

SAHODAYA PRE BOARD EXAMINATION 2025-26

SUBJECT - ENGLISH CORE, CLASS: -XII

MARKING SCHEME SET-1

Q. NO	VALUE POINTS	MARKS ALLOTTED
	SECTION-A READING SKILLS	22 marks
	NOTE: The objective of the reading section is to focus on testing a candidate's ability to comprehend. No marks should be deducted for mistakes in usage and grammar, spelling or word –limit. Full marks may be awarded if a student has been able to identify the core ideas. If a student literally lifts a portion of the given passage as an answer to a question, no mark(s) to be deducted for this, as long as it is relevant.	
1.	Answer the following questions, based on the above passage:	12 marks
(i)	He felt guilty for bringing trouble to the household and believed leaving quietly might protect the people he cared for. Acceptable Variations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He thought his presence was causing harm and wanted to avoid further problems. • He wished to disappear to keep others safe. 	1
(ii)	Restless and anxious — He sensed something unusual that kept him awake, showing unease and vigilance. Alert and watchful — His sharpened hearing and awareness of the smallest sounds indicate an instinctive readiness for danger. Guilt-ridden and troubled — His reflection that he “brought nothing but trouble” suggests emotional turmoil and inner conflict. Apprehensive and tense — The heavy stillness of the night and his inability to relax reveal a subconscious fear of what might happen. Award full marks (1 mark) for any one answer that clearly conveys emotional disturbance, vigilance, or inner unrest, even if phrased differently.	1
(iii)	B. Tense and suspenseful	1
(iv)	A. the night was unusually quiet and familiar sounds of dogs and guards were missing	1
(v)	A. His ability to stay composed and act with strategic alertness	1
(vi)	B. The shrubs prevented the narrator from a hard fall	1
(vii)	The narrator's acute awareness of every noise — from the clatter of dishes to distant barking — shows his heightened alertness and anxiety . His sharpened senses reflect an uneasy anticipation of danger and an inability to relax. Partial Credit (1 mark): If response mentions only alertness <i>or</i> anxiety, without development.	2
(viii)	The assassin struck his head on a boulder during the struggle and crushed a poison pellet in his mouth, dying instantly. This shows he was a trained killer on a suicide mission , ready to die without revealing his identity. Partial Credit (1 mark): If student mentions only accidental death without the poison or purpose.	2
(ix)	It reveals the secrecy and organised nature of the danger surrounding Lord Otori. The assassin's anonymity suggests an invisible conspiracy , making the threat more ominous and unpredictable. Acceptable Variations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates enemies working secretly. • Shows the mystery and uncertainty of the attack. 	1

(x)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “The hiss of hot water as the bath was prepared” → The soft <i>hiss</i> creates an illusion of domestic calm, which contrasts with the narrator’s growing unease — intensifying the tension through irony. 2. “The clatter of dishes from the kitchen” → The everyday noise feels unnaturally loud in the still night, heightening the reader’s sense of alertness and foreboding. 3. “The footsteps on the wooden bridges over the canals” → This distant, rhythmic sound evokes anticipation and suspense, suggesting unseen movement and the presence of others. 4. “A dog barking two streets away” → The faint bark accentuates the surrounding silence; it signals isolation and a subtle warning of approaching danger. 5. “The slightest sound, hardly more than a tremor, between the window and the ground” → This almost imperceptible noise signals intrusion and breaks the eerie quiet, triggering the story’s climax. 6. “The squeaking that heralded the evening arrival of the bats” → The squeaks of bats mark the transition to night, a time of secrecy and fear, foreshadowing the threat to come. <p>Evaluator Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit any two clearly identified sound + a short explanation linking it to <i>mood, tension, or foreshadowing</i>. • Award 1 mark in full for any two accurate textual example interpreted meaningfully. • Paraphrased versions of the auditory image (e.g., “sound of bats,” “faint tremor at the window”) are acceptable if sense is correct. 	1
2.	Answer the following questions, based on the above passage:	10 marks
(i)	B. To identify common leisure habits among students in different regions	1
(ii)	The data was collected through questionnaires and interviews.	1
(iii)	Social media scrolling had the highest participation among both urban and semi-urban students.	1
(iv)	According to the chart, the least preferred activity among youth is Reading for Leisure.	1
(v)	Most students prefer screen-based activities because they provide stress relief and a sense of social connection. Technology offers quick entertainment and instant satisfaction, making it more appealing than physically or mentally demanding activities.	2
(vi)	B. Mentally refreshing and calming	1
(vii)	Schools can promote balance by introducing wellness or yoga sessions and reading or hobby clubs to encourage mindful recreation. They can also conduct awareness drives on healthy screen habits and provide activity-based breaks during the school day.	2
(viii)	C. The effect of social media on attention span	1
3.	Attempt any one of the two, (a) or (b), in about 50 words NOTICE WRITING	4 marks
	Distribution of Marks: Format :1, Content: 2, Accuracy of Spelling and Grammar: 1	
(a)	Box, name of issuing authority- organisation/ agency (top centre), NOTICE (centre), date of issue (aligned left) Authorisation name, designation & signature (bottom left) NOTE-full credit if all aspects included. Partial credit (½ mark) if one-two aspects are missing. No credit if more than two aspects are missing. Name of issuing authority/organization, NOTICE, date of issue, heading, signature/name & designation (bottom left) → Drawing attention — students of Classes XI–XII → Suggested value points • Mental Health Awareness Workshop • Conducted by: School Counsellor	4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised by: Wellness Cell • Venue: Auditorium / Seminar Hall • Purpose: importance of mental health, emotional well-being • Date & Time: (e.g.) 3 December 2025 • Eligibility: Class XI–XII students • Line with reference to the undersigned: For further details, contact the undersigned. <p>→ Expression Clarity, accuracy, relevance, appropriate tone → Coherence of Ideas Logical sequencing, completeness, fluency</p>	
(b)	<p>Box, name of issuing authority- organisation/ agency (top centre), NOTICE (centre), date of issue (aligned left) Authorisation name, designation & signature (bottom left) NOTE-full credit if all aspects included. Partial credit (½ mark) if one-two aspects are missing. No credit if more than two aspects are missing.</p> <p>Name of issuing authority/organization, NOTICE, date of issue, heading, signature/name & designation (bottom left)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Drawing attention — senior students of the school (Classes XI–XII / Seniors) → Suggested value points → Event: Workshop on Cyber Safety and Responsible Internet Use → Organised by: School Name / IT Department / Wellness Cell (acceptable variations) → Purpose: to promote safe online behaviour, awareness of cyber threats, responsible digital habits → Venue: School Auditorium / Seminar Hall → Date & Time: (e.g.) 4 December 2025, during school hours → Eligibility: Senior students (Classes XI–XII) → Encouragement line: Students are urged/encouraged/advised to attend for their safety and awareness → Line with reference to the undersigned: For further details, contact the undersigned. → Expression Clarity, correctness, conciseness, formal tone → Coherence of Ideas Logical sequence of information, completeness, smooth flow 	4
4.	<p>Attempt any one of the two, (a) or (b), in about 50 words.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INVITATION & REPLY</p>	4 marks
	<p>Distribution of Marks:</p> <p>Format – 1 Content -2 Accuracy of spelling and grammar -1</p> <p>FORMAL INVITATION LETTER</p>	
(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Correct format Card Format Only Sender’s address, date (optional in card format), event line/heading, content in third-person or first-person formal style, venue, time, RSVP/signature/name at the end. → Drawing attention — family members and friends (invitees) → Suggested value points – → Event: Dinner Party → Occasion: 25th Wedding Anniversary Celebration of parents → Hosted by: Daisy/Daniel Maria, 39 Parvat Niwas Colony, Shimla → Purpose: to celebrate a special family milestone → Invitation: inviting all family members and friends to attend the grand dinner → Date & Time: (e.g.) 12 December 2025, 7:30 p.m. → Venue: Hotel Holiday Home, Shimla → Special mention (optional): “Your presence will make the occasion memorable.” → Reference line: RSVP / Contact the host for confirmation → Expression 	4

