



COMMON PRE-BOARD EXAMINATION

ENGLISH CORE-Code No. 301

Class-XII-(2025-26)

SET: 1



Time allowed: 3 Hrs.

Maximum Marks: 80

General Instructions:

Read the following instructions very carefully and 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,
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. The forest lay awake under a broad, pale moon, its whole body softened and silvered. The path Liam chose wound through a stand of pines and birches whose trunks rose like quiet pillars; their high crowns made a vaulted roof alive with shadow. Mist threaded in low ribbons between the trees, smelling faintly of wet leaves and something older — the slow, patient rot of fallen wood that fed new life. Each step sank into a hush that had its own vocabulary: the small, dry click of a twig; the whisper of a squirrel slipping from branch to branch; the sudden hush again, as if the earth itself had inhaled.

2. Liam had come not because he sought spectacle but because he wanted an absence — an absence of beeping phones, of meetings that began and ended with unresolved glances, of a constant urban static that lodged in his chest like a pebble. He had been carrying that pebble for months; it had grown heavier with each day of urgent email and polite small talk. Here, the city's urgencies felt indistinct and far away, like a radio tuned between stations. The forest offered no solutions, only space. He found that was sometimes all a man needed: the permission to do nothing but breathe and watch the world keep its rhythms.

3. Somewhere ahead, an owl called once, low and deliberate, a sound that did not startle but seemed to recognise him. It was odd how the forest's noises turned from mere background into a language one could learn to read. The moonlight pooled on the trail in places and drew silver maps on fallen leaves; each leaf was a tiny lantern, each lantern a memory. He thought of the phone calls he had avoided while walking, of the last conversation that had left his hands shaking. He thought of his father's slow, stubborn humour and how it would come back to him now in stray lines like pieces of a tune remembered between bars.

4. By the stream, the trees parted, and the water moved in a slender, steady voice — not loud, but terrible in its persistence. A leaf floated there and was taken; the river did not ask permission. Liam sat on a rock warmed by a day that had died into coolness and let the world’s silence press in around him until his pulse slowed. He felt, without theatrics, the small loosening of whatever had tightened his life in recent months. It was not an instant unburdening; instead, it was many tiny givings: a release of breath here, a loosened jaw there, a memory accepted rather than contended with.

5. He stayed as the moon climbed and the mist thickened into a soft, woolly shawl. He could have left at any moment and returned to the city’s bright, impatient life; instead, he lingered until the forest had registered him and made room inside its own steady sequence. When he rose to go, he did so with a different measure: not the impossible expectation that all would change overnight, but the steadier sense that he could carry less of the pebble than before. The woods did not promise answers — only a listening; that, he realised, could sometimes be enough.

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

- I The phrase “vaulted roof alive with shadow” mainly suggests that the trees— 1
- a) were dangerous and close together
 - b) formed a high, cathedral-like canopy of darkness and light
 - c) blocked all moonlight completely
 - d) made the path hard to find
- II The “pebble” Liam carried is a symbol of his — 1
- a) love for walking
 - b) burden of anxieties and small, persistent worries
 - c) habit of collecting stones
 - d) physical injury
- III The owl’s call is described as — 1
- a) startling and threatening
 - b) friendly and recognising
 - c) meaningless background noise
 - d) loud and disturbing
- IV The forest’s noises gradually became a kind of _____ for Liam. 1
- V Find a word in paragraph 4 that means ‘very determined or relentless’. 1
- VI The tone of the passage is best described as — 1
- a) frantic and anxious
 - b) triumphant and celebratory
 - c) reflective and restorative
 - d) angry and bitter
- VII How does the writer convey the difference between city life and the forest? 2
- VIII What change occurs in Liam by the end of his stay in the woods? 2

- IX The line “the river did not ask permission” emphasises — 1
 a) the river’s slow rage
 b) nature’s indifference to human plans
 c) the need to ask for nature’s permission
 d) the river’s obedience to man
- X The passage’s final idea suggests the forest gives Liam _____ rather than definite solutions. 1

2. Read the following carefully.

10 marks

Case Study: Digital Payment Adoption in India

(1) Introduction:

India has witnessed a significant transformation in its financial landscape, with digital payments becoming increasingly prevalent. The adoption of digital payment methods, including Unified Payments Interface (UPI), mobile wallets, and credit/debit cards, has been driven by factors such as technological advancements, government initiatives, and changing consumer preferences. This case study examines the extent of digital payment adoption across various demographics and regions in India, highlighting the implications for financial inclusion and economic growth.

(2) Methodology:

A nationwide survey was conducted among households, small businesses, and large corporations across urban and rural regions of India. Participants were asked about their preferred mode of payment (cash or digital), frequency of use, and the reasons behind their choices. The collected data was analysed to identify patterns in adoption and barriers to digital payment usage.

