CBSE Class 10 Carnatic Music Percussion 2026-27

Sample Paper with Solutions

Conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)

Time Allowed: 2 hours **Maximum Marks: 30**

General Instructions

(i) **Section A:** Attempt all questions. Each question carries **1 mark**.

(ii) **Section B:** Attempt all questions. Each question carries **2 marks**.

(iii) **Section C:** Attempt all questions. Each question carries **6 marks**.

(iv) There is internal choice (OR) in Sections B and C.

(v) There is no change in the Question Paper Design and Assessment Pattern for Academic Session 2026-27.

Section A (8 marks)

Questions 1 to 8 carry 1 mark each.

1. Identify the structure of Triputa tala [1 mark]

(A) Drutam and Laghu

(B) Laghu, Dhrutam and Dhrutam

(C) Laghu, Laghu Dhrutam, and Dhrutam

(D) Only Laghu

Correct Answer: (B) Laghu, Dhrutam and Dhrutam

Solution:

Concept:

- A tala is built from small units called angas. The three common angas are Laghu (symbol I), Dhrutam (symbol O) and Anudrutam (symbol U).
- The question asks which anga pattern makes Triputa tala.

Step 1: Recall the structure of Triputa Triputa is one of the seven talas of the Sapta tala family. Its anga pattern is I O O.
That means one Laghu followed by two Dhrutams. The word Tri-puta itself points to three parts.

Step 2: Count the aksharas to confirm In Chatusra jaati a Laghu has 4 aksharas and each Dhrutam has 2 aksharas.
So the cycle is $4 + 2 + 2 = 8$ aksharas. This is the well known Adi tala, which is Chatusra jaati Triputa tala.

Step 3: Why the other options are wrong Option A (Drutam and Laghu) has only two parts and the order is also wrong. Triputa has three parts and starts with the Laghu.
Option C has two Laghus. Triputa has just one Laghu.
Option D (only Laghu) is the pattern of Eka tala, not Triputa.

Step 4: Conclusion Triputa tala is one Laghu followed by two Dhrutams, which is option B.

Quick Tip to Solve: Triputa has three parts. Recall its symbol pattern I O O.

2. Select the correct number of Jaatis in the realm of Tala [1 mark]

(A) 3

(B) 2

(C) 5

(D) 7

Correct Answer: (C) 5

Solution:

Concept:

- In Carnatic tala, the jaati tells us how many aksharas (counts) the Laghu anga has.
- A change of jaati changes the length of the Laghu, and so it changes the length of the whole tala.

Step 1: List the jaatis There are five jaatis. They are Tisra (3), Chatusra (4), Khanda (5), Misra (7)

and Sankeerna (9).
Counting the names gives 5.

Step 2: Show the effect with Triputa Triputa is I O O. With the Dhrutams fixed at 2 counts each, the total is Laghu + 4.
Tisra gives 7, Chatusra gives 8, Khanda gives 9, Misra gives 11 and Sankeerna gives 13 counts.

Step 3: Why the other options are wrong 3 and 2 are too few. They count only some of the angas, not the jaatis.
7 is the number of talas in the Sapta tala family, and also the count of Misra jaati. It is not the number of jaatis.

Step 4: Conclusion There are five jaatis, so the answer is option C.

Quick Tip to Solve: Name the jaatis by their Laghu counts: 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9. How many names is that?

3. Identify a Tala which is not a part of Sapta tala [1 mark]

(A) Adi

(B) Rupaka

(C) Dhruva

(D) Triputa

Correct Answer: (A) Adi

Solution:

Concept:

- The Sapta tala (also called Suladi Sapta tala) is a family of seven basic talas.
- Every other tala name is a variant of one of them.

Step 1: Recall the seven talas The seven are Dhruva, Matya, Rupaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata and Eka. Their anga patterns are: Dhruva I O I I, Matya I O I, Rupaka O I, Jhampa I U O, Triputa I O O, Ata I I O O, Eka I.

Step 2: Compare with the options Rupaka, Dhruva and Triputa are all in this list. So options B, C and D are parts of Sapta tala.
Adi is not in the list. Adi is just the popular name for Chatusra jaati Triputa tala, which has 8 counts (4 + 2 + 2).

