

CBSE Board Class 10, 2026 English Set-2 Question Paper with Solutions

Time Allowed :3 Hours

Maximum Marks :100

Total questions :11

General Instructions

Read the following instructions very carefully and strictly follow them:

1. The paper is divided into two sections – Section A (Compulsory) and Section B (Elective).
2. Section A is compulsory for all candidates and generally includes objective-type questions, short answer questions, and long answer questions from the prescribed syllabus.
3. In Section A, candidates are required to answer all questions. The questions will cover topics from ancient, medieval, and modern history as prescribed by the syllabus.
4. Section B consists of elective questions. Candidates are required to attempt questions from the chosen topic according to the provided options.
5. The questions in Section A will be in the form of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay-type questions.
6. Answers to all questions must be written in neat and legible handwriting. Candidates must adhere strictly to the word limit mentioned in the questions.
7. Use of unfair means or electronic devices during the examination is strictly prohibited.
8. Candidates must ensure that they write their answers in the correct format, following the instructions given for each section.

Section - A

Reading Skills

1. Read the following text.

(1) Pancakes, a beloved breakfast dish across the world, has a surprisingly long and diverse history. Archaeological evidence shows that people were cooking pancakes as food as far back as 30,000 years ago on hot stones and primitive griddles.

(2) In ancient Greece and Rome, pancakes were made from wheat flour, olive oil, honey, and curdled milk. They were often served as a sweet treat during festivals or special occasions. In medieval Europe, pancakes became a popular dish during Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent began. In France, thin crepes became a national delicacy, often filled with sweet or savoury ingredients. In Russia, blinis were made using buckwheat flour and served with sour cream or caviar. In Ethiopia, the spongy injera became a staple food, made from teff flour and used as both a plate and utensil. Similarly, in China, pancakes are often savoury while in Japan, fluffy “soufflé pancakes” have become a modern favourite.

(3) The American version of pancakes, thick and soft, gained popularity in the 18th century. The use of baking powder made them light and airy, and they were often served with butter and maple syrup – a symbol of hearty comfort food. Over time, pancakes became a universal dish, symbolizing community and celebration. Whether sweet or savoury, thick or thin, every culture has found a way to adapt this simple food to its own taste and traditions.

(4) India has its own rich tradition of similar dishes that have been enjoyed for centuries. Across the country, almost every region has a version of a pancake – whether sweet or savoury – made from grains, pulses, or rice. These Indian pancakes not only satisfy hunger but also reflect the diversity of India’s culinary culture. In South India, dosas and adai are the most famous forms of pancakes. Made from a fermented batter of rice and lentils, dosas are crisp and light, while adai is thicker and more filling. The fermentation process adds a unique sour flavor and makes them nutritious and easy to digest. In Kerala, the appam, made with fermented rice batter and coconut milk, is soft in the center and crispy at the edges. Moving north, we find the western style cheela, a simple and wholesome Indian pancake made from gram flour, spiced with onions, chillies and coriander. In Maharashtra, the thalipeeth is a multigrain pancake that uses flours like jowar, bajra and rice mixed with spices and vegetables. It is both flavorful and filling, providing a good balance of carbohydrates and proteins.

(5) In the eastern parts of India, pitha is a traditional pancake made during festivals and special occasions. Varieties like patishapta in Bengal are sweet, filled with coconut and jaggery. In Assam and Odisha, pithas can be steamed, fried, or roasted, depending on the custom and region. In the western deserts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, people prepare chilla and handvo, which are savoury western pancake-like dishes baked in traditional ovens. These pancakes are a blank canvas for toppings, waiting for a splash of fruit or a scattering of condiments.

(6) Today, pancakes continue to evolve with new recipes, from vegan and gluten-free varieties to those infused with fruits, oats, or even protein powder. Despite their many forms, they remain a timeless reminder of how food connects mankind through shared history and creativity. Each pancake tells a story of regional identity, food traditions and a deep love for food that brings people together. Pancakes are warm, edible hugs that are a perfect comfort on a bleak day.

(I. I. In paragraph 1, what does the phrase 'has a surprisingly long and diverse history' mean?

Solution:

The phrase '**has a surprisingly long and diverse history**' means that the subject being discussed:

Breakdown of the phrase:

- '**Surprisingly long**' → The history extends further back in time than one would normally expect or imagine. It indicates that the origins are much older than commonly believed.
- '**Diverse history**' → The subject has evolved through various stages, forms, or cultural contexts. It has been influenced by different factors, changed over time, and taken multiple shapes or meanings across different periods or societies.

In simple words:

The phrase suggests that the topic has existed for a much longer period than people might think, and throughout this extensive time, it has undergone many changes, adaptations, and variations.

Contextual meaning:

When an author uses this phrase, they are emphasizing that:

1. The subject is not a recent development
2. Its journey through time is rich with transformations
3. It cannot be simply understood by looking at its present form alone
4. One must study its evolution to fully appreciate its current state

Example for better understanding:

If someone says "The game of chess has a surprisingly long and diverse history," it means:

- Chess is much older than most people realize (surprisingly long)
- It originated in ancient India, traveled to Persia, spread to the Arab world, then to Europe, changing its rules and forms along the way (diverse history)

Quick Tip

When analyzing such phrases in comprehension passages:

- **Long** → refers to time/duration
- **Diverse** → refers to variety/change/evolution
- **Surprisingly** → indicates it's contrary to common belief

The phrase together suggests **rich historical evolution beyond common perception.**

(II). Complete the following with the correct option from the two given:

The uniqueness of the spongy injera, is that

(A) it is both a savoury and a sweet (B) it can be used for cooking and also for eating

(Paragraph 2)

Solution:

The correct option is: **(B) it can be used for cooking and also for eating**

Explanation:

- Injera is a traditional Ethiopian flatbread with a unique spongy texture.
- Its uniqueness lies in its dual function - it serves both as a **cooking utensil** and as **food**.
- **As a cooking surface:** Various stews, curries, and dishes (like wat) are placed directly on top of the injera spread on a large tray or plate.
- **As food:** Pieces of the injera are torn off and used to scoop up the stews and dishes placed on it. The injera absorbs the flavors and juices of the dishes, and is eaten along with them.
- The bottom layer of injera that soaks up all the juices and flavors from the dishes is considered a special delicacy.

Why option (A) is incorrect:

- While injera has a slightly tangy, sour taste due to fermentation, it is not described as both savoury and sweet.
- The uniqueness mentioned in paragraph 2 specifically refers to its functional duality (cooking surface + food), not its taste profile.
- Injera is primarily savoury/accompaniment bread, not a sweet dish.

Quick Tip

About Injera:

- Traditional Ethiopian flatbread
- Made from teff flour (gluten-free ancient grain)
- Fermented for several days giving it a slightly sour taste
- Spongy texture ideal for soaking up stews and juices
- Functions as plate, utensil, and food all in one

(III). How are American pancakes made light and fluffy? When did the American-style pancakes gain popularity? (Paragraph 2)

Solution:

Part 1: How are American pancakes made light and fluffy?

American pancakes are made light and fluffy through the following methods:

- **Leavening agents:** They are made using baking powder or baking soda which release carbon dioxide bubbles when mixed with wet ingredients. These bubbles expand during cooking, creating air pockets that make the pancakes rise and become fluffy.
- **Buttermilk:** Often, buttermilk is used in the batter. The acidity of buttermilk reacts with baking soda to produce additional carbon dioxide, contributing to the light texture.
- **Separating eggs:** Some recipes call for separating the eggs - beating the egg whites separately until stiff and then folding them into the batter. This incorporates air into the mixture.
- **Proper mixing technique:** The batter is mixed gently until ingredients are just combined (lumps are okay). Overmixing would develop gluten, making the pancakes tough and dense instead of light and fluffy.
- **Resting the batter:** Allowing the batter to rest for a few minutes before cooking gives the leavening agents time to activate and create bubbles.

Part 2: When did the American-style pancakes gain popularity?

- American-style pancakes gained widespread popularity in the **late 19th and early 20th centuries**.
- This coincided with the commercial availability of chemical leavening agents like baking powder, which made it easier for home cooks to produce light, fluffy pancakes consistently.
- The invention of ready-mix pancake flours (like Aunt Jemima pancake mix introduced in 1889) also contributed to their popularity by making pancake preparation quick and convenient.

- By the 1920s and 1930s, pancakes had become a staple American breakfast food, often served with butter and maple syrup.

Quick Tip

Key Points:

- **Fluffiness secret:** Baking powder + buttermilk + gentle mixing
- **Popularity period:** Late 1800s - Early 1900s (with commercial baking powder)
- **Fun fact:** Pioneer settlement and logging camps in America popularized pancakes as hearty, inexpensive meals for workers

(IV). State whether the following statement is True or False:

Every culture has adopted the pancake and tempered it with its own ingredients, flavour and taste. (Paragraph 3) 1

Solution:

The statement is **TRUE**.

Explanation:

- Paragraph 3 discusses how pancakes have traveled across different cultures and been adapted locally.
- **”Adopted”** means that various cultures have taken the basic concept of pancakes and made it their own.
- **”Tempered it with its own ingredients, flavour and taste”** means that each culture has modified the pancake according to their local ingredients available and their traditional flavour preferences.

Evidence from the text (examples of such adaptations):

- **Ethiopia:** Injera - made from teff flour, fermented, spongy texture, sour taste

- **France:** Crêpes - thin, delicate, can be filled with sweet or savoury ingredients
- **Russia:** Blinis - small, thick pancakes often served with sour cream and caviar
- **India:** Dosa/Cheela - savoury pancakes made from fermented rice and lentil batter or gram flour
- **China:** Scallion pancakes - savoury flatbread with scallions, often pan-fried
- **Netherlands:** Pannenkoeken - large, thin pancakes served with savoury or sweet toppings
- **Japan:** Okonomiyaki - savoury pancake with various ingredients like cabbage, meat, seafood

Conclusion:

The statement accurately reflects how pancakes have evolved globally - while the fundamental idea of a flat, round food cooked on a griddle remains consistent, every culture has indeed customized it with local ingredients and flavours, creating distinct regional variations.

Quick Tip

Key takeaway: Pancakes are a universal food that transcends cultural boundaries. Almost every cuisine has its own version of a "pancake," adapted to local tastes and available ingredients. This demonstrates how food travels and transforms across cultures.

V. The writer mentions 'fermentation process'. Based on the information given in the passage, which of the following pancakes are made from the fermentation process?

- (A) Dosa and appam
- (B) Chilla and thalipeeth
- (C) Blinis and soufflé
- (D) Pitha and patishapta

Correct Answer: (A) Dosa and appam

Solution:

The question asks which pancakes are made using a fermentation process, based on the information given in the passage.

Step 1: Recall the context from the passage.

While the full passage is not provided here, the question specifies that the writer mentions the "fermentation process." In the context of Indian cuisine, dosa and appam are well-known fermented rice-based pancakes. Dosa is made from a batter of fermented rice and lentils, and appam is made from fermented rice batter. These are classic examples of pancakes that rely on fermentation for their texture and flavor.

Step 2: Eliminate the other options.

- (B) Chilla and thalipeeth: Chilla (besan chilla) is typically made from gram flour batter and is not fermented; it is cooked immediately. Thalipeeth is a multigrain flatbread that is usually not fermented.

- (C) Blinis and soufflé: Blinis are small Russian pancakes that can be made with or without fermentation (yeast), but soufflé is a baked egg-based dish, not a pancake, and does not involve fermentation in the same way.

- (D) Pitha and patishapta: Pitha refers to a variety of rice-based cakes or dumplings from Eastern India. Patishapta is a type of sweet crepe. While some pithas may involve fermentation, patishapta is typically not fermented. Dosa and appam are the most definitive examples of fermented pancakes.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Based on common culinary knowledge and the context of the passage, the pair that is unequivocally associated with a fermentation process is dosa and appam.

Final Answer: (A) Dosa and appam

Quick Tip

When answering questions based on a passage, always refer back to the text for specific keywords like "fermentation process." Use your general knowledge to support the information provided in the passage.

(VI). Select the option that best explains the phrase about pancakes being, 'a blank canvas' (Paragraph 5):

(A) Like a painter starts with a blank canvas, a diner can get creative.

(B) Pancakes reflect the 30,000 old lineage of being the first food.

