# CBSE Class 12 English 2026 — Set 1 — Answer Key

English Medium

Time Allowed: 3 Hours

General Instructions:

1. This is an answer key — each question is shown with its correct answer and a step-by-step explanation.
2. Questions appear in the original paper order.

Q.1

Read the following passage carefully:

(1) Jonathan Seagull discovered that boredom, fear and anger are the reasons a gull's life is so short and with those gone from his thought, he lived a long, fine life indeed.

(2) They laughed at him. The other gulls scorned him. 'Such nonsense', they would squawk, as he practised flying, not for food but for the joy of flight itself. But Jonathan, undeterred, flew higher and faster than any gull before him. He learned that the secret to flight was not merely flapping wings, but in knowing the purpose of flying.

(3) 'Break the chain of your thought', he told himself, 'And you break the chains of your body.' In solitude, he mastered loops, dives and rolls. He flew at speeds that blurred the ocean below. The flock cast him out for defying tradition, he discovered that exile was not the end but a beginning. Alone, he found peace. Alone, he found the sky.

(4) One morning, soaring silently above the clouds, Jonathan was joined by two radiant gulls. Their wings shone with light and their presence was calm and sure. 'We've been watching you', they said. 'You're ready to come with us.'

'Where ?' Jonathan asked blinking in the sunlight.

'To a higher level of being,' they answered.

'You have learned much but there is more – more to flying, more to being a gull.'

(5) He followed them into a realm where flight was pure thought and time had no meaning. There, gulls didn't fight over scraps of bread or squawk at one another in fear. They flew to understand themselves to explore the limitless. There Jonathan met Chiang, the wisest gull, who told him : 'The only true law is that which leads to freedom – there is no other.'

(6) Jonathan began to teach others what he had learned, sharing not just

flight techniques but freedom of thought. 'You can go as far as you wish,' he would say. 'Because you have the right to learn. You have the right to be free.'

No longer bound by rules, written in sand, Jonathan soared not just through the skies but through understanding. And as he flew, he knew that greatness is not measured in a wingspan but in the courage to break free.

Q1(i): According to Jonathan, what was the secret of living a long life ? (para-1)

Answer: According to Jonathan, the secret of living a long life was eliminating boredom, fear and anger from one's thoughts. He discovered that these three negative emotions are the reasons a gull's life is so short, and with those gone from his thought, he lived a long, fine life indeed.

Explanation:

Paragraph (1) directly states: 'Jonathan Seagull discovered that boredom, fear and anger are the reasons a gull's life is so short and with those gone from his thought, he lived a long, fine life indeed.'

Q.2

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(ii): How did Jonathan's unconventional passion for flying lead to his exclusion from the flock ? (para-2)

Answer: Jonathan's unconventional passion for flying — practising not for food but for the joy of flight itself — made the other gulls scorn and laugh at him, calling it 'such nonsense'. His relentless pursuit of flying higher and faster than any gull before him defied the flock's traditions, leading them to cast him out.

Explanation:

Paragraph (2) explains the other gulls scorned and laughed at him for flying for joy rather than food.

Paragraph (3) confirms 'The flock cast him out for defying tradition.'

Q.3

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(iii): Read and complete the following sentence suitably:
'Break the chains of your thought and you break the chains of your body', suggests: (para-3)

Choose the correct response from the two options to complete the sentence:

(a) freedom is achieved through physical strength.
(b) mental liberation is the key to true freedom. <<

Explanation:
The quote implies that mental/intellectual liberation — breaking free from limiting thoughts — is what leads to true physical and existential freedom.
Option (B) correctly captures this idea.

Q.4

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(iv): Complete the following suitably with ONE advantage with reference to paragraph 3.

It was ironical that Jonathan Seagull's exile did not mean isolation but _____.

Answer: a new beginning / freedom / peace (He found peace and the sky — exile was not the end but a beginning)

Explanation:
Paragraph (3) states: 'he discovered that exile was not the end but a beginning.
Alone, he found peace.
Alone, he found the sky.' The irony is that his exile, expected to be isolating, actually

brought him peace and discovery.

Q.5

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(v): What do the two radiant gulls who approached Jonathan, most likely represent ? (para-4)

(a) rivals sent to watch his skills.
(b) a hallucination formed out of his loneliness.
(c) fellow gulls returning from his original flock.
(d) spiritual guides leading him to a higher plane. <<

Explanation:

The two radiant gulls with shining wings and calm presence invite Jonathan 'to a higher level of being' — they most likely represent spiritual guides leading him to a higher plane of existence.

Option (D) is correct.

Q.6

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(vi): Provide one textual evidence with reference to paragraph 4 to prove the following:

'You are ready to come with us.'

Answer: The textual evidence is: 'We've been watching you', they said. 'You're ready to come with us.' — The two radiant gulls had been observing Jonathan's progress and judged him ready to ascend to a higher level of being.

Explanation:

Paragraph (4) contains the direct quote showing that the two radiant gulls observed Jonathan and declared him ready to join them at a higher level.

Q.7

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(vii): In Chiang's statement, 'the only true law is that which leads to freedom – there is no other', what does the phrase 'the only true law' refer to ? (para-5)

Answer: The phrase 'the only true law' refers to the principle of freedom — any rule, principle or law that genuinely leads to freedom is the only one worth following. Chiang implies that no external law, tradition or social norm holds true value unless it serves the purpose of liberating the individual.

Explanation:

Paragraph (5) presents Chiang as the wisest gull who teaches that freedom is the highest and only authentic principle — contrasting it with the petty rules and traditions that the flock imposed on Jonathan.

Q.8

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(viii): Select the option that best explains Jonathan's transformation after meeting Chiang.

(a) becomes more aggressive and fearless
(b) forgets that past and returns to his flock.
(c) learns to use his skills to dominate the other gulls.
(d) internalises freedom and shares his wisdom with others. <<

Explanation:

After meeting Chiang, Jonathan began to teach others, sharing freedom of thought and telling them they have the right to learn and be free.

Option (D) — internalising freedom and sharing wisdom — best describes his transformation.

Q.9

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(ix): Complete the analogy with ONE word from paragraph 6:

free : bound
dropped : _____

(a) soared <<
(b) learned
(c) measured
(d) break

Explanation:
'Free' is the opposite of 'bound'.
'Dropped' is the opposite of 'soared' — both pairs are antonyms.
'Soared' appears in paragraph 6: 'Jonathan soared not just through the skies but through understanding.' Option (A) is correct.

Q.10

Passage: Jonathan Seagull (as in Q1).

Q1(x): In what way did Jonathan's journey challenge traditional beliefs ? Give an example.

