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Candidates must write the Set No on the title page of the answer book.

SAHODAYA PRE BOARD EXAMINATION -2025-26

- Please check that this question paper contains **12** printed pages.
- Set number given on the right-hand side of the question paper should be written on the title page of the answer book by the candidate.
- Check that this question paper contains **13** questions.
- Write down the Serial Number of the question in the left side of the margin before attempting it.
- 15 minutes' time has been allotted to read this question paper. The question paper will be distributed 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination. The students will read the question paper only and will not write any answer on the answer script during this period. Students should not write anything in the question paper.

CLASS- XII**Sub.: ENGLISH CORE (301)****Time Allowed: 3 hours****Maximum marks: 80****General Instructions:****Read the following instructions very carefully and strictly follow them:**

- (i) This question paper has **13** questions. **All** questions are **compulsory**.
- (ii) This question paper contains **three** sections- Section A: **Reading Skills**, Section B: **Creative Writing Skills** and Section C: **Literature**.
- (iii) Attempt all questions based on specific instructions for each part. Write the correct question number and part thereof in your answer sheet.
- (iv) Separate instructions are given with each question /part, wherever necessary.
- (v) Adhere to the prescribed word limit while answering the questions.

SECTION A**READING SKILLS (22 marks)**

- 1. Read the following passage carefully: (12)**
1. I could hear the squeaking that heralded the evening arrival of the bats. I listened to the sounds that announced the coming of night. Every day my hearing grew sharper. I was learning to filter out the unimportant noises and to give no sign that I could hear everything that went on in the house. I could not sleep. The air was heavy and still, the moon hidden behind thick banks of cloud. Lord Otori was sound asleep. I did not want to leave the house I had come to love so much, yet I seemed to bring nothing but trouble to it. Perhaps it would be better for everyone if I just vanished in the night.
 2. Now I heard the hiss of hot water as the bath was prepared, the clatter of dishes from the kitchen, the sliding sigh of the cook's knife, a dog barking two streets away, and the footsteps on the wooden bridges over the canals. I knew the sounds of the house—day and night, in sunshine and under rain. Yet this evening, I realised I was waiting for something more. For what?

3. I began to wonder if I could leave the house without setting the dogs barking or alerting the guards. I started consciously listening for them. Usually, I heard the dogs bark on and off throughout the night, but that night they were silent. I set my ears for the guards: a foot on stone, a whispered conversation—nothing. Sounds that should have been there were missing from the familiar web of the night. I was wide awake now, straining to hear. Then came the slightest sound, hardly more than a tremor, between the window and the ground. Someone was climbing up the side of the house.
4. My first instinct was to call out, but caution took over. I rose from the mattress and crept silently to Lord Otori’s side. I knelt beside him and whispered, “Lord Otori, someone is outside.” He woke instantly, reached for his sword and knife, and gestured towards the window. The faint tremor came again. Lord Otori passed me the knife. We waited. The intruder climbed slowly, unhurried, as if he had all the time in the world.
5. He paused on the sill to take out the knife he planned to use, and then stepped inside. Lord Otori seized him in a stranglehold. The intruder struggled; I leapt forward, and the three of us tumbled into the garden like fighting cats. The man fell first, striking his head on a boulder. Lord Otori landed on his feet; my fall was broken by a shrub. The intruder groaned, tried to rise, but slipped back into the water. “Get a light,” Lord Otori said. I ran inside, took a candle, and returned. The assassin had died without regaining consciousness. It turned out he had a poison pellet in his mouth, which he had crushed as he fell. He was dressed in black, with no markings on his clothes. There was nothing to tell us who he was.