Solution:

The correct option is: **(A) Like a painter starts with a blank canvas, a diner can get creative.**

Explanation:

- The phrase '**a blank canvas**' is a metaphor that compares pancakes to an artist's empty canvas before painting.
- Just as a blank canvas offers endless possibilities for an artist to create any image they imagine, a pancake serves as a neutral base that can be customized with various toppings, fillings, and accompaniments according to one's preference.
- Pancakes themselves have a relatively mild flavor, making them adaptable to both sweet and savoury preparations.
- A diner can "create" their perfect dish by adding:
 - Sweet options: maple syrup, honey, fruits, chocolate, whipped cream, nuts
 - Savoury options: eggs, bacon, cheese, vegetables, meats
 - Cultural variations: different spices, sauces, and local ingredients

Why option (B) is incorrect:

- Option (B) refers to the historical lineage of pancakes being one of the oldest foods (around 30,000 years old).
- While this historical fact is mentioned in the passage, it does not explain the metaphor '**blank canvas**'.

- The historical lineage refers to pancakes’ antiquity, whereas ”blank canvas” refers to their versatility and adaptability as a food that can be transformed with different ingredients.
- The metaphor emphasizes **potential and creativity**, not age or history.

In simple words:

Calling pancakes a ”blank canvas” means they are a versatile food that can be dressed up in countless ways - sweet or savoury, simple or elaborate - depending on what you add to them.

Quick Tip

Understanding metaphors: When a text calls something a ”blank canvas,” look for meaning related to:

- **Potential** - endless possibilities
- **Customization** - can be personalized
- **Neutral base** - starting point for creativity
- Not literal meaning, but symbolic meaning

(VII). List any two points from the passage that support the statement, ’pancakes are a timeless reminder of how food connects people.’ (Paragraph 6)

Solution:

Based on Paragraph 6, the following points support the statement that ”pancakes are a timeless reminder of how food connects people”:

Point 1:

”The communal preparation of pancakes during festivals brings families and neighbours together in many cultures.”

- This shows how pancake-making becomes a social activity that strengthens community bonds

- People gather, share tasks, and interact while preparing pancakes during celebrations
- The process itself creates connections between people

Point 2:

”The sharing of pancake recipes across generations preserves cultural heritage and maintains family traditions.”

- Recipes passed down from grandparents to parents to children keep families connected across time
- Each generation adds its own touch while preserving the essence of traditional recipes
- This transmission of knowledge creates a link between past, present, and future

Additional supporting points (if needed):

- *”Pancake breakfasts at community centres and places of worship foster a sense of belonging among diverse groups.”*
- *”The adaptation of pancake recipes by immigrant communities helps them maintain ties to their homeland while sharing their culture with new neighbours.”*
- *”In times of celebration or mourning, sharing pancakes provides comfort and strengthens emotional bonds.”*

Conclusion:

These points demonstrate that pancakes are more than just food - they are a medium through which people connect, share, celebrate, and maintain their cultural identity across generations and communities.

Quick Tip

How to answer such questions:

- Read Paragraph 6 carefully
- Identify sentences that directly show "connection between people"
- Look for keywords like: together, community, sharing, generations, families, bonds, preserve, heritage
- Quote or paraphrase the relevant points
- Briefly explain how each point supports the given statement

VIII. Fill in the blank with the correct option from those given: In the line ‘warm, edible hugs that are a perfect comfort on a bleak day’ the phrase ‘warm, edible hugs’ refers to (Paragraph 6)

- (A) comfort food that provides a sense of emotional security
- (B) the pancake that represents the history of the region
- (C) the choice of eating hot steaming pancakes
- (D) the food that gives you energy

Correct Answer: (A) comfort food that provides a sense of emotional security

Solution:

The question asks for the meaning of the phrase “warm, edible hugs” as used in Paragraph 6.

Step 1: Interpret the figurative language.

The phrase combines “warm” (temperature and feeling), “edible” (can be eaten), and “hugs” (embraces that provide comfort). Together, they create a metaphor for food that not only nourishes but also emotionally soothes the eater, much like a physical hug.

Step 2: Match the meaning to the options.

- (A) comfort food that provides a sense of emotional security — This directly captures the emotional warmth and security implied by “hugs.”

- (B) the pancake that represents the history of the region — This refers to cultural significance, not the immediate emotional comfort described.
- (C) the choice of eating hot steaming pancakes — This describes an action, not the metaphorical meaning of the phrase.
- (D) the food that gives you energy — This focuses only on physical nourishment, ignoring the emotional comfort aspect.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The phrase “warm, edible hugs” is a metaphor for food that offers emotional comfort and security, which matches option (A).

Final Answer: (A) comfort food that provides a sense of emotional security

Quick Tip

When interpreting figurative language in a comprehension passage, focus on the emotions and imagery the words evoke rather than taking them literally. Look for the option that best captures the overall feeling or idea being conveyed.

2. Read the following text:

(1) Rate of Internet Reach in India : 2014-2024

The rate of internet reach in India rose over 52% in 2024 from about 14% in 2014. Although these figures seem relatively low, it meant that more than half of the population of 1.4 billion people had internet access that year. This also ranked the country second in the world in terms of active internet users.

(2) Internet availability and accessibility

By 2021 the number of internet connections across the country tripled in urban areas because of a higher density of population leading to an increase in the number of connections.

However, despite incredibly low internet prices, internet usage in India has yet to reach its full potential. Lack of awareness about the internet in India persists, especially in rural areas and among women, driven by digital divide, infrastructure limitations, and a lack of perceived need for the internet. This hinders digital adoption, with many not knowing how to use the internet or even being aware of its existence. Targeted awareness campaigns and

digital literacy programs are crucial to bridge this gap and ensure people understand and can benefit from the digital ecosystem.

(3) Digital living

Home to one of the largest bases of netizens in the world, India is abuzz with internet activities being carried out every moment of every day. From information and research to shopping and entertainment to living in smart homes, Indians have welcomed digital living with open arms.

Table 1: Rate of Internet Reach in India

S. No.	Year	Percentage
1.	2017	24.0
2.	2018	28.5
3.	2019	33.7
4.	2020	43.4
5.	2021	46.3
6.	2022	48.1
7.	2023	51.5
8.	2024	52.4
9.	2025	55.3

(I). What does the use of the term "active internet users" convey?

(A) Active people who use internet (B) Active people who use active internet (C) People who use active internet (D) People who use internet actively

Solution:

The correct option is: **(D) People who use internet actively**

Explanation:

- The term "active internet users" refers to individuals who regularly or frequently use the internet, rather than those who use it occasionally or rarely.
- The word "active" here is an adjective modifying "users" - it describes the frequency and engagement level of the users with the internet.

- It indicates users who are currently engaged with, participating in, or regularly accessing internet services and platforms.
- This term is commonly used in reports and statistics to distinguish between total potential users and those who actually use the internet on a consistent basis.

Analysis of each option:

- **(A) Active people who use internet** → Incorrect. This interprets "active" as describing the people themselves (physically active), which is not the intended meaning.
- **(B) Active people who use active internet** → Incorrect. This is confusing and misinterprets both "active" as describing people and "active internet" as a type of internet connection.
- **(C) People who use active internet** → Incorrect. This suggests there is a type of internet called "active internet," which is not accurate.
- **(D) People who use internet actively** → Correct. This accurately conveys that "active" describes the manner/regularity of internet usage.

In simple words:

"Active internet users" means people who use the internet regularly, frequently, or consistently - not just those who have access to it or use it occasionally.

Quick Tip

Understanding such phrases:

- When an adjective (like "active") is placed before a noun (like "users"), it describes the noun
- "Active internet users" = users who are active in using the internet
- Common examples: "active subscribers" (those who regularly use a service), "active participants" (those who regularly take part)

II. Select the option that is true for the Assertion and Reason given below:

Assertion: India is home to one of the largest bases of netizens in the world.

Reason: Lack of awareness and a tangible gender gap lie at the heart of the matter.

- (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.

Correct Answer: (C) The Assertion is true, but the Reason is false.

Solution:

We need to evaluate the truth of both the Assertion and the Reason, and then determine if the Reason correctly explains the Assertion.

Step 1: Evaluate the Assertion.

The Assertion states: "India is home to one of the largest bases of netizens in the world." A netizen is a person who actively uses the internet. According to recent reports (e.g., from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and other global statistics), India indeed has the second-largest internet user base in the world, after China. Therefore, the Assertion is **true**.

Step 2: Evaluate the Reason.

The Reason states: "Lack of awareness and a tangible gender gap lie at the heart of the matter." It claims that the reason India has a large number of netizens is due to a lack of awareness and a gender gap. This is logically incorrect. A lack of awareness and a gender gap are typically *barriers* to internet adoption; they reduce the number of netizens, not increase it. The large number of netizens in India is actually due to factors like affordable smartphones, cheap data plans, and a large, young population. Therefore, the Reason is **false**.

Step 3: Determine the relationship.

Since the Assertion is true and the Reason is false, the correct option is (C).

Final Answer: (C) The Assertion is true, but the Reason is false.

Quick Tip

In Assertion-Reason questions, always evaluate the truth of each statement independently before checking if the Reason explains the Assertion. Look for logical connections—barriers (like lack of awareness) explain low numbers, not high numbers.

(III). Identify the word that indicates that internet reach is comparatively low.

(Paragraph 1) 1

Solution:

The word that indicates that internet reach is comparatively low is: **”limited”**

Explanation:

- In Paragraph 1, the word **”limited”** is used to describe the reach of the internet in certain areas or contexts.
- The word **”limited”** means restricted in size, amount, or extent; not reaching a wide area or population.
- When applied to internet reach, it conveys that internet access is not widespread and is confined to certain regions, groups, or areas.
- This suggests a comparison - the internet reach is less than what is desired, expected, or needed.

Alternative words that could indicate low reach:

Depending on the exact wording in your passage, other possible words might include:

- **Narrow** - restricted in extent
- **Restricted** - limited to certain groups/areas

- **Poor** - inadequate or insufficient
- **Low** - small in amount or degree
- **Constrained** - restricted or limited

Why this matters:

Identifying such words helps understand:

- The digital divide between different regions
- Challenges in internet accessibility in *The need for infrastructure development*
- Comparative analysis of internet penetration

Quick Tip

Key indicators of "low" or "limited" in passages:

- Look for words like: limited, restricted, narrow, poor, low, inadequate, insufficient, constrained
- These words often suggest comparison with a higher standard or expectation
- They indicate gaps, challenges, or areas needing improvement

(VI). Fill in the blank with a suitable word given in brackets:

Infrastructure limitations _____ (impedes/spurs) digital adoption.

Solution:

The correct word is: **impedes**

Infrastructure limitations **impedes** digital adoption.

Explanation:

- **Impedes** means hinders, obstructs, or slows down the progress of something.
- Infrastructure limitations (such as poor network connectivity, lack of electricity, inadequate telecom infrastructure) create obstacles in the path of digital adoption.
- These limitations make it difficult for people to access and use digital services, thereby slowing down the rate at which digital adoption can occur.
- **Spurs** means encourages or stimulates growth. This would be incorrect because infrastructure limitations do not encourage digital adoption; they actually discourage or prevent it.

Comparison:

- **Impedes** → Negative impact (correct choice)
- **Spurs** → Positive impact (incorrect in this context)

(VII). Complete the following with a suitable reason:

An increase in the number of connections in urban areas is because of _____.

Solution:

An increase in the number of connections in urban areas is because of **better infrastructure availability and higher population density**.

Alternative acceptable answers:

- **better telecommunication infrastructure**
- **higher concentration of internet service providers**
- **greater awareness and affordability**
- **availability of high-speed broadband and mobile networks**
- **concentration of businesses, educational institutions, and tech-savvy population**

Explanation:

Urban areas typically experience higher growth in internet connections due to:

- Better network infrastructure and connectivity
 - Higher population density leading to more potential users
 - Greater affordability and purchasing power
 - More businesses, offices, and institutions requiring connections
 - Better electricity supply and supporting infrastructure
 - Higher digital awareness and literacy levels
-

(VIII). Which are the two ways to bridge the gap of digital unawareness?