Answer: Jonathan's journey challenged the traditional belief that flying is solely a means to obtain food. He flew for the joy of flight itself, mastered techniques like loops, dives and rolls, and sought a higher purpose — understanding and freedom — rather than survival. For example, while other gulls flew to find food, Jonathan flew to explore the limits of speed and skill, and eventually to attain a higher level of being.

Explanation:
Throughout the passage, Jonathan defies the flock's convention that flying exists only

for feeding.

His pursuit of purposeful flight, his eventual exile, and his transcendence to a higher realm all challenge conventional thinking.

Q.11

Read the following passage carefully:

(1) Introduction : India faces a serious road safety challenge. According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, over 4.8 lakh road accidents were reported in 2023, leading to 1.72 lakh deaths. Many of these could have been avoided by simple precautions – wearing helmets, fastening seatbelts and following speed limits. These statistics aren't just numbers; they represent lives lost and family dynamics changed forever.

Causes of Road Accidents in India (2023):

1. Overspeeding — 56%
2. Drunk driving — 8%
3. No seatbelt/helmet — 15%
4. Distraction (mobiles) — 6%
5. Mechanical failure — 4%
6. Weather/road condition — 6%
7. Others — 5%

(2) Methodology : Several cities are becoming proactive, especially near school zones. Municipal corporations and traffic police have introduced stricter school-zone safety measures – speed bumps, zebra crossings and digital signboards. This led to a 30% drop in minor accidents near schools, within a year.

(3) Survey : In many cities, class XI and XII students launched a campaign called 'Ride Right', promoting helmet use among two-wheeler riders. They

handed out stickers, ran roadshows and launched a 'No Helmet, No Selfie' challenge that went viral. Over 2000 riders pledged to wear helmets daily.

(4) Results : Technology is playing a significant role. AI-powered traffic cameras, digital signs and automated lights are being implemented in metros. Pilot projects such as iRASTE and AI based road safety pilot predict and prevent accidents using real time data. These systems have led to a 40% rise in fine collection. GPS based alert systems in school buses now notify parents of speeding or unscheduled stops.

(5) Implication for interventions : Personal responsibility is the most powerful safety tool. Whether it's a student cyclist using the left lane or a pedestrian waiting for the signal, every right choice sets an example. 'I follow, I influence.'

Q2(i): What strategy does the author use in paragraph (1) to highlight the seriousness of road accidents ?

(a) use of statistics and emotional appeal. <<
(b) humour and satire
(c) technical jargon and neutrality
(d) personal anecdotes and optimism

Explanation:

Paragraph (1) uses specific statistics (4.8 lakh accidents, 1.72 lakh deaths) and then appeals emotionally by saying 'these statistics aren't just numbers;
they represent lives lost and family dynamics changed forever.' Option (A) is correct.

Q.12

Passage: Road Safety (as in Q2).

Q2(ii): What evidence from the passage suggests that stricter school-zone measures were effective ?

(a) the number of schools increased rapidly.
(b) there was a 30% drop in minor accidents near schools. <<
(c) teachers and parents opposed the new rules.
(d) students stopped commuting by bicycle.

Explanation:
Paragraph (2) states: 'This led to a 30% drop in minor accidents near schools, within a year.' Option (B) directly cites this evidence.

Q.13

Passage: Road Safety (as in Q2).

Q2(iii): What would the following be classified as ?

Students launched a campaign called 'Ride Right' promoting helmet use among two wheeler riders.

Select the appropriate response:

(a) primary purpose <<
(b) secondary objective
(c) method of analysis
(d) research outcome

Explanation:
The 'Ride Right' campaign was directly aimed at promoting helmet use — this is the primary purpose of the campaign.
The passage presents it under 'Survey' as the main student-led initiative.
Option (A) is correct.

Q.14

Passage: Road Safety (as in Q2).

Q2(iv): Give two points to support the success of the No Helmet – No Selfie

Challenge.

Answer: 1. The challenge went viral, gaining widespread public attention and participation. 2. Over 2000 riders pledged to wear helmets daily as a direct result of the challenge.

Explanation:

Paragraph (3) states the 'No Helmet, No Selfie' challenge went viral and over 2000 riders pledged to wear helmets daily.

These are the two textual evidence points for the challenge's success.

Q.15

Passage: Road Safety (as in Q2).

Q2(v): Which word from paragraph 4 best conveys the idea of 'ensuring compliance through authoritative measures' especially in the context of traffic systems ?

(a) collection

(b) enforcement <<

(c) monitoring

(d) automation

Explanation:

'Enforcement' means ensuring compliance through authoritative measures — it best captures the idea of rules being applied compulsorily.

The passage mentions a 40% rise in fine collection 'showing improved rule enforcement.' Option (B) is correct.

Q.16

Passage: Road Safety (as in Q2).

Q2(vi): Analyze why does the author emphasise that both technology and personal responsibility are important in promoting road safety.

Answer: The author emphasises both because they are complementary:

technology (AI cameras, GPS alerts, automated lights) can monitor and enforce rules at scale, reducing human error in implementation. However, technology alone cannot change behaviour — personal responsibility (each individual making the right choice, as the slogan 'I follow, I influence' suggests) creates a culture of safety from within. Together, systemic and individual approaches make road safety sustainable.

Explanation:

Paragraphs (4) and (5) address technology and personal responsibility respectively. The passage implies neither alone is sufficient — both are needed for comprehensive road safety.

Q.17

Passage: Road Safety (as in Q2).

Q2(vii): Complete the following with a suitable reason:

Road safety is about personal responsibility because _____.

Answer: every individual's right choice sets an example and influences others — as the slogan 'I follow, I influence' conveys, personal behaviour is the most powerful safety tool because it shapes a culture of compliance and care.

Explanation:

Paragraph (5) states personal responsibility is 'the most powerful safety tool' and that 'every right choice sets an example', supported by the slogan 'I follow, I influence.'

Q.18

Passage: Road Safety (as in Q2).

Q2(viii): Which of the following inferences is best supported by the data in the table ?

(a) enforcement of helmet and seat belt rules would address the cause of

road deaths.

(b) speeding is the key issue, which requires technological and behavioural interventions. <<

(c) mobile phone use while driving is the fastest growing cause of accidents.

(d) drunk driving accounts for more deaths than 'no helmet/seat belt' and distractions combined.

Explanation:

The table shows overspeeding accounts for 56% of road accidents — by far the largest single cause.

This strongly supports the inference that speeding is the key issue requiring both technological (speed cameras, AI alerts) and behavioural (awareness campaigns) interventions.

