Roll No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Q.P. Code 1/1/1

ENGLISH (CORE)

CBSE Class XII Board Examination 2026 — with answers

Time allowed: 3 hours **Maximum Marks: 80**

General Instructions:

1. The paper has 13 questions; all are compulsory.
2. It has three sections: Section A – Reading Skills, Section B – Creative Writing Skills, Section C – Literature.
3. Follow the specific instructions given with each question or part, and write the correct question number and part in the answer sheet.
4. Keep to the word limit stated for each answer.
5. All names, addresses and other details in the questions are imaginary.

SECTION A

Reading Skills (22 marks).

1. *Unseen passage — a literary passage based on Richard Bach's 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull', about a gull who flies for the joy of flight, is cast out by his flock and learns that freedom of thought is the true law — not reproduced. Q1 (i)–(x) are based on it: MCQs, sentence completion, an analogy item and textual-evidence items (1 mark each) and short answers (2 marks each).* **12**

2. *Unseen passage — a factual report on road safety in India (2023 accident figures, a table of causes of accidents, school-zone safety measures, a student helmet campaign, AI traffic technology and personal responsibility) — not reproduced. Q2 (i)–(viii) are based on it: MCQs, a word-meaning item, sentence completion and a data-inference item (1 mark each) and short answers (2 marks each).* **10**

SECTION B

Creative Writing Skills (18 marks). Each question has an internal choice: attempt (A) or (B).

3. Notice (about 50 words): Your school is holding a career counselling session for Classes XI and XII so that students can choose their future careers wisely. As Riya/Rohan, Head Girl/Head Boy of M.L.C. School, write a notice giving all the details of the session. Put the notice in a box. **4**

ANSWER

Boxed notice: M.L.C. SCHOOL – NOTICE – date – heading (Career Counselling Session) – what/for whom/date/time/venue/resource person/registration – Riya/Rohan, Head Girl/Head Boy.

Model answer (in a box):
M.L.C. SCHOOL
NOTICE
12 January 20XX
CAREER COUNSELLING SESSION
Confused about what to study after school? A career counselling session for Classes XI and XII will be held on 20 January 20XX, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the school auditorium. Experts from leading universities will guide you on streams, entrance exams and new-age careers, followed by one-to-one doubt clearing. Interested students may give their names to their class teachers by 17 January.
Riya/Rohan
Head Girl/Head Boy

Marking points:
• Format (1): school name, the word NOTICE, date, suitable heading, name with designation at the bottom, all in a box.
• Content (2): what the event is, who it is for, date, time, venue, resource persons, how to register and the last date.
• Expression (1): grammar, spelling, clear and concise organisation.
Common mistake: forgetting the box or crossing the 50-word limit with unnecessary description.

OR

Notice (about 50 words): As Kavya/Karan, Chief Editor of the school magazine 'Parakh', write a notice asking students to send articles, stories, poems, artwork and similar entries for the special annual edition. Entries go to the Chief Editor. Give the necessary details and put the notice in a box.

ANSWER

Boxed notice: school name – NOTICE – date – heading (Contributions Invited for 'Parakh') – types of entries, theme/word limit, last date, where to submit – Kavya/Karan, Chief Editor.

Model answer (in a box):
ABC SCHOOL, NEW DELHI
NOTICE
5 October 20XX
CALL FOR ENTRIES – 'PARAKH' ANNUAL EDITION
Budding writers and artists, here is your chance! Original articles, stories, poems, sketches and paintings are invited for the special annual edition of 'Parakh'. Write-ups should not exceed 500 words. Submit your entries, with name and class, to the undersigned in Room 12 by 25 October

20XX.
Kavya/Karan
Chief Editor, 'Parakh'

Marking points:
• Format (1): issuing school, NOTICE, date, heading, name and designation, box.
• Content (2): purpose (annual edition), kinds of contributions, word limit/originality, last date, submission to the Chief Editor.
• Expression (1): accuracy and coherence.