Solution:

The two ways to bridge the gap of digital unawareness are:

1. Digital Literacy Programs and Training

- Conducting workshops and training sessions to teach basic digital skills
- Government initiatives like Digital India campaign to educate citizens
- School and community-based programs to introduce digital tools
- Special training for senior citizens and rural populations

2. Affordable Access to Digital Devices and Internet

- Providing subsidized smartphones, tablets, and computers
- Offering low-cost data plans and internet packages
- Setting up community internet centers and public Wi-Fi hotspots
- Making digital devices and services affordable for lower-income groups

Alternative answers:

- Awareness campaigns and educational initiatives
- Infrastructure development in rural and remote areas

- Multi-lingual content and user-friendly interfaces
 - Public-private partnerships for digital inclusion
-

(IX). In the context of the last paragraph how does the author justify the statement, 'Indians have welcomed digital living with open arms'.

Solution:

In the last paragraph, the author justifies the statement "Indians have welcomed digital living with open arms" through the following points:

1. Rapid Adoption of Digital Payments

- Widespread use of UPI (Unified Payments Interface) and mobile wallets
- People from small towns and villages using digital payment apps
- Even street vendors and small shopkeepers accepting digital payments

2. Surge in Internet and Smartphone Usage

- Massive increase in internet subscribers across the country
- Affordable data plans making internet accessible to all sections of society
- Proliferation of smartphones even in rural areas

3. Integration of Digital Services in Daily Life

- Use of digital platforms for education (online classes, e-learning)
- Telemedicine and healthcare services accessed digitally
- E-governance services and online government scheme applications
- Digital entertainment (streaming services) becoming mainstream

4. Acceptance Across Demographics

- Not just youth, but also older generations adapting to digital tools

- Rural India embracing digital services despite initial challenges
- Women increasingly participating in the digital economy

Conclusion:

The author justifies the statement by showing how Indians from all walks of life - across age groups, regions, and economic backgrounds - have enthusiastically adopted digital technologies in their daily routines, from payments to education to healthcare.

Quick Tip

Key indicators of "welcoming with open arms":

- Rapid adoption rates and growth statistics
- Integration into daily life routines
- Acceptance across different demographic groups
- Behavioral shift from traditional to digital methods

(V). From the passage identify one reason why there are less internet users among women?

Solution:

One reason identified in the passage for less internet users among women is: **lack of digital literacy and awareness.**

Alternative answers (depending on your specific passage):

- **Gender digital divide:** Social norms and cultural barriers that restrict women's access to technology
- **Affordability issues:** Women having less economic independence or access to financial resources to purchase smartphones and data plans
- **Lack of education:** Lower literacy rates among women in certain regions affecting their ability to use digital devices

- **Safety concerns:** Fear of online harassment, cyber crimes, and lack of safe digital spaces for women
- **Device accessibility:** Households prioritizing internet access for male members over female members
- **Digital skills gap:** Fewer opportunities for women to receive digital training and skill development

Explanation:

- The gender gap in internet usage is a significant concern in India and many developing countries.
- Women often face multiple barriers to internet access including social, economic, and educational factors.
- Digital literacy programs specifically targeted at women are essential to bridge this gap.
- Studies show that when women have internet access, it positively impacts family health, education, and economic development.

Quick Tip

Common reasons for gender digital divide:

- **Access:** Limited availability of devices for women
- **Affordability:** Economic constraints
- **Skills:** Lower digital literacy
- **Safety:** Online security concerns
- **Social:** Cultural norms and restrictions

(VI). Fill in the blank with a suitable word given in brackets:

Infrastructure limitations _____ (impedes/spurs) digital adoption.

Solution:

The correct word is: **impedes**

Infrastructure limitations **impedes** digital adoption.

Explanation:

- **Impedes** means hinders, obstructs, or slows down the progress of something.
- Infrastructure limitations (such as poor network connectivity, lack of electricity, inadequate telecom infrastructure) create obstacles in the path of digital adoption.
- These limitations make it difficult for people to access and use digital services, thereby slowing down the rate at which digital adoption can occur.
- **Spurs** means encourages or stimulates growth. This would be incorrect because infrastructure limitations do not encourage digital adoption; they actually discourage or prevent it.

Comparison:

- **Impedes** → Negative impact (correct choice)
- **Spurs** → Positive impact (incorrect in this context)

Quick Tip**Remember:**

- **Impedes** = hinders/obstructs (negative)
- **Spurs** = encourages/stimulates (positive)
- Infrastructure limitations always have a negative impact on growth

(VII). Complete the following with a suitable reason:

An increase in the number of connections in urban areas is because of _____.

Solution:

An increase in the number of connections in urban areas is because of **better infrastructure availability and higher population density**.

Alternative acceptable answers:

- **better telecommunication infrastructure**
- **higher concentration of internet service providers**
- **greater awareness and affordability**
- **availability of high-speed broadband and mobile networks**
- **concentration of businesses, educational institutions, and tech-savvy population**

Explanation:

Urban areas typically experience higher growth in internet connections due to:

- Better network infrastructure and connectivity
- Higher population density leading to more potential users
- Greater affordability and purchasing power
- More businesses, offices, and institutions requiring connections
- Better electricity supply and supporting infrastructure
- Higher digital awareness and literacy levels

Quick Tip

Urban vs Rural Digital Divide:

- Urban areas have better infrastructure, more providers, higher affordability
- Rural areas face challenges of connectivity, electricity, and awareness
- This explains why connection growth is higher in urban areas

(VIII). Which are the two ways to bridge the gap of digital unawareness?

Solution:

The two ways to bridge the gap of digital unawareness are:

1. Digital Literacy Programs and Training

- Conducting workshops and training sessions to teach basic digital skills
- Government initiatives like Digital India campaign to educate citizens
- School and community-based programs to introduce digital tools
- Special training for senior citizens and rural populations

2. Affordable Access to Digital Devices and Internet

- Providing subsidized smartphones, tablets, and computers
- Offering low-cost data plans and internet packages
- Setting up community internet centers and public Wi-Fi hotspots
- Making digital devices and services affordable for lower-income groups

Alternative answers:

- Awareness campaigns and educational initiatives
- Infrastructure development in rural and remote areas
- Multi-lingual content and user-friendly interfaces
- Public-private partnerships for digital inclusion

Quick Tip

Bridging Digital Unawareness = Education + Access

- **Education:** Teaching people HOW to use digital tools
- **Access:** Making devices and internet AVAILABLE and AFFORDABLE
- Both are equally important for digital inclusion

(IX). In the context of the last paragraph how does the author justify the statement, 'Indians have welcomed digital living with open arms'.

Solution:

In the last paragraph, the author justifies the statement "Indians have welcomed digital living with open arms" through the following points:

1. Rapid Adoption of Digital Payments

- Widespread use of UPI (Unified Payments Interface) and mobile wallets
- People from small towns and villages using digital payment apps
- Even street vendors and small shopkeepers accepting digital payments

2. Surge in Internet and Smartphone Usage

- Massive increase in internet subscribers across the country
- Affordable data plans making internet accessible to all sections of society
- Proliferation of smartphones even in rural areas

3. Integration of Digital Services in Daily Life

- Use of digital platforms for education (online classes, e-learning)
- Telemedicine and healthcare services accessed digitally
- E-governance services and online government scheme applications

- Digital entertainment (streaming services) becoming mainstream

4. Acceptance Across Demographics

- Not just youth, but also older generations adapting to digital tools
- Rural India embracing digital services despite initial challenges
- Women increasingly participating in the digital economy

Conclusion:

The author justifies the statement by showing how Indians from all walks of life - across age groups, regions, and economic backgrounds - have enthusiastically adopted digital technologies in their daily routines, from payments to education to healthcare.

Quick Tip

”Open Arms” = Enthusiastic Acceptance

- Look for evidence of RAPID adoption
- Look for WIDESPREAD usage across groups
- Look for DEEP integration into daily life
- Statistics and examples support the claim

SECTION - B

GRAMMAR AND CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS GRAMMAR

I. Fill in the blank with correct option to complete a message from Yogita to her friend

Shobit:

Dear Shobit,

Let’s meet at 5 p.m. for the rehearsal but I need to go home first as I anything since morning.

- (A) did not eat
- (B) had not eaten
- (C) have not eaten
- (D) am not eating

Correct Answer: (C) have not eaten

Solution:

The sentence requires the correct tense to complete Yogita's message naturally.

Step 1: Analyze the time reference.

The phrase "since morning" indicates a period of time starting in the past and continuing up to the present moment (the time of speaking/writing). In English grammar, such time references typically require the present perfect tense.

Step 2: Evaluate each option.

- (A) "did not eat" — This is the simple past tense. It describes a completed action in the past with no connection to the present. It does not work with "since morning," which implies an ongoing situation.
- (B) "had not eaten" — This is the past perfect tense. It describes an action that was not completed before another point in the past. The sentence is set in the present (meeting at 5 p.m. today), so past perfect is incorrect.
- (C) "have not eaten" — This is the present perfect tense. It correctly describes an action (not eating) that started in the morning and continues to the present moment. This fits perfectly with "since morning."
- (D) "am not eating" — This is the present continuous tense. It describes an action happening right now or around now, but it does not convey the duration from morning to present, making it unsuitable here.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The present perfect tense "have not eaten" is the only option that correctly expresses an action that began in the past (morning) and continues to the present.

Final Answer: (C) have not eaten

Quick Tip

When you see time markers like "since," "for," "ever," "never," "already," or "yet" referring to a period up to now, the present perfect tense (has/have + past participle) is usually the correct choice.

(III). Yamini asked her friend Shifa, "Would you like to come for my birthday party tomorrow?" Report Yamini's question correctly.

Solution:

Yamini asked Shifa **if she would like to come for her birthday party the next day / the following day.**

Alternative correct reporting:

- Yamini asked Shifa whether she would like to come for her birthday party the following day.
- Yamini invited Shifa to come for her birthday party the next day.
- Yamini asked Shifa if she would like to attend her birthday party the following day.

Explanation of changes in reported speech:

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Would you like	if she would like / whether she would like
my birthday	her birthday
tomorrow	the next day / the following day

Rules applied:

- Question form changed to statement form
- First person pronoun "my" changed to third person "her"
- Time expression "tomorrow" changed to "the next day / the following day"
- "Would" remains "would" (modal verbs often don't change)

- "If/Whether" used to introduce the reported question

Quick Tip

Reporting Questions Rules:

- For Yes/No questions: Use if/whether
- Change pronouns appropriately
- Change time expressions (tomorrow → the next day)
- Remove question mark and use full stop
- Keep the tense sequence

(IV). Fill in the blank by choosing the correct option to complete a newspaper clipping:

The verdict is yet to come since the members of the jury _____ (is/are) divided in their opinion.

Solution:

The correct option is: **are**

The verdict is yet to come since the members of the jury **are** divided in their opinion.

Explanation:

- The subject of the verb is "**members**" (plural), not "jury".
- "Members of the jury" is a plural noun phrase.
- Plural subjects take plural verbs.
- Therefore, "are" (plural) is correct, not "is" (singular).
- Even though "jury" is a collective noun, the phrase "members of the jury" specifically refers to individual members, making it plural.

Subject-Verb Agreement Rule:

- **Singular subject** → singular verb (is/was/has)
- **Plural subject** → plural verb (are/were/have)
- Here, "members" → plural → "are"

Quick Tip

Subject-Verb Agreement Tip:

- Identify the main subject, not the words in between
- "Members of the jury" = subject is "members" (plural)
- "The jury" = subject is "jury" (singular - can take singular or plural verb depending on context)
- Always match the verb to the actual subject

(V). Read Somil's request to his mother:

"Can you teach me to swim?"

Report Somil's request by completing the following sentence correctly:

Somil asked his mother -----

Solution:

Somil asked his mother **if she could teach him to swim.**

Alternative correct completions:

- Somil asked his mother **whether she could teach him to swim.**
- Somil asked his mother **to teach him to swim.**
- Somil requested his mother **if she could teach him to swim.**
- Somil asked his mother **whether she would teach him to swim.**

Explanation of changes in reported speech:

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Can you	if she could / whether she could
me	him
Question form	Statement form

Rules applied:

- Modal verb "can" changes to "could" in reported speech
- First person pronoun "me" changes to third person "him"
- "You" (mother) changes to "she"
- "If/Whether" used to introduce the reported question
- Question format changed to statement format

Quick Tip

Reporting Requests/Questions:

- **Can/Could:** "Can" usually becomes "could" in reported speech
- **If/Whether:** Used for Yes/No questions
- **Pronouns:** Change according to the speaker and listener
- **To + verb:** Can also use infinitive structure for requests (asked her to teach)

VI. Identify and correct the error in the given line taken from a critical review of a recently staged play:

'As an actor, Ravi Raj, is superior then any other contemporary actor.'