(3) Survey Examination:

The survey delved into not only the preferred payment methods but also the factors influencing these preferences. Participants shared insights on the ease of use, security concerns, accessibility, and incentives offered by banks or digital platforms. Understanding both motivations (internal drivers) and influences (external factors) provided a comprehensive picture of digital payment adoption.

S. No.	Demographic	% Adoption of Digital Payment	Preferred Method	Reasons for Preference
1	Households	65%	UPI & Mobile Wallets	Convenience, safety, government promotions
2	Small Businesses	58%	Mobile Wallets & Cards	Cost savings, quicker transactions, and customer demand
3	Large Corporations	72%	Bank Transfers & Cards	Security, audit compliance, efficiency
4	Rural Areas	40%	Mobile Wallets	Limited cash handling, access to bank accounts
5	Urban Areas	78%	UPI & Cards	Ease of use, infrastructure, and digital literacy

(5) Implications for Interventions:

The findings suggest that while digital payment adoption is high in urban areas, rural regions exhibit lower adoption rates. To bridge this gap, targeted interventions are necessary. These may include:

- Digital Literacy Programs: Educating rural populations on the benefits and usage of digital payment methods.
- Infrastructure Development: Enhancing internet connectivity and smartphone accessibility in underserved areas.
- Incentive Schemes: Offering cashback, discounts, or other incentives to encourage the adoption of digital payments.

By implementing these interventions, India can promote financial inclusion, reduce transaction costs, and enhance the transparency of economic activities.

(6) Conclusion:

The insights from this study indicate that fostering digital payment adoption across all demographics requires both awareness campaigns and infrastructural support. The ultimate goal is to create a more inclusive, efficient, and secure financial ecosystem in India.

Answer the following questions, based on the given passage.

- I 1. Fill in the Blank: 1
- Digital payments in India, including UPI, mobile wallets, and cards, have increased due to advancements in _____, government initiatives, and changing consumer preferences.
- II Match the demographic with the key reason for preferring digital payments: 1
- | <u>Demographic</u> | <u>Reason for Preference</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. Households | 1. Security and audit compliance |
| B. Small Businesses | 2. Convenience, safety, promotions |
| C. Large Corporations | 3. Cost savings, faster transactions |
- a) A → 3 B → 1 C → 2
b) A → 1 B → 3 C → 2
c) A → 2 B → 3 C → 1
- III Although both urban and rural areas use mobile wallets, the adoption rate in urban areas is almost double that in rural areas. Suggest one reason for this difference. 1
- IV According to the survey, which method is preferred by both urban households and large corporations? 1
- V State True or False. 1
Large corporations use digital payments mainly for cost savings.
- VI Mobile wallets are most preferred by? 1
a) Rural households b) Small Biz
c) Large Corp d) Urban banks
- VII As a policymaker, suggest two strategies to increase adoption in rural areas and explain their impact. 2
- VIII What does “financial inclusion” mean in the context of this study? 2

SECTION B
CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

18
marks

3. Attempt any **one** of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words 1x4=4

- A. Your school is celebrating National Science Week in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. As the Secretary of the Science Club, draft a notice informing students of Classes IX–XII about the various inter-school competitions being organised. Provide details about the dates, registration procedure, and the contact person. (Put the notice in a box.)

OR

- B. As the Head of the Literary Club, you are planning to host an Inter-School Debate Competition on the topic “Technology is Making Us Less Human.” Write a notice for the school notice board inviting entries from interested students of Classes XI - XII, giving necessary details such as date, venue, and submission deadline. (Put the notice in a box.)

4. Attempt any **one** of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words. 1x4=4

- A. You are the Cultural Secretary of your school. Draft a formal invitation inviting all teachers and staff members to attend the Annual Cultural Evening being organised in the school auditorium. Mention the date, time, and programme highlights.

OR

- B. You have received an invitation from your friend Ritika Sharma to attend her brother’s wedding reception in Delhi. As Ananya Kapoor, write a short reply in about 50 words expressing your inability to attend the function due to your board exam preparations.

5. Attempt any **one** of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words. 1x5=5

- A. You are Prerna Das, a recent graduate in Journalism. You came across the following advertisement on a popular job portal and wish to apply for the position. Write a job application to the HR Manager, The Times Network, New Delhi, expressing your interest in the position. Also, enclose your bio-data along with the application.

WANTED

- Sub-editor. Lifestyle and Culture
- The Times Network is seeking a sub-editor to cover lifestyle and culture-related news in Bangalore.
- Experience: 0-2 years
- Qualification: An undergraduate/postgraduate degree in English literature, Journalism, Mass Media or Communications.