4. Formal invitation (about 50 words): As Satupa/Satish, President of Surya Vikas RWA, write an invitation to the M.L.A. of your constituency asking him/her to be the Chief Guest at a function honouring residents who have done outstanding work for the colony. Mention one attractive highlight of the programme. **4**

ANSWER

Formal invitation (letter or card, third person if card): host (Surya Vikas RWA), occasion (felicitation of eminent residents), request to be Chief Guest, date-time-venue, one highlight, RSVP/name.

Model answer:
The President and members of Surya Vikas Resident Welfare Association request the pleasure of the company of Hon'ble M.L.A. Shri _____ as Chief Guest at the Felicitation Ceremony to honour residents who have worked for the upliftment of our colony.
Date: 15 March 20XX, Time: 5 p.m., Venue: Community Hall, Surya Vikas
Highlight: a short documentary on the colony's journey from neglect to a model green neighbourhood.
RSVP: Satupa/Satish, President (98XXXXXXXX)

Marking points:
• Format (1): invitation layout (card in third person or formal letter), name of host, RSVP/signature.
• Content (2): occasion, request to be Chief Guest, date, time, venue, the compelling highlight.
• Expression (1): polite formal tone, accuracy.

OR

Formal reply (about 50 words): You are Dr. Vora, a certified art therapist from Manipur. Green Valley Public School, Jammu has invited you to conduct a seminar for students on 'Art Therapy, the Way Forward'. Write a reply accepting the invitation.

ANSWER

Formal letter of acceptance: sender's address, date, receiver's address, subject, salutation, thanks + acceptance + confirmation of date/time/venue, any requirement, complimentary close, Dr. Vora.

Model answer (body):
Dear Sir/Madam,
Thank you for inviting me to conduct a seminar on 'Art Therapy, the Way Forward' at Green Valley Public School. I am pleased to accept and will reach the school on 10 April 20XX at 10 a.m. Kindly arrange a projector and some art material for a short hands-on activity.
Yours sincerely,
Dr. Vora

Marking points:
• Format (1): sender's address, date, receiver's address, subject, salutation, complimentary close, name.
• Content (2): thanks, acknowledgement of the invitation, clear acceptance, confirmation of date/time/venue (and any needs).
• Expression (1): formal tone, accuracy.

5. Letter to the editor (120-150 words): You are Kaneshta/Shirish, a keen follower of yoga. Write to the editor of a newspaper sharing your views and urging people, especially students and young adults, to make yoga part of their daily life. Cues you may use: the need for a disciplined exercise routine; yoga reduces stress and improves physical and mental health; it increases focus; schools and colleges should encourage it. **5**

ANSWER

Formal letter format + subject (e.g. 'Make Yoga a Daily Habit'); content: sedentary/stressful lifestyle, benefits of yoga (fitness, stress relief, focus), role of schools/institutions, appeal to youth.

Model answer (outline in own words):
Sender's address – date – The Editor, The Daily News, city – Subject: Need to make yoga a part of young people's daily lives – Sir/Madam,
¶1 Through your columns I wish to draw attention to the poor fitness and rising stress among students and young adults, who spend hours on screens and hardly exercise.
¶2 Yoga offers a simple, free and disciplined routine. Regular asanas and pranayama keep the body flexible, reduce anxiety and improve sleep and concentration, which directly helps studies and work.
¶3 Schools and colleges should begin the day with a short yoga session, hold workshops and celebrate Yoga Day meaningfully; parents too should practise with children.
¶4 Even twenty minutes a day can change our lives. I hope this letter inspires readers to start today.
Yours truly, Kaneshta/Shirish

Marking points:
• Format (1): sender's address, date, receiver's address, subject, salutation, complimentary close, name.
• Content (2): problem, benefits of yoga, suggestions for schools/institutions, appeal (cues used with own ideas).
• Expression (2): grammar, spelling, organisation and coherence.