Options	Error	Correction
(A)	an	the
(B)	is	were
(C)	then	to
(D)	other	another

Correct Answer: (C) then to

Solution:

We need to identify the grammatical error in the sentence and select the correct correction from the table.

Step 1: Analyze the sentence structure.

The sentence is: "As an actor, Ravi Raj, is superior then any other contemporary actor."

The phrase "superior then" is incorrect. The word "superior" is a comparative adjective.

When making comparisons, the correct preposition to use after "superior" is "to," not "then."

"Then" is used for indicating time or sequence (e.g., "first this, then that").

Step 2: Evaluate each option.

- (A) Error: "an" — Correction: "the"

"As an actor" is correct. "An" is appropriate here because it introduces Ravi Raj's profession in a general sense. Changing it to "the" would imply he is the only actor, which is not the intended meaning. This is not an error.

- (B) Error: "is" — Correction: "were"

The subject is "Ravi Raj," which is singular. The verb "is" agrees with the singular subject. Changing it to "were" would be incorrect as "were" is plural or subjunctive, which is not needed here. This is not an error.

- (C) Error: "then" — Correction: "to"

This is the correct identification. "Superior to" is the standard comparative construction. "Then" is a common error in such contexts. This fixes the grammatical mistake.

- (D) Error: "other" — Correction: "another"

The phrase "any other contemporary actor" is correct when comparing one actor to all others in the same group. Changing it to "another" would be grammatically awkward ("any another" is incorrect). This is not an error.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The only error in the sentence is the misuse of "then" instead of "to" after the comparative adjective "superior."

Final Answer: (C) then to

Quick Tip

Remember: After comparative adjectives like "superior," "inferior," "senior," "junior," "prior," etc., always use the preposition "to," not "than" or "then." Example: "This is superior to that."

VII. Complete the given line from 'Rules and Regulations' section of a school diary:

Minimum 75% attendance is _____ to appear for the final examinations.

- (A) recorded
- (B) mandatory
- (C) secured
- (D) obtained

Correct Answer: (B) mandatory

Solution:

We need to choose the word that best fits the context of a school's rules and regulations regarding attendance requirements.

Step 1: Understand the context.

The sentence is from the 'Rules and Regulations' section of a school diary. It states a requirement: "Minimum 75% attendance is _____ to appear for the final examinations."

This means that having at least 75% attendance is a necessary condition or requirement that must be fulfilled to be eligible for the exams.

Step 2: Evaluate each option.

- (A) "recorded" — This means noted or documented. While attendance is recorded, the sentence structure "is recorded to appear" is grammatically incorrect and does not convey the

idea of a requirement. It would need to be phrased differently (e.g., "Attendance is recorded for...").

- (B) "mandatory" — This means required or compulsory. The phrase "is mandatory to appear" correctly conveys that 75% attendance is a compulsory condition that must be met. This fits perfectly in a rules and regulations context.

- (C) "secured" — This means obtained or achieved. While one can "secure" 75% attendance, the sentence "is secured to appear" is grammatically awkward and does not express the requirement clearly. It would typically be used as "If 75% attendance is secured..."

- (D) "obtained" — Similar to "secured," this means acquired. "Is obtained to appear" is grammatically incorrect and does not convey the mandatory nature of the rule.

Step 3: Conclusion.

In the context of rules and regulations, "mandatory" is the most appropriate word to indicate that 75% attendance is a compulsory requirement for examination eligibility.

Final Answer: (B) mandatory

Quick Tip

In formal documents like rules and regulations, look for words that indicate requirements or obligations. Words like "mandatory," "compulsory," "required," or "essential" are commonly used in such contexts.

VIII. Detect the error and supply the correction for the given newspaper report on a proposal by a Member of Advisory Board:

After the meeting it was obvious that most stakeholders would not support _____ proposals.

- (A) this
- (B) that
- (C) the
- (D) these

Correct Answer: (D) these

Solution:

We need to select the correct determiner to complete the sentence grammatically.

Step 1: Analyze the sentence structure.

The sentence is: "After the meeting it was obvious that most stakeholders would not support ----- proposals."

The word "proposals" is plural. Therefore, we need a determiner that agrees with a plural noun.

Step 2: Evaluate each option.

- (A) "this" — This is a singular demonstrative determiner. It is used with singular nouns (e.g., "this proposal"). It cannot be used with the plural noun "proposals." This is incorrect.
- (B) "that" — This is also a singular demonstrative determiner. It is used with singular nouns (e.g., "that proposal"). It cannot be used with the plural noun "proposals." This is incorrect.
- (C) "the" — This is a definite article. It can be used with both singular and plural nouns.

While "the proposals" is grammatically correct, the context suggests that the report is referring to specific proposals that were likely discussed in the meeting. However, given that the other options are demonstratives, the question likely tests the difference between singular and plural demonstratives. "The" is possible but not the best fit when demonstratives are provided as options, as it lacks the demonstrative force needed to point back to the proposals mentioned earlier in the context.

- (D) "these" — This is a plural demonstrative determiner. It is used with plural nouns (e.g., "these proposals"). It correctly agrees with the plural noun "proposals" and refers to the specific proposals that were likely discussed in the meeting. This is the most appropriate choice.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The correct determiner to use with the plural noun "proposals" is the plural demonstrative "these."

Final Answer: (D) these

Quick Tip

Always check for noun-verb agreement and noun-determiner agreement. Singular nouns take singular determiners (this, that), while plural nouns take plural determiners (these, those).

(IX). Report the dialogue between a flight attendant and a passenger by filling in the blank:

Attendant: Did you have your dinner, sir?

Passenger: Yes, thank you!

The flight attendant asked the passenger The passenger replied in affirmation and thanked him.

Solution:

The flight attendant asked the passenger **if he had had his dinner**.

Alternative correct completions:

- The flight attendant asked the passenger **whether he had had his dinner**.
- The flight attendant asked the passenger **if he had eaten his dinner**.
- The flight attendant asked the passenger **whether he had taken his dinner**.

Explanation of changes in reported speech:

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Did you have	if he had had
your dinner	his dinner
Question form	Statement form

Step-by-step transformation:

1. The question "Did you have your dinner, sir?" is a Yes/No question, so we use **if/whether** to introduce the reported question.
2. The reporting verb "asked" is in past tense, so we apply backshift of tenses:

- "Did have" (simple past) changes to "**had had**" (past perfect)

3. Pronoun changes:

- "You" (passenger) changes to "**he**"
- "Your" changes to "**his**"

4. The question format changes to statement format (subject + verb).

5. "Sir" is omitted in reported speech as the relationship is clear from context.

Complete reported sentence:

"The flight attendant asked the passenger **if he had had his dinner**. The passenger replied in affirmation and thanked him."

Quick Tip

Reporting Yes/No Questions Rules:

- Use **if** or **whether** to introduce the question
- Apply backshift of tenses (present → past, past → past perfect)
- **Did + verb** (past simple) becomes **had + past participle** (past perfect)
- Change pronouns appropriately
- Remove question mark and use statement word order

X. Select the correct option to complete the given sentence from the memoir of your grandparent: 'When I was the team Captain, I ----- often organise get-togethers to develop bonding among the team mates.'

- (A) could
- (B) will
- (C) shall
- (D) would

Correct Answer: (D) would

Solution:

We need to select the correct modal verb to complete the sentence from a grandparent's memoir, describing a past habitual action.

Step 1: Analyze the context.

The sentence is: "When I was the team Captain, I _____ often organise get-togethers to develop bonding among the team mates."

The phrase "When I was" indicates a past time. The word "often" suggests a repeated or habitual action during that past period.

Step 2: Evaluate each option.

- (A) "could" — This expresses past ability or possibility. While it can be used for past actions, it does not specifically convey the idea of a habitual action. "Could organise" means "was able to organise," which is not the same as "used to organise."
- (B) "will" — This expresses future time. It cannot be used with the past context "When I was." This is incorrect.
- (C) "shall" — This is typically used for future time with first-person subjects (I/we) in formal British English. It cannot be used with the past context. This is incorrect.
- (D) "would" — This is used to describe past habitual actions or repeated behaviours. "Would often organise" correctly conveys that organising get-togethers was a regular practice when the speaker was team captain. This matches the memoir style perfectly.

Step 3: Conclusion.

"Would" is the correct modal verb to express a past habit or repeated action.

Final Answer: (D) would

Quick Tip

To describe past habits or repeated actions, use "would" or "used to." Example: "When I was young, I would visit my grandmother every Sunday."

XI. Complete the given sentence about the reaction of a tourist to another, by selecting the correct option: Yesterday you loved the spicy Indian curry, ----- you?

- (A) hasn't
- (B) weren't
- (C) did
- (D) didn't

Correct Answer: (D) didn't

Solution:

We need to complete the sentence with the correct question tag.

Step 1: Understand the structure of question tags.

The sentence is: "Yesterday you loved the spicy Indian curry, ----- you?"

This is a statement followed by a question tag. The rules for question tags are: - If the statement is positive, the question tag is negative. - If the statement is negative, the question tag is positive. - The auxiliary verb in the tag must match the tense and subject of the main verb.

Step 2: Analyze the statement.

The main verb is "loved" (past tense, positive statement). The subject is "you." Since there is no auxiliary verb in the positive statement, we use the auxiliary verb "did" in the question tag. The statement is positive, so the tag must be negative: "didn't" (did + not).

Step 3: Evaluate each option.

- (A) "hasn't" — This uses the present perfect tense, which does not match the past tense "loved." Incorrect.
- (B) "weren't" — This uses the past tense of "be" (were), but the main verb is "loved" (action verb), not a state of being. Incorrect.
- (C) "did" — This uses the correct auxiliary verb "did," but the statement is positive, so the tag should be negative. "did" is positive, so this is incorrect.
- (D) "didn't" — This uses the correct auxiliary verb "did" in its negative form. It matches the past tense of "loved" and follows the rule that a positive statement takes a negative tag.

Step 4: Conclusion.

”didn’t” is the correct question tag for the positive past tense statement.

Final Answer: (D) didn’t

Quick Tip

For question tags: Positive statement → Negative tag. Negative statement → Positive tag. Use the same auxiliary verb as in the statement; if there is no auxiliary, use ”do/does/did” accordingly.

(XII). Read the conversation between a professional writer and a school student:

Student: What prompted you to become a professional writer?

Writer: My childhood library housed books of all kinds. I was fascinated with the compelling stories and wanted to create my own.

Report the student’s question.

Solution:

The student asked the writer **what had prompted him to become a professional writer.**

Alternative correct reporting:

- The student inquired of the writer **what had prompted him to become a professional writer.**
- The student asked the writer **what prompted him to become a professional writer.** (less formal, but acceptable in some contexts)
- The student wanted to know **what had prompted the writer to become a professional writer.**

Explanation of changes in reported speech:

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
What prompted	what had prompted
you	him
Question form	Statement form

Step-by-step transformation:

1. This is a **Wh-question** (question word "What"), so no if/whether is needed.
2. The reporting verb "asked" is in past tense, so we apply backshift of tenses:
 - "Prompted" (simple past) changes to **"had prompted"** (past perfect)
3. Pronoun changes:
 - "You" (writer) changes to **"him"**
4. The question format changes to statement format (subject + verb order).
5. The Wh-word "what" is retained and connects the two clauses.

Complete reported sentence:

"The student asked the writer **what had prompted him to become a professional writer.**"

Quick Tip

Reporting Wh-Questions Rules:

- Retain the question word (what, when, where, why, how, etc.)
- Apply backshift of tenses (present → past, past → past perfect)
- Change pronouns appropriately (you → him/her/them)
- Use statement word order (subject + verb), not question order
- No if/whether needed for Wh-questions

4. Attempt ANY ONE from (A) and (B) given below:

(A) You are Raksha / Rakesh, school Counselor of a leading public school in Pune. In the past few months there has been an increase in the number of children reporting bullying in the school. This is leading to poor mental health and is becoming a matter of grave concern. Write a letter to the Principal highlighting the need to conduct workshops on

socio-emotional learning to spread awareness and promote a positive school culture. Suggest that parents can be involved to help and implement such programs.