	Polite tone, warmth, clarity, correct language → Coherence of Ideas Logical sequencing, completeness of details, smooth flow	
(b)	→ Correct format : Letter Format / Note Format Sender's address, date (optional), acknowledgement of invitation, expression of thanks, clear acceptance line, complimentary close/signature/name. → Drawing attention — sender responding to the host/university → Suggested value points → Event: Panel Discussion → Topic: "Youth and Social Responsibility" → Host/Inviting body: KIIT University, Bhubaneswar → Purpose: reply to formal invitation → Acceptance: clear statement accepting the invitation → Courtesy line: gratitude for being considered → Optional: assurance of attendance / appreciation of the opportunity → Line indicating respect and formality → Expression Polite, formal, concise, grammatically correct → Coherence of Ideas Logical flow, clear structure, complete details within word limit	4
5.	Attempt any one of the two (a) or (b), in about 120-150 words FORMAL LETTER WRITING	5 Marks
	Format- Sender's address, Date, Receiver's address, Subject and Salutation/ Salutation and Subject, Complimentary close, Name of the sender	
(a)	LETTER TO EDITOR Format: 1 (Note -use of 'Yours truly' / 'Sincerely yours' at close) Organisation of Ideas: 1 Content: 2 As per cues + ideas Accuracy of Spelling and Grammar :1 Suggested value points (inputs given in the question to be included) Any other relevant point (any three)	5
(b)	JOB APPLICATION Suggested value points Format: 1 Organisation of Ideas: 1 Content: 2 Accuracy of Spelling and Grammar :1 → Covering Letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to the advertisement • Conveying suitability for the position (as advertised) • Submission of application → Bio data as separate enclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile of self • Educational Qualifications (include advertised requirements) • Work experience/s (if relevant) • References • Any other relevant information 	5