OR

Job application with bio-data (120-150 words): You are Roshni/Rohan, a final-year Computer Science degree student. 'Tech Innovate Solutions', Markhande Lane, Pune has advertised in 'The National Times' for AI Engineers: Bachelor's degree in CS/IT; skill in AI frameworks, data science, PyTorch and Python; 1-2 years of work experience, projects or certifications. Apply to the Public Relations Officer with your bio-data.

ANSWER

Covering letter (reference to the advertisement, suitability, offer of candidature, availability for interview) + bio-data (personal details, qualifications, skills, experience/projects, achievements, references).

Model answer (outline):
Covering letter – sender's address, date, The Public Relations Officer, Tech Innovate Solutions, Markhande Lane, Pune – Subject: Application for the post of AI Engineer – Sir/Madam,
In response to your advertisement in 'The National Times' dated ___, I offer myself as a candidate for the post of AI Engineer. I am completing my B.Tech in Computer Science and have built projects in machine learning using Python and PyTorch, and I hold a certification in data science. I enclose my

bio-data and would be glad to appear for an interview at your convenience.
Yours faithfully, Roshni/Rohan
Bio-data: Name, date of birth, address, contact, e-mail; Qualifications: Class XII, B.Tech CS (final year, CGPA); Skills: Python, PyTorch, TensorFlow, data analysis; Experience/Projects: 1-year internship, two AI projects; Certifications; Languages/Hobbies; References: two names.

Marking points:
• Format (1): formal letter format + separate (or included) bio-data.
• Content (2): reference to advertisement, suitability, candidature; bio-data with personal details, qualifications, experience, skills, references.
• Expression (2): grammar, organisation, coherence.

6. Article (120-150 words): You are Aanya/Ankit, troubled that quiet moments and an unhurried way of living are disappearing from our fast lives. Write a newspaper article titled 'The Vanishing Art of Slowing Down'. Cues: hustle culture and technology harming mental health; losing touch with nature, people and ourselves; value of mindful celebrations and slow living; role of schools, communities and media; need for digital limits, reflection and simple joys. **5**

ANSWER

Title + byline; content: the problem (hustle culture, screens), its effects (stress, loss of connection), value of slowing down, role of schools/communities/media, digital boundaries and simple joys; conclusion.

Model answer (outline):

THE VANISHING ART OF SLOWING DOWN – by Aanya/Ankit

¶1 We rush from alarms to deadlines, scrolling even while eating; being 'busy' has become a badge of honour.

¶2 This hustle culture and constant connectivity cause anxiety, burnout and sleeplessness. We hardly notice the sky, talk to neighbours or listen to ourselves.

¶3 Slowing down means mindful festivals, unhurried family meals, walks in nature and time to reflect.

¶4 Schools can include mindfulness and nature activities; communities can create screen-free spaces; media can celebrate rest instead of glorifying overwork.

¶5 Fixed digital boundaries and small joys – a book, a hobby, a chat – can restore balance. Let us pause before life passes us by.

Marking points:

• Format (1): title and byline.

• Content (2): causes, impact, importance of slow living, suggestions (cues + own ideas).

• Expression (2): grammar, organisation, coherence.

OR

Report (120-150 words): Your school held a 'Tastes of India' Week to teach students about the variety of Indian food. As Arti/Aryan of Class XII, Secretary of the School Magazine Editorial Board, write a detailed report on the activities of the week – the events, participation, the chief guest and the overall effect on the school. Use What–When–Where–Who–Why–How.

ANSWER

Title + byline (+ place/date); content: what (Tastes of India Week), when, where, who (chief guest, participants), why (cuisine diversity), how (activities, response, impact).

Model answer (outline):

'TASTES OF INDIA' WEEK CELEBRATES OUR CULINARY DIVERSITY – by Arti/Aryan, Secretary, Editorial Board

City, date: A 'Tastes of India' Week was held in the school from 10 to 15 November to introduce students to the regional cuisines of the country.