Step 3: Conclusion Adi is a special name for one of the 35 talas, not one of the seven basic talas. The answer is option A.

Quick Tip to Solve: Write the seven basic talas from memory. Which option is missing from that list?

4. Find out the value of Khanda Gati [1 mark]

(A) 9

(B) 5

(C) 7

(D) 3

Correct Answer: (B) 5

Solution:

Concept:

- Gati (also called nadai) tells us how many small sub-beats, or matras, sit inside one akshara.
- There are five gatis: Tisra, Chatusra, Khanda, Misra and Sankeerna.

Step 1: Recall the value of each gati Tisra gati = 3, Chatusra gati = 4, Khanda gati = 5, Misra gati = 7, Sankeerna gati = 9.
So Khanda gati has the value 5.

Step 2: See it in a sollu In Khanda gati each akshara is filled with five syllables, for example Ta Ka Ta Ki Ta.
In an 8 akshara tala this gives 8 x 5 = 40 matras in one cycle.

Step 3: Why the other options are wrong 9 is the value of Sankeerna gati. 7 is the value of Misra gati. 3 is the value of Tisra gati.

Step 4: Conclusion Khanda gati has the value 5, so the answer is option B.

Quick Tip to Solve: Khanda means five. Say the gati values in order: 3, 4, 5, 7, 9.

5. Select the anga which is of 8 akshras [1 mark]

(A) Kakapadam

(B) Plutam

(C) Guru

(D) Laghu

Correct Answer: (C) Guru

Solution:

Concept:

- Besides the three common angas, Carnatic tala also knows three bigger angas. All six together are called the shadangas.
- Each anga has a fixed number of aksharas.

Step 1: Recall the values Anudrutam = 1, Drutam = 2, Laghu = 4 (in Chatusra jaati), Guru = 8, Plutam = 12, Kakapadam = 16.
So the anga with 8 aksharas is the Guru.

Step 2: Why the other options are wrong Kakapadam has 16 aksharas, which is twice 8.
Plutam has 12 aksharas.
Laghu usually has 4 aksharas in Chatusra jaati. Its value changes with the jaati to 3, 5, 7 or 9, but it is never fixed at 8.

Step 3: Conclusion The Guru anga has 8 aksharas, so option C is correct.

Quick Tip to Solve: Write the six angas with their akshara values: 1, 2, 4, 8, 12, 16.

6. Choose the correct statement:
I. Korvai is a part of the calculations that occurred during the terminal performance of Mridangam.
II. The term 'Taggu' is described as a low-pitched mridangam.
III. Palaghat Mani Iyer is considered a prominent follower of the Pudukottai style of mridangam playing.
IV. 'Karani' is a structural part of Ghatam.
Select the correct option [1 mark]

(A) I & III

(B) II & IV

(C) I & II

(D) III & IV

Correct Answer: (C) I & II

Solution:

Concept:

- We must judge four statements, mark each as true or false, and then pick the option that joins the two true ones.

Step 1: Check statement I A korvai is a planned rhythmic pattern with a clear mathematical plan. It is played as a closing calculation at the end of the tani avartanam.
So statement I is TRUE.

Step 2: Check statement II 'Taggu' is used for a mridangam that is tuned low, that is, a low-pitched mridangam. The marking scheme accepts this statement as true.
So statement II is TRUE.

Step 3: Check statement III Palaghat Mani Iyer followed the Tanjavur style of mridangam playing. The Pudukottai style is linked with artists such as Palani Subramania Pillai.
So statement III is FALSE.

Step 4: Check statement IV Karani is a part of the mridangam. The ghatam is a clay pot and is not described with this part.
So statement IV is FALSE.

Step 5: Pick the option True statements: I and II. Option C reads I and II. Option A has III, option B has IV and option D has both III and IV, so all three contain a false statement.

Step 6: Conclusion Only statements I and II are correct, which is option C.

Quick Tip to Solve: Palaghat Mani Iyer follows the Tanjavur school, and the ghatam is a clay pot. Cancel options with these false statements.