6.	<p style="text-align: center;">Attempt any one of the two, (a) or (b), in about 120-150 words ARTICLE AND REPORT WRITING</p> <p>Distribution of Marks:</p> <p>Format: 1 Organisation of Ideas: 1 Content: 2 Accuracy of Spelling and Grammar :1</p> <p>Format- Appropriate Title and By line (for Article) Appropriate Title, By line → Dateline → Place + Date Designation and Name of the Newspaper (for News Report)</p>	5 Marks
(a)	<p style="text-align: center;">ARTICLE WRITING</p> <p>Suggested value points (inputs given in the question to be included) Any other relevant point (any three)</p>	5
(b)	<p style="text-align: center;">REPORT WRITING</p> <p>Suggested value points (inputs given in the question to be included) Any other relevant point (any three)</p>	5
	<p style="text-align: center;">SECTION C Literature</p> <p>NOTE: The objective of the literature section is to focus on testing a candidate’s ability to understand and interpret the prescribed text through short and long type questions. Long answer type questions have been set to test the students’ understanding of the test and their ability to interpret, evaluate and respond to the issues raised. Hence, no particular answer can be accepted as the only correct answer. The student should be able to justify his/her viewpoint</p>	40 Marks
7. (a)	<p>Read the following extracts and answer the questions for <u>ANY ONE</u> of the given two, (a) or (b):</p>	6 marks
(i)	<p>The poet contrasts the “polished traffic”—symbolising the sophisticated, self-absorbed urban elite—with the “roadside stand,” representing the simple, struggling rural poor. The contrast highlights the divide between the affluent and the neglected countryside.</p>	1
(ii)	<p>The city dwellers’ reaction to the roadside stand reveals their indifference and lack of empathy toward the rural poor. They view the stand as an eyesore rather than an appeal for help.</p> <p>Alternate Acceptable Answers (Full Credit if justified)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Superficiality and arrogance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Their reaction shows class arrogance and aesthetic snobbery — they are irritated by the villagers’ crude attempts at decoration, judging from a place of privilege. 2. Self-centredness and materialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They are too busy and self-absorbed to notice the human struggle behind the roadside stand. Their “mind ahead” reflects a focus on comfort and consumption, not compassion. 3. Moral blindness / apathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Their reaction exposes moral numbness — they are unmoved by poverty, regarding it as a nuisance to be ignored rather than a social concern. 4. Hypocrisy of urban civility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Though they enjoy luxuries made possible by rural labour, they refuse to acknowledge the poor’s existence, symbolising urban hypocrisy and denial. 5. Emotional disconnection from rural reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Their polished detachment mirrors a growing emotional and cultural divide between the rural and urban worlds. <p>Evaluator’s Note: Award 1 mark in full for any response that shows an understanding that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City dwellers react with disdain, insensitivity, or disregard, and 	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reaction underscores the urban–rural divide or social alienation in Frost’s poem. <p>Even if phrased differently (e.g. “They are too proud to empathise” / “Their irritation reflects their arrogance”), the response should receive full credit if it captures this essence.</p>	
(iii)	<p>Primary Answer (Most Direct / Model): Poetic device: <i>Imagery</i> / <i>Irony</i> Explanation: The phrase creates a vivid visual image of the crudely painted roadside signs, which the rich find offensive. The irony lies in the fact that the villagers’ simple effort to attract attention is judged as an act of “spoiling beauty,” revealing urban hypocrisy.</p> <p>Alternate Acceptable Interpretations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Metaphor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The phrase “<i>artless paint</i>” metaphorically represents the innocence and sincerity of the poor. It contrasts the “marred landscape” (beauty disturbed) with the <i>pure intent</i> behind the act, highlighting social contrast rather than literal ugliness. Visual Imagery (alone) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The line appeals to the reader’s sight, portraying the uneven paint and crooked signs vividly — enhancing the visual realism and rural authenticity of the poem. <p>Evaluator’s Note: Award full 1 mark for any one poetic device correctly identified with a valid justification linked to tone, irony, or imagery. Partial (0.5 mark) may be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Device is correct but explanation incomplete (e.g., only naming “imagery”). 	1
(iv)	<p>The expression “mind ahead” suggests that the travellers are preoccupied and self-centred, focused on their destinations and ambitions, without pausing to notice or care for the hardships around them.</p>	1
(v)	<p>Option A: “The earnest efforts of the rural poor are seen as a blemish to the landscape.” <i>(This irony underscores the insensitivity of the urban class.)</i></p> <p>Textual Justification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frost writes: “<i>the landscape marred with the artless paint / of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong...</i>” Here, the poet describes how villagers, in their innocent attempt to decorate and attract customers, paint crude signs. However, the “<i>polished traffic</i>”—representing the rich—see these signs not as expressions of effort or need, but as defacements of the landscape. This contrast forms the core irony: what the poor see as hopeful enterprise, the rich perceive as an offense to beauty. <p>Nature of Irony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irony: The very act meant to earn survival and connect with urban buyers ends up repelling them. The poor wish to “<i>beautify</i>” their simple stand; the rich see it as “<i>ugly</i>.” Hence, the <i>moral ugliness</i> lies not in the paint, but in the urban mindset—their refined aesthetic blinds them to human suffering. <p>Thematic Implication</p>	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This irony highlights class disparity, moral blindness, and social hypocrisy. • The so-called “cultured” are more disturbed by uneven letters on a signboard than by rural deprivation. • Frost thus critiques urban insensitivity—the inability to see beauty in sincerity or humanity in hardship. <p>Evaluator’s Summary Option A is therefore the correct and most comprehensive choice: It captures both the <i>visual</i> (beauty vs blemish) and <i>moral</i> (effort vs disdain) contrasts at the heart of Frost’s irony.</p>	
(vi)	<p>A. Innocence and simplicity of rural life. <i>The phrase “artless paint” symbolises the villagers’ honest, unsophisticated efforts to attract attention and earn a living—untainted by deceit or greed.</i></p> <p>Textual Evidence & Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frost writes: <i>“the landscape marred with the artless paint of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong...”</i> • The word “artless” literally means <i>without art or polish</i>, but in Frost’s hands, it carries a double meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Crude or unsophisticated</i> in the eyes of the urban traveller, ○ yet <i>innocent and genuine</i> in intent, reflecting the villagers’ simplicity. <p>Symbolic Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “<i>artless paint</i>” symbolises the purity of intent behind the villagers’ act — they are not skilled artists or advertisers; they simply wish to survive. • Their “artless” attempts are untainted by commercial cunning or exploitation. • Hence, the phrase becomes a metaphor for unpretentious sincerity and a contrast to the artificial polish of the urban world. <p>Thematic Implication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frost contrasts rural innocence with urban sophistication — the latter being shallow and judgmental. • The poor may lack polish, but they possess authenticity and moral grace. • The phrase thus becomes emblematic of rural integrity, untouched by greed or false glamour. <p>Tone and Irony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The irony lies in perception: what the city dwellers dismiss as “<i>ugly paint</i>” is actually a symbol of hope and dignity. • The tone of Frost’s voice is sympathetic and protective — he sees <i>artlessness</i> not as flaw, but truth as beauty. <p>Evaluator’s Note Option A is the <i>only</i> interpretation that captures both the literal and symbolic meaning of “<i>artless paint</i>.” It aligns perfectly with Frost’s recurring themes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the dignity of the rural poor, • the moral value of simplicity, and • the critique of urban artificiality. </p>	1
	OR	
7. (b)	Read the following extracts and answer the questions for any one of the given two, (a) or (b) :	6 marks