Option (B) is correct.

Option (D) is false: drunk driving = 8%, no seatbelt/helmet = 15%, distraction = 6%, so 15+6=21% > 8%.

Q.19

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q3(A): Your school is organising a career counselling session for students of classes XI and XII to help them make informed decisions about their future career choices. As the Head Girl / Head Boy of M.L.C. School, draft a notice informing them about the session. Include all necessary details. You are Riya/Rohan. Put the notice in a box. (about 50 words)

Answer: Format: Notice in a box. Heading: NOTICE. School name: M.L.C. School. Date. Title: Career Counselling Session. Body (~50 words): Date, time, venue of the session; intended audience (Classes XI and XII); brief purpose (to help make informed career decisions); request to attend. Signed by: Riya/Rohan, Head Girl/Head Boy.

Explanation:

A notice must include: name of organisation/institution, the word 'NOTICE', date, title/heading, body with all relevant details (who, what, when, where, why), and signature with designation.

The question specifies ~50 words and placement in a box.

OR

Q.19

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q3(B) [OR]: You are Kavya/Karan Chief Editor of 'Parakh' the school magazine. Draft a notice inviting contributions in the form of articles, stories, poems, artwork etc. for the special annual edition. All contributions are to be submitted to the Chief Editor. Include necessary details. Put your notice in a box. (about 50 words)

Answer: Format: Notice in a box. Heading: NOTICE. School/Magazine name. Date. Title: Contributions Invited for Special Annual Edition of 'Parakh'. Body (~50 words): types of contributions accepted (articles, stories, poems, artwork etc.); deadline for submission; submission address (to the Chief Editor); any theme if relevant. Signed by: Kavya/Karan, Chief Editor, Parakh.

Explanation:

Notice format: organisation name, 'NOTICE', date, heading, body with who/what/when/where details, and name + designation of issuing authority.

Placed in a box as instructed.

Q.20

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q4(A): Draft an invitation to invite the M.L.A. of your Constituency, to be the Chief Guest at a felicitation function to honour eminent residents who have contributed to the upliftment of the colony. Mention one compelling highlight

of the programme. You are Satupa/Satish, President of the Surya Vikas, RWA. (about 50 words)

Answer: Format: Formal invitation. From: Satupa/Satish, President, Surya Vikas RWA. To: The Hon'ble M.L.A., [Constituency Name]. Body (~50 words): Request to grace the felicitation function as Chief Guest; purpose — to honour eminent residents for their contribution to the upliftment of the colony; one highlight (e.g., award ceremony / cultural programme); date, time and venue. RSVP details.

Explanation:

An invitation must include: name of the host/organisation, name/designation of the invitee, purpose of the event, one programme highlight, date/time/venue, and RSVP details.

Approximately 50 words.

OR

Q.20

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q4(B) [OR]: You are Dr. Vora, a certified art therapist from Manipur. You have been invited by Green Valley Public School, Jammu to conduct a seminar on 'Art Therapy, the Way Forward' for the students. Draft a reply accepting the invitation. (about 50 words)

Answer: Format: Formal letter/reply. From: Dr. Vora, Certified Art Therapist, Manipur. To: The Principal, Green Valley Public School, Jammu. Body (~50 words): Express gratitude for the invitation; confirm acceptance to conduct the seminar on 'Art Therapy, the Way Forward'; confirm date/time/venue as communicated or request confirmation; express enthusiasm to engage with students.

Explanation:

A formal reply accepting an invitation should acknowledge receipt of the invitation, express acceptance clearly, confirm event details, and convey enthusiasm.

Approximately 50 words.

Q.21

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q5(A): You are Kaneshta/Shirish, an avid yoga follower. Write a letter to the editor expressing your views and urging people especially students and young adults to incorporate yoga into their daily lives. (120-150 words)

You may use the following cues:
- need to follow a disciplined exercise routine
- reduces stress, improves physical and mental health
- increases focus
- schools and educational establishments must encourage practice of yoga

Answer: Format: Letter to the editor. From: Kaneshta/Shirish, [Address]. To: The Editor, [Newspaper Name]. Subject: Incorporating Yoga into Daily Life. Body (120-150 words): Introduction mentioning concern about declining health among youth; argue yoga provides a disciplined exercise routine accessible to all; it reduces stress and improves both physical and mental health; it enhances focus — particularly beneficial for students; call upon schools and educational establishments to make yoga a regular part of the curriculum; conclude with an appeal to students and young adults to adopt yoga as a daily habit. Closing: Yours sincerely, Kaneshta/Shirish.

Explanation:

Letter to the editor format: sender's address, date, editor's designation and newspaper name, subject line, salutation (Sir/Madam), body using given cues plus own ideas (120-150 words), and closing signature.

OR

Q.21

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q5(B) [OR]: You are Roshni/Rohan, a final year student pursuing a degree in Computer Science. You have read an advertisement for 'AI Engineers Wanted' by Tech Innovate Solutions (qualifications: Bachelor's in CS/IT; skills: AI frameworks, data science, PyTorch, Python; experience: 1-2 years). Write a job application along with your bio-data to the Public Relations Officer, Tech Innovate Solutions, Markhande Lane, Pune. (120-150 words)

Answer: Format: Job application letter + bio-data. Letter From: Roshni/Rohan, [Address]. To: The Public Relations Officer, Tech Innovate Solutions, Markhande Lane, Pune. Subject: Application for the Post of AI Engineer. Body (~100 words): reference to the advertisement in 'The National Times'; express suitability; mention final year CS degree, proficiency in AI frameworks/PyTorch/Python, data science knowledge, project experience/certifications; request for an interview. Bio-data (~50 words): Name, Date of Birth, Address, Email, Education (Bachelor's CS — pursuing), Technical Skills (Python, PyTorch, AI frameworks, data science), Projects/Certifications, Languages known, Declaration.

Explanation:

Job application: address, date, designation of addressee, subject line, body referencing the ad with qualifications match, and bio-data with standard fields (personal details, education, skills, experience/projects, declaration).

Q.22

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q6(A): You are Aanya/Ankit. Write an article for the newspaper on 'The Vanishing Art of Slowing Down'. (120-150 words)

You may use the following cues:

- impact of hustle culture and technology on mental well-being
- losing connection with nature, people and self

- importance of mindful celebrations and slow/relaxed living
- role of schools, communities, and media
- need for digital boundaries, reflection, and simple joys

Answer: Format: Newspaper article. Title: The Vanishing Art of Slowing Down. By: Aanya/Ankit. Body (120-150 words): Open with the observation that silence and relaxed living are disappearing; discuss how hustle culture and constant technology use harm mental well-being; note how people are losing connection with nature, loved ones and themselves; stress the importance of mindful celebrations and slow living; suggest role of schools, communities and media in promoting digital boundaries; conclude with a call to reclaim simple joys and moments of reflection as acts of self-care.