7. Match List - I with List - II

List - I	List - II
a. Koraippu	i. Related to pitch
b. Hecchu	ii. Related to Mridangam
c. Chappu	iii. Related to the division of Tala
d. Anudrutam	iv. Related to only beats

Choose the correct option: [1 mark]

(A) a-ii, b-iv, c-i, d-iii

(B) a-ii, b-i, c-iv, d-iii

(C) a-ii, b-i, c-iii, d-iv

(D) a-ii, b-iv, c-iii, d-i

Correct Answer: (B) a-ii, b-i, c-iv, d-iii

Solution:

Concept:

- We have to match four terms with the field they belong to.
- Every term has one match only.

Step 1: Match a. Koraippu Koraippu is a technique of the mridangam solo, where a rhythmic pattern is reduced step by step. So a matches ii (related to Mridangam).

Step 2: Match b. Hecchu Hecchu means a rise in pitch. It is the word used when the pitch is raised. So b matches i (related to pitch).

Step 3: Match c. Chappu Chappu talas, such as Tisra chappu and Khanda chappu, are counted only by beats, without the Laghu or Drutam angas. So c matches iv (related to only beats).

Step 4: Match d. Anudrutam Anudrutam is an anga, that is, a division of tala (one beat of 1 count). So d matches iii (related to the division of Tala).

Step 5: Choose the option The set is a-ii, b-i, c-iv, d-iii. That is option B.
Option A has b-iv and c-i, which swaps pitch and beats. Option C has c-iii and d-iv, which swaps beats

and division. Option D has b-iv, c-iii and d-i, which gets three matches wrong.

Step 6: Conclusion The correct match is a-ii, b-i, c-iv, d-iii, option B.

Quick Tip to Solve: Anudrutam is an anga (a division of tala). Use this to reject two options at once.

8. Statement - I: Tanjavur and Pudukottai are the two major schools of playing Mridangam
Statement - II: Palaghat Mani Iyer introduced the art of playing Khanjeera

Choose the correct option: [1 mark]

(A) Statements I & II are both true

(B) Statements I & II are both false

(C) Statement I is false, but II is true

(D) Statement I is true, but II is false

Correct Answer: (D) Statement I is true, but II is false

Solution:

Concept:

- Two statements are given.
- We decide whether each is true or false and then choose the matching option.

Step 1: Check Statement I Mridangam playing is taught in two major schools (banis): the Tanjavur style and the Pudukottai style.
The Tanjavur style is linked with Narayanaswami Appa and the Pudukottai style with Manpoondia Pillai. So Statement I is TRUE.

Step 2: Check Statement II Palaghat Mani Iyer was a great mridangam artist who followed the Tanjavur style. He did not introduce the khanjeera (kanjira) to concerts.
The kanjira was brought into the concert hall by Manpoondia Pillai of the Pudukottai school. So Statement II is FALSE.

Step 3: Choose the option Statement I is true and Statement II is false. That is option D.
Option A says both true, B says both false, and C says I is false and II is true. All three misjudge at least one statement.

Step 4: Conclusion Statement I is true and Statement II is false, option D.

Quick Tip to Solve: Name the two schools of mridangam. Then ask which school the kanjira is linked with.

Section B (10 marks)

Questions 9 to 13 carry 2 marks each.

9(A). Define the terms Jaati and Gati with their varieties. [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- Jaati and Gati are two ideas that change the speed and size of a tala.
- The question wants a definition of each and the values of their varieties (1 + 1 marks).

Step 1: Define Jaati Jaati is the number of aksharas (counts) in the Laghu anga of a tala. It decides how long the Laghu is, and so how long the whole tala cycle is.
Example: in Triputa tala (I O O) the Laghu is 4 counts in Chatusra jaati, so the cycle is 4 + 2 + 2 = 8 counts. In Tisra jaati it is 3 + 2 + 2 = 7.

Step 2: Varieties of Jaati Tisra jaati = 3, Chatusra jaati = 4, Khanda jaati = 5, Misra jaati = 7, Sankeerna jaati = 9.

Step 3: Define Gati Gati, also called nadai, is the number of small sub-beats (matras) in each akshara. It tells us how finely each beat is divided.
Example: in Chatusra gati each akshara has 4 matras (Ta Ka Di Mi). In Khanda gati each akshara has 5 (Ta Ka Ta Ki Ta).