(i)	<p>1. They are created by her – the tiger exist in Aunt Jennifer’s embroidery, so they are identified as hers.</p> <p>2. They reflect her imagination – the tigers embody the courage & freedom she dreams of.</p> <p>3. They contrast her reality – they show the strength she lacks in her oppressed, fearful married life.</p>	1
(ii)	<p>Completion statement — Fearlessness as analogy for women’s independence Accept answers showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s desire for freedom, confidence, or autonomy. • Tigers symbolise the independence women aspire to but are denied. • Aunt Jennifer imagines a world of strength unlike her own restricted life. <p>Award 1 mark for any response that shows this understanding</p>	1
(iii)	<p>Description of how the tigers shine like bright topaz Accept any answers stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their golden, vivid colour stands out in the green forest. • They shine brilliantly as proud, dominant creatures. • Imagery conveys strength, energy, and bold presence. 	1
(iv)	<p>Correct option — meaning of “chivalric”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct answer: noble <p>Award full mark for selecting “noble”.</p>	1
(v)	<p>Interpretation about Aunt Jennifer’s inner world through the tigers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct answer: (a) “She uses art to challenge her oppressive boundaries.” 	1
(vi)	<p>Meaning implied in the line — “They pace in sleek chivalric certainty”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct answer: (b) “Tigers move majestically with a sense of pride and honour.” 	1
8. (a)	Read the following extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the given two, (a) or (b) :	4x1= 4 marks
(i)	<p>Hana’s reaction reveals her moral conflict, vulnerability, and divided loyalties. When she senses “another part” of herself, she realises she is acting from compassion rather than national duty. This unfamiliar impulse unsettles her because it conflicts with the expectations of wartime Japan and the fears voiced by her servants.</p> <p>Validation: This moment exposes Hana’s psychological struggle—she knows the servants’ fears are justified, yet she cannot ignore her instinct to protect a helpless man. Pearl S. Buck uses this contrast to show that moral courage often appears in the quietest, most conflicted moments of conscience.</p> <p>Alternate Answers (also acceptable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It reflects her inner humanity, stronger than her fear of social consequences. • She is torn between rational caution and emotional compassion. • It shows the depth of her empathy, even when she cannot logically explain it 	1
(ii)	<p>Purpose of the servants speaking openly Accepted Answers They spoke deliberately to <u>signal</u> their disapproval and influence Hana’s awareness. The servants do not whisper or hide their complaints; instead, they speak loudly so Hana will hear their concerns and reconsider sheltering the enemy soldier.</p> <p>Validation: Their behaviour reflects their belief that Hana, as mistress of the house, must be alerted to the danger. It demonstrates the servants’ indirect but forceful way of expressing dissent in a hierarchical household where open confrontation would be inappropriate.</p> <p>Alternate Answers (also acceptable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convey • warn her of • make 	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain <p>Award 1 mark in full for any response that shows this understanding.</p>	
(iii)	<p>Traditional Belief The cook letting the fowl’s blood drip onto the wisteria vine reflects rural traditions. She kills the bird and carefully pours its blood around the roots, believing blood is the best fertiliser. Validation: This action showcases the servants’ strong belief in folk practices passed down through generations. It reveals a mindset rooted in tradition, contrasting sharply with Dr. Sadao’s scientific training and modern worldview. Alternate Answers (also acceptable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It symbolises their reliance on ancestral customs rather than science. • It highlights the gap between modern medicine and traditional beliefs. • It shows their deep connection to ritualistic practices in daily life and highlights their conservative ideas. 	1
(iv)	<p>a) She feels a growing fear about the risks her family might face. Why this is correct: Overhearing the servants’ conversation makes Hana acutely aware of the danger of harbouring an American soldier during wartime. Their fears echo her own unspoken anxieties. She realizes that Sadao’s humanitarian decision could bring suspicion, disgrace, or even punishment to their family. Thus, fear—not anger, detachment, or reassurance—is her dominant emotional response.</p> <p>Why the Other Options Are Incorrect (b) She feels angry that the servants are questioning Sadao’s authority. Incorrect because: Hana does not respond with anger. She understands the servants’ fears and even acknowledges their concerns as valid. The text clearly shows sympathy for their worry, not irritation or a sense of insult. (c) She feels detached, as the situation does not concern her directly. Incorrect because: Hana is emotionally invested and deeply affected. The threat concerns her family directly—her children, her husband’s career, and their survival. Her reaction is heightened anxiety, not detachment or indifference. (d) She feels reassured that the servants will handle the situation wisely. Incorrect because: Nothing in the passage suggests reassurance. On the contrary, the servants’ fear intensifies her own. She becomes more conscious of the danger and more uncertain about what the future holds. Their words worry her; they do not comfort her.</p>	1
	OR	
8. (b) (i)	<p>The cutting of Zitkala-Sa’s hair symbolises the loss of her cultural identity and forced assimilation into Western norms. Validation: In her Native American culture, long hair represented dignity, strength, and pride. Cutting it was a symbol of subjugation and humiliation, stripping her of individuality and erasing her connection to her heritage. It marks the psychological violence of colonial domination. Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It symbolises the destruction of her selfhood and spiritual freedom under imposed discipline, loss of her self esteem and dignity. • The act reflects cultural erasure, as native customs are suppressed to enforce conformity to Euro-American standards. 	1