(Adapted from “Tales of the Otori” by Lian Hearn)

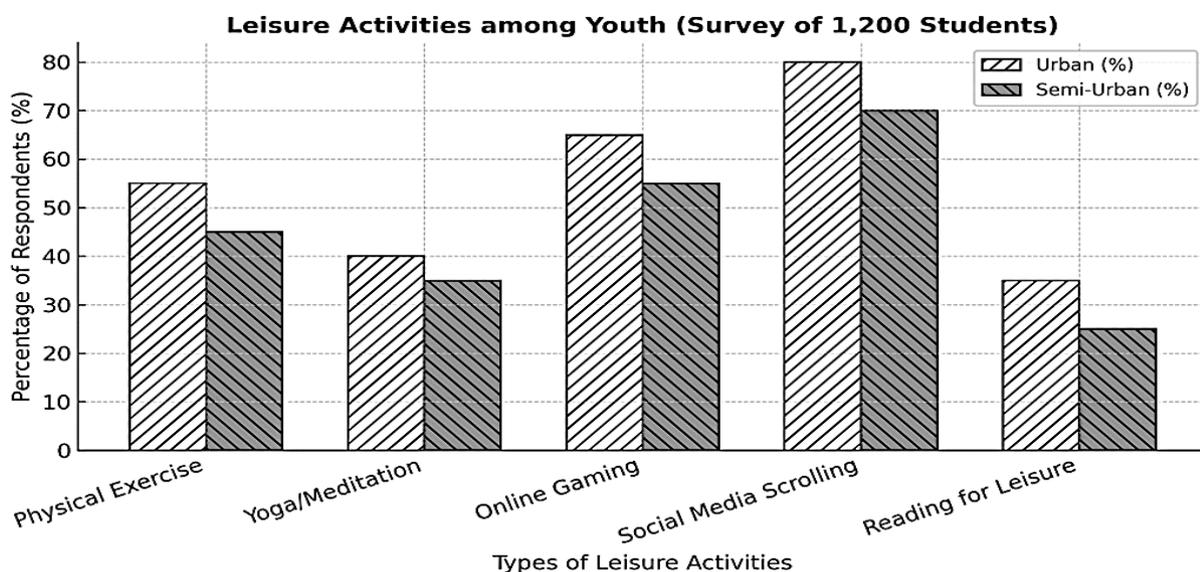
Answer the following questions, based on the above passage:

- (i) Why did the narrator consider leaving the house in the middle of the night? (1)
- (ii) Complete the sentence appropriately:
The narrator’s inability to sleep shows that he was _____ . (1)
- (iii) Which of the following best describes the mood created in the passage? (1)
 - A. Calm and restful
 - B. Tense and suspenseful
 - C. Joyful and content
 - D. Dreamy and nostalgic
- (iv) What made the narrator suspicious that something was wrong? Choose the correct option. (1)
The narrator became suspicious because _____ .
 - A. the night was unusually quiet and familiar sounds of dogs and guards were missing
 - B. rush of guards and barking of dogs
 - C. the cook was working late at night
 - D. Lord Otori was already asleep

- (v) What quality of the narrator is revealed through his response to the intruder’s presence? (1)
- A. His ability to stay composed and act with strategic alertness
- B. His tendency to overthink ordinary night sounds
- C. His reliance on Lord Otori for every decision
- D. His hesitation to trust his own instincts
- (vi) Choose the most suitable meaning of the phrase “*My fall was broken by one of the shrubs.*” (1)
- A. The narrator injured himself while falling into the shrubs
- B. The shrubs prevented the narrator from a hard fall
- C. The shrubs made the fall more painful
- (vii) What do the sounds described in the second paragraph suggest about the narrator’s state of mind?
(Answer in 40 words) (2)
- (viii) Describe how the assassin met his end and what it revealed about his purpose.
(Answer in 40 words) (2)
- (ix) What does the closing sentence “There was nothing to tell us who he was” reveal about the nature of the threat faced by Lord Otori? (1)
- (x) Identify and explain the significance of any two auditory image used in the passage that helps create an atmosphere of tension. (1)

2. Read the following passage carefully: (10)

1. A recent study titled *Leisure Activities among Youth* surveyed 1,200 high school and college students to understand how young people spend their free time. The study focused on identifying the most common leisure activities, comparing the preferences of urban and semi-urban students.
2. Participants were asked to choose from five popular activities: physical exercise, yoga/meditation, online gaming, social media scrolling, and reading for leisure. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews, and the consolidated findings are shown in the bar chart.