Step 4: Varieties of Gati Tisra gati = 3, Chatusra gati = 4, Khanda gati = 5, Misra gati = 7, Sankeerna gati = 9.
Jaati and gati each have five varieties. Seven talas with five jaatis make 35 talas, and with five gatis each they become 175 talas.

Step 5: Conclusion Jaati is the Laghu length and Gati is the number of sub-beats per akshara, each with five varieties: 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9.

Quick Tip to Solve: Jaati is about the Laghu length and Gati is about the sub-beats inside an akshara. Both have the values 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9.

OR

9(B). Define the term 'Tala' and write the names of Sapta Tala. [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question asks for a definition of tala (1 mark) and the names of the seven basic talas (1 mark).

Step 1: Define Tala Tala is the method of measuring time in music. It is shown with hand actions, that is, claps (beats) and waves, in a cycle that repeats.
One round of the cycle is called an avartanam. It starts and ends at the first beat, called the samam. Tala keeps the singer, the instruments and the rhythm together.

Step 2: Name the Sapta tala The seven basic talas are Dhruva, Matya, Rupaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata and Eka.
They are also called Suladi Sapta talas.

Step 3: Give the anga pattern of each Dhruva: Laghu, Dhrutam, Laghu, Laghu (I O I I).
Matya: Laghu, Dhrutam, Laghu (I O I).
Rupaka: Dhrutam, Laghu (O I).

Jhampa: Laghu, Anudrutam, Dhrutam (I U O).
Triputa: Laghu, Dhrutam, Dhrutam (I O O).
Ata: Laghu, Laghu, Dhrutam, Dhrutam (I I O O).
Eka: Laghu (I).

Step 4: Add the extra fact Each of the 7 talas can take 5 jaatis, giving 7 x 5 = 35 talas.

Step 5: Conclusion Tala is the cyclic measure of time by hand beats. The Sapta talas are Dhruva, Matya, Rupaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata and Eka.

Quick Tip to Solve: Define tala as a repeating cycle of beats. Then list: Dhruva, Matya, Rupaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata, Eka.

10(A). What is the difference between Korvai and Koraippu? [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- Korvai and Koraippu sound alike but are different ideas.
- The marking scheme asks for a short description of each (1 + 1 marks) so that the difference becomes clear.

Step 1: Korvai A korvai is a pre-planned rhythmic composition made by joining jathis (groups of sollu syllables) in a mathematical order.
It is usually played at the end of the tani avartanam, repeated three times and finishing exactly on the samam (the starting beat of the tala). It shows the artist's skill in calculation.

Step 2: Koraippu Koraippu comes from the Tamil word for reduction. It is a technique where a rhythmic pattern is shortened step by step in successive rounds, while the tala is kept steady.
A phrase of 8 aksharas can be played as 8, then 6, then 4, then 2 aksharas, with the rest of the cycle filled with rests or a fixed pattern.

Step 3: State the difference Korvai is a complete composition with a fixed shape that ends at the samam. Koraippu is a method of reducing a pattern, and it is a part of the mridangam solo.
Korvai is the finished piece and Koraippu is a working method.

Step 4: Conclusion Korvai is a planned closing composition built from jathis. Koraippu is the technique of reducing a rhythmic pattern step by step.

Quick Tip to Solve: Korvai is a finished composition. Koraippu means reduction, so think of a pattern becoming shorter each time.

OR

10(B). Define the term 'Mohra' and give an outline of how to prepare it. [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question needs a definition of mohra (1 mark) and an outline of how it is prepared (1 mark).

Step 1: Define Mohra A mohra is a short rhythmic composition, made of sollu syllables, that is played to bring a rhythmic passage to a close. It ends on the samam, the first beat of the tala.
It is shorter than a korvai and is often used as a cadence before the final korvai or at the end of a solo.

Step 2: How to prepare it: choose the base Step one: decide the tala, the jaati and the gati. These fix the number of aksharas and matras that are available.
Step two: decide how many aksharas the whole mohra will take.

Step 3: How to prepare it: build and place Step three: compose a main phrase from jathis such as Ta Ka Di Mi and Ta Ka Ju Nu, or longer sollus.
Step four: repeat the phrase three times with an equal gap (rest) between the repeats.
Step five: count the matras so that the last sollu falls exactly on the samam.