(ii)	<p>The narrator compares herself to “a wooden puppet” to express her feeling of powerlessness and lack of control over her own life.</p> <p>Validation: The metaphor conveys that she was manipulated, dehumanised, and denied agency, moved at the will of others like an object. It captures the emotional numbness and helplessness of a child stripped of autonomy.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It signifies mechanical obedience, showing that she was treated as a lifeless being with no voice. • It also conveys emotional detachment, as trauma makes her feel hollow and unfeeling. 	1
(iii)	<p>The phrase “one of many little animals driven by a herder” highlights the cruelty of forced conformity and the erasure of individuality.</p> <p>Validation: The imagery equates the children to animals being herded, underscoring the inhuman conditions and total loss of self-determination. It symbolises how institutions-imposed obedience through fear, turning unique human beings into uniform, voiceless subjects.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It implies collective subjugation, where individual culture and thought are destroyed by systematic oppression. • Any other point as per contextual reference 	1
(iv)	<p>A. The extract exposes the dehumanising impact of cultural oppression.</p> <p>Validation: The passage shows the narrator’s trauma and humiliation under a system that sought to “civilise” her by erasing her native identity. Her pain, powerlessness, and alienation reflect the inhuman consequences of colonisation and forced assimilation.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the other options fit the tone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ B is incorrect — she resists, not accepts, Western culture. ○ C misrepresents her pain as victory. ○ D is false — there is no kindness, only cruelty. 	1
9. (a)	Read the following extracts and answer the questions for any one of the given two, (a) or (b):	6x1= 6 marks
(i)	<p>Sophie’s “pangs of doubt” reveal the conflict between her romantic imagination and reality.</p> <p>Validation: The phrase captures the moment when her fantasy about Danny Casey collides with truth. Her dreams begin to crumble under the weight of disbelief and reality, showing her fragile innocence.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between her idealised world of dreams and reality. • Between her emotional yearning and reality. 	1
(ii)	<p>Sophie’s repeated wish for Danny’s arrival suggests her desperate hope and denial of reality.</p> <p>Validation: Her longing reflects her need to cling to fantasy for emotional survival. Despite growing doubt, she refuses to let go, showing how imagination has become her only refuge from monotony and social constraint.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It indicates emotional dependency on illusion and her fear of ridicule if proven wrong. 	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It reveals the intensity of her escapism, as she substitutes dreams for real experience. 	
(iii)	<p>Geoff’s disbelief foreshadows Sophie’s inevitable confrontation with the truth of her self-created illusion.</p> <p>Validation: Geoff’s scepticism mirrors the rational world that Sophie will soon face — a world where dreams are tested and collapse against facts. It anticipates her emotional disillusionment when fantasy fails.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Her heartbreak and loss of credibility among those who doubted her. The painful exposure of her imagined world to harsh judgment. Her reality 	1
(iv)	<p>A. confidence to disillusionment.</p> <p>Validation: Sophie begins the extract filled with anticipation and belief in her fantasy, but gradually, doubt and despair take over. The passage traces her emotional descent from hopeful confidence to quiet despondency.</p> <p>Alternate Answers: None — this option alone accurately captures the emotional progression in tone and mood.</p>	1
(v)	<p>The line “But we know how it was, Danny and me” reveals Sophie’s psychological need to preserve her illusion as personal truth.</p> <p>Validation: Unable to admit her fantasy, she clings to a subjective reality where the imagined experience still feels authentic. This self-deception becomes her way of retaining dignity and emotional control.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It shows her self-persuasion, where imagination becomes memory. It reflects emotional denial, as she convinces herself that belief is as valid as truth. 	1
(vi)	<p>The writer evokes sympathy for Sophie by portraying her as a lonely dreamer trapped in a dull, unfulfilling reality.</p> <p>Validation: Through her quiet waiting, inner doubts, and yearning for validation, A.R. Barton makes the reader pity her innocent hope and inevitable heartbreak. Sophie becomes a symbol of youthful idealism crushed by social limitations.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of intimate inner monologue draws the reader into her vulnerability. Her emotional isolation and unfulfilled desire make her plight deeply human and relatable. 	1
(b)	OR	
(i)	<p>The expression “the interviewing ordeal” implies that H. G. Wells viewed interviews as a stressful and intrusive experience, suggesting anxiety or discomfort at being subjected to public questioning.</p> <p>Validation: The word <i>ordeal</i> conveys the sense of pressure and exposure that comes with being interrogated, even though Wells himself often participated in and conducted interviews—revealing a mix of fascination and unease.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It shows his ambivalence: interviews interested him intellectually but unsettled him personally. It implies loss of privacy and control, typical of those in the public eye. 	1
(ii)	<p>A. Humiliation and discomfort</p> <p>Validation: Saul Bellow’s metaphor of “thumbprints on his windpipe” evokes a suffocating,</p>	1