The week was inaugurated by a well-known chef (chief guest) in the school hall. Each day focused on a region: food stalls by houses, a no-fire cooking contest, a quiz on spices and grains, a talk on millets and nutrition, and a 'grandma's recipe' exhibition. About 600 students and many parents took part.

The chief guest praised the effort and stressed healthy traditional food. Students learnt about the

culture and history behind dishes and the value of local produce; the event ended with a vote of thanks by the Principal.

Marking points:
• Format (1): title and byline (place/date optional).
• Content (2): what, when, where, who (chief guest, participants), why, how (activities, response, impact).
• Expression (2): grammar, organisation, past tense, reported style.

SECTION C

Literature (40 marks).

7. Extract from 'Keeping Quiet' (Pablo Neruda): the poet imagines a strange, peaceful moment with no hurry and no machines, when people are together, fishermen spare the whales and the salt-gatherer looks at his injured hands. **6**

(i) What does 'an exotic moment' stand for? (A) a dream-like pause from mechanical human activity that allows reflection and unity (B) a ritual stop to honour traditional and ecological wisdom (C) a sudden event that makes all human labour useless (D) an unusual break in routine that shows cultural diversity and isolation

(ii) Complete: The words 'we' and 'together' signify ____.

(iii) Fill in from the brackets: The poet ____ (condemns/glorifies) the moment without rush and engines.

(iv) The tone of the poet here is best described as: (A) despairing and cynical (B) aggressive and accusatory (C) meditative and hopeful (D) humorous and sarcastic

(v) Complete: 'Hurt hands' is a symbol of ____.

(vi) What message does the poet give through this extract?

ANSWER

(i) (A) (ii) unity/shared human responsibility (iii) glorifies (iv) (C) (v) relentless hard labour without rest (vi) pause, introspect and live in peace with each other and nature

(i) (A) – the 'exotic' moment is a rare, almost unreal pause from machines and hurry, in which people can reflect and feel united.

(ii) 'We' and 'together' show a collective awareness – all humanity united in harmony and sharing responsibility.

(iii) Glorifies – he presents the quiet moment as precious and desirable.

(iv) (C) – the poet is calm and thoughtful and hopes stillness will improve the world.

(v) Endless physical toil / a life of labour without a pause, which harms the worker himself.

(vi) Silence and introspection can bring unity and peace and stop us from exploiting nature and one another.

Tip: in 'complete the sentence' items, write a phrase that fits grammatically into the blank.

OR

Extract from 'A Roadside Stand' (Robert Frost): the farmer at the roadside stand is annoyed with city travellers who pass by without buying; he says the spoiling of scenery is not his real grievance but the silent sorrow of rural people who hope city money will improve their lives and give them the comfortable life promised (in films and by the ruling party) but kept from them.

(i) What emotion does the speaker show when he tells the passer-by that if he wants to be mean he may keep his money and go on? (A) curiosity (B) bitterness (C) indifference (D) detachment

(ii) What does the speaker mean when he says the harm to the scenery would not be his complaint?

(iii) Complete: The word 'expand' (making their being expand) shows a longing for ____.

(iv) Assertion (A): The speaker criticises the ruling party for keeping opportunities away from the rural poor. Reason (R): The extract praises the government for its promise of a life like the

movies. Options: (A) Both true, R explains A (B) Both true, R does not explain A (C) A true, R false (D) A false, R true

(v) Which concern is NOT discussed in the extract? (A) political exploitation of rural dreams (B) discrimination due to religious policies (C) the purely commercial gap between city and village (D) effect of unfulfilled hopes

(vi) In one sentence, what advice would you give politicians based on this extract?

ANSWER

(i) (B) (ii) rural people's suffering matters more than natural beauty (iii) a better, more fulfilling life (iv) (C) (v) (B) (vi) keep promises and genuinely uplift the rural poor

(i) (B) bitterness – the word 'crossly' shows his resentment at the travellers' meanness.