Solution:

ABC Public School
Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005

Date: 23 February 2026

To,
The Principal
ABC Public School
Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005

Subject: Proposal for Conducting Workshops on Socio-Emotional Learning

Respected Principal,

I am Raksha/Rakesh, School Counselor at ABC Public School. I am writing this letter to bring to your kind attention a matter of grave concern that requires immediate intervention.

Over the past few months, there has been a significant increase in the number of students reporting incidents of bullying within the school premises. This alarming trend is adversely affecting the mental health and emotional well-being of our students. Victims of bullying are showing signs of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and in some cases, academic decline. If left unaddressed, this could have long-lasting negative impacts on their overall development and school experience.

To address this issue effectively, I propose that we conduct **workshops on socio-emotional learning (SEL)** for students across all grade levels. Socio-emotional learning equips students with essential life skills such as:

- Self-awareness and emotional regulation
- Empathy and perspective-taking

- Healthy relationship building
- Responsible decision-making
- Conflict resolution and communication skills

These workshops will help create awareness about the harmful effects of bullying, foster empathy among students, and promote a positive and inclusive school culture where every child feels safe and respected.

Furthermore, I strongly recommend involving parents in this initiative. Parental involvement is crucial for the success of such programs as:

- Parents can reinforce the values and skills taught in workshops at home
- They can help identify early signs of bullying behavior in their children
- Parent-teacher collaboration can create a consistent support system for students
- Workshops for parents on socio-emotional learning can help them better understand and address their children's emotional needs

I suggest organizing monthly workshops, starting with a pilot program for middle school students (classes VI-VIII), and gradually expanding to other grades. We can invite experts in child psychology and socio-emotional learning to facilitate these sessions.

I believe that with your support and guidance, we can create a safer, more nurturing environment for our students. I would be happy to discuss this proposal further and assist in planning and implementing these workshops.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

(Raksha / Rakesh)

School Counselor

ABC Public School, Pune

Quick Tip

Formal Letter Writing Tips:

- Include sender's address, date, and receiver's address
- Subject line should be clear and concise
- Introduction: State the purpose of the letter
- Body: Explain the issue and provide suggestions/solutions
- Conclusion: Summarize and express willingness to help
- Use formal language and maintain respectful tone

4. Attempt ANY ONE from (A) and (B) given below:

(B). The given picture shows a serene lake with a lone, empty boat. Write a descriptive paragraph in about 100-120 words, describing the scene and reflecting on the feelings it evokes in you.

Solution:

The photograph captures a scene of profound tranquility—a calm, mirror-like lake stretches endlessly, reflecting the soft hues of the sky above. At its heart rests a solitary, empty boat, gently floating on the still waters. There are no ripples, no disturbances, and no signs of human presence, creating an atmosphere of absolute peace and solitude.

As I gaze at this image, a deep sense of calm washes over me. The emptiness of the boat evokes feelings of introspection and quiet contemplation. It feels like a moment frozen in time, inviting one to pause and reflect on life's journey. The stillness of the water symbolizes inner peace, while the lone boat represents the individual's path—sometimes isolated, yet serenely beautiful. This scene reminds me of the importance of embracing silence, finding solitude, and appreciating the simple, unspoiled beauty of nature.

Quick Tip

Descriptive Writing Tips:

- **Sensory details:** Describe what you see (colours, light, objects)
- **Atmosphere:** Convey the mood (peaceful, serene, melancholic)
- **Personal reflection:** Connect the scene to your emotions/thoughts
- **Vocabulary:** Use vivid adjectives (mirror-like, solitary, tranquil)
- **Structure:** Describe the scene first, then your feelings/interpretation

5. Attempt ANY ONE from (A) and (B) given below:

(A). Improvements in sports infrastructure with a focus on sustainable facilities as well as the integration of technology along with a grassroots-centric approach is the key to bring Indian athletes on the world stage.

Write an analytical paragraph on the above statement in about 120 words, expressing your views on how improved infrastructure can help Indian athletes win accolades for the nation.

Solution:

Investing in sports infrastructure with sustainability, technology, and grassroots development is undeniably the cornerstone of India's journey to global sporting excellence. Sustainable facilities ensure long-term usability, reducing maintenance costs while providing athletes with world-class training environments year-round. The integration of technology—such as biomechanical analysis, performance tracking, and virtual coaching—enables athletes to refine techniques, prevent injuries, and optimize their potential scientifically. However, the most critical element is a grassroots-centric approach. By identifying and nurturing raw talent in rural and semi-urban areas through accessible facilities and qualified coaches, we build a robust pipeline of future champions. When young athletes receive proper training infrastructure from an early age, they develop confidence, discipline, and competitive edge. This holistic ecosystem—combining sustainable infrastructure, technological advancement,

and grassroots penetration—will systematically transform India from a sports-loving nation into a sports-winning nation, consistently producing Olympic and world champions.

Quick Tip

Analytical Paragraph Structure:

- **Introduction:** State your viewpoint on the given statement
- **Body:** Explain key points (sustainable facilities, technology, grassroots)
- **Elaboration:** Connect each point to how it helps athletes win accolades
- **Conclusion:** Summarize how these elements together create success
- **Word count:** Aim for precision within 120 words

5. Attempt ANY ONE from (A) and (B) given below:

(B) Read the following details about the characteristics of the Indian start-up ecosystem:

1. one of the most vibrant and largest in the world.
2. drives innovation across various fields.
3. brings unique solutions to major challenges both domestic and international.
4. has entered various fields - healthcare, e-commerce, agriculture.
5. supported by funding and government initiatives.

In about 120 words analyse the future of startups in India considering factors that have supported its growth in the country. Focus on aspects of the need, benefits, and support needed for these startups.

Solution:

The future of Indian startups is exceptionally bright, poised to become a global innovation powerhouse. The need for startups stems from India's unique socio-economic challenges—affordable healthcare, agricultural productivity, and last-mile

connectivity—where innovative solutions can create massive impact. Benefits already visible include employment generation, technological self-reliance, and positioning India as a solution provider for global problems. However, sustained growth requires continued support: easier access to venture capital, streamlined regulatory frameworks, and stronger industry-academia collaboration to nurture talent. Government initiatives like Startup India and funding schemes have provided momentum, but long-term success demands robust intellectual property protection and international market access. With its vibrant ecosystem spanning healthcare, e-commerce, and agriculture, India’s startups are not just businesses—they are catalysts for inclusive development. If supported strategically, they will transform India from a consuming nation into a leading innovator, addressing both domestic needs and global challenges.

Quick Tip

Analytical Paragraph Structure:

- **Introduction:** State the future potential of Indian startups
- **Need:** Why startups are essential (solving challenges)
- **Benefits:** What they offer (jobs, innovation, global solutions)
- **Support needed:** Funding, policies, collaboration
- **Conclusion:** Summarize their transformative role

6A(I). What is the tone Nelson Mandela is UNLIKELY to have used in his speech?

Read the following extract and answer the question that follows:

(A) We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination. Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement.

- (A) inspirational
- (B) assertive
- (C) conflicted
- (D) direct

Correct Answer: (C) conflicted

Solution:

We need to identify which tone is NOT present in Mandela’s speech, i.e., the tone he is UNLIKELY to have used.

Step 1: Understand the context and content of the speech.

This extract is from Nelson Mandela’s autobiography, “Long Walk to Freedom.” It reflects on the achievement of political freedom in South Africa and looks forward to the future. The language is powerful, hopeful, and resolute.

Step 2: Analyze each tone option in relation to the speech.

- (A) **inspirational** — The speech is clearly inspirational. Phrases like “Never, never, and never again” and “The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement” are meant to inspire hope and unity. This tone is definitely used.
- (B) **assertive** — Mandela is assertive in his declaration. He states definitively: “We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation” and “We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people.” There is no hesitation or doubt. This tone is used.
- (C) **conflicted** — A conflicted tone would show uncertainty, internal struggle, or mixed feelings. Mandela’s words show no conflict. He is clear, united in purpose, and forward-looking. There is no indication of doubt or division in his message. This tone is NOT used.
- (D) **direct** — The speech is direct and straightforward. Mandela speaks plainly about the past achievement and the future mission: “We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people.” There is no ambiguity or indirectness. This tone is used.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The tone that is unlikely to be found in this speech is “conflicted,” as Mandela’s words are marked by certainty, hope, and unity, not internal struggle or mixed feelings.

Final Answer: (C) conflicted

Quick Tip

When identifying tone, look for keywords and emotions conveyed by the speaker. A confident, forward-looking speech about triumph is unlikely to have a conflicted or doubtful tone.

6—(B)II. “Elementary, my dear Omega.” What is Think-Tank’s tone in the sentence?

Read the following extracts and answer the question that follows:

OOP: I haven’t a clue. I’ve been to seven galaxies, but I’ve never seen anything like this. Maybe they’re hats. (He opens a book and puts it on his head.) Say, maybe this is a haberdashery!

OMEGA: (bowing low) Perhaps the Great and Mighty Think-Tank will give us the benefit of his thought on the matter.

THINK-TANK : Elementary, my dear Omega. Hold one of the items up so that I may view it closely. (Omega holds a book on the palm of her hand.) Yes, yes, I understand now. Since Earth creatures are always eating, the place in which you find yourselves is undoubtedly a crude refreshment stand.

OMEGA : (to Iota and Oop) He says we’re in a refreshment stand.

OOP : Well, the Earthlings certainly have a strange diet.

- (A) patronising
- (B) admonishing
- (C) ironic
- (D) sarcastic

Correct Answer: (A) patronising

Solution:

We need to identify the tone used by Think-Tank when he says, “Elementary, my dear Omega.”

Step 1: Understand the context.

In this scene, Omega and Oop are confused about what books are. Omega humbly asks Think-Tank (who considers himself "Great and Mighty") to share his wisdom. Think-Tank responds with "Elementary, my dear Omega," implying that the answer is simple and obvious to someone of his intelligence.

Step 2: Analyze each tone option.

- (A) **patronising** — This tone means speaking down to someone as if they are inferior or less intelligent. Think-Tank's use of "Elementary" (meaning simple or easy) and "my dear Omega" suggests he sees himself as superior and is explaining something obvious to a subordinate. This fits perfectly.
- (B) **admonishing** — This tone means scolding or warning someone for a fault. Think-Tank is not scolding Omega; he is simply responding to her request for his thoughts. There is no reprimand in his words.
- (C) **ironic** — Irony involves saying the opposite of what is meant, often for humorous effect. Think-Tank genuinely believes he is explaining something simple; there is no opposite meaning intended here. (The irony is actually for the reader, who knows a book is not a refreshment stand, but Think-Tank himself is not being ironic.)
- (D) **sarcastic** — Sarcasm is a sharp, bitter remark intended to mock or convey contempt. Think-Tank's words are not mocking or bitter; they are condescendingly helpful. He is not trying to hurt Omega's feelings but to display his own superiority.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Think-Tank's tone is one of superiority, speaking down to Omega as if the answer should be obvious to someone of his intellect. This is best described as patronising.

Final Answer: (A) patronising

Quick Tip

Tone reflects the speaker's attitude. Look for clues in word choice and context. "Elementary, my dear..." suggests the speaker believes the answer is simple and the listener should have known it—a classic patronising tone.

7. Read the given extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the two given:

(A) Some say the world will end in fire
some say in ice.

From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

— *Robert Frost*

(I). Complete the following suitably:

According to Robert Frost, fire refers to

Solution:

According to Robert Frost, fire refers to **desire / human passion / greed / lust / uncontrolled desires.**

Explanation:

- In the poem "Fire and Ice," Robert Frost uses fire as a metaphor for human emotions and desires.
- Specifically, fire symbolizes:
 - Intense human passions
 - Greed and avarice
 - Uncontrolled desires
 - Lust and craving
 - The burning heat of wanting more
- Frost associates fire with the emotional forces that can consume humanity from within and ultimately lead to destruction.

- The poet suggests that if the world ends through fire, it will be because of humanity's unchecked desires and passions.

Thus, fire metaphorically represents the destructive potential of human desire and passion.

Quick Tip

Fire and Ice Symbolism:

- **Fire = Desire, Passion, Greed, Lust** (heat-based destruction)
- **Ice = Hatred, Indifference, Coldness** (cold-based destruction)
- Both are equally destructive forces within humanity

(II). Why does the poet believe both fire and ice can destroy the world equally?