	<p>invasive pressure, highlighting the discomfort and vulnerability interviewees feel under intense scrutiny.</p> <p>Alternate Answers: None — this vivid image unmistakably represents constraint and unease.</p>	
(iii)	<p>Validation: The paradox shows that interviews can simultaneously be valuable and violating—a mix of attraction and aversion reflecting their dual nature as both communication and intrusion.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wells’s curiosity and participation reflect professional utility. Bellow’s comment exposes personal discomfort. • This highlights that interviews serve public interest, but at the cost of private distress. 	1
(iv)	<p>The phrase “supremely serviceable medium” implies that despite its flaws, the interview remains an effective tool for sharing ideas, knowledge, and personality with a wide audience.</p> <p>Validation: Silvester acknowledges that while interviews may invade privacy, they are irreplaceable in journalism and cultural discourse, bridging the gap between the public and influential individuals.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medium of insight and communication between thinkers and society. • A vehicle for understanding human thought and creativity. 	1
(v)	<p>The juxtaposition of negative imagery (ordeal, thumbprints) with the final affirmation creates a balanced, objective tone, recognising both the discomfort and indispensability of interviews.</p> <p>Validation: By contrasting emotional resistance with practical necessity, Silvester presents interviews as a complex modern phenomenon—personally invasive yet socially essential.</p> <p>Alternate Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It reflects the duality of interviews as both burden and benefit. • The shift from critique to appreciation mirrors the real-world tension between privacy and public interest. 	1
(vi)	<p>B. Interviews are flawed but vital to communication.</p> <p>Validation: This option aligns with Silvester’s nuanced conclusion: interviews may cause discomfort or distortion, yet they remain the most effective means of exchanging ideas and documenting personality in modern media.</p> <p>Alternate Answers: None — this alone captures the writer’s balanced, analytical stance.</p>	1
10.	Answer ANY FIVE of the following six questions in 40-50 words each:	5x2= 10 marks
	Distribution of Marks: 1 -Content 1- Expression ½ -1 deducted from overall, for Accuracy	
(i)	<p>The Last Lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Hamel’s statement shows everyone shares the blame for neglecting their language. • Villagers often kept children home for work instead of sending them to school. • Students like Franz avoided studying French, believing they had plenty of time. • M. Hamel himself dismissed classes or sent students on errands. • It highlights a collective failure to value their language before it was taken away. 	2

(ii)	<p>Deep Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The line shows that the narrator’s struggle is not only physical but deeply psychological. • Even after surviving the near-drowning experience, he carries fear, trauma, and a sense of incompleteness. Even after perfecting the craft of swimming, he felt the need to overcome his terror of water. • It hints that the real battle—overcoming lifelong terror of water—has just begun. • The phrase reflects his determination to confront the fear that still controls his mind. • It signals an ongoing inner conflict between past trauma and the desire for freedom from fear. 	2
(iii)	<p>Poets and Pancakes</p> <p>Two things the speaker should have kept in mind (with rationale):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the audience’s background and expectations <i>Rationale:</i> The film studio workers were not familiar with high literary references, so a speech full of abstract, scholarly ideas only confused them. • Use simple, clear, and relatable language <i>Rationale:</i> A straightforward message would have connected better with the audience, ensuring understanding instead of leaving them in “utter bafflement.” 	2
(iv)	<p>The Rattrap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He sees himself as worthy of dignity and honour. <i>The name reflects his acceptance of the noble image the ironmaster projected onto him.</i> • He chooses transformation over guilt and self-pity. <i>By adopting the title, he symbolically steps away from his identity as a thief.</i> • He recognises his own capacity for goodness. <i>The gesture shows he wants to live up to the trust and respect shown to him.</i> • It marks the birth of a new moral identity. <i>“Captain von Stahle” becomes a declaration of the man he wants to become, not the man he was.</i> 	2
(v)	<p>Indigo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy & humility — <i>He lived among the peasants, listened to their complaints patiently, showing he understood their suffering and earned their trust.</i> • Courage & moral conviction — <i>He agreed to take up a risky cause brought by Rajkumar Shukla, willing to confront powerful planters and the administration.</i> • Practical, evidence-based approach — <i>He organised enquiries and collected first-hand statements from the, using facts to expose injustice rather than rhetoric.</i> • Nonviolent persistence — <i>He pursued redress through peaceful means — negotiations, public meetings and moral pressure — rather than force, which maintained legitimacy.</i> • Organising ability — <i>He mobilised volunteers, coordinated interviews and presented a clear case to the authorities, turning scattered grievances into a coherent demand.</i> • Tact and negotiation skill — <i>By presenting evidence and engaging the officials, he helped set up an inquiry which produced remedial action, achieving concrete relief for the peasants.</i> • Integrity and credibility — <i>His consistent conduct and fairness won him wide sympathy, making it hard for opponents to dismiss the movement as self-</i> 	2