(ii) The real pain is the unspoken sorrow and hardship of the poor villagers, not the damage done to the beauty of the landscape.

(iii) Better economic opportunities and a fuller, richer standard of living.

(iv) (C) – the assertion is true (the party in power is said to keep the promised life from them), but the reason is false: the poem criticises, not praises, the government.

(v) (B) – religion is never mentioned; the other three ideas are present.

(vi) Politicians should stop making empty promises and spend sincerely on improving the lives of rural people.

Tip: in A-R items first test each statement separately against the text.

8. Extract from 'Memories of Childhood' (Zitkala-Sa's part): Zitkala-Sa describes the moment her long braid was cut off at the boarding school, the humiliations she had suffered since leaving her mother, and her feeling that she was just one of many animals being driven by a herder. **4**

(i) Complete: Her words 'Then I lost my spirit' show that she ____.

(ii) What does her mention of having 'suffered extreme indignities' tell us about prejudice in that society?

(iii) Why did she long for her mother at that painful moment?

(iv) The narrator's tone is best described as: (A) bitter and strong-willed (B) detached and impersonal (C) pained and despairing (D) grateful and reflective

ANSWER

(i) gave up/resigned herself to her fate (ii) the dominant culture discriminated against and disrespected Native Americans (iii) her mother was her only source of comfort and protection (iv) (C)

(i) She stopped resisting and surrendered – she accepted defeat.

(ii) The mainstream (white) society did not accept her culture; Native American children were treated with disrespect and their customs (like long hair) were insulted.

(iii) Her mother had always comforted her and reasoned with her gently; in a strange, hostile place she instinctively wanted that safety and reassurance.

(iv) (C) pained and despairing – she is hurt and hopeless, not detached or grateful.

OR

Extract from 'On the Face of It' (Susan Hill): Derry tells Mr. Lamb that he is not afraid – it is others who are afraid of him; people pretend, but he can see they think his burnt face is the ugliest thing and pity him, and even he is afraid of himself in the mirror. Mr. Lamb replies that they are not afraid of the whole of him.

(i) Which emotion dominates Derry's words? (A) superiority (B) shrewdness (C) vulnerability (D) indifference

(ii) Complete: According to Derry, people pretend when they see him because ____.

(iii) By saying 'No, not the whole of you. Not of you,' Mr. Lamb means: (A) your face will heal and your ideas about it will change (B) you are not just your face or your injury – that is not all of you (C) I am afraid of your face (D) avoid mirrors so you don't feel low

(iv) In one sentence, what advice would you give people who look away when they see Derry's face?

ANSWER

(i) (C) (ii) they want to hide their fear/disgust and not hurt him (iii) (B) (iv) show empathy and see the whole person, not only the injury

(i) (C) vulnerability – behind his defiant words he is deeply hurt and insecure.

(ii) They do not want to show the shock or revulsion they feel at his burnt face, or they do not want to hurt his feelings.

(iii) (B) – Mr. Lamb tells Derry that his identity is far more than his scarred face.

> (iv) Treat him with kindness and normality – a person is the sum of their mind and heart, not just their face.

9. Extract from 'Poets and Pancakes' (Asokamitran): the author describes the Gemini Studios make-up room with its bright incandescent lights and mirrors, its staff drawn from many regions of India (showing national integration long before AIR and Doordarshan), their heavy use of pancake that made actors look monstrous, the mostly indoor shooting and the strict hierarchy in the department. **6**

(i) Why did the make-up room look like a hair-cutting salon?

(ii) What does the 'fiery misery' of people being made up suggest? (A) emotional stress of the actors (B) physical discomfort from heat and lights (C) anger of irritated make-up men (D) discomfort of a cramped room

(iii) Complete: The author's tone in 'hideous crimson hued monster' is ____.