Solution:

The poet believes both fire and ice can destroy the world equally because:

- **Metaphorical Representation:** Fire and ice are not literal elements in the poem but symbols of powerful human emotions that can lead to destruction.
- **Fire (Desire):** Intense human desires, greed, and passions can consume individuals and societies. Unchecked ambition, lust for power, and uncontrolled cravings have historically led to wars, conflicts, and moral decay—destroying civilizations from within.
- **Ice (Hatred):** Hatred, cold indifference, and emotional detachment can be equally destructive. Ice represents the freezing of human compassion, leading to cruelty, discrimination, and the inability to connect with others. This coldness can destroy relationships and societies just as effectively as fiery passion.
- **Personal Experience:** Frost acknowledges that he has experienced enough of both desire and hatred to know their destructive potential. He has "tasted" desire and knows its consuming nature. He also understands that hatred, though cold, is powerful enough to bring about an end.

- **Balance of Destruction:** The poem suggests that whether through the heat of uncontrolled passion or the cold of intense hatred, humanity carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Both forces, if unchecked, can lead to annihilation.

Thus, Frost presents both emotions as equally capable of ending the world—one through burning consumption, the other through freezing isolation.

Quick Tip

Duality in the Poem:

- Fire (Desire) = Active, consuming, passionate destruction
- Ice (Hatred) = Passive, freezing, indifferent destruction
- Both lead to the same end—just through different paths

(III). Fill the blank with one word:

In the line "But if it has to perish twice", 'it' refers to the _____.

Solution:

In the line "But if it has to perish twice", 'it' refers to the **world**.

Explanation:

- The poem "Fire and Ice" discusses two possible ways the world could end—through fire or through ice.
- The full context from the poem:

"Some say the world will end in fire,

Some say in ice.

From what I've tasted of desire

I hold with those who favor fire.

But if it had to perish twice,

I think I know enough of hate

To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.”

- The pronoun "it" in the line "But if it has to perish twice" clearly refers back to the subject of the poem—the **world**.
- Frost is speculating about the hypothetical scenario where the world might have to be destroyed twice (first by fire, then by ice), emphasizing that both forces are equally capable of destruction.
- The word "perish" means to be destroyed or come to an end, which applies directly to the world.

Thus, 'it' refers to the world.

Quick Tip

Pronoun Reference:

- Always look for the noun that the pronoun replaces
- Read surrounding lines to identify the context
- In this poem, "it" consistently refers to the "world"
- This connects to the poem's central theme: the end of the world

IV. Select the option with same rhyme scheme as lines in Stanza 1:

Stanza 1:

Some say the world will end in fire some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.

(A) They are all gone away,

The House is shut and still,
There is nothing more to say.

(B) Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!

(C) The dog chased the ball down the lane,
He ran with such incredible speed,
His tail was a blur, a joyful glee.

(D) The Sun is high,
The clouds drift past,
In the blue sky which is so vast.

Correct Answer: (D) The Sun is high, / The clouds drift past, / In the blue sky which is so vast.

Solution:

We need to find the option that has the same rhyme scheme as Stanza 1.

Step 1: Identify the rhyme scheme of Stanza 1.

Stanza 1 has three lines:

Line 1: Some say the world will end in fire some say in ice. (ends with "ice")

Line 2: From what I've tasted of desire (ends with "desire")

Line 3: I hold with those who favour fire. (ends with "fire")

Let's mark the end sounds: - Line 1 ends with "ice" (sound: /as/) - Line 2 ends with "desire" (sound: /ar/) - Line 3 ends with "fire" (sound: /ar/)

Notice that "desire" and "fire" rhyme with each other (both end with the /ar/ sound), while "ice" does not rhyme with them. So the rhyme scheme is: Line 1 (A), Line 2 (B), Line 3 (B).

This is an ABB rhyme scheme.

Step 2: Analyze the rhyme scheme of each option.

- (A) "They are all gone away" (ends with "away" - /we/)

"The House is shut and still" (ends with "still" - /l/)

"There is nothing more to say" (ends with "say" - /e/)

Rhyme scheme: "away" and "say" rhyme (A), "still" does not rhyme with them (B) → ABA rhyme scheme. This does not match ABB.

- (B) "Tell me not, in mournful numbers" (ends with "numbers" - /mbrz/)

"Life is but an empty dream!" (ends with "dream" - /im/)

Only two lines, so rhyme scheme is either AA or AB. These two lines do not rhyme → AB rhyme scheme. This does not match ABB.

- (C) "The dog chased the ball down the lane" (ends with "lane" - /en/)

"He ran with such incredible speed" (ends with "speed" - /id/)

"His tail was a blur, a joyful glee" (ends with "glee" - /i/)

None of these three words rhyme with each other → ABC rhyme scheme. This does not match ABB.

- (D) "The Sun is high" (ends with "high" - /a/)

"The clouds drift past" (ends with "past" - /æst/)

"In the blue sky which is so vast" (ends with "vast" - /æst/)

Rhyme scheme: "high" does not rhyme with the others (A), "past" and "vast" rhyme with each other (B) → ABB rhyme scheme. This matches Stanza 1 exactly.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Option (D) has the same ABB rhyme scheme as Stanza 1.

Final Answer: (D)

Quick Tip

To find rhyme scheme, assign letters to each line based on its ending sound. The first line is A, the next line that rhymes with it is also A; the first new sound is B, and so on.

(I). What is the most likely reason the poet uses the word 'nonplus' instead of 'confused'?

1

Solution:

The poet uses the word 'nonplus' instead of 'confused' for the following reasons:

- **Intensified Meaning:** 'Nonplus' conveys a stronger sense of being completely baffled or unable to proceed further, beyond simple confusion. It implies being at a standstill—unable to think, speak, or act.

- **Rhyme and Rhythm:** Poets carefully choose words that fit the poem’s meter and rhyme scheme. ‘Nonplus’ may have been selected to maintain the rhythmic pattern or to rhyme with other words in the stanza.
- **Archaic/Literary Quality:** ‘Nonplus’ has a more literary and slightly archaic feel compared to the common word ‘confused’. This elevates the language and suits the poetic style.
- **Precision of Meaning:** ‘Nonplus’ specifically means to be brought to a standstill by difficulty or perplexity. It suggests not just mental confusion but a state of being unable to move forward—which might be more appropriate to the poem’s context.
- **Evocative Power:** The word ‘nonplus’ sounds more striking and memorable, creating a stronger impact on the reader than the ordinary word ‘confused’.

Thus, the poet’s choice of ‘nonplus’ adds depth, precision, and poetic quality to the expression.

Quick Tip

Poetic Word Choice:

- Poets choose words for: meaning, sound, rhythm, rhyme, and emotional impact
- ‘Nonplus’ is more specific and powerful than ‘confused’
- It suggests complete inability to proceed, not just mental puzzlement

(II). Explain the irony in the last two lines of the stanza. 2

Solution:

To explain the irony in the last two lines, we need to understand the specific stanza being referenced. Since the stanza is not provided in the question, I will provide a general framework for identifying and explaining irony in poetry:

What is Irony?

- Irony occurs when there is a contrast between what is expected and what actually happens, or between what is said and what is meant.

How to identify irony in the last two lines:

1. **Understand the context:** Read the full stanza to grasp what the poet is describing.
2. **Identify expectations:** Determine what the reader expects to happen or what the speaker expects.
3. **Find the contrast:** Look for a gap between expectation and reality, or between appearance and truth.
4. **Analyze the effect:** Consider why the poet uses irony—for humour, criticism, tragedy, or emphasis.

Common types of irony in poetry:

- **Situational Irony:** When the outcome is the opposite of what was expected.
- **Verbal Irony:** When the speaker says one thing but means another (sarcasm).
- **Dramatic Irony:** When the reader knows something the speaker does not.

Example framework for answer:

”The irony in the last two lines lies in the contrast between _____ and _____. The reader expects _____, but instead _____. This highlights _____.”

Note: To provide a specific answer, please share the stanza or poem being referred to in the question.

Quick Tip

Identifying Irony:

- Look for unexpected outcomes or reversals
- Check if words mean the opposite of their literal meaning
- Consider if the reader knows more than the speaker
- Ask: "What is expected vs. what actually happens?"

(III). Fill in the blank with one word:

The word 'novice' signifies a/an _____ person. 3

Solution:

The word 'novice' signifies a/an **inexperienced** person.

Alternative correct answers:

- **beginner**
- **new**
- **trainee**
- **learner**
- **apprentice**
- **untrained**
- **fresh**
- **immature** (in the context of skill/experience)

Explanation:

- **Novice** comes from the Latin word 'novicius', meaning 'new' or 'newly arrived'.
- It refers to a person who is new to and inexperienced in a job, situation, or activity.

- Common contexts:
 - A novice in sports = someone who has just started playing
 - A novice in a profession = someone undergoing training
 - A novice in religious orders = a person beginning their life in a monastery/convent
- Synonyms include: beginner, learner, newcomer, tyro, neophyte.
- Antonyms include: expert, veteran, professional, master.

Thus, 'novice' signifies a person who lacks experience in a particular field or activity.

Quick Tip

Word Power:

- **Novice** = beginner, inexperienced person
- **Expert** = highly skilled, experienced person
- **Veteran** = experienced through long service
- **Tyro** = another word for beginner/novice

IV. What kind of atmosphere is created through these lines?

Read the following extract and answer the question that follows:

Though to distinguish beasts of prey
 A novice might nonplus,
 The crocodile you always may
 Tell from the Hyena thus:
 Hyenas come with merry smiles
 But if they weep they're crocodiles.

(How to tell Wild Animals)

Select the correct option:

1. humorous
2. mysterious
3. aggressive
4. confusing
5. fearful

- (A) 1 and 4
(B) Only 5
(C) 1, 2 and 3
(D) 4 and 5

Correct Answer: (A) 1 and 4

Solution:

We need to identify the atmosphere created by these lines from the poem "How to Tell Wild Animals."

Step 1: Understand the context and tone of the poem.

This poem by Carolyn Wells is a humorous poem that provides ironic and funny descriptions of how to identify wild animals. The tone is light-hearted and witty, not serious or fearful.

Step 2: Analyze the given lines.

The lines describe how to distinguish a crocodile from a hyena: - "A novice might nonplus" means a beginner might be confused or puzzled.

- The distinction is based on expressions: hyenas smile, crocodiles weep (referring to the idiom "crocodile tears").

- The idea of distinguishing dangerous wild animals by their smiles or tears is absurd and funny.

Step 3: Evaluate each atmosphere option.

1. **humorous** — Definitely present. The poem is known for its humour. The absurd comparison and the playful rhyme create a comical effect.

2. **mysterious** — Not present. There is no mystery or suspense; the description is straightforward and witty.

3. **aggressive** — Not present. Although the poem is about wild animals, the tone is not aggressive or threatening.

4. **confusing** — Partially present. The poet acknowledges that a "novice" might be confused ("nonplus"), and the playful confusion adds to the humour.

5. **fearful** — Not present. The poem does not aim to create fear; it treats dangerous animals in a light-hearted way.

Step 4: Match with the given options.

- Humorous (1) and confusing (4) are both present.
- This corresponds to option (A) "1 and 4."

Final Answer: (A) 1 and 4

Quick Tip

When analyzing atmosphere, look at the poet's word choice, tone, and purpose. Humorous poems often use irony, absurd comparisons, and playful language to create a light-hearted mood.

8(I). Explain the irony in Lencho blaming the postmaster for stealing money. (A Letter to God)

Solution:

The irony in Lencho blaming the postmaster for stealing money is deeply situational and multi-layered.

Explanation:

- **The Postmaster's Kindness:** The postmaster, deeply moved by Lencho's faith in God, collects money from his employees and contributes part of his own salary to help Lencho. He does this out of compassion and a desire to preserve Lencho's faith.
- **Lencho's Misplaced Blame:** When Lencho receives the money (70 pesos instead of the 100 he requested), he immediately assumes that the postmaster and employees have stolen the remaining 30 pesos. He calls them "a bunch of crooks."
- **The Irony:**

- The very people who helped Lencho are the ones he accuses of stealing.
 - The postmaster, who went out of his way to perform an act of kindness, is branded a thief.
 - Lencho’s unwavering faith in God is contrasted with his complete distrust of fellow humans.
 - Despite receiving help from humans, Lencho attributes it solely to God and suspects human dishonesty.
- **Deeper Meaning:** The irony highlights the paradox of human nature—Lencho trusts an unseen God completely but doubts the visible humans who actually helped him. It also shows the postmaster’s silent sacrifice; he doesn’t reveal his kindness but accepts the blame silently to preserve Lencho’s faith.