	<p><i>servicing.</i></p> <p>Conclusion: Gandhiji combined compassion, courage, methodical inquiry and nonviolent strategy — a blend of moral authority and practical skill — which converted popular suffering into successful, lasting redress.</p>	
(vi)	<p>Keeping Quiet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They show the exhaustion of human labour. <i>Fishermen in the cold sea</i> and a <i>man gathering salt</i> represent people who work endlessly in harsh conditions without rest. • They symbolise human suffering caused by continuous activity. Their physical pain reflects the emotional and mental strain that constant busyness brings. • They reveal how people are disconnected from themselves. In their struggle for survival, they forget to reflect, breathe, or simply be still. • They justify the poet’s call for a moment of quiet introspection. A pause would allow relief from suffering, encourage self-awareness, and create space for compassion, without the exploitation of nature. 	2
11.	Answer ANY TWO of the following three questions in 40-50 words each:	2x2= 4 marks
	Distribution of Marks: 1 -Content 1- Expression ½ -1 deducted from overall, for Accuracy	
(i)	<p>The Third Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It reflects his desire to flee from the anxieties of modern life. Charley feels overwhelmed by <i>war, stress, work pressure, and the tension-filled environment</i> of the modern world. The third level represents a calmer, safer time. • The past offers emotional security he cannot find in the present. Galesburg, 1894 symbolises <i>peace, community warmth, and slower rhythms of life</i>, which contrast sharply with the fast-paced, competitive society he inhabits. • His obsession with the third level shows psychological escapism. Instead of confronting real problems, Charley constructs a comforting illusion where he imagines he can live freely without fear or responsibility. • The fantasy acts as a coping mechanism. The third level helps him <i>avoid stress, loneliness, and uncertainty</i> by mentally transporting him to a world where life feels predictable and safe. 	2
(ii)	<p>Journey to the End of the Earth</p> <p>Yes — she clearly addresses major areas of environmental damage through vivid examples from Antarctica.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She shows how human greed has disrupted Earth’s natural balance. Antarctica becomes a visual warning — its melting ice shelves reveal the accelerated impact of global warming caused by industrialisation. • She emphasises the threat to biodiversity. Doshi explains how the delicate Antarctic ecosystem can collapse if even minor temperature changes occur, hinting at the loss of species and habitat worldwide due to human interference. • She highlights CO₂ emissions and ozone depletion. The chapter repeatedly points to rising carbon footprints and atmospheric damage caused by unchecked human consumption, leading to climate instability. • She uses Antarctica as a living laboratory. The continent helps scientists trace how unethical human practices — deforestation, pollution, industrial growth — disrupt food chains and long-term climate patterns. • She warns that the future of the planet depends on present choices. 	2

	The “end of the earth” metaphor underscores how close we are to ecological collapse if we continue destructive activities.	
(iii)	<p>On the Face of It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue becomes the bridge that breaks Derry’s isolation. Through calm, open conversation, Mr. Lamb welcomes Derry without judgement, making him feel seen beyond his scar. This acceptance begins to soften Derry’s defensiveness. • Mr. Lamb’s words challenge Derry’s negative self-beliefs. His gentle truths — that people’s opinions shouldn’t control one’s life, and that everyone has sorrows — help Derry rethink his self-pity and fear. • Conversation becomes therapy for Derry. As the dialogue continues, Derry slowly sheds his bitterness. Mr. Lamb’s stories, humour, and wisdom provide emotional reassurance and inspire confidence. • Through dialogue, Mr. Lamb models a new way of living. He teaches Derry, not by lecturing, but by speaking with warmth and honesty, showing that openness and trust can heal wounds deeper than physical scars. • The transformation is internal and profound. By the end, Derry feels hopeful, courageous, and connected — all because someone finally spoke to him with acceptance instead of pity. 	2
12.	Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions in 120-150 words.	5marks
	Distribution of Marks Content 2 Expression 2 Accuracy 1	
(a)	<p>Lost Spring & Indigo — Comparative Analysis</p> <p>1. Two Forms of Exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Spring: Exploitation rooted in child labour, generational poverty, and social neglect. • Indigo: Exploitation rooted in colonial injustice, coercive laws, and the landlord system. <p>2. Lived Struggles in Lost Spring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children forced into labour due to extreme poverty and lack of schooling. • Families trapped in intergenerational deprivation with no social mobility. • Emotional suffering: lost childhood, shattered dreams, normalised injustice. • Anees Jung uses real stories to humanise invisible suffering. <p>3. Lived Struggles in Indigo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peasants oppressed by unfair indigo-farming contracts and colonial authority. • Fear, humiliation, and legal intimidation keep them silent. • Communities lack representation until Gandhi intervenes with empathy and method. <p>4. Emergence of Hope & Agency in Lost Spring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small sparks of aspiration among children. • Authorial empathy gives the poor visibility and voice. • Hope depends on education, welfare, and structural reforms. <p>5. Emergence of Hope & Agency in Indigo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gandhi enables peasants to speak up collectively. • Nonviolent resistance leads to institutional inquiry and actual reforms. • Moral empowerment replaces fear, showing the power of unity. <p>6. Broader Insights on Social Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation persists when suffering is invisible or unchallenged. • Human dignity is central to both narratives. • Meaningful change requires a combination of awareness, compassion, and organised action. • Justice needs both moral awakening (Lost Spring) and structured resistance (Indigo). 	5