3. The survey revealed that social media scrolling dominated leisure habits, with 80% of urban and 70% of semi-urban students spending significant time on it daily. Online gaming was the second most common, with 65% of urban and 55% of semi-urban students involved. In contrast, physical exercise and yoga/meditation had moderate participation rates, with slightly higher figures among urban students. Reading for leisure, however, was the least popular, followed by only 35% of urban and 25% of semi-urban respondents.
4. Students cited stress relief and social connection as key reasons for preferring screen-based activities. Researchers noted that although technology offers entertainment and quick satisfaction, it also reduces the time spent on mentally restorative or creative pursuits.
5. Experts suggested that educational institutions introduce regular wellness sessions, reading clubs, and activity-based breaks to balance digital engagement with mindful and physical recreation. They further recommended awareness campaigns to promote healthy digital habits and the importance of self-discipline in managing screen time.

(Created for educational use • 356 words)

Answer the following questions, based on the above passage:

- (i) What was the primary objective of the survey on leisure activities among youth? (1)
 - A. To study the impact of exercise on academic performance
 - B. To identify common leisure habits among students in different regions
 - C. To promote the use of social media in education
 - D. To measure the popularity of reading among adults
- (ii) The data was collected through _____ and _____. (1)
- (iii) Which leisure activity had the highest participation among both urban and semi-urban students? (1)
- (iv) Fill in the blank appropriately:
According to the chart, the least preferred activity among youth is _____. (Physical Exercise / Yoga & Meditation / Reading for Leisure) (1)
- (v) Why do most students prefer screen-based leisure activities? (*Answer in 2–3 sentences, Ref: Paragraph 4*) (2)
- (vi) Choose the most suitable meaning of the term “*mentally restorative*” as used in Paragraph 4. (1)
 - A. Physically demanding
 - B. Mentally refreshing and calming
 - C. Mentally restrained
 - D. Technically advanced
- (vii) Suggest two ways schools can help students strike a balance between digital and non-digital activities. (*Answer in about 40 words, Ref: Paragraph 5*) (2)
- (viii) Which of the following aspects was **not** covered in the study? (1)
 - A. The difference in leisure preferences across regions

- B. The reasons for preferring digital activities
- C. The effect of social media on attention span
- D. Suggestions for balanced recreation

SECTION B

CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS (18 MARKS)

All the names and addresses used in the questions are fictitious. Resemblance, if any, is purely coincidental.

3. Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in about 50 words. (4)

- (a) You are Rachael/Rueben Shah, President of the Wellness Cell of your school. You decide to organise a workshop, to raise awareness on the importance of mental health. This workshop would be conducted by the school counsellor. Write a notice, informing the students of class XI-XII about the workshop.

OR

- (b) You are the Head Boy/Head Girl of your school. The school has decided to conduct a Workshop on Cyber Safety and Responsible Internet Use for senior students. Write a notice informing them about the workshop details and encouraging attendance.

4. Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in about 50 words. (4)

- (a) You are Daisy/Daniel Maria, living at 39, Parvat Niwas Colony, Shimla. You decide to hold a dinner party to celebrate your parents 25th wedding anniversary. Draft an invitation card in not more than 50 words to invite all family members and friends to attend a grand dinner at Hotel Holiday Home.

OR

- (b) You are Rohan Das, a renowned Scholar residing at 52, Lake View Colony, Cuttack. You were invited to attend a Panel Discussion on “Youth and Social Responsibility” at KIIT University, Bhubaneswar. Write a formal reply in about 50 words, *accepting* the invitation and expressing your gratitude for being considered.

5. Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in about 120-150 words. (5)

- (a) You are Sonia/Shivam of 96, Main Street, Green City, Delhi. Write a letter to the Editor of a local daily expressing your views on the increased screen time among children and its harmful effects on their well-being. Suggest practical steps that parents, schools, and the community can take to reduce screen dependency and promote healthier lifestyles among young learners. You may use the following cues as well as your own ideas:

- Excessive use of mobile phones, tablets, and gaming devices
- Impact on eyesight, sleep patterns, concentration, and social behaviour
- Reduction in outdoor play and physical activity
- Need for screen-time limits and supervised digital use
- Role of educators and parents in encouraging hobbies, reading, and real-world engagement

OR

(b) You are Sudhanshu Chaturvedi, a resident of B-43, Church Street, Hyderabad. You recently came across the following job advertisement published in *The Hyderabad Express*. Study the advertisement carefully and write an appropriate letter of application for the position. Enclose your bio-data and include all necessary details.