Explanation:

Article format: title, by-line (author name), and a structured body (120-150 words) incorporating the given cues.

No letter format; written in third/first person with a journalistic tone.

OR

Q.22

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Q6(B) [OR]: Your school organised a 'Tastes of India' Week to educate students on the diversity of Indian cuisine. Write a comprehensive report detailing the activities conducted during the week. You are Arti/Aryan, a student of Std. XII and the Secretary of the School Magazine Editorial Board. Organise your report on the basis of What – When – Where – Who – Why – How. (120-150 words)

Answer: Format: Report. Title: 'Tastes of India' Week — A Celebration of Culinary Diversity. By: Arti/Aryan, Secretary, School Magazine Editorial Board. Body (120-150 words) structured on 5Ws+H: What — a week-long celebration of Indian cuisine diversity; When — [dates]; Where — school premises; Who — students,

teachers, chief guest (prominent personality from culinary/cultural field); Why — to educate students on India's rich culinary heritage; How — through food stalls from different states, cooking demonstrations, cultural performances, quizzes. Impact: students gained appreciation for diversity, bonds strengthened.

Explanation:

Report format: title, by-line, date, and body structured using What-When-Where-Who-Why-How.

Written in past tense, third person, factual and comprehensive (120-150 words).

Includes reference to activities, chief guest, participation, and overall impact.

Q.23

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Read the following extract from 'Keeping Quiet' by Pablo Neruda and answer the questions:

'It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines.
we would all be together
in sudden strangeness
Fishermen in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.'

Q7A(i): What does the phrase 'an exotic moment' in the extract signify ?

(a) surreal pause from mechanized human activity enabling reflection and unity. <<

(b) ceremonial halt wherein humans acknowledge traditional and ecological wisdom.

(c) spontaneous event where all human labour becomes obsolete.

(d) rare disruption of routine that highlights cultural diversity and isolation.

Explanation:

'An exotic moment' refers to the extraordinary stillness the poet imagines — a pause from mechanized, rushed human activity ('without rush, without engines') that enables reflection and brings all people together.

Option (A) best captures this.

Q.24

Extract from 'Keeping Quiet' (as in Q7A).

Q7A(ii): Complete the following sentence suitably:

The words 'we' and 'together' signify _____.

Answer: The words 'we' and 'together' signify a sense of universal human unity and collective solidarity — the poet's vision that all of humanity, regardless of differences, would pause and be united in that moment of stillness.

Explanation:

The poet uses 'we' (inclusive of all humanity) and 'together' to suggest that the moment of quiet would bring everyone — fishermen, salt-gatherers, all people — into a shared, unified experience of reflection.

Q.25

Extract from 'Keeping Quiet' (as in Q7A).

Q7A(iii): Select the option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank:

The excerpt tells us that the poet _____ (condemns/glorifies) the moment 'without rush, without engines'.

Answer: glorifies

Explanation:

The poet describes the moment 'without rush, without engines' as 'an exotic moment'

— a positive, aspirational vision of stillness and peace.
He glorifies (celebrates) this pause, not condemns it.

Q.26

Extract from 'Keeping Quiet' (as in Q7A).

Q7A(iv): Choose the correct option that BEST reflects the tone of the poet in the given extract:

(a) despairing and cynical
(b) aggressive and accusatory
(c) meditative and hopeful <<
(d) humorous and sarcastic

Explanation:
The poet's tone is meditative — he reflects on a vision of stillness and collective peace — and hopeful, as he imagines a world where humans pause their destructive rush.
Option (C) is correct.

Q.27

Extract from 'Keeping Quiet' (as in Q7A).

Q7A(v): Complete the sentence:
The phrase 'hurt hands' is a symbol of _____.

Answer: The phrase 'hurt hands' is a symbol of the physical toil, exploitation and suffering endured by labourers (like the salt-gatherer) in their daily struggle for survival — and a reminder of the human cost of endless, mindless work.

Explanation:
'Hurt hands' represents the wounds and weariness of manual labour.
During the moment of stillness, the salt-gatherer would look at his hurt hands — symbolising an awakening to the suffering caused by ceaseless, purposeless toil.

Q.28

Extract from 'Keeping Quiet' (as in Q7A).

Q7A(vi): What message is the poet conveying through the given extract ?

Answer: The poet conveys the message that humanity needs to pause its relentless, mechanised activity and reflect on the consequences of its actions. The moment of stillness ('without rush, without engines') would foster unity, prevent harm to nature (fishermen not harming whales), and allow people to recognise their own suffering. The poet advocates for introspection, non-violence and a deeper connection with oneself and the world.

Explanation:

The extract from 'Keeping Quiet' presents the poet's vision of a collective pause — a moment free from the destructive rush of modern life — which would bring people together and encourage reflection on their actions and suffering.

OR

Q.23

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Read the following extract from 'A Roadside Stand' by Robert Frost:

'You have the money, but if you want to be mean
Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along
The hurt to the scenery, wouldn't be my complaint
So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid:
Here far from the city we make our roadside stand
And ask for some city money to feel in hand
To try if it will not make our being expand,
And give us the life of the moving – pictures' promise
That the party in power is said to be keeping from us.'

Q7B(i): What emotion does the speaker reveal when he says, 'if you want to be mean, why keep your money (this crossly) and go along' ?

(a) curiosity
(b) bitterness <<
(c) indifference
(d) detachment

Explanation:
The speaker's use of 'mean' (stingy/cruel) and 'crossly' reveals bitterness and frustration at the indifference and lack of generosity shown by city travellers.
Option (B) is correct.

OR

Q.24

Extract from 'A Roadside Stand' (as in Q7B).

Q7B(ii): What does the speaker imply in the statement 'The hurt to the scenery wouldn't be my complaint' ?

Answer: The speaker implies that the visual disruption caused by the roadside stand — its impact on the natural scenery — is not what truly pains him. His deeper grievance is the emotional and psychological hurt: the 'trusting sorrow of what is unsaid' — the unacknowledged aspirations and silent suffering of the rural poor who are ignored by passing city dwellers.

Explanation:
The speaker dismisses the aesthetic complaint about 'hurt to the scenery' to highlight a more profound pain — the unspoken sorrow of people who hope but are silently overlooked.

OR

Q.25

Extract from 'A Roadside Stand' (as in Q7B).