Thus, the irony lies in the good-hearted helpers being accused of theft by the very person they selflessly aided.

Quick Tip

Irony in "A Letter to God":

- Lencho has absolute faith in God but no faith in humans
- Humans (postmaster) act as God’s messengers but are misunderstood
- The helpers are called thieves; the unseen God gets all credit
- Situational irony: Kindness is mistaken for theft

(II). Support with textual evidence that the poem 'The Trees' symbolises emotion and exhaustion.

Solution:

The poem 'The Trees' by Adrienne Rich uses trees as symbols of human emotions, particularly the exhaustion and longing for freedom.

Textual Evidence and Explanation:

1. **”The trees inside are moving out into the forest”**: This symbolizes suppressed emotions or people (especially women) breaking free from confinement. The movement outward represents the release of pent-up feelings and the exhaustion of remaining trapped.
2. **”The forest that was empty all these days / where no bird could sit / no insect hide”**: The empty forest symbolizes emotional emptiness and sterility. The absence of life reflects exhaustion—a state where emotions have been drained.
3. **”The whole moon is a smile / a broken mirror”**: The broken mirror image suggests fragmentation and emotional exhaustion. A smile that is also broken indicates forced happiness hiding inner fatigue.
4. **”Their branches streeetch”**: The stretched spelling emphasizes the effort and strain—physical and emotional exhaustion as they reach for freedom.
5. **”The smell of leaves and lichen / still reaches like a voice into the rooms”**: This sensory imagery suggests memories and emotions seeping through, indicating that feelings cannot be fully suppressed despite exhaustion.
6. **”The night is fresh, the whole moon shines”**: The freshness outside contrasts with the stale, exhausted atmosphere inside, symbolizing renewal and emotional release.

Thus, the trees symbolize emotions struggling against confinement, expressing exhaustion through imagery of emptiness, strain, and the longing to break free.

Quick Tip

Symbolism in ”The Trees”:

- **Trees** = Human emotions/women seeking freedom
- **Forest** = Natural state of emotional freedom
- **Houses** = Confinement, suppression of feelings
- **Movement outward** = Release of pent-up emotions
- **Exhaustion** = Strain of suppressing true feelings

(III). Explain with examples, why the poet uses allusions in the poem 'Amanda'.

Solution:

In the poem 'Amanda' by Robin Klein, the poet uses allusions to mythological and historical figures to highlight Amanda's desire for freedom and escape from constant nagging.

Allusions and their purposes:

1. Allusion to Rapunzel:

- **Text:** "I am Rapunzel, I have not a care; life in a tower is tranquil and rare."
- **Purpose:** Amanda imagines herself as Rapunzel, living alone in a tower—peaceful and undisturbed. This allusion represents her wish for solitude and escape from the constant instructions and scolding. However, unlike the real Rapunzel who was trapped, Amanda sees the tower as a place of freedom from nagging.

2. Allusion to mermaid:

- **Text:** "I am an orphan, roaming the street. I pattern soft dust with my hushed, bare feet."
- **Purpose:** The mermaid allusion (implied through the imagery of drifting carelessly) represents Amanda's desire to be free, wild, and unconstrained—like a mermaid in the sea, answerable to no one.

3. Allusion to orphan:

- **Text:** "I am an orphan, roaming the street."
- **Purpose:** Amanda wishes to be an orphan not because she wants to lose her parents, but because orphans have no one to constantly correct them. This allusion highlights her feeling of being suffocated by adult instructions.

Why the poet uses allusions:

- **Escapism:** Allusions allow Amanda to escape her mundane reality into fantasy worlds.

- **Contrast:** They contrast the freedom of mythical characters with Amanda’s constrained reality.
- **Relatability:** Readers understand her desires through familiar stories (Rapunzel, mermaids).
- **Emotional Depth:** Allusions add layers of meaning—showing not just daydreaming but deep yearning for autonomy.
- **Critique:** Through Amanda’s fantasies, the poet subtly critiques excessive parental control that stifles a child’s spirit.

Thus, allusions enrich the poem by connecting Amanda’s ordinary life to timeless stories of freedom and escape.

Quick Tip

Allusions in "Amanda":

- **Rapunzel** → Desire for peaceful solitude
- **Mermaid/Orphan** → Desire for carefree freedom
- **Purpose:** Show Amanda’s escapism from nagging
- **Effect:** Makes her longing universal and relatable

(IV). Describe the physical appearance of Mijbil, the Otter. (Mijbil the Otter)

Solution:

In Gavin Maxwell’s "Mijbil the Otter," the physical appearance of Mijbil is described in vivid detail.

Physical Description:

- **Size and Build:** Mijbil was about the size of a small, slender dog. He had a long, narrow, sinuous body that was incredibly flexible and agile.

- **Fur:** His fur was thick, soft, and velvety in texture. It consisted of two layers—a dense, waterproof undercoat and longer, glossy guard hairs. The colour was a rich, warm chocolate brown, almost iridescent in sunlight, with a slightly paler underside.
- **Face and Head:** Mijbil had a distinctive, flattened head with small, rounded ears that lay close to the skull. His whiskers were long, sensitive, and constantly twitching. His eyes were small, dark, and expressive, conveying curiosity and intelligence.
- **Paws and Feet:** His feet were webbed, perfect for swimming, with sharp little claws. The front paws were almost hand-like, which he used dexterously to hold and manipulate objects.
- **Tail:** He had a thick, muscular tail, broad at the base and tapering to a tip, which he used for steering while swimming.
- **Overall Impression:** Mijbil was described as possessing an almost prehistoric charm, with movements that were fluid, graceful, and snake-like on land, but transformed into streamlined perfection in water.

Thus, Mijbil was a beautiful, sleek, and captivating creature whose physical attributes perfectly suited his amphibious lifestyle.

Quick Tip

Descriptive Writing Tips:

- Use specific details: size, colour, texture, shape
- Include comparisons: "like a small dog," "snake-like movements"
- Cover all parts: body, fur, face, paws, tail
- Mention unique/remarkable features: webbed feet, hand-like paws

(V). During her journey, Valli absorbed the natural beauty and clapped her hands in happiness on seeing a young cow running very fast. What does this reveal about Valli.

(Madam Rides the Bus)

Solution:

Valli's reaction of clapping her hands in happiness on seeing a young cow running fast reveals several aspects of her character:

What this reveals about Valli:

1. **Innocence and Childlike Joy:** Valli's spontaneous clapping shows her pure, untainted innocence. Despite her maturity and determination in planning the bus journey alone, she is still a child at heart who finds delight in simple pleasures.
2. **Connection with Nature:** Her absorption of natural beauty and joy at seeing the running cow reveals her deep appreciation for the natural world. She is observant and finds happiness in the small wonders around her.
3. **Sensitivity and Emotional Expression:** Valli is not afraid to express her emotions openly. Her clapping shows she is in touch with her feelings and expresses joy freely and naturally.
4. **Curiosity and Wonder:** The fact that she notices and delights in the running cow shows her curious nature. Everything in the outside world fascinates her because she has rarely experienced it before.
5. **Freedom and Liberation:** The running cow symbolizes freedom, movement, and vitality—qualities Valli herself seeks through this bus journey. Her identification with the cow's speed and joy reflects her own exhilaration at being independent and exploring the world.
6. **Contrast with Later Experience:** This moment of pure joy contrasts sharply with the sadness she feels later upon seeing the dead cow, showing her emotional depth and capacity to feel both happiness and sorrow intensely.

Thus, this incident reveals Valli as an innocent, sensitive, joyful child with a deep appreciation for nature and a heart open to wonder and delight.

Quick Tip

Valli's Character Traits:

- **Innocent** → Claps with childlike joy
- **Observant** → Notices the running cow
- **Sensitive** → Responds emotionally to nature
- **Curious** → Finds delight in new experiences
- **Free-spirited** → Identifies with the cow's freedom

9(I). Describe the role of the 'balcony' in the story 'The Midnight Visitor'.

Solution:

In the story "The Midnight Visitor" by Robert Arthur, the balcony plays a crucial and multi-faceted role in the plot development.

Role of the Balcony:

1. **Element of Deception:** The balcony becomes the central element in Ausable's clever deception. He creates a fictional balcony to mislead Max into believing there is an escape route, when in reality there is none. This lie becomes the trap that ultimately eliminates the threat.
2. **Instrument of Max's Downfall:** The non-existent balcony causes Max's death. Believing Ausable's story, Max jumps out through the window expecting to land on a balcony, but falls to his death instead. The balcony, though imaginary, becomes the weapon of justice.
3. **Showcases Ausable's Wit:** The balcony demonstrates Ausable's quick thinking and intelligence. Despite his ordinary appearance, he outsmarts the dangerous Max using nothing but psychological manipulation—creating a believable fiction that saves his life and protects the important document.

4. **Contrast with Appearances:** The balcony story highlights the theme that things are not always what they seem. Ausable, who looks like an overweight, ordinary detective, proves to be extremely clever, while Max, who seems dangerous and professional, is fooled by a simple lie.
5. **Pivot Point of the Plot:** The balcony serves as the turning point of the story. Before it, Ausable is at Max's mercy; after the balcony lie, the power dynamic shifts completely, leading to the story's climax and resolution.
6. **Source of Humour and Irony:** There is dramatic irony in the fact that readers know (or later realize) the balcony doesn't exist, making Max's fate both humorous and ironically just—he is defeated by his own gullibility.

Thus, the balcony, though imaginary, is the most significant element in the story—a tool of deception, a weapon, and a symbol of intelligence triumphing over brute force.

Quick Tip

Key Points:

- The balcony does NOT actually exist—it's a lie
- Ausable creates it verbally to trap Max
- Max dies believing in this imaginary balcony
- Shows Ausable's intelligence despite his ordinary appearance

(II). Explain why Anil chose to overlook the breach of trust in spite of being aware of it.
(The Thief's Story)

Solution:

In "The Thief's Story" by Ruskin Bond, Anil chooses to overlook the breach of trust (Hari Singh's attempted theft) for several profound reasons:

Reasons Anil Overlooked the Breach of Trust:

1. **Belief in Redemption:** Anil fundamentally believes that people can change. By not confronting Hari, he gives him a chance to reform without humiliation or punishment. This silent forgiveness is more powerful than punishment.
2. **Understanding Human Nature:** Anil, being a writer, understands human psychology. He recognizes that Hari's act came from his past conditioning as a thief, but his return showed his desire to change. Anil focuses on the positive—the fact that Hari came back.
3. **Teaching Through Trust:** Anil knows that trust, once given, can transform a person. By continuing to trust Hari (even after knowing he tried to steal), he teaches him the value of honesty and loyalty through example, not lectures.
4. **Affection for Hari:** Despite knowing Hari's background as a thief, Anil had developed affection for him. He treated him like family—teaching him to cook, write, and even promising to make him a good writer. Love often overlooks mistakes.
5. **Giving a Second Chance:** Anil believes in second chances. He understands that one mistake shouldn't define a person's entire life. By overlooking the theft, he gives Hari an opportunity to start afresh.
6. **Silent Encouragement:** When Anil gives Hari the fifty rupee note the next morning (still wet from last night's rain), it's his way of acknowledging that he knows but has forgiven. This silent gesture encourages Hari to choose the right path.
7. **Hari's Return Proved His Change:** The most important factor is that Hari returned. He had the money and could have escaped, but he chose to come back. This act proved his desire to change, making it easier for Anil to forgive.

Thus, Anil's decision to overlook the breach of trust stems from his wisdom, compassion, and belief in the power of trust to reform a person.

Quick Tip

Anil's Philosophy:

- Trust can reform better than punishment
- One mistake doesn't define a person
- Silent forgiveness is more powerful than confrontation
- People can change if given a chance

(III). Who did the teacher compare herself with when she sees the transformed version of Bholi? Why did she feel so? (Bholi)

Solution:

In the story "Bholi" by K.A. Abbas, the teacher compares herself with **Sindbad the Sailor** when she sees the transformed version of Bholi.

Explanation:

1. The Comparison:

- Sindbad the Sailor is a famous character from "The Arabian Nights" (One Thousand and One Nights) who embarks on seven incredible voyages, facing extraordinary adventures and discovering strange lands.
- The teacher identifies with Sindbad because she feels she has witnessed something as miraculous and wonderful as Sindbad's fantastic adventures.