Wanted: Assistant Event Coordinator

Starline Media Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, invites applications from young and energetic professionals for the role of **Assistant Event Coordinator**.

- **Qualifications:** Graduate in any discipline (preference for Event Management graduates)
- **Skills Required:** Excellent communication, creativity, multitasking ability, organisational and leadership skills
- **Experience:** 0–3 years
- **Salary:** Negotiable as per industry standards

Apply with a detailed resume to:

The HR Manager
Starline Media Pvt. Ltd.
Plot No. 89, Anna Nagar
Chennai – 600040

Email: hr@starlinemedia.in

Phone: +91-98761-23450

6. Attempt ANY ONE of the two, (a) or (b), in about 120-150 words. (5)

(a) Education today is undergoing a remarkable transformation—from a content-heavy, traditional system to one that prioritises skills, flexibility, and individual needs. Alongside foundational subjects, students now have access to diverse courses such as design, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship. This departure from rigid structures has allowed learners to explore their interests, develop their talents, and discover their potential. Using the ideas given below, write an article on the topic “**Changing Trends in Education.**”

Changing Trends in Education

Then → Now

- Limited subjects → Diverse subject choices
- Rigid subject streams → Integrated and flexible syllabus
- Academic-only focus → Interest and aptitude-based learning
- Rote learning → Technology-enabled learning
- Pen-and-paper approach → Competency-based assessment

OR

(b) A brilliant musical concert was organised in your city during the Diwali season, featuring renowned as well as emerging musicians from across the country. As a correspondent for *The Indian Express*, write a report on the event. You are Inder Mishra.

You may use the following points for guidance:

- Purpose behind organising the concert
- Description of the venue and performances by various artists
- Celebrities and dignitaries in attendance
- How the event offered a unique and meaningful way of celebrating Diwali

SECTION C

LITERATURE (40 marks)

7. Read the following extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the given two, (a) or (b). (6)

(a) The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,
or if ever aside a moment, then out of sorts
at having the landscape marred with the artless paint
of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong
offered for sale wild berries in wooden quarts,
and the beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene.

(*The Roadside Stand – Robert Frost*)

- (i) What contrast does the poet establish between “polished traffic” and the “roadside stand”? (1)
- (ii) Complete the following statement appropriately:
The city dwellers’ reaction to the roadside stand reveals their _____. (1)
- (iii) Which poetic device is used in “the landscape marred with the artless paint,” and how does it contribute to the tone of the poem? (1)
- (iv) What does the expression “mind ahead” suggest about the attitude of the travellers? (1)
- (v) Choose the option that best describes the central theme in the extract. (1)
- a) The earnest efforts of the rural poor are seen as a blemish to the landscape

- b) The city travellers appreciate the aesthetic effort of the poor.
 - c) The roadside sellers exploit the passers-by.
 - d) The poet celebrates the success of rural trade.
- (vi) What does the phrase “artless paint” symbolise in the context of the poem? (1)
- a) Innocence and simplicity of rural life
 - b) Commercial sophistication
 - c) Artificiality of modern civilisation
 - d) Anger and protest

OR

- (b)** Aunt Jennifer’s tigers prance across a screen,
 Bright topaz denizens of a world of green,
 They do not fear the men beneath the tree;
 They pace in sleek chivalric certainty. (Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers-Adrienne Rich)
- (i) Why are the tigers addressed as Aunt Jennifer’s tigers? (1)
- (ii) Complete the following suitably. (1)
 The fearlessness of Aunt Jennifer’s tigers is an apt analogy for women’s independence because _____.
- (iii) Examine briefly how the tigers shine like bright topaz in their own domain. (1)
- (iv) Fill in the blank with the correct option from those given in the brackets. (1)
 The use of the word ‘chivalric’ depicts the tigers as brave and _____ (noble/afraid/dangerous) creatures.
- (v) If a student were to infer about Aunt Jennifer’s inner world through her depiction of the tigers, which of the following would be chosen? (1)
 Options:
 a) She uses art to challenge her oppressive boundaries.
 b) She portrays the tigers to escape from the monotony of daily life.
 c) She uses the tigers to show that nature is more powerful than human beings.
 d) She creates the tigers simply to showcase her artistic skill.
- (vi) What does the poet imply about the quality of the tigers in the line ‘They pace in sleek chivalric certainty’? (1)
- a) Tigers are the imaginary creation of Aunt Jennifer.
 - b) Tigers move majestically with a sense of pride and honour.
 - c) Tigers enjoy complete freedom in their own world.
 - d) Tigers move meekly with a sense of coyness.