Step 4: Check and practise Recite the mohra with the tala hand actions to check that it ends at the samam. Then play it on the instrument at slow speed and then at normal speed.

Step 5: Conclusion Mohra is a short closing rhythmic composition ending on the samam. It is prepared by choosing the tala and gati, building a phrase, repeating it three times with equal gaps and counting to end on the samam.

Quick Tip to Solve: Think of a mohra as a short closing piece. Fix the tala, make a phrase, repeat it three times and finish on the samam.

11(A). Write the names of the 'Shodasha Angas' of Tala. [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The six basic angas are called the shadangas: Anudrutam, Drutam, Laghu, Guru, Plutam and Kakapadam.
- When the viramam (a pause of one count) and the Drutam are joined with them in different ways, we get sixteen angas. These are the Shodasha angas, and the question asks for their names and values (1 + 1 marks).

Step 1: The six basic angas and their values Anudrutam = 1 akshara.
Drutam = 2 aksharas.
Laghu = 4 aksharas (in Chatusra jaati).
Guru = 8 aksharas.
Plutam = 12 aksharas.
Kakapadam = 16 aksharas.

Step 2: The sixteen angas in order of value 1 Anudrutam
2 Drutam
3 Drutaviramam
4 Laghu
5 Laghuviramam
6 Laghudrutam

7 Laghudrutaviramam
8 Guru
9 Guruviramam
10 Gurudrutam
11 Gurudrutaviramam
12 Plutam
13 Plutaviramam
14 Plutadrutam
15 Plutadrutaviramam
16 Kakapadam

Step 3: How the values grow Each name adds one small unit to the one before. The viramam adds 1, so Drutaviramam = 2 + 1 = 3 and Laghuviramam = 4 + 1 = 5.
Laghudrutam = 4 + 2 = 6 and Laghudrutaviramam = 6 + 1 = 7. The same method gives the values up to Kakapadam = 16.

Step 4: Note on use In today's practice only Anudrutam, Drutam and Laghu are used in the Sapta talas. The Shodasha angas are for finer calculation in older talas.

Step 5: Conclusion The sixteen Shodasha angas, with values 1 to 16, are listed above from Anudrutam to Kakapadam.

Quick Tip to Solve: Start from the six basic angas with values 1, 2, 4, 8, 12 and 16. The viramam and Drutam fill the gaps to make sixteen.

OR

11(B). Write a brief note on the different schools of playing Mridangam. [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- A school (bani) is a style of playing handed down through teachers and students.
- The marking scheme asks for the two styles, Pudukottai and Tanjavur, and the person who introduced each (1 + 1 marks).

Step 1: The Tanjavur school The Tanjavur style is linked with Narayanaswami Appa, who is seen as an early master of mridangam in the Tanjavur region.
It is known for a soft, clear tone, balanced use of both hands and a style that suits the singer. Tanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer and Palaghat Mani Iyer followed this tradition.

Step 2: The Pudukottai school The Pudukottai style was founded by Manpoondia Pillai, who was a court artist of Pudukottai. He also brought the kanjira into concerts.
It is known for strong strokes, bold rhythmic work and clever calculation. Dakshinamurthy Pillai and Palani Subramania Pillai belong to this school.

Step 3: Compare in short Tanjavur: gentle and melodic, introduced by Narayanaswami Appa.
Pudukottai: strong and laya centred, founded by Manpoondia Pillai.

Step 4: Conclusion The two major schools of mridangam are Tanjavur (Narayanaswami Appa) and Pudukottai (Manpoondia Pillai).

Quick Tip to Solve: Name the two schools, the person linked to each, and one feature of each style.

12(A). Define the term 'Sollukattu' with suitable example. [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question wants a short definition of sollukattu (1 mark) and a suitable example (1 mark).

Step 1: Define Sollukattu Each stroke of the mridangam has its own spoken syllable, called a sollu. Sollukattu is the reciting of these sollus in a fixed order, to the beats of a tala.
It is how a student first learns a rhythmic pattern. The student speaks it aloud before playing it on the instrument.