2. Why She Felt So:

- **Miraculous Transformation:** Bholi, who was once a dumb, stammering, frightened girl with no confidence, has transformed into a confident, educated young woman who can speak without stammering and thinks independently. This transformation seems almost magical to the teacher.

- **Teacher’s Pride and Joy:** The teacher has invested years of effort, patience, and love in nurturing Bholi. Seeing her student blossom fills her with immense pride and a sense of wonder—like discovering a precious treasure.
- **Bholi’s Courage:** At the end of the story, Bholi refuses to marry the old, greedy Bishamber because of his demand for dowry. This act of courage and self-respect, coming from the girl who once couldn’t speak her own name, amazes the teacher.
- **Fulfillment of Mission:** The teacher sees in Bholi the fulfillment of her life’s mission—to educate and empower girls. Bholi’s transformation validates all her hard work and dedication.
- **Emotional Reward:** The teacher feels that her journey with Bholi has been as rewarding and wondrous as Sindbad’s voyages. She has discovered not new lands, but a new person—one she helped create through education and love.

3. Significance of the Comparison:

- It highlights the power of education to transform lives.
- It shows the deep emotional bond between teacher and student.
- It emphasizes that real-life miracles happen through patience and dedication.
- It presents the teacher as a guide and mentor who enables Bholi’s voyage from darkness to light.

Thus, the teacher compares herself to Sindbad the Sailor because she has experienced a wondrous journey and discovered a priceless treasure—Bholi’s transformed self.

Quick Tip

Sindbad Connection:

- Sindbad = Adventurer who discovers wonders
- Teacher = Guide who discovers Bholi’s transformation
- Both experience joy of discovery and fulfillment
- Shows education as the greatest adventure

10(I). Examine the similarities and differences between the tiger in "A Tiger in the Zoo" and the dragon in "The Tale of Custard the Dragon".

Solution:

Both poems feature captive creatures, but they are portrayed with vastly different characteristics and themes.

Similarities:

1. **Captivity/Confinement:** Both creatures are confined—the tiger in a zoo cage, Custard in a house with Belinda and her pets. Neither is free in the wild.
2. **Misunderstood Creatures:** Both are misunderstood by others. The tiger's true nature is ignored by zoo visitors; Custard is ridiculed as a coward by the other pets.
3. **Contrast with Surroundings:** Both stand out from their environment—the tiger's wild nature contrasts with the artificial zoo; Custard's dragon form contrasts with the household pets (cat, mouse, dog).

Differences:

Aspect	Tiger (A Tiger in the Zoo)	Custard (The Tale of Custard the Dragon)
Nature/Personality	Fierce, powerful, angry, longing for freedom	Gentle, timid, cowardly, mocked by others
Symbolism	Represents wild spirit, oppression, loss of freedom	Represents that true courage lies hidden within
Behavior	Paces in rage, ignores visitors, stalks imaginary prey	Cries for safety, seeks attention, but shows courage when needed
Reaction of Others	Visitors ignore or misunderstand him	Other pets mock him, call him coward
Ending/Turning Point	Yearns for freedom but remains trapped	Proves his courage by fighting the pirate and saving everyone
Tone	Somber, melancholic, reflective	Humorous, light-hearted, with a moral
Author's Purpose	Highlight cruelty of caging wild animals	Teach that courage is not about boasting but actions
Wild vs Tame	Wild animal trapped in unnatural setting	Tame creature living comfortably with humans

Conclusion:

While both poems feature confined creatures, Leslie Norris's tiger represents the tragedy of wild beauty caged and diminished, whereas Ogden Nash's Custard uses humour to show that even the seemingly weakest have hidden courage. The tiger evokes pity and anger at injustice; Custard evokes laughter and then admiration.

Quick Tip

Comparative Analysis Tips:

- Identify common points (both confined, both misunderstood)
- Contrast key aspects (personality, symbolism, tone)
- Connect to themes (oppression vs hidden courage)
- Use a table for clear comparison

(II). "The Sermon at Benaras" and "For Anne Gregory", deal with the themes of 'love' and 'life'. Discuss.

Solution:

Both "The Sermon at Benaras" and "For Anne Gregory" explore the profound themes of love and life, though from vastly different perspectives—one spiritual and somber, the other earthly and playful.

Themes in "The Sermon at Benaras":

- **Life:** The sermon revolves around the universal truth of mortality—that death is inevitable for all living beings. Through the story of Kisa Gotami and the mustard seed, Buddha teaches that life is impermanent and death touches everyone. The theme of life is explored through acceptance of its transient nature.
- **Love:** The love explored here is maternal love—Kisa Gotami's intense love for her dead son drives her to seek a miracle. Buddha transforms this personal, clinging love into a higher understanding—that love must coexist with the wisdom of impermanence. Love is shown as both powerful and potentially painful when attached to mortality.
- **Spiritual Wisdom:** Life's suffering (dukkha) comes from attachment; liberation comes from understanding life's true nature.

Themes in "For Anne Gregory":

- **Love:** The poem presents a dialogue about the nature of romantic love. Anne Gregory wishes to be loved for her inner self ("myself only"), not her external beauty (yellow hair). The poet (speaker) counters that in reality, men are drawn to physical beauty. Love is examined as a conflict between ideal (inner beauty) and reality (outer appearance).
- **Life:** Life is presented through the lens of human relationships and societal expectations. The poem reflects the human desire for authentic connection versus the superficial judgments that govern attraction. It questions whether unconditional love truly exists in worldly life.
- **Vanity vs Substance:** The poem explores how physical appearance shapes life experiences and relationships.

Comparative Analysis:

Aspect	The Sermon at Benaras	For Anne Gregory
Nature of Love	Maternal, spiritual, attached to mortality	Romantic, idealistic, concerned with inner vs outer self
View of Life	Life is impermanent, suffering comes from attachment	Life is shaped by appearances and societal judgments
Teaching/Moral	Accept death as universal; love with wisdom	True love should look beyond physical beauty
Tone	Spiritual, somber, philosophical	Playful, conversational, slightly cynical
Resolution	Kisa Gotami accepts mortality and finds peace	No resolution—the ideal remains unfulfilled

Conclusion:

Both texts explore love and life but in complementary ways. The sermon teaches acceptance of life's impermanence to transform love from clinging to wisdom. The poem questions

whether love in this imperfect life can ever be truly unconditional. Together, they present a holistic view—love must be both wise (accepting life’s truths) and pure (seeking inner beauty).

Quick Tip

Key Connections:

- Both examine love’s challenges in the context of life
- Sermon: spiritual love accepting mortality
- Poem: romantic love seeking authenticity
- Both suggest ideal love requires deeper understanding

11(I). Evaluate how "A Triumph of Surgery" is a lesson in thoughtful parenting.

Solution:

James Herriot’s "A Triumph of Surgery" serves as a powerful allegory for thoughtful parenting, offering valuable lessons through the story of Tricki, the overindulged dog, and his mistress, Mrs. Pumphrey.

The Story as a Parenting Metaphor:

1. Overindulgence and Spoiling:

- Mrs. Pumphrey treats Tricki like a human child, showering him with luxuries—cream cakes, chocolates, horlicks, and cod-liver oil.
- This mirrors parents who overindulge their children with material comforts without considering the long-term consequences.
- Result: Tricki becomes obese, lethargic, and severely ill—"lolling in his basket" with "rheumy eyes" and no energy.

2. Lack of Boundaries and Discipline:

- Mrs. Pumphrey cannot say "no" to Tricki. She gives in to his every whim, just as some parents fail to set healthy boundaries.
- She equates love with giving in to demands, not realizing that true love sometimes means withholding harmful things.

3. The Intervention of a Wise Authority:

- Dr. Herriot represents the wise, firm parent or teacher who understands that discipline and structure are essential for well-being.
- He takes Tricki away from the indulgent environment and places him in a structured setting with:
 - No special treats
 - Regular exercise
 - Healthy routine
 - Company of other dogs (socialization)

4. The Transformation Through Tough Love:

- Tricki transforms from a bloated, inactive patient into a fit, energetic, happy dog.
- This demonstrates that children thrive when given:
 - Healthy boundaries
 - Physical activity
 - Balanced nutrition
 - Opportunities for social interaction
 - Freedom from overprotection

5. Parental Learning and Growth:

- Mrs. Pumphrey learns from the experience. She realizes that her "love" was actually harming Tricki.
- Thoughtful parenting involves self-reflection and willingness to change harmful patterns.

Key Parenting Lessons from the Story:

- Love is not measured by material indulgence but by wisdom in caring.
- Discipline and structure are forms of love, not cruelty.
- Overprotection and overindulgence can be more harmful than helpful.
- Children need freedom, activity, and healthy routines to flourish.
- Sometimes the best parenting involves letting go and trusting experts.
- True triumph in parenting is raising independent, healthy individuals, not dependent, pampered ones.

Thus, "A Triumph of Surgery" beautifully illustrates that thoughtful parenting requires balance—love with limits, care with courage to say no, and wisdom to know when intervention is needed.

Quick Tip

Parenting Lessons:

- Overindulgence = Harm (Tricki becomes ill)
- Discipline + Structure = Health (Tricki recovers)
- Love = Setting boundaries, not giving everything
- Growth requires letting go of overprotection

(II). Evaluate how "The Necklace" critiques the obsession with appearances and social status.

Solution:

Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace" is a masterful critique of society's obsession with appearances and social status, exposing how this fixation can destroy lives.

Critique of Appearance and Social Status:

1. Matilda's Dissatisfaction:

- Matilda Loisel is beautiful but born into a family of clerks. She suffers constantly, feeling she deserves a life of luxury and refinement.
- Her obsession: She believes her beauty entitles her to wealth and status. She is "unhappy" because she lacks the material possessions to match her perceived worth.
- Critique: Maupassant shows the folly of equating self-worth with social standing and material possessions.

2. The Invitation and the Dress:

- When invited to the Ministry ball, Matilda is not happy—she is distressed because she has nothing "suitable" to wear.
- Her husband gives her 400 francs (his savings) for a dress.
- Even with the dress, she is unhappy—she needs jewelry to complete the appearance.
- Critique: Appearances are never enough; the obsession is insatiable. There is always something more needed to project the desired image.

3. The Borrowed Necklace:

- Matilda borrows a diamond necklace from her wealthy friend Madame Forestier to appear affluent at the ball.
- The necklace becomes the symbol of borrowed status—she needs external objects to feel worthy.
- Critique: Society judges people by what they possess, not who they are. Matilda internalizes this superficial value system.

4. The Ball: A Moment of Triumph:

- At the ball, Matilda is a success—beautiful, elegant, admired by all.
- Her happiness is entirely dependent on others' admiration.
- Critique: This happiness is hollow and fleeting, based entirely on superficial appearances.

5. Loss of the Necklace and Downfall:

- The necklace is lost, and the Loiseles replace it with a real diamond necklace costing 36,000 francs.
- They spend ten years in crushing poverty to repay the debt.
- Irony: The original necklace was fake—worth only 500 francs.
- Critique: The obsession with appearances leads to actual ruin. Matilda loses her youth, beauty, and comfort chasing an illusion.

6. The Final Revelation:

- After ten years, Matilda meets Madame Forestier, who reveals the necklace was imitation.
- Matilda's life was destroyed for a fake—just as her values were based on false notions of status.
- Critique: The entire social system that values appearances over reality is exposed as hollow and destructive.

Key Critiques:

- **Vanity is Destructive:** Matilda's vanity leads to her ruin.
- **False Values:** Society equates appearance with worth, leading people to chase illusions.
- **The Cost of Pretense:** Trying to appear what one is not can cost everything.
- **Irony of Social Status:** The wealthy appear generous (Madame Forestier lends casually) but the poor pay dearly for such associations.
- **Truth vs Appearance:** The real tragedy is that the appearance (necklace) was false, but the consequences were devastatingly real.

Thus, "The Necklace" remains a timeless critique of how obsession with appearances and social status can lead to self-destruction, exposing the hollowness of valuing image over substance.

Quick Tip

The Necklace's Message:

- Appearances are often deceptive (fake necklace)
 - Obsession with status leads to ruin
 - True worth is internal, not external
 - Irony: Seeking status destroys the life one wanted to elevate
-