(iv) Why was heavy make-up thought necessary at Gemini Studios at that time? (A) it cut the cost of sets and costumes (B) the creative heads and stars ordered it (C) it matched theatre traditions the studio admired (D) it made up for the lack of advanced lighting and camera technology

(v) What does 'became too big for the studio and left' suggest about the Bengali make-up man?

(vi) Complete: The author mentions people from different regions in the department to ____.

ANSWER

(i) lights at all angles around half a dozen large mirrors (ii) (B) (iii) humorous/sarcastic (iv) (D) (v) he outgrew the studio/became over-ambitious (vi) show national integration existed there long before the media promoted it

(i) Like a salon, it had many large mirrors with lights fixed at all angles around them.
(ii) (B) – the hot incandescent bulbs made sitting for make-up physically torturous.
(iii) Humorous and sarcastic (exaggerating) – he mocks the over-done make-up.
(iv) (D) – with indoor sets and strong studio lights, heavy make-up compensated for limited lighting/camera technology.
(v) He had grown in reputation and ambition beyond the studio (or had become arrogant), so he moved on.
(vi) Show, with gentle irony, that national/cultural integration was already practised in Gemini Studios before AIR and Doordarshan made programmes on it.

OR

Extract from 'The Rattrap' (Selma Lagerlöf): the peddler tells the ironmaster that the whole world is a big rattrap whose good things are only bait to catch a poor man, and warns that one day the ironmaster too may be caught; the ironmaster laughs and says they might leave the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve.

(i) What does the speaker mean by calling the world a big rattrap? (A) the world offers many chances of success (B) life's temptations are traps that lead people into trouble (C) good deeds are always rewarded with cheese rinds (D) justice is not guaranteed for all

(ii) The phrase 'cheese rinds' stands for: (A) temptation (B) affirmation (C) gluttony (D) deprivation

(iii) Fill in from the brackets: By calling himself a 'poor fellow', the speaker stresses his ____ (vulnerability/credibility).

(iv) What does the peddler hint at through his warning to the ironmaster?

(v) The ironmaster's remark about leaving the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve shows that he is:

(A) materialistic (B) understanding (C) conniving (D) enterprising

(vi) Complete with a reason: It is implied that the speaker might be locked up because ____.

ANSWER

(i) (B) (ii) (A) (iii) vulnerability (iv) anyone, even the ironmaster, can fall to temptation (v) (B) (vi) he had not revealed his true identity/had deceived the ironmaster

(i) (B) – material comforts act as bait that trap people, as the rattrap traps rats.

(ii) (A) – cheese rinds are the cheap bait, i.e. temptation.

(iii) Vulnerability – he presents himself as weak and helpless.

(iv) Everybody gives in to temptation sometime; if the ironmaster judges him now, he too may be trapped by greed later.

(v) (B) understanding – he laughs and is willing to be lenient in the Christmas spirit.

(vi) He was not honest – he let the ironmaster believe he was an old acquaintance and did not correct the mistake.

10. *Answer any five of the following six questions in 40–50 words each (2 marks each).* **10**

(a) 'My Mother at Sixty-six' (Kamala Das): How does the poem bring out the relationship between the mother and her daughter? Comment (40-50 words).

ANSWER

A close, loving bond mixed with the poet's fear of losing her mother and guilt at leaving her alone.

The poet loves her mother deeply; seeing her pale, aged face she is struck by the fear of losing her. Yet circumstances force her to leave, so she hides her pain behind a smile and the words 'see you soon', revealing helplessness and a touch of guilt at not being able to give her more time.
Marking: content 1 (any one point – close bond/fear of loss, or guilt/helplessness) + expression 1.

(b) 'The Interview': What does Umberto Eco mean when he calls himself 'a professor who writes novels on Sundays'? (40-50 words)

ANSWER

He sees himself mainly as an academic; novel-writing is a secondary, spare-time activity.