Step 2: Example Ta Ka Di Mi Ta Ka Ju Nu is a common sollukattu of 8 sollus. It is recited in Chatusra gati, 4 sollus for each akshara, so it fills 2 aksharas.
In Tisra gati, the sollukattu Ta Ki Ta has 3 sollus per akshara. In Khanda gati it is Ta Ka Ta Ki Ta, 5 sollus per akshara.

Step 3: Use Sollukattu is used in teaching, in building jathis and korvais, and in memorising patterns for tani avartanam.

Step 4: Conclusion Sollukattu is the recitation of percussion syllables in tala, for example Ta Ka Di Mi Ta Ka Ju Nu.

Quick Tip to Solve: Sollu means a spoken drum syllable. Give a real example such as Ta Ka Di Mi.

OR

12(B). Describe the term 'Chappu' and mention the varieties of Chappus used in the field of Carnatic Talas. [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question asks for the meaning of chappu (1 mark) and its varieties (1 mark).

Step 1: Describe Chappu Chappu is a group of talas that are measured by beats only. They are not built with the Laghu and Drutam angas of the Sapta talas.
In a chappu tala a beat is followed by a wave of the hand, and the counts are grouped into short parts, for example 3 + 4. They are common in light and folk music and in many compositions.

Step 2: Varieties of Chappu Tisra chappu: 1 + 2 = 3 beats.
Khanda chappu: 2 + 3 = 5 beats.
Misra chappu: 3 + 4 = 7 beats.
Sankeerna chappu: 4 + 5 = 9 beats.

Step 3: Extra point Misra chappu can also be played in the reverse order, 4 + 3. This is called the vilomam form.

Step 4: Conclusion Chappu is a beat-only tala. Its varieties are Tisra, Khanda, Misra and Sankeerna chappu.

Quick Tip to Solve: Chappu talas are counted by beats only. List them with their splits: 1+2, 2+3, 3+4, 4+5.

13(A). **How do you define the term 'Tani - avartanam' and why is it so important in the domain of percussion instruments?** [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question has two parts: define tani avartanam (1 mark) and explain its importance (1 mark).

Step 1: Define Tani Avartanam Avartanam means one cycle of the tala. Tani means alone. So tani avartanam is the solo played by the percussion artists, usually after the main item of the concert, while the main artist and the violinist keep the tala.
The mridangam artist starts, and then others such as the ghatam, kanjira and morsing join in turns and trade ideas. The solo ends with a korvai or a mohra that lands on the samam.

Step 2: Why it is important: for the percussionist It is the one chance in the concert for the percussion players to show their command of laya (rhythm), their calculations and their creativity.
It also tests the knowledge of tala, gati and jaati.

Step 3: Why it is important: for the concert It gives the main artist a short rest and adds variety to the concert.
It lets the audience enjoy pure rhythm, and the final korvai gives a strong ending to the main item.

Step 4: Conclusion Tani avartanam is the percussion solo of a concert. It is important because it shows laya mastery and adds variety to the concert.

Quick Tip to Solve: Tani means alone and avartanam means one cycle. Say what the percussionists show in it.

OR

13(B). **What is the difference between the musical forms - Varnam and Tillana?** [2 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- Varnam and Tillana are two musical forms.
- The marking scheme asks for the difference in a few sentences (1 + 1 marks).

Step 1: Varnam A varnam is a long composition with a pallavi, anupallavi, muktayi swaras (chit-taswaras) and a charanam. It has both words (sahitya) and swara passages.
It brings out the full shape of a raga. It is often sung at the start of a concert as a warm-up, and in dance it is the main item. Two types are the tana varnam and the pada varnam.

Step 2: Tillana A tillana is a lively, rhythmic piece. Most of it is made of rhythmic syllables such as 'dheem' and 'tana'. It has a pallavi, anupallavi and charanam, and only a few lines of words in the charanam.
It is usually sung or danced near the end of a concert, and it is full of jathis that make it fit for percussion.

Step 3: Difference Varnam: raga centred, with long words and swara passages, sung early in the concert.
Tillana: rhythm centred, with syllables and few words, sung late in the concert.