Q7B(iii): Complete the following suitably:

The word 'expand' in the line 'to see if it will not make our being expand' implies an aspiration to _____.

Answer: grow beyond mere survival — to experience a fuller, richer life with dignity, comfort and opportunity, like the city dwellers enjoy; 'expand' symbolises the rural poor's desire to transcend their limited, struggling existence.

Explanation:

'Our being expand' suggests a desire for personal and social growth — not just material wealth but a better quality of life, opportunity, and dignity that the city's 'moving-pictures' promise represents.

OR

Q.26

Extract from 'A Roadside Stand' (as in Q7B).

Q7B(iv): Read the two statements and choose the correct option:

Assertion (A): The speaker critiques the governing party for withholding opportunities from the rural poor.

Reason (R): The extract praises the government for their promises of 'a life of the moving pictures'.

(a) Both the Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of the Assertion (A).

(b) Both the Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

(c) Assertion (A) is true, but the Reason (R) is false. <<

(d) Assertion (A) is false, but the Reason (R) is true.

Explanation:

Assertion (A) is true — the speaker says the government 'is said to be keeping from us' the promised better life, implying the party withholds opportunities.

Reason (R) is false — the extract does NOT praise the government;
it criticises the unfulfilled promises.
Option (C) is correct.

OR

Q.27

Extract from 'A Roadside Stand' (as in Q7B).

Q7B(v): Which of the following concerns is NOT explored in the extract ?

(a) political manipulation of rural dreams
(b) discrimination faced due to different religious policies. <<
(c) transactional disconnection between the city and the village.
(d) impact of unfulfilled expectations.

Explanation:

The extract addresses: political manipulation of rural dreams (the party 'keeping from us' the promised life — Option A), the transactional disconnection (city people ignore the roadside stand — Option C), and unfulfilled expectations (the moving-pictures promise — Option D).
Religious discrimination (Option B) is NOT mentioned anywhere in the extract.

OR

Q.28

Extract from 'A Roadside Stand' (as in Q7B).

Q7B(vi): State in one sentence:
What advice your address to the politicians from this extract is most likely to include ?

Answer: Honour your promises to the rural poor — stop withholding the opportunities and better life you claim to offer, and acknowledge the silent suffering of those who wait by their roadside stands.

Explanation:

The speaker criticises the governing party for promising 'the life of the moving pictures' but 'keeping it from us' — an address to politicians would urge them to fulfil these promises and recognise the aspirations of rural communities.

Q.29

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Read the following extract from 'Memories of Childhood' (Zitkala-Sa):

'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.'

Q8A(i): Complete the following suitably: 'Then I lost my spirit', indicates that the speaker _____.

Answer: had given up fighting back and was completely broken — the forcible cutting of her braids, which held deep cultural significance for her, was the final act of humiliation that crushed her will and identity.

Explanation:

Zitkala-Sa's braids were a symbol of her Native American identity and dignity.
Their forced removal was the culminating indignity that caused her to 'lose her spirit' — surrender her inner resistance.

Q.30

Extract from 'Memories of Childhood' (as in Q8A).

Q8A(ii): What does Zitkala-Sa imply about the prejudice prevailing in society when she talks of having 'suffered extreme indignities' ?

Answer: Zitkala-Sa implies that the dominant society (the boarding school and its staff) treated Native American children as inferior — subjecting them to dehumanising practices such as staring, tossing her about, and forcibly cutting her hair. The 'extreme indignities' suggest a deeply prejudiced system that stripped indigenous children of their cultural identity, dignity and individuality.

Explanation:

The series of indignities — people staring, being tossed like a puppet, hair being cut — reflect the racist and colonial attitudes of the society that saw indigenous children as objects to be assimilated and controlled, not as human beings with their own identity.

Q.31

Extract from 'Memories of Childhood' (as in Q8A).

Q8A(iii): Why did Zitkala-Sa yearn to be with her mother in her moment of anguish ?

Answer: Zitkala-Sa yearned for her mother because her mother was the only one who ever 'reasoned quietly' with her and offered comfort. In the boarding school, there was no one to console her — she was treated as just 'one of many little animals'. Her mother represented love, understanding, cultural identity, and the security she had been forcibly taken from.

Explanation:

The text says 'Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do.' Her mother represents the warmth, understanding and cultural belonging that the institutionalised environment denied her.

Q.32

Extract from 'Memories of Childhood' (as in Q8A).

Q8A(iv): The tone of the narrator in the extract can be best described as

(a) bitter and strong willed
(b) detached and impersonal
(c) pained and despairing <<
(d) grateful and reflective

Explanation:

The narrator describes her anguish and moaning, the loss of her spirit, and the absence of any comfort — the tone is one of deep pain and despair.

'Pained and despairing' (Option C) best describes it.

While there is some resistance, by the end she has 'lost her spirit', making 'bitter and strong-willed' less accurate.

OR

Q.29

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Read the following extract from 'On the Face of It' by Susan Hill:

Derry: But I'm not…. I'm not afraid [pause] people are afraid of me.
Mr. Lamb: Why should that be ?
Derry: Everyone is. It doesn't matter who they are, or what they say, or how they look. How they pretend. I know. I can see.
Mr. Lamb: See what ?
Derry: What they think ?
Mr. Lamb: What do they think, then ?
Derry: You think…. 'Here's a boy'. You look at me… and then you see my face and you think. That's bad. That's a terrible thing. 'That's the ugliest thing I ever saw.' You think, 'poor boy'. But I'm not. Not poor. Underneath, you are afraid. Anybody would be – I am. When I look in the mirror, and see it, I'm afraid of me.

Mr. Lamb: No, not the whole of you. Not of you.
Derry: Yes !

Q8B(i): Which emotion dominates Derry's dialogue in this extract ?

(a) superiority
(b) shrewdness
(c) vulnerability <<
(d) indifference

Explanation:
Derry admits that even he is afraid when he sees his own face in the mirror — this self-aware admission of fear and the sense that others always pity or fear him reveals profound vulnerability.
Option (C) is correct.

OR

Q.30

Extract from 'On the Face of It' (as in Q8B).

Q8B(ii): Complete the following suitably:
According to Derry, the people put up a pretence when they see him because _____.

Answer: they are actually afraid of his disfigured face — they pretend not to be repulsed or fearful, but underneath Derry knows they think his face is terrible and they pity him, even if they try to conceal their true reaction.

Explanation:
Derry says 'How they pretend.
I know.
I can see.' and 'Underneath, you are afraid.' He believes people mask their true feelings of fear and disgust behind a pretence of normalcy.