Eco identifies with the academic world – he teaches, attends conferences and writes scholarly works. Novels are written in his spare moments (his 'interstices'), almost by accident (he began at about fifty), so he humorously calls them his Sunday activity, not his main profession.
Marking: content 1 (any one point) + expression 1.

(c) 'Indigo': In the Champaran dispute the British landlords agreed to return 25% of the money to the sharecroppers. Why was this event significant? (40-50 words)

ANSWER

The amount mattered less than the fact that the landlords lost money and prestige; peasants learnt they had rights and courage.

Gandhi accepted 25% because the principle mattered: the landlords were forced to give back money and also lost their prestige – they were shown not to be above the law. The peasants realised they had rights and defenders, gained courage, and the episode became an early victory for non-violent satyagraha.
Marking: content 1 (any one significance) + expression 1.

(d) 'Deep Water' (William O. Douglas): How did his experience at the beach in California affect him? (40-50 words)

ANSWER

A wave knocked him down; it left him terrified of water and created a lasting aversion.

When Douglas was three or four, a strong wave knocked him down and swept over him at a California beach. The incident frightened him badly and planted a deep fear of water in his mind, which grew worse after the YMCA pool accident and haunted him for years.
Marking: content 1 + expression 1.

(e) 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers' (Adrienne Rich): Explain how the restrictions of Aunt Jennifer's married life have left her frightened and emotionally scarred. (40-50 words)

ANSWER

The heavy wedding band and dominating husband keep her 'ringed with ordeals'; her hands flutter in fear, and even death will not free her.

Her marriage, symbolised by the 'massive weight' of Uncle's wedding band, is oppressive and patriarchal. She is so terrified that her fingers flutter and she can barely pull the needle. The poet says even after death her terrified hands will still be 'ringed with ordeals', showing lasting emotional damage.

Marking: content 1 + expression 1.

(f) 'The Last Lesson' (Alphonse Daudet): Franz wonders whether they will make even the pigeons sing in German. What does this remark show about the forcing of German on schools in Alsace? (40-50 words)

ANSWER

Imposing German on the French is as absurd and unnatural as making pigeons coo in German.

Franz's innocent question shows that the order is unnatural and absurd: a people's mother tongue is as natural to them as cooing is to pigeons. It reveals his frustration at the Prussian oppression and criticises linguistic chauvinism – language cannot be changed by force.

Marking: content 1 (any one point) + expression 1.

11. *Answer any two of the following three questions in 40–50 words each (2 marks each).* **4**

(a) 'Memories of Childhood – We Too are Human Beings' (Bama): What does Bama's decision to study hard and excel reveal about her character? (40-50 words)

ANSWER

She is determined, resilient and mature – she takes her brother's advice and uses education to rise above caste discrimination.

After her brother told her that only education could remove the indignities of caste, Bama studied with all her might and came first. This shows she was hard-working, determined and mature; she respected her brother's advice and understood education as a weapon against prejudice and a path to self-respect.

Marking: content 1 + expression 1.

(b) 'The Third Level' (Jack Finney): How did the newspaper 'The World' help Charley believe that the third level existed? (40-50 words)

ANSWER

He saw copies of 'The World', a paper closed for years, carrying news about President Cleveland – proof he was in 1894.

At the third level Charley saw a man buying 'The World', a newspaper that had stopped publishing many years before, and its front page carried a story about President Cleveland. This convinced him he had really stepped back into 1894, so the third level must be real.

Marking: content 1 (any one point) + expression 1.

(c) 'The Tiger King' (Kalki): Assess how the court astrologer influenced the course of the Tiger King's life. (40-50 words)

ANSWER

His prophecy that the king would die by the hundredth tiger set off the obsessive tiger hunt that ruled every decision of the king's life.

