assertion is false, but the reason is true.		
Ans.	(A) Both the assertion and the reason are true and the reason is the correct explanation of the assertion.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
OR			
(b)	My Antarctic experience was full of such epiphanies, but the best occurred just short of the Antarctic Circle at 65.55 degrees south. The <i>Shokalskiy</i> had managed to wedge herself into a thick white stretch of ice between the peninsula and Tadpole Island which was preventing us from going any further. The Captain decided we were going to turn around and head back north, but before we did, we were all instructed to climb down the gangplank and walk on the ocean. So there we were, all 52 of us, kitted out in Gore-Tex and glares, walking on a stark whiteness that seemed to spread out forever. Underneath our feet was a metre-thick ice pack, and underneath that, 180 metres of living, breathing salt water. In the periphery Crabeater seals were stretching and sunning themselves on ice floes much like stray dogs will do under the shade of a banyan tree. It was nothing short of a revelation: everything does indeed connect. (Journey to the end of the Earth)		
i.	The author describes the moment near the Antarctic Circle as the best of epiphanies because _____.		
Ans.	of sudden realisation / revelation that everything does indeed connect / she felt a strong communion in all that is present on Earth	Step 1: 1 mark	1
ii.	The author's experience of walking on the frozen ocean revealed _____.		

Ans.	that it seemed to spread out forever / the contrast between static ice and the dynamic ocean life / the idea that nature remains active even in extreme conditions / the expanse of Antarctica	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	Support with evidence from the given extract, the Captain's decision to walk on the ocean.		
Ans.	instructed to climb down the gangplank and walk on the ocean as their ship was stuck	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iv.	Which of the following is <i>not</i> a plausible interpretation of the phrase 'living, breathing' used to describe the water beneath the ice? (A) It evokes a sense of continuous motion and vitality under the frozen surface. (B) The phrase highlights the contrast between static ice and the dynamic ocean life. (C) It implies that the ocean lies dormant and lifeless during the winter months. (D) The words convey the idea that nature remains active even in extreme conditions.		
Ans.	(C) It implies that the ocean lies dormant and lifeless during the winter months.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
9.	Read the following extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the given two, (a) or (b):		1x6=6 marks
(a)	Sophie watched her back stooped over the sink and wondered at the incongruity of the delicate bow which fastened her apron strings. The delicate-seeming bow and the crooked back. The evening had already blacked in the windows and the small room was steamy from the stove and cluttered with the heavy-breathing man in his vest at the table and the dirty washing piled up in the corner. Sophie felt a tightening in her throat. She went to look for her brother Geoff. He was kneeling on the floor in the next room tinkering with a part of his motorcycle over some newspaper spread on the carpet. He was three years out of school, an apprentice mechanic, travelling to his work each day to the far side of the city. He was almost grown up now, and she suspected areas of his life about which she knew nothing, about which he never spoke. (Going Places)		
i.	Complete the following suitably: The phrase 'the incongruity of the delicate bow ... and the crooked back' of Sophie's mother conveys _____.		
Ans.	contrast or difference between the beautiful bow and crooked back / delicacy of the bow and the harshness of life / refined elegance or	Step 1: 1 mark	1

	sophistication and harsh reality or heavy burden of manual life / gap between appearance and reality (any other relevant point)		
ii.	Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank. The description of Sophie's 'mother's back' in the extract expresses Sophie's _____ (conflicted/confident) state of mind.		
Ans.	conflicted	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	What role does the man in the vest play in enhancing the tone of the passage? (A) he brings a sense of peace to the setting. (B) he deepens the oppressive atmosphere. (C) he reinforces the narrator's emotional connection. (D) he introduces a moment of comic relief.		
Ans.	(B) he deepens the oppressive atmosphere.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iv.	What is the most plausible interpretation of Sophie's physical reaction of 'a tightening in her throat'? (A) a desire to express something, restrained by uncertainty (B) apprehension about her upcoming encounter with Geoff (C) a surge of inner turmoil triggered by her surroundings (D) a symptom indicating that she may be unwell		
Ans.	(C) a surge of inner turmoil triggered by her surroundings	Step 1: 1 mark	1
v.	Why does Sophie decide to go look for Geoff ?		
Ans.	to escape the oppressive atmosphere / to search for relief / felt comfortable with her brother / he was the only one who listened to her	Step 1: 1 mark	1
vi.	What is Sophie's perception of Geoff's nature ?		
Ans.	introvert / quiet person / he spoke less / reserved / secretive / a good listener / mysterious	Step 1: 1 mark	1
	OR		
(b)	Mukund: The English novelist and academic David Lodge once remarked, "I can't understand how one man can do all the things he [Eco] does." Umberto Eco: Maybe I give the impression of doing many things. But in the end, I am convinced I am always doing the same thing. Mukund: Which is? Umberto Eco: Aah, now that is more difficult to explain. I have some philosophical interests and I pursue them through my academic work and my novels. Even my books for children are about non-violence and peace... you see, the same bunch of ethical, philosophical interests.		