OR

Q.31

Extract from 'On the Face of It' (as in Q8B).

Q8B(iii): Complete the following suitably:

When Mr. Lamb says, 'No, not the whole of you. Not of you.' He means _____.

(a) Your face will get healed and your ideas about your appearance will change.

(b) You are not just your face or your injury. That is not the sum total of who you are. <<

(c) I am afraid of your face and your appearance.

(d) You shouldn't look into the mirror so that you don't get the feeling of dejection.

Explanation:

Mr.

Lamb's statement 'No, not the whole of you.

Not of you.' is a correction of Derry's claim that people are afraid of him.

Mr.

Lamb implies that a person is more than their physical appearance — that Derry's face is not the sum total of who he is.

Option (B) is correct.

OR

Q.32

Extract from 'On the Face of It' (as in Q8B).

Q8B(iv): State in one sentence:

What advice will you give to the people who pretend to look away when they see Derry's face ?

Answer: Look beyond physical appearances and interact with empathy and

respect — a person's worth lies in their character and humanity, not in how they look.

Explanation:

The play 'On the Face of It' addresses the theme of social prejudice against those with physical disabilities.

The advice would encourage genuine empathy and seeing the whole person rather than reacting to their appearance.

Q.33

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Read the following extract from 'Poets and Pancakes' by Asokamitran:

'The make-up room had the look of a hair-cutting salon with lights at all angles around half a dozen large mirrors. They were all incandescent lights, so you can imagine the fiery misery of those subjected to make-up. The make-up department was first headed by a Bengali who became too big for the studio and left. He was succeeded by a Maharashtrian who was assisted by a Dharwar Kannadiga, an Andhra, a Madras Indian Christian, an Anglo-Burmese and the usual local Tamils. All this shows that there was a great deal of National Integration long before A.I.R. and Doordarshan began broadcasting programmes on national integration. This gang of nationally integrated make-up men could turn any decent-looking person into a hideous crimson hued monster with the help of truckloads of pancake and a number of other locally made potions and lotions. Those were the days of mainly indoor shooting, and only five percent of the film was shot outdoors. I suppose the sets and studio lights needed girls and boys to be made to look ugly in order to look presentable in the movie. A strict hierarchy was maintained in the make-up department.'

Q9A(i): Why did the make-up room have a look of a hair-cutting salon ?

Answer: The make-up room looked like a hair-cutting salon because it had lights at all angles around half a dozen large mirrors — an arrangement typical of a salon, where lighting and mirrors are set up for close grooming work.

Explanation:

The text directly states: 'The make-up room had the look of a hair-cutting salon with lights at all angles around half a dozen large mirrors.' This visual similarity is the direct answer.

Q.34

Extract from 'Poets and Pancakes' (as in Q9A).

Q9A(ii): What does 'fiery misery of those subjected to make-up' suggest ?

(a) emotional stress faced by the actors.
(b) physical discomfort due to heat and lighting. <<
(c) anger of the make-up artists due to irritation.
(d) the discomfort caused by the cramped room.

Explanation:

The 'fiery misery' refers to the intense heat generated by the incandescent lights surrounding the mirrors — the actors/persons subjected to make-up had to endure this physical heat while being made up.

Option (B) is correct.

Q.35

Extract from 'Poets and Pancakes' (as in Q9A).

Q9A(iii): Complete the following suitably:

The tone of the author in the phrase 'hideous crimson hued monster' is _____.

Answer: satirical / humorous and ironic

Explanation:

The phrase 'hideous crimson hued monster' is an exaggerated, comic description of the over-application of make-up.

The author uses this hyperbole with satirical humour to mock the excessive use of pancake make-up at Gemini Studios.

Q.36

Extract from 'Poets and Pancakes' (as in Q9A).

Q9A(iv): Why was excessive make-up considered a cinematic necessity at Gemini Studios during that era ?

(a) minimised the cost of set design and costumes.

(b) was a mandated practice by the studio's creative heads and lead actors.

(c) aligned with the theatrical traditions the studio admired.

(d) compensated for the lack of advanced lighting and camera technology. <<

Explanation:

The author states 'the sets and studio lights needed girls and boys to be made to look ugly in order to look presentable in the movie.' Since 95% of shooting was indoors using artificial studio lights, the excessive make-up compensated for the limitations of the camera and lighting technology of that era.

Option (D) is correct.

Q.37

Extract from 'Poets and Pancakes' (as in Q9A).

Q9A(v): What does 'became too big for a studio and left' imply about the Bengali make-up artist ?

Answer: It implies that the Bengali make-up artist became so successful and renowned that he outgrew the confines of Gemini Studios — his reputation and demand exceeded what the studio could offer, so he moved on to bigger

opportunities. The phrase is used with irony/humour by the author.

Explanation:

The idiomatic expression 'became too big for the studio' suggests the artist's ambitions or reputation grew beyond what the studio could accommodate, leading him to leave for greater prospects.

Q.38

Extract from 'Poets and Pancakes' (as in Q9A).

Q9A(vi): Complete the sentence with a suitable reason:

The author refers to the presence of people from different regions in the make-up department to _____.

Answer: highlight the irony that Gemini Studios had achieved genuine national integration — through a diverse, multi-regional workforce — long before the state-run media (A.I.R. and Doordarshan) began making programmes about national integration.

Explanation:

The author sardonically notes the multi-regional composition (Bengali, Maharashtrian, Kannadiga, Andhra, Madras Indian Christian, Anglo-Burmese, local Tamils) to make a witty point: real national integration existed organically in the studio before it became a government-broadcast theme.

OR

Q.33

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Read the following extract from 'The Rattrap' by Selma Lagerlof:

'Now I am going to tell you, Mr. Ironmaster, how things are', he said. 'The whole world is nothing but a big rattrap. All the good things that are offered to you are nothing but cheese rinds and bits of pork, set out to drag a poor

fellow into trouble. And if the sheriff comes now and locks me up for this, then you, Mr. Ironmaster, must remember that a day will come when you yourself may want to get a big piece of pork, and then you will get caught in the trap.'

The ironmaster began to laugh.

'That was not so badly said, my good fellow. Perhaps we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve.'

Q9B(i): What does the speaker mean when he says 'The whole world is nothing but a big rattrap' ?

(a) The world offers many chances for success and prosperity.

(b) Temptations in life are traps that lead people into trouble. <<

(c) Good deeds are always rewarded with cheese rinds.

(d) Justice and fairness are not guaranteed for everyone.

Explanation:

The peddler's rattrap philosophy is that the world's temptations (good things offered) are like cheese and pork in a rattrap — they lure people in and then trap them. Option (B) correctly captures this metaphor.