8. Read the following extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the given two, (a) or (b): (4)

- (a) “The young master is so proud of his skill to save life that he saves any life,” the cook said contemptuously. She split a fowl’s neck skilfully and held the fluttering bird and let its blood flow into

the roots of a wisteria vine. Blood is the best of fertilisers, and the old gardener would not let her waste a drop of it. “It is the children of whom we must think”. Yumi said sadly. “What will be their fate if their father is condemned as a traitor?” They did not try to hide what they said from the ears of Hana as she stood arranging the day’s flowers in the veranda nearby, and she knew they spoke on purpose that she might hear. That they were right she knew too in most of her being. But there was another part of her which she herself could not understand. (The Enemy-Pearl S. Buck)

- (i) What does Hana imply when she senses that “there was another part of her which she herself could not understand”? What does this reveal about her inner conflict? (1)
- (ii) Fill in the blank suitably. (1)
- They were not trying to hide anything from Hana. This was to _____ their intentions and make her aware of the situation.
- (iii) Identify the moment in the passage that reflects the servants’ belief in traditional practices. (1)
- (iv) How does overhearing the cook and Yumi’s conversation affect Hana emotionally? (1)
- Choose the most appropriate option.
- a) She feels a growing fear about the risks her family might face.
- b) She feels angry that the servants are questioning Sadao’s authority.
- c) She feels detached, as the situation does not concern her directly.
- d) She feels reassured that the servants will handle the situation wisely.

OR

- (b) I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward’s! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now, I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

(Memories of Childhood – Zitkala-Sa)

- (i) What does the cutting of Zitkala-Sa’s hair symbolise in the context of her cultural identity? (1)
- (ii) Complete the following sentence appropriately: (1)
- The narrator compares herself to “*a wooden puppet*” to express her feeling of _____.
- (iii) What does the phrase “*one of many little animals driven by a herder*” highlight? (1)
- (iv) Choose the correct option from the following as per the given extract: (1)
- a) The extract exposes the dehumanising impact of cultural oppression.
- b) It celebrates the narrator’s acceptance of Western education.
- c) It portrays her strength in overcoming childhood humiliation.
- d) It shows the kindness of her teachers in comforting her.

9. Read the following extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the given two, (a) or (b): (6)

(a) Here I sit, she said to herself, wishing Danny would come, wishing he would come and sensing the time passing. I feel the pangs of doubt stirring inside me. I watch for him but still there is no sign of him. I remember Geoff saying he would never come, and how none of them believed me when I told them. I wonder what will I do, what can I tell them now if he doesn't come? But we know how it was, Danny and me — that's the main thing. How can you help what people choose to believe? But all the same, it makes me despondent, this knowing I'll never be able to show them they're wrong to doubt me. (*Going Places – A. R. Barton*)

(i) Fill in the blank appropriately:

Sophie's "pangs of doubt" reveal the conflict between _____ and reality. (1)

(ii) What does Sophie's repeated wish for Danny's arrival suggest about her state of mind? (1)

(iii) Complete the sentence suitably:

Geoff's disbelief foreshadows Sophie's inevitable confrontation with _____. (1)

(iv) Which of the following best describes Sophie's emotional journey in the extract? (1)

- a) Confidence to disillusionment
- b) Anger to acceptance
- c) Hope to forgiveness
- d) Defiance to indifference

(v) What does the line "*But we know how it was, Danny and me*" reveal about Sophie's perception of truth? (1)

(vi) How does the writer evoke sympathy for Sophie in this passage? (1)