	And then I have a secret. Did you know what would happen if you eliminate the empty spaces from the universe, eliminate the empty spaces in all the atoms? The universe will become as big as my fist. Similarly, we have a lot of empty spaces in our lives. I call them interstices. Say you are coming over to my place. You are in an elevator and while you are coming up, I am waiting for you. This is an interstice, an empty space. I work in empty spaces. While waiting for your elevator to come up from the first to the third floor, I have already written an article! <i>(Laughs)</i> (The Interview)		
i.	What does Umberto Eco mean when he says, “Maybe I give the impression of doing many things”? (A) work appears diverse but has the same core interests (B) multitasks constantly to prove his worth (C) hides his real work behind his many hobbies (D) doesn’t enjoy working on too many things		
Ans.	(A) work appears diverse but has same core interests	Step 1: 1 mark	1
ii.	Complete the following suitably: When Eco says that he is always doing the same thing he means _____.		
Ans.	same core interests / works on similar themes / uses similar ethical and philosophical ideas in all genres	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iii.	Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank. Eco’s secret to being productive, as implied in the passage is (delegating tasks/managing time).		
Ans.	managing time	Step 1: 1 mark	1
iv.	What does the following line in the extract showcase about Eco’s nature? ‘Even my books for children are about non-violence and peace.’ (A) bored (B) insolent (C) ethical (D) playful		
Ans.	(C) ethical	Step 1: 1 mark	1
v.	Read the assertion and the reason below, with reference to the given extract. Assertion : While waiting for the elevator, Eco has already written an article. Reason : He pursues his philosophical interests through his work. Choose the correct option :		

	(A) Both the assertion and the reason are true and the reason is the correct explanation of the assertion. (B) Both the assertion and the reason are true, but the reason is not the correct explanation of the assertion. (C) The assertion is true, but the reason is false. (D) The assertion is false, but the reason is true.		
Ans.	(B) Both the assertion and the reason are true but the reason is not the correct explanation of the assertion.	Step 1: 1 mark	1
vi.	Complete the following sentence suitably. Eco's tone in the statement: 'I have already written an article!'' is _____. (A) sympathetic (B) cynical (C) humorous (D) pensive		
Ans.	(C) humorous	Step 1: 1 mark	1
10.	Answer ANY FIVE of the following six questions in 40 - 50 words each:		5x2=10 marks
	Distribution of marks: Content – 1 Expression– 1		
i.	'We've all a great deal to reproach ourselves with.' What does M. Hamel's statement reveal about his emotional turmoil following the ban on French, in 'The Last Lesson' ?		
Ans.	- blames everyone for taking the language for granted / neglecting the French language and education - holds everyone (the parents, the villagers and himself) in the community accountable for procrastinating learning - blames everyone for missed opportunity (any one)	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression-1 mark	2
ii.	Anees Jung through the title 'Lost Spring' symbolises the plight of the marginalised children. Justify.		
Ans.	- highlights the life of poor children who are denied basic rights like education - forced into child labour - forced to work as ragpickers and bangle-makers / loss of childhood and dreams (any one)	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression-1 mark	2
iii.	Why do you think that Edla's kindness had a stronger effect on the peddler than the ironmaster's hospitality in 'The Rattrap' ?		
Ans.	- Edla's compassion was genuine / unconditional. - her kindness transformed the peddler / peddler returns the money he had stolen earlier - the ironmaster's kindness and hospitality was based on a mistaken identity / conditional / wanted to send him away when the truth came out	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression-1 mark	2

	(any one)		
iv.	Despite criticism, why does the author suggest that interviews remain important in journalism? (The Interview)		
Ans.	offer insights into a person's thoughts, motivations and character traits / give most vivid impressions of people through interviews / a vital method to gain first-hand information / source of truth / a serviceable medium of communication	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression- 1 mark	2
v.	Why did the visit of the English poet lead to confusion among the staff at Gemini Studios? (Poets and Pancakes)		
Ans.	no knowledge of his background / no one knew his purpose of visit / strong accent which they could not understand / speech was full of literary references which were of no interest to the Gemini staff / speech was too long and lacked context	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression- 1 mark	2
vi.	How does the poet use the phrase 'polished traffic' to highlight the contrast between urban and rural life in the poem 'A Roadside Stand'?		
Ans.	- urban prosperity – rural poverty - wealthy / materialistic urban dwellers – needy and poor rural folk - money being used to maintain the flower of cities - injustice and neglect faced by the rural people - apathy for the village folk – aspiration of village folk to have a better life (any one point of contrast)	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression- 1 mark	2
11.	Answer ANY TWO of the following three questions in 40 - 50 words each.		2x2=4 marks
	Distribution of marks:- Content – 1 Expression– 1		
i.	The Tiger King's royal power is both his strength and his greatest weakness. Discuss. (The Tiger King)		
Ans.	Power as Tiger King's strength: - his power allowed him to do as he pleased - launched a massive tiger-hunting campaign - passed orders imposing a ban according to his will - imposed and exempted land taxes - nobody in the kingdom could defy him Power as Tiger King's weakness: - power blinds him to reason, making him arrogant - causes his downfall - he thinks he can defy fate or destiny	Step 1: Content-0.5 mark Step 2: Content-0.5 mark Step 3: Expression- 1 mark	2