OR

- B. You are Arunita Garg, residing at 13-A, Gol Bazaar, Jaisalmer. Write a letter to the Editor of The Nation Today, highlighting the need to promote environmental awareness and sustainable living habits among the youth. Emphasise how homes, parents, communities, and schools play a vital role in shaping environmentally responsible citizens. Use your own ideas as well as the cues given below.

Cues:

- Encouraging eco-friendly habits at home and school
- Role of parents and teachers in modelling sustainable practices
- Community initiatives and local participation
- Importance of environmental education and awareness drives
- Creating a generation that values conservation and green living

OR

- B. Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering through her wool
Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.
The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.
- I "Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hands". Through the above expression, the poet indicates 1
a. Aunt Jennifer is happily married
b. Aunt Jennifer loves the tigers in the panel.
c. Aunt Jennifer's unhappy married life.
d. Aunt Jennifer's rich and luxurious life.
- II State whether the following statement is TRUE or FALSE with reference to the extract. 1
'Aunt Jennifer is nervous and traumatised because of the constraints of her marriage.'
- III The figure of speech used in 'fluttering fingers' is _____ 1
- IV What contrast is highlighted through Aunt Jennifer's fingers and the wedding band? 1
- V What does the uncle's character reflect in the poem? 1
a. male chauvinism and patriarchy b. a man's physical strength
c. male ego d. a male's view of the world
- VI Which of the following CANNOT be inferred from the extract? 1
a. Aunt Jennifer's fingers flutter as she struggles under the weight of her marriage.
b. Aunt Jennifer finds even delicate tasks like embroidery difficult due to her oppression.
c. Aunt Jennifer feels completely powerless and exhibits no inner strength at all.
d. The wedding band represents the societal oppression she experiences.
8. Read the following extracts and attempt any **one** of the given two, (A) or (B) 1x4=4
- A. "If I am able, are you?" Sadao asked. "No," Hana said, "But if you can do it alone..." Sadao hesitated again. "The strange thing is," he said, "that if the man were whole I could turn him over to the police without difficulty. I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy. And he is only a common fellow. You see how foolish his face is. But since he is wounded..."
- I What is the "strange thing" Sadao refers to? 1
a. Hana's fear of the enemy b. His inability to turn in an injured soldier
c. The soldier's foolish face d. His deep concern for an American
- II Complete the sentence appropriately. 1
Sadao's claim that "he is my enemy" but also expressing hesitation to hand him over, reflects an inner conflict between _____ and _____.
- III How does the wounded condition of the American soldier affect Sadao's perception of him? 1
- IV With reference to Sadao's declaration, "All Americans are my enemies", read the statements given below and choose the option that correctly evaluates Sadao's belief: 1
Statement 1: Sadao's declaration reflects the nationalistic conditioning prevalent during wartime.
Statement 2: Sadao genuinely hates all Americans and shows no empathy throughout the story.
Choose the correct option:
a. Statement 1 is true but Statement 2 is false.
b. Statement 1 is false but Statement 2 is true.
c. Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are true.
d. Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are false.

OR

B. “Mr Lamb: It’s all relative. Beauty and the Beast.

Derry: what’s that supposed to mean?

Mr Lamb: You tell me.

Derry: You needn’t think they haven’t all told me that fairy story before. ‘It’s not what you look like, it’s what you’re inside. Handsome is as handsome does. Beauty loved the monstrous beast for himself and when she kissed him he changed into handsome prince’ Only he wouldn’t, he’d have stayed a monstrous beast. I won’t change.

- I Complete the following suitably: 1
Mr. Lamb’s response to Derry reflects his belief in the equality of _____.
- II What does Derry’s statement “I won’t change” reveal about his self-image? 1
- III Choose the correct option: Mr. Lamb’s philosophy, ‘It’s all relative’ teaches Derry to — 1
a. Avoid mirrors and people
b. Accept his appearance and value inner beauty
c. Seek medical treatment
d. Blame others for his condition
- IV How does this short dialogue encapsulate the theme of acceptance and positive outlook in the story? (Write in not more than 30 words) 1
9. Read the following extracts and attempt any **one** of the given two, (A) or (B). 1x6=6
- A. What a thunderclap these words were to me!
Oh, the wretches; that was what they had put up at the town-hall!
My last French lesson! Why, I hardly knew how to write! I should never learn any more! I must stop there, then! Oh, how sorry I was for not learning my lessons, for seeking birds’ eggs, or going sliding on the Saar! My books, that had seemed such a nuisance a while ago, so heavy to carry, my grammar, and my history of the saints, were old friends now that I couldn’t give up. And M. Hamel, too; the idea that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget all about his ruler and how cranky he was.
- I Why does the writer use the metaphor of a ‘thunderclap’ to describe Franz’s realization? 1
- II Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank. 1
The use of exclamatory marks in the first five sentences of the extract serves to express the speaker's _____ (hidden/ intense) emotions.
- III Complete the following suitably. 1
The activities of seeking birds' eggs and sliding on the Saar reveal two things about Franz's character before his change in perspective. First, his youthful carefree nature, and second, his preference for _____.
- IV What does the Franz’s forgetting of M. Hamel’s strictness reveal about his new understanding of education? 1
- V Select the textual option that is closest to indicating a sense of panic. 1
a. Oh, how sorry I was for not learning my lessons...
b. Why, I hardly knew how to write!
c. Oh, the wretches; that was what they had put up at the town-hall!
d. And M. Hamel, too;