OR

Q.34

Extract from 'The Rattrap' (as in Q9B).

Q9B(ii): What does the following phrase from the extract showcase: 'Cheese rinds'.

(a) temptation <<

(b) affirmation

(c) gluttony

(d) deprivation

Explanation:

'Cheese rinds and bits of pork' are the bait used in a rattrap to lure animals.

In the peddler's metaphor they represent the temptations of the world that trap people.

Option (A) — temptation — is correct.

OR

Q.35

Extract from 'The Rattrap' (as in Q9B).

Q9B(iii): Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank:

By calling himself a 'poor fellow', the speaker emphasises his _____. (vulnerability/credibility)

Answer: vulnerability

Explanation:

The peddler calls himself a 'poor fellow' to emphasise his helplessness and pitiable state — his vulnerability — in the face of a world full of traps and a sheriff who may lock him up.

He is not asserting credibility but rather evoking sympathy for his weak position.

OR

Q.36

Extract from 'The Rattrap' (as in Q9B).

Q9B(iv): What does the speaker imply through his warning to the ironmaster ?

Answer: The speaker implies that no one is immune to the rattrap of the world — not even the wealthy ironmaster. By warning him that 'a day will come when you yourself may want to get a big piece of pork, and then you will get caught in the trap', the peddler suggests that greed and temptation are universal human weaknesses that can ensnare anyone, regardless of their wealth or status.

Explanation:

The peddler's warning universalises the rattrap metaphor — it is not only the poor and desperate who fall into traps;
the rich and powerful are equally susceptible to the lure of temptation.

OR

Q.37

Extract from 'The Rattrap' (as in Q9B).

Q9B(v): What does the following line from the extract showcase about the ironmaster's nature ?
'Perhaps, we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve.'

(a) materialistic
(b) understanding <<
(c) conniving
(d) enterprising

Explanation:

The ironmaster's response — laughing at the peddler's philosophy and suggesting they 'let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve' — shows a lenient, compassionate side.
He is moved by the peddler's clever words and decides not to call the sheriff.
Option (B) — understanding — best captures this.

OR

Q.38

Extract from 'The Rattrap' (as in Q9B).

Q9B(vi): Complete the following with a suitable reason:
In the extract, it is implied that the speaker would be locked up because _____.

Answer: he had stolen money from the old crofter who had generously shown him hospitality — the theft made him a wanted man and he feared the sheriff would arrest him if found.

Explanation:

In the story, the peddler (rattrap seller) stole thirty kronor from a kind old crofter after the man had given him shelter and food.

This theft is the reason he fears the sheriff and the ironmaster's power to hand him over to the authorities.

Q.39

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q10(i): The poem explores the relationship between a mother and daughter. Comment. (My Mother at Sixty Six) (40-50 words)

Answer: In 'My Mother at Sixty Six', Kamala Das portrays a complex mother-daughter relationship suffused with love and fear of loss. The daughter observes her ageing mother's pale, corpse-like face and is gripped by a familiar, childhood dread of separation and death. The poem captures the daughter's helplessness and her attempt to mask grief with a smile.

Explanation:

The poem depicts the poet driving her ageing mother to the airport.

She observes her mother's declining health, fears losing her, and parts with a painful smile — the relationship is tender, deep, and tinged with the anxiety of inevitable separation.

Q.40

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q10(ii): What does Umberto Eco mean when he says he is 'a professor who writes novels on Sundays' ? (The Interview) (40-50 words)

Answer: Umberto Eco means that he considers his serious academic work — his research, essays and university teaching — to be his primary profession. Novel-writing, for which he became world-famous, is presented as a leisure activity or secondary pursuit: something he does in his free time, not his main

vocation.

Explanation:

In 'The Interview', Eco explains that his scholarly work is what he regards as his true life's work.

He uses the phrase humorously but also sincerely to downplay his celebrity-novelist status and to signal that he sees himself principally as an academic.

Q.41

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q10(iii): The British landlords agreed to refund 25% of the money to the sharecroppers in the Champaran dispute. What is the significance of this event ? (Indigo) (40-50 words)

Answer: The refund signified a moral and psychological victory for the sharecroppers — the landlords admitted their wrongdoing by returning even a fraction of the money. More importantly, it broke the landlords' aura of authority and untouchability, demonstrating that injustice could be challenged. Gandhi considered the amount secondary to the precedent it set.

Explanation:

In 'Indigo', Gandhi explains that the 25% refund was not significant for its monetary value but because it established that the British landlords could be compelled to acknowledge their exploitation.

It was the first step in dismantling an unjust system.

Q.42

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q10(iv): How did Douglas' experience at the beach in California affect him ? (Deep Water) (40-50 words)

Answer: At a beach in California, Douglas swam in the surf and found that his old terror of water had completely vanished. He dived into waves, swam with ease,

and felt no residual fear — confirming that his instructor's training had successfully conquered the phobia that had haunted him since his near-drowning experience at the YMCA pool.

Explanation:

In 'Deep Water', Douglas describes testing himself in various waters after his training. At the California beach he confronted and finally overcame his aquaphobia, swimming freely — the experience confirmed his complete psychological recovery.

Q.43

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q10(v): The constraints of Aunt Jennifer's married life leave her terrorised and emotionally scarred. Elaborate. (Aunt Jennifer's Tigers) (40-50 words)

Answer: Aunt Jennifer is trapped in a suffocating, patriarchal marriage — symbolised by the 'massive weight of Uncle's wedding band' that makes her fingers 'flutter' in fear. She is too terrified and oppressed to rebel openly, so she channels her desire for freedom into her embroidered tigers — bold, fearless creatures she herself can never be.

Explanation:

Adrienne Rich's poem shows Aunt Jennifer's artistic tigers as a projection of the freedom she is denied.

Her heavy wedding ring symbolises marital subjugation.

The poem's ending — that even in death she will remain 'ringed with ordeals' — underscores the permanence of her terror and scarring.

Q.44

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q10(vi): 'Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons ?' What does Franz's remark suggest about the imposition of German in school in Alsace ? (Last Lesson) (40-50 words)

Answer: Franz's remark reveals his disbelief and ironic awareness of the absurdity of cultural imposition — if even the cooing of pigeons cannot be changed, the forced replacement of French with German seems both futile and oppressive. It suggests that language and identity are so deeply rooted that no occupation can truly erase them.

Explanation:

In 'The Last Lesson', Franz wonders whether the Prussian occupiers would even try to make pigeons sing in German.

This thought captures the absurdity of forced assimilation and the impossibility of truly destroying a people's native language and culture.