The astrologer predicted that the prince would be killed by a tiger. To prove him wrong, the Maharaja vowed to kill a hundred tigers; this obsession guided his hunting, his marriage and his policies, and ironically led to his death from a sliver of a wooden tiger.

Marking: content 1 + expression 1.

12. 'Going Places' and 'Lost Spring': Sophie and Mukesh both dream of a better life, but forces outside them shape their reality and opportunities. Discuss (120-150 words). **5**

ANSWER

Both are held back by poverty/humble background; Sophie escapes into fantasy, while Mukesh dares to plan a real future – circumstances limit both.

Value points:

• Sophie dreams of owning a boutique, becoming a fashion designer, actress or manager and of meeting Danny Casey, but she belongs to a lower-middle-class family and is destined for the biscuit factory.

• Mukesh dreams of being a motor mechanic and driving a car, but is born into a poor bangle-making family in Firozabad caught in a cycle of poverty, debt, middlemen and caste/tradition.

• Both lack money, guidance and opportunity; family and society discourage them.

• Contrast: Mukesh is realistic and determined to break away from the family trade; Sophie loses herself in daydreams and suffers disappointment.

• Conclusion: dreams need realism and support; external circumstances shape what each can achieve.

Marking: content 3 (three points referring to both texts) + expression 2.

OR

'My Mother at Sixty-six' and 'A Thing of Beauty': How do these poems show that beauty and life are short-lived? (120-150 words)

ANSWER

Kamala Das shows ageing and approaching death against lively images outside; Keats admits life's sorrow and decay but holds that the joy of beauty is everlasting.

Value points:

'My Mother at Sixty-six':

• The mother's ashen, corpse-like face and the 'late winter's moon' image show ageing, weakness and nearness of death.

• The young trees sprinting and merry children outside contrast youth with old age – physical beauty and life pass.

• The poet's fear of loss stresses how temporary life is.

'A Thing of Beauty':

• Life is full of gloom, sickness and suffering ('dark spirits').

• Even when a beautiful object fades, its memory and joy remain and protect us; beauty is not merely physical.

Conclusion: life and physical beauty are transient, but the joy given by beauty endures.

Marking: content 3 (three points referring to both poems) + expression 2.

13. 'Journey to the End of the Earth' (Tishani Doshi): Examine how having school students on the Antarctic expedition supports the message of environmental responsibility and hope. (120-150 words) **5**

ANSWER

'Students on Ice' gives future leaders first-hand experience of fragile Antarctica and climate change, so they learn responsibility and become hope for sustainable decisions.

Value points:

• Students are tomorrow's decision-makers and policy-makers; they are open to learning and acting.

• The 'Students on Ice' programme shows them climate change directly – retreating glaciers, collapsing ice shelves – far more powerfully than a textbook.

• Seeing the fragile ecosystem and the role of tiny phytoplankton teaches them how everything is interconnected and the importance of small things.

• Such immersive learning creates concern and a sense of responsibility, giving hope that this generation will protect the planet.

Marking: content 3 (any three) + expression 2.

OR

'The Enemy' (Pearl S. Buck): How does the story explore the conflict between humanity and patriotism? Support your answer from the text. (120-150 words)

ANSWER

Dr. Sadao and Hana are torn between loyalty to Japan and the duty to save a wounded American; they choose humanity, showing it rises above war and borders.

Value points:

• Sadao finds a wounded American prisoner of war on his beach during the war; as a Japanese patriot he should hand him over, but as a doctor he must save life.

• He and Hana cannot throw the man back into the sea; they bring him home, operate on him and nurse him, though it could cost them dearly.

• The servants leave the house, showing society's disapproval of helping an enemy.

• Sadao finally helps the soldier escape by boat, balancing duty to nation and to humanity.

• Message: true humanity transcends borders, politics and war.

Marking: content 3 (any three) + expression 2.

— END —

Questions restated from the CBSE Class XII Board Examination 2026 (set 1/1/1) for practice. Reading passages and map items are described, not reproduced.