	(any two – at least one from each)		
ii.	What prompted Sadao to put the unfinished report into the secret drawer of his desk? (The Enemy)		
Ans.	- was not sure whether to hand over the prisoner of war or enemy to the police - was not sure about the reaction of the old General - was afraid that he may be seen as a traitor for saving the enemy / afraid of being arrested (any one)	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression-1 mark	2
iii.	‘Because if I don’t go there, I’ll never go anywhere else in this world again.’ What does the statement reveal about Derry’s transformation? (On The Face Of It)		
Ans.	- marks Derry’s awakening / coming out of his shell / taking first step towards reclaiming his independence or his individuality - shows his resolve to break free from his self-pity and isolation - decides to move on from his inhibition or obsession with his burnt face (any one)	Step 1: Content-1 mark Step 2: Expression-1 mark	2
12.	Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions in 120-150 words.		1x5=5 marks
	Distribution of marks: - Content – 3 Expression– 2 EXPRESSION- grammar, spelling, punctuation, organisation and coherence of ideas		
(a)	‘Deep Water’ by William Douglas and ‘Keeping Quiet’ by Pablo Neruda represent a state of introspection that leads to growth, understanding and liberation. Discuss.		
Ans.	Both highlight looking inward / lead to a more enlightened / better state of being / life / introspection is essential for growth. - Douglas realises – that the only thing to fear is fear itself – leads to conquering his fear / in death there is peace - Keeping Quiet – introspection helps us realise we are hurting ourselves as well as nature – leads to a more peaceful / harmonious life / world (any other relevant point) (three points with at least one from each text)	Step 1: Content-3 marks Step 2: Expression-2 marks	5
	OR		
(b)	Aunt Jennifer from Adrienne Rich’s poem ‘Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers’ and Gandhi from ‘Indigo’ struggle against oppression to fight for freedom, even though the contexts are different. Discuss.		
Ans.	Aunt Jennifer: oppressed by husband/ patriarchal society while Gandhi was fighting for peasants oppressed by British landlords	Step 1: Content-3 marks	5

	- Aunt was alone in her struggle and suffered silently while Gandhi's fight became a mass movement where peasants and lawyers united for the cause - Aunt used art to vent out her feelings while Gandhi used civil disobedience to seek justice - Gandhi won by getting 25% compensation for the peasants – thus empowering them, making them self-reliant but Aunt will remain mastered by her ordeals even after her death (any other relevant point) (three points showing contrast between the two characters)	Step 2: Expression- 2 marks	
13.	Answer any one of the following two questions in 120-150 words.		1x5=5
	Distribution of marks:- Content – 3 Expression– 2 EXPRESSION- grammar, spelling, punctuation, organisation and coherence of ideas		
(a)	Derry's journey reflects an intense personal challenge that he overcomes through courage and determination. Elaborate. (On The Face Of It)		
Ans.	Derry's challenge: - not just a physical scar but the mental wall of self-pity / self-loathing and isolation he created to protect himself from the insensitive / cruel world Shows courage and determination: - talking to Mr. Lamb makes him gather courage and face his deep insecurities - starts seeing himself as a 'whole person', not just a burnt face / overcomes his obsession with his burnt face - realises his potential and returns to garden / asserts his independence / ready to face the world - determined to live on his own terms - no longer cares what others say but focuses on what he wants, thinks, feels (any other relevant point) (any three points with one point from 'challenge' and any two points from 'overcoming the challenge')	Step 1: Content-3 marks Step 2: Expression- 2 marks	5
	OR		
(b)	'... and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit.' This episode highlighted the indignity meted out to Zitkala-Sa. Support your answer with evidence from the text. (Memories of Childhood)		

Ans.	- discriminated against as she was a native American / the school tried to suppress / destroy her cultural identity - dragged out and tied in a chair / treated like an animal / tossed about like a wooden puppet - forced cutting of her hair - cried aloud but no one cared / everybody stared at her without sympathy / she was left alone traumatised - her humiliation was not just physical but psychological (any other relevant point) (any three)	Step 1: Content-3 marks Step 2: Expression- 2 marks	5
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