

MAH AAC CET Design & Composition

Sample Paper – 10 | 2026

Duration: 90 Minutes | Maximum Marks: 50

Instructions

- This paper contains **1 practical question** modelled on the MAH AAC CET Design & Composition pattern.
- Total marks: **50**. There is **no negative marking**.
- Render the design in **POSTER COLOUR** or **WATERCOLOUR** on a drawing sheet of approximately **14" × 19"** (portrait orientation recommended).
- Use a pencil for the initial layout; **pencil lines must not be visible** in the final submission.
- All lettering on the cover must be done **freehand**. Stencils and printed lettering are **strictly not permitted**.
- Write your **seat number and name** clearly on the front of the sheet before beginning work.
- **Mobile phones, calculators, and all electronic gadgets** are strictly prohibited in the examination hall.

Design & Composition Question



Question (50 Marks):

Design a **POSTER** for an environmental awareness campaign titled “*Jal Bachao — Save Our Rivers*” launched by a fictional NGO called *Prakriti Foundation*. The poster must be designed on a 14” × 19” sheet in **portrait orientation** and must include all of the following:

- (i) The **CAMPAIGN HEADLINE** — “*Jal Bachao*” (in Hindi/Devanagari-inspired lettering, OR in bold Roman script) as the single most dominant text element on the poster. Directly below it, the English translation “*Save Our Rivers*” in a complementary, slightly smaller style. Together, the two lines must immediately communicate urgency and care.
- (ii) A **CENTRAL VISUAL METAPHOR** — a hand-rendered illustration that powerfully communicates the message of river conservation. Choose **ONE** of the following approaches:
 - A **SPLIT COMPOSITION**: the left half shows a clean, flowing river with forested banks (greens, clear blues, fish visible) and the right half shows the same river polluted (grey-brown water, industrial pipes, plastic waste) — the contrast communicates the before/after message;
 - A **WATER-DROPLET MOTIF**: a large tear-drop or water-drop shape occupies the central zone; inside the drop, a detailed miniature landscape of a healthy river ecosystem (mountains, trees, fish, birds) is visible, while outside the drop, dry or cracked earth or industrial grey is suggested;
 - A **RIVER FLOWING INTO A HAND**: the river flows from mountains in the upper portion of the poster into two cupped hands in the lower portion — implying that rivers depend on human protection.

The illustration must occupy the largest single zone of the poster and must be rendered with care, colour, and visual power.

- (iii) A **CALL TO ACTION** or awareness message — a short statement at the bottom (e.g. “*Every drop matters. Act now.*” or “*Polluted rivers cannot be undone. Protect them today.*”) in a legible, impactful typographic style.
- (iv) The **NGO NAME** *Prakriti Foundation* placed at the very bottom of the poster in a clean, professional typeface, with a small decorative leaf or water-drop motif alongside it.

Maintain a clear **VISUAL HIERARCHY**: headline → illustration → call to action → NGO name. Choose a colour palette that conveys both environmental concern and emotional urgency — consider using sky blue, river blue, and forest green for the “clean” half or zone, contrasted against industrial grey, murky brown, or sepia for the “polluted” imagery; use an earthy warm accent (terracotta, amber) sparingly for the headline lettering.



Suggested Composition Layout (Thumbnail)

The thumbnail below suggests one possible arrangement. Candidates are encouraged to develop their own original composition.



Thumbnail: Awareness Poster — Jal Bachao — Split Composition

Evaluation Rubric (50 Marks)

Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptors	Marks
Headline Typography	<i>Jal Bachao</i> headline is dominant, urgent, and legible; <i>Save Our Rivers</i> subtitle is complementary and well-proportioned; NGO name is placed clearly and professionally	12
Central Visual Metaphor	Illustration powerfully communicates the conservation message; chosen approach (split composition, water-drop motif, or river-into-hands) is rendered with care in colour, detail, and emotional impact; the visual metaphor is immediately understood without explanation	12
Visual Hierarchy & Composition	Clear reading order (headline → illustration → call-to-action → NGO name); each element occupies a distinct zone; poster conveys its message at a glance, as effective social-cause communication requires	10
Colour & Emotional Impact	Palette conveys both environmental richness and urgency; contrast between “clean” and “polluted” (or healthy and threatened) zones is visually striking; accent colour on headline anchors the composition	8
Technical Execution	Clean, confident colour application; no visible pencil guidelines; neat edges; lettering is entirely freehand; sheet correctly labelled with name and seat number	8
Total		50

Preparation Guidance

- **Choosing a visual metaphor:** all three approaches (split composition, water-drop motif, river-into-hands) communicate the same message with different demands. The split com-



position is the most time-efficient and unambiguous in 90 minutes — it avoids complex silhouette masking and allows you to develop both the clean and polluted halves in parallel. Choose the water-drop or hands motif only if you are confident in your silhouette control.

- **Lettering strategy:** *Jal Bachao* must be the biggest, most visually dominant element on the poster. Scale it to at least one-fifth the total poster height. If using Devanagari-inspired forms, practise the horizontal headline stroke (*shirorekha*) and the simplified vowel marks before the exam. If using bold Roman lettering, consider block capitals with a single terracotta or amber fill — no outlines needed if the fill is bold enough.
- **Colour psychology:** cool blue and forest green communicate life, freshness, and ecological health — reserve these for the clean half or the inside of the water-drop. Grey, muddy brown, and sepia communicate pollution and threat — use these in the industrial half or the surrounding dry landscape. A warm accent (terracotta or amber) on the headline creates urgency without overheating the composition.
- **Rendering the split composition:** decide how the dividing line is treated before you start painting. A hard vertical edge is the simplest and most graphic option. A slight diagonal (clean on the upper left, polluted on the lower right) adds dynamism. A gradual blur or blended transition is striking but risky under time pressure — avoid it unless you are comfortable with wet-on-wet technique.
- **Avoiding common errors:** do not over-detail the illustration at the cost of the headline lettering. Examiners read the poster from a distance first — if the headline is weak, no amount of illustration detail rescues the score. Also avoid making both halves the same colour temperature: if both the clean and polluted sides are painted in similar tonal ranges, the contrast message disappears entirely.
- **Background and sky treatment:** keep the sky zones in both halves simple and relatively flat so the headline bar reads cleanly against them. A pale blue wash on the left and a warm grey wash on the right are sufficient — avoid texturing these zones heavily.
- **Time management:** approximately 10 min for thumbnail sketches, 10 min for pencil layout on the final sheet, 15 min for headline and subtitle lettering, 40 min for the central illustration (both halves plus detail and colour), and 15 min for the call-to-action zone, NGO name, leaf motif, and the outer border.