VI What does the following line from the extract showcase? 1

My books, that had seemed such a nuisance a while ago, so heavy to carry, my grammar, and my history of the saints, were old friends now that I couldn't give up.

- a. realisation
- b. expectation
- c. confusion
- d. affirmation

OR

B. Umberto Eco: Aah, now that is more difficult to explain. I have some philosophical interests and I pursue them through my academic work and my novels. Even my books for children are about non-violence and peace...you see, the same bunch of ethical, philosophical interests.

And then I have a secret. Did you know what will happen if you eliminate the empty spaces from the universe, eliminate the empty spaces in all the atoms? The universe will become as big as my fist.

Similarly, we have a lot of empty spaces in our lives. I call them interstices. Say you are coming over to my place. You are in an elevator and while you are coming up, I am waiting for you. This is an interstice, an empty space. I work in empty spaces. While waiting for your elevator to come up from the first to the third floor, I have already written an article!

I How does Eco's mention of his philosophical interests reveal the unity between his academic and literary pursuits? 1

II Eco's comparison of the universe to his fist symbolically emphasises— 1

- a. The vastness of knowledge
- b. The strength of human thought
- c. The essential role of emptiness in existence
- d. The complexity of atoms

III By blending scientific imagery with philosophical thought, Eco reveals— 1

- a. His fascination with physics
- b. His habit of using metaphors to express profound truths
- c. His dislike for abstract ideas
- d. His focus on academic writing alone

IV TRUE or FALSE 1
Eco's mention of "empty spaces" is purely scientific, with no philosophical meaning.

V Which literary device is used in describing "interstices," and how does it convey Eco's approach to time? 1

VI Compare Eco's concept of "interstices" with the usual way people view waiting or idle moments in daily life. 1

- 10.** Answer any **five** of the following six questions in 40 - 50 words each: 5x2=10
- I Read the quote given below. Justify it with reference to 'Deep Water'. 2
 "Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision". -Winston Churchill
- II Why did the peddler decline the ironmaster's invitation to his home despite being offered shelter and comfort? 2
- III Why do the vendors at the roadside stand react eagerly to the "squealing of brakes"? Comment on the significance of this sound in terms of their hopes and expectations. 2
- IV The poet effectively uses imagery to highlight the contrast between the "merry children" and her mother. Comment. 2
- V In 'Going Places', Sophie feels constrained by her family. State how the author brings out the disapproval of each family member towards her choices and ambitions. 2
- VI In the poem 'A Thing of Beauty', how does Keats suggest that beauty has the power to heal the human spirit and provide continuity amid transience? 2
- 11.** Answer any **two** of the following three questions in 40 -50 words each: 2x2=4
- I Why is it said that you lose all sense of perspective and time once you enter Antarctica? 2
- II What was the ticket clerk's reaction when Charley tried to buy the ticket? 2
- III How did the astrologer demonstrate his confidence in the prophecy about the Maharaja's death? 2
- 12.** Answer any **one** of the following two questions in about 120-150 words. 1x5=5
- A. 'Lost Spring' and 'Indigo' portray how the powerless suffer due to social neglect and the dominance of those in power. Elaborate.
- OR
- B. Subbu might be referred to as a sycophant, but he has qualities that distinguish him as a unique character amidst the ordinary men. Give reasons with close reference to the text.
- 13.** Answer any **one** of the following two questions in about 120-150 words 1x5=5
- A. 'The Third Level' delves into the theme of both mental and physical escapism through its characters, who seek refuge from societal monotony and emotional emptiness. Explain with close reference to the text.
- OR
- B. In 'Memories of Childhood', both Bama and Zitkala-Sa rebel silently against the deep-rooted prejudices of their societies. How do their individual experiences reflect the universal struggle against discrimination and the assertion of identity?