Q.45

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q11(i): What does Bama's decision to excel in academics reveal about her character ? (Memories of Childhood – We Too are Human Beings) (40-50 words)

Answer: Bama's decision to excel in academics reveals her resilience, determination and defiance. Advised by her brother Annan that education is the only weapon against caste discrimination, she internalises this lesson and works hard to top her class — turning personal hurt into purposeful action, and using achievement as a tool for dignity and social equality.

Explanation:

In 'We Too are Human Beings', Bama learns from her brother that Dalits can earn respect only through education.

Her resolve to study hard and become a top student reflects her character's strength, intelligence and refusal to accept the subordinate identity imposed by caste.

Q.46

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q11(ii): How did the newspaper 'The World' contribute to Charley's belief in the existence of the third level ? (The Third Level) (40-50 words)

Answer: Charley found an old copy of 'The World', a newspaper dated July 18, 1894, at the third level of Grand Central. Since it was a real newspaper from that era — with news, advertisements and prices of the period — it served as concrete proof to Charley (and later Sam) that the third level genuinely existed as a passage to 1894.

Explanation:

In 'The Third Level', the old newspaper from 1894 is the key piece of evidence.

It corroborates Charley's account of the third level and reinforces his (and ultimately Sam's) conviction that the mysterious level connecting to the past was real.

Q.47

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q11(iii): Evaluate the role of the court astrologer in shaping the trajectory of the Tiger King's life. (The Tiger King) (40-50 words)

Answer: The court astrologer's prophecy — that the Tiger King would be killed by a tiger — set the entire trajectory of his life. It drove him to a single obsessive mission of killing tigers, shaped all his decisions (wars, marriage, defiance of the Dewan), and ultimately proved ironic when he was killed not by a real tiger but by a toy one.

Explanation:

In 'The Tiger King', the astrologer's prediction at birth determines the king's entire life pursuit.

The supreme irony is that his death comes from a wooden toy tiger — the prediction comes true in a way no one anticipated, underscoring the story's satirical message about fate and obsession.

Q.48

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q12(A): Sophie in 'Going Places' and Mukesh in 'Lost Spring' aspire for a better life yet external forces shape their realities and opportunities. Discuss. (120-150 words)

Answer: Both Sophie and Mukesh are young people trapped by their socioeconomic circumstances, who dream of escaping them. Sophie, from a working-class family in England, fantasises about owning a boutique, working as a fashion designer or actress, and meeting her football hero Danny Casey. Her dreams are vivid but disconnected from her reality — she has limited means, no concrete plan, and must return to the same drab factory environment. Mukesh, a young bangle-maker's son in Firozabad, dreams of becoming a motor mechanic — a modest but bold aspiration in a community bound by caste, poverty and the vicious cycle of debt. External forces — caste oppression, poverty, the bangle-makers' mafia-police nexus for Mukesh; class constraints and limited opportunity for Sophie — prevent both from realising their potential. The contrast highlights how socioeconomic systems crush individual aspiration regardless of geography.

Explanation:

The question asks for a comparative analysis of two characters from different stories who share a common theme: dreams vs reality shaped by external forces.

Sophie's dreams are escapist fantasies; Mukesh's are more grounded but equally obstructed.

OR

Q.48

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q12(B) [OR]: How is the transient nature of beauty and life portrayed in the poems 'My Mother at Sixty Six' and 'A Thing of Beauty' ? (120-150 words)

Answer: In 'My Mother at Sixty Six', Kamala Das portrays the transience of life through her ageing mother — once vibrant, now with a 'wan, pale' face like a 'late

winter's moon', fading inevitably toward death. The poet's repeated farewell ('smile, smile, smile') masks unspoken grief at life's fragility and the fear of permanent loss. In contrast, 'A Thing of Beauty' by John Keats celebrates beauty as a source of eternal joy that transcends human suffering. Keats argues that beautiful things — nature, myths, heroic deeds — provide 'a joy forever', an 'immortal drink' that counters the transience of pain and sorrow. Together, the poems offer contrasting perspectives: Das mourns the inevitable fading of the people and joys we love, while Keats affirms that beauty, though witnessed in a transient world, leaves an enduring imprint on the human spirit.

Explanation:

The comparative question links two poems from different traditions on the theme of beauty and impermanence.

Das's poem is elegiac and personal; Keats's is celebratory and universal.

The contrast enriches the discussion of transience.

Q.49

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q13(A): Examine how the presence of school students on the expedition contribute to the message of environmental responsibility and hope. (Journey to the End of the Earth) (120-150 words)

Answer: In 'Journey to the End of the Earth', Tishani Doshi describes Antarctica as Earth's last great wilderness and a record of its geological and climatic history. The inclusion of students from around the world in the 'Students on Ice' programme is deliberate and symbolically significant. Students represent the future — the generation that will inherit the consequences of today's environmental decisions. By immersing young people in Antarctica's pristine but fragile ecosystem, the programme instils in them a visceral, first-hand understanding of what is at stake: melting ice caps, ozone depletion, and the fragility of life on Earth. Their presence embodies environmental hope — the

possibility that an informed, emotionally invested younger generation will drive policy change and sustainable living. The message is clear: if humanity is to save the planet, the future must be engaged now, in the very places most threatened.

Explanation:

The essay focuses on the pedagogical and symbolic purpose of taking students to Antarctica — connecting young people with environmental realities to create a future generation of responsible stewards.

OR

Q.49

SECTION C — LITERATURE

Q13(B) [OR]: How does Pearl S. Buck explore the theme of humanitarianism versus patriotism in the lesson 'The Enemy' ? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (120-150 words)

Answer: In 'The Enemy', Pearl S. Buck places Dr. Sadao Hoki in an impossible moral conflict: he discovers a wounded American prisoner of war — his country's enemy — washed ashore near his home during World War II. As a Japanese citizen and patriot, duty demands he hand the man over to the authorities. As a doctor and humanitarian, his conscience compels him to save the man's life ('a man to be operated upon is a patient and nothing else'). Buck explores this tension through Sadao's internal conflict, his wife Hana's discomfort, and the General's cynical intervention. In the end, Sadao saves the prisoner and helps him escape — humanitarianism triumphs over narrow patriotism. Buck's message is that the universal duty to preserve human life transcends national loyalties and wartime hatred, and that true civilisation lies in choosing compassion over enmity.

Explanation:

The story contrasts patriotism (Sadao's Japanese identity, wartime duty) with humanism (a doctor's oath, universal conscience).

Buck resolves the tension in favour of humanity — Sadao acts as a healer first and a

patriot second.