Step 4: Conclusion Varnam is a raga-centred opening piece with words and swaras. Tillana is a rhythm-centred closing piece of syllables.

Quick Tip to Solve: Compare the two on purpose, structure and where each sits in a concert.

Section C (12 marks)

Questions 14 and 15 carry 6 marks each.

14(A). Explain the structure of the percussion instrument of your choice with the help of a diagram, and also briefly mention how to tune the chosen instrument. Mention a prominent artist in this field.

[6 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question is for the student's own chosen instrument (2 + 2 + 2 marks): the structure, a labelled diagram drawn by the student, and the tuning with a prominent artist.
- Here we take the mridangam.

Step 1: Part 1: Structure of the mridangam The mridangam has a hollow barrel-shaped body, called the shell. It is made from a single piece of jackfruit wood.
The two openings are covered with skin heads. The right head, the valanthalai, is smaller and gives a high, clear note. The left head, the thoppi, is larger and gives a deep bass sound.
The right head has three layers of skin. At its centre is a black circular patch of paste called the soru (also called karanai) which gives the clear sound. The two heads are joined by leather straps (vaar) that go round the shell.

Step 2: Part 2: Labelled diagram (to be drawn by the student) Draw a horizontal barrel with a wider middle. Label:
1) Right head (valanthalai) with the black patch (soru) at its centre.
2) Left head (thoppi).
3) Wooden shell.
4) Leather straps (vaar).
5) Wooden tuning blocks (gattai) placed under the straps on the right side.
Show the three layers of skin at the right head and mark the soru in the middle.

Step 3: Part 3: Tuning The mridangam is tuned to the tonic (sruti) of the main artist. To change the pitch, the player taps the wooden blocks (gattai) that sit between the shell and the straps on the right head, with a small hammer. Tapping them in one direction makes the straps tighter and the pitch higher.
Tapping them the other way loosens the straps and lowers the pitch. The pitch is checked by playing the open stroke and listening. For the left head, a small ball of semolina or wheat flour paste is placed on the head before playing to get a deep bass.

Step 4: Prominent artist Palaghat Mani Iyer (Tanjavur style) is one of the greatest mridangam artists. Other well known names are Palani Subramania Pillai, Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman and Trichy Sankaran.

Step 5: Conclusion The mridangam has a wooden shell with two skin heads joined by leather straps and is tuned to the sruti with the wooden blocks. A prominent artist is Palaghat Mani Iyer.

Quick Tip to Solve: Pick one instrument. Describe its parts, label a sketch, say how it is tuned to the sruti and name one great artist.

OR

14(B). Suppose you are invited as an accompanying artist in a music concert with your opted instrument, describe the basic principles need to be taken care of. [6 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question asks for an essay of 6 marks on the basic principles to be taken care of by an accompanying artist.
- The marking scheme also expects the position of artists on the stage and the microphone positions.

Step 1: Principles of the accompanist: role The main artist is the leader. The accompanist supports and follows the leader and never takes away the focus.
The accompanist should listen with full attention to the singer or the lead instrument and play to suit the mood and the speed of the item.

Step 2: Principles: music Check the sruti (tonic) and tune the instrument before the concert. Keep the tala and the speed steady.
Know the compositions, the ragas and the talas to be played, and the usual cues for starting and ending.
Play soft, short and neat phrases while the main artist sings or plays. Keep the volume and the stroke in balance with the voice.

Step 3: Principles: tani avartanam Play the solo only in the tani avartanam. Use the chance to show skill and creativity, and close with a clean korvai or mohra ending on the samam.
Do not play over the other artist's solo, and give the chance to the violinist and others in turn.

Step 4: Position on stage The lead artist sits in the centre. The accompanists sit slightly behind and beside the lead so that there is eye contact for cues. The percussion artists sit together so that they can hear each other.
Everyone should be able to see the main artist's hand beats.

Step 5: Microphone and conduct Do a sound check before the concert. Place the microphone near the heads of the drum, at the right distance so that the sound is full but not too loud. For the mridangam, one microphone is set for each head or one for both.
Keep the volume low enough to mix well with the singer.
Reach the venue on time, dress properly, behave politely with the lead artist and other accompanists, and be ready with spare strings or tools.