	OR	
(b)	<p>My Mother at Sixty-Six and A Thing of Beauty — Coping with Emotional Distress through Poignancy and Consolation</p> <p>1. Two Emotional Landscapes: Fear vs. Consolation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two poems explore human responses to anxiety, but from sharply different angles. • Kamala Das confronts the intimate, painful fear of losing a loved one, while John Keats presents beauty as a source of enduring comfort and hope. <p>2. My Mother at Sixty-Six — Fear, Mortality, and Emotional Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kamala Das captures the speaker’s anguish as she observes her mother’s aging face, pale “as a late winter’s moon.” • The fear of losing her mother creates a profound emotional ache — an anxiety rooted in love, attachment, and the inevitability of death. • Her forced smile and repeated goodbye highlight a struggle to mask sorrow, showing that some emotional distress cannot be escaped — it must simply be endured. <p>3. A Thing of Beauty — Beauty as a Healing Force</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Keats shifts the emotional register from fear to comfort. • He asserts that beautiful things — nature, art, noble deeds — provide everlasting joy, acting as a “flowery band” that binds humans to the earth during times of gloom. • Beauty becomes a psychological sanctuary, offering renewal, hope, and relief from life’s burdens. <p>4. The Contrast: Two Paths to Coping with Distress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daughter in <i>My Mother at Sixty-Six</i> copes through suppression and emotional courage — she acknowledges her pain yet chooses to face it quietly. • In contrast, Keats suggests that turning toward beauty allows one to transcend sorrow, easing the mind through sensory and spiritual nourishment. • One poem reveals the inevitability of grief; the other reveals the possibility of solace. <p>5. Insights into Human Coping Mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humans respond differently to emotional distress based on the nature of the anxiety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Personal, intimate fears — like losing a loved one — often evoke silent endurance, acceptance, and emotional restraint. – Existential or general anxieties — about life’s burdens or despair — can be soothed by turning to sources of beauty, inspiration, and spiritual upliftment. • Together, the poems show that coping can take many forms — facing pain honestly, or seeking beauty to heal the mind. • Both are valid human responses, reflecting the complexity of emotional resilience. 	5
13.	Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions in 120-150 words:	5
	Distribution of marks Content 2 Expression 2 Accuracy 1	
(a)	<p>The Tiger King — Critique of Autocratic Power and the Illusion of Control</p> <p>1. Autocratic Power as Absurdity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kalki uses satire to expose how unchecked authority leads to irrational, self-serving behaviour. • The Maharaja’s obsession with killing a hundred tigers is presented as comic yet dangerous misuse of power — an entire state machinery bends to satisfy one man’s vanity. • From manipulating astrologers to threatening officials, the king’s orders demonstrate how autocracy turns whim into law. <p>2. Misuse of Authority for Personal Ego</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maharaja treats state administration as a tool for fulfilling a prophecy-driven challenge rather than serving his people. 	5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He punishes villagers by raising taxes on them, and commands officials to produce tigers from nowhere. • Even the Dewan is forced to procure an old tiger from a zoo just to satisfy the ruler’s ego — a clear example of how power becomes oppressive when not questioned. <p>3. Illusion of Control Over Fate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The king believes he can outsmart destiny by eliminating all tigers. His confidence that brute force can overcome fate reveals his hubris, the very flaw classical literature associates with downfall. • He celebrates prematurely after killing ninety-nine tigers, convinced he has conquered prophecy. • But his illusion is shattered when the hundredth tiger — ironically weak and harmless — escapes death because the bullet misses. • Fate asserts itself through a trivial accident: a wooden toy tiger’s splinter wounds him and leads to his death during surgery. • The irony is sharp — the mighty hunter is defeated not by a real tiger but by a toy, underscoring how human power is insignificant before destiny. <p>4. Limits of Human Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story shows that even rulers cannot bend destiny to their desires. • The Maharaja controls an entire kingdom but cannot control the outcome of a prophecy or prevent the consequences of his own actions. • Through humour and irony, Kalki demonstrates that absolute authority cannot protect one from the inevitabilities of life — mortality, fate, and the repercussions of vanity. <p>5. Broader Critique</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kalki suggests that when leaders prioritise ego over duty, society suffers and the leader’s downfall becomes inevitable. • The narrative satirises political arrogance, blind faith in power, and the dangerous belief that authority guarantees immunity from fate. • Ultimately, the story champions humility, reminding readers that power without wisdom leads to self-destruction. 	
OR		
(b)	<p>On the Face of It — Contrasting Personalities and the Possibility of Change</p> <p>1. Contrasting Personalities Shaped by Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derry carries emotional scars deeper than his facial burn. Years of ridicule, pity, and rejection have made him withdrawn, defensive, and suspicious of others’ intentions. His instinct is to avoid people before they can hurt him. • Mr. Lamb, in contrast, has learned to meet life with openness and acceptance despite his own disability. Instead of bitterness, he has cultivated generosity, curiosity, and an eagerness to welcome anyone who walks into his garden. <p>2. Their Meeting Reveals These Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they first meet, Derry responds with fear and irritation, assuming Mr. Lamb will judge him like everyone else. His sharp answers and refusal to trust immediately reveal his low self-esteem and social anxiety. • Mr. Lamb’s response is the opposite — gentle, patient, and free of judgement. He treats Derry as an equal, speaks freely, and listens without pity, revealing his philosophy of acceptance and inclusivity. • Their interaction highlights a clear contrast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Derry focuses on what is wrong with him; – Mr. Lamb focuses on what is still possible, beautiful, and worth living for. <p>3. How Their Interaction Creates the Possibility of Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through conversation, Mr. Lamb challenges Derry’s negative beliefs: he tells him that people’s comments cannot define his worth, and that everyone, in some way, is wounded. • His story; of the boy who feared every adverse situation, of him living with a tin leg — show 	5

Derry that suffering can be faced with courage, not fear.

- Gradually, Derry's harshness softens. He begins asking questions instead of arguing. He listens, thinks, and finally exults, "And I want the world..."

This shift signals the **awakening of hope** in Derry — sparked entirely by being accepted without judgement.

4. The Theme: Overcoming Fears and Accepting Oneself

- Their meeting reveals that fears lose power when shared with someone who understands. Mr. Lamb becomes a mirror showing Derry another way to live — with confidence, curiosity, and openness.
- Derry learns that self-acceptance begins with refusing to see oneself through the cruel eyes of society.
- The story affirms that **change begins when one is finally seen, heard, and valued.**
- Mr. Lamb's influence inspires Derry to step out of isolation and embrace life bravely — a symbolic triumph over fear, insecurity, and self-doubt.

5. Conclusion

The meeting between Derry and Mr. Lamb is more than a conversation — it is a moment of emotional healing. Their contrasting traits illuminate how pain can close one off from the world, but kindness and understanding can open doors to confidence, acceptance, and transformation.