OR

(b) H. G. Wells in an interview in 1894 referred to "the interviewing ordeal," but was a fairly frequent interviewee and forty years later found himself interviewing Joseph Stalin. Saul Bellow, who has consented to be interviewed on several occasions, nevertheless once described interviews as being like thumbprints on his windpipe. Yet despite the drawbacks of the interview, it is a supremely serviceable medium of communication. (*The Interview – Christopher Silvester*)

(i) What does the expression "the interviewing ordeal" imply about H. G. Wells's attitude towards interviews? (1)

(ii) Complete the following with the correct option: (1)

Saul Bellow's comparison of interviews to "thumbprints on his windpipe" vividly conveys—

- a) Humiliation and discomfort
- b) Authority and confidence
- c) Excitement and curiosity
- d) Ease and openness

- (iii) How do H. G. Wells and Saul Bellow's experiences help highlight the paradox of interviews? (1)
- (iv) Fill in the blank appropriately:
The phrase "supremely serviceable medium" implies _____ . (1)
- (v) How does the juxtaposition of negative imagery with the final sentence in the extract create a balanced view of interviews? (1)
- (vi) Choose the correct interpretation: (1)
- Interviews are exploitative and useless.
 - Interviews are flawed but vital to communication.
 - Interviews should be banned altogether.
 - Interviews reveal more about the interviewer than the subject.

10. Answer ANY FIVE of the following six questions in 40-50 words each: (5x2=10)

- (i) How does M. Hamel's statement, "We have all a great deal to reproach ourselves with," point to shared responsibility for the situation? (The Last Lesson)
- (ii) How does the narrator's assertion, "But I was not finished," hint at an unresolved internal conflict ? (Deep Water)
- (iii) The people left in 'utter bafflement' after the English poet's speech. Mention two things the speaker could have kept in mind before addressing an audience to avoid such a reaction. Give your rationale for it. (Poets and Pancakes)
- (iv) What deeper change in the peddler's self-perception is suggested by his choice to sign himself as "Captain von Stahle"? (The Rattrap)
- (v) How does Gandhiji's response to the conditions in Champaran demonstrate the qualities of an effective leader? Use any two examples from the chapter to support your reasoning. (Indigo)
- (vi) How do the images of the 'fishermen in the cold sea' and the 'man gathering salt' highlight the need for a moment of pause in the poem *Keeping Quiet*?

11. Answer ANY TWO of the following three questions in 40-50 words each: (2x2 = 4)

- (i) In *The Third Level*, Charley's fascination with the past reflects a psychological need rather than historical curiosity. Analyse how his belief in the third level serves as an escape from the insecurities of the modern world.
- (ii) Climate Change is a major concern these days. Has Tishani Doshi touched upon the major areas of drastic change happening due to human activities? Exemplify. (Journey to the End of the Earth)
- (iii) In *On the Face of It*, Mr. Lamb's interaction with Derry becomes a metaphor for healing through acceptance. Explain how dialogue functions as a means of emotional transformation in the story.

12. Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions in 120-150 words. (5)

A. Both *Lost Spring* and *Indigo* portray exploitation, though in different forms—one rooted in child labour and generational poverty, the other in colonial injustice. Examine how each author presents the lived struggles of the oppressed and the ways in which hope, resistance, or agency emerge in their narratives. What broader insights about social justice do these chapters encourage readers to reflect upon?

OR

B. How does the poignancy of the speaker's fear of losing her aging mother in *My Mother at Sixty-Six* contrast with the consoling idea in *A Thing of Beauty* that beautiful things offer lasting joy and relief from life's anxieties? What does this contrast reveal about the different ways humans cope with emotional distress?

13. Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions in 120-150 words: (5)

A. In *The Tiger King*, Kalki exposes the absurdities of autocratic power and the dangers of unchecked ego. How does the story critique the misuse of authority and highlight the limits of human control over fate? Support your answer with relevant examples from the text.

OR

B. In *On the Face of It*, both Derry and Mr. Lamb have personalities shaped by their past experiences—one withdrawn and distrustful, the other open and accepting. Explain how their meeting brings out these contrasting traits and shows the possibility of change. How does their interaction help us understand the theme of overcoming fears and accepting oneself?