Step 6: Conclusion A good accompanist follows the lead, keeps sruti and laya, plays softly, takes the solo only in the tani avartanam, sits in the right place and uses the microphone well.

Quick Tip to Solve: Think of five headings: attitude, preparation, playing, stage position and microphone.

15(A). Give a detailed life sketch and contribution of Palani Subramania Pillai [6 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question has two parts of 3 marks each: the life sketch (birth, childhood, musical education) and the musical contribution of the artist.

Step 1: Birth and family Palani Subramania Pillai was born on 20 April 1908. Some sources give 1909. His father was Palani Muthaiah Pillai, a well known mridangam artist of the Pudukottai school. His mother was Unnamulai Ammal.

Step 2: Childhood and musical education He learnt the mridangam first from his father. He was also guided by the great Dakshinamurthy Pillai, and he was a close friend of the thavil artist Malikkottai Panchapakesa Pillai.
His first concert was around the age of 15 in 1923, when he accompanied Mannargudi Rajagopala Pillai, and before he was twenty he had played for many senior artists. The singer Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar advised him to tone down heavy laya work and to give more beauty and support to the music.

Step 3: Contribution as an accompanist He became one of the foremost accompanists. He played for G. N. Balasubramaniam, Madurai Mani Iyer, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and Chembai. He was the regular accompanist of the Alathur Brothers and composed many pallavis for them.
He was known for supportive playing, for a fluid rhythm called sarvalaghu, and for his skill with strong (vallinam) and soft (mellinam) strokes.

Step 4: Contribution to other fields He also played the kanjira and gave well loved duets with leading mridangists.
Madurai Mani Iyer called him 'Thyagi' for his humble nature.

Step 5: Teacher and legacy He taught in the gurukula way. His disciples include T. Ranganathan, Trichy Sankaran, M. N. Kandaswamy Pillai and Udumalai Mayilswamy.
He built a shrine at the samadhi of Mamundia Pillai, the founder of the Pudukottai school, in 1945 and held an annual guru pooja until he passed away on 27 May 1962 at the age of 53. A centenary special postal cover was issued in 2008.

Step 6: Conclusion Palani Subramania Pillai was a master of the Pudukottai school who set high standards in accompaniment and trained many leading artists.

Quick Tip to Solve: Cover birth, family, training and first concert for 3 marks, and accompaniments, style and disciples for the next 3 marks.

OR

15(B). Classify the rhythmic instruments used in the musical concerts and their importance in detail.

[6 marks]

Solution:

Concept:

- The question asks for a classification of the rhythmic instruments (3 marks) and their importance in a concert, including their stage and microphone position (3 marks).

Step 1: Classification: skin instruments (Avanaddha vadya) These produce sound from a stretched skin. Mridangam: a two-faced drum, the main percussion of Carnatic music.
Kanjira: a small frame drum with a single skin.
Thavil: a barrel drum used with the nadaswaram.

Step 2: Classification: solid or clay instruments (Ghana vadya and others) These make sound from the body of the instrument itself. Ghatam: a clay pot played with the fingers and palms.
Morsing: a small metal lip-instrument played with the mouth and fingers.
Jalra and other cymbals: struck metal plates.

Step 3: Importance of rhythmic instruments They keep the tala and the speed steady for the singer and the other instruments.
They give strength and colour to the music and support the main artist.
They play the tani avartanam, where artists show their skill.
They add variety through korvai and mohra, and give a strong finish to the item.

Step 4: Position on stage The main artist sits in the centre. The percussion artists sit slightly behind and beside, so that they can follow the beats. The mridangam is placed near the main artist. The ghatam, kanjira and morsing artists sit next to the mridangam, so that they can play in tani avartanam together.

Step 5: Microphone positions The mridangam needs a microphone for each head, or one near the middle. The ghatam needs a microphone near its mouth and body. The kanjira needs one near its skin. The morsing needs a microphone near the mouth. A sound check keeps the volume balanced with the singer.

Step 6: Conclusion Rhythmic instruments are classified as skin instruments and solid or clay instruments. They give the beat, support the lead and enrich the concert.

Quick Tip to Solve: Classify by how the sound is made (skin versus body of the instrument) and then say how they help a concert. Add stage and microphone points.