



B.K. BIRLA CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

SARALA BIRLA GROUP OF SCHOOLS
A CBSE DAY-CUM-BOYS' RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL



ENGLISH CORE — Code No. 301
TERM 1 EXAMINATION (2026-27)
CLASS XII

SET A — ANSWER KEY / MARKING SCHEME

Maximum Marks: 80

SECTION A — READING SKILLS (22 Marks)

1. Passage 1 — Answers

12

I. Reference to Nathu having 'carried letters up and down the stone steps of Kasoli for thirty-one years' / his knees 'complaining at the same stretch of steps' for three decades. 1

II. He did not want to openly show that he was hoping/waiting for something, so he masked his eagerness as indifference. (Any similar valid reason) 1

III. C 1

IV. A 1

V. Any one reason: She had stopped coming to her gate altogether after the telegram arrived, showing she had given up expecting news. (Accept any valid textual reference) 1

VI. B 1

VII. Suggests a moment of hesitation or quiet anticipation, as he sensed the significance of what he was about to deliver. 1

VIII. Key points (1+1): Shows that Nathu has a deep, personal familiarity with the people on his route, going beyond mechanical duty / Suggests an emotionally invested, caring relationship built over years of service. 2

IX. Key points (1+1): Symbolically marks the relief/completion of a long, painful wait for Meera's family / Reinforces the idea that each letter carries emotional, not just physical, weight. 2

X. B 1

2. Passage 2 — Answers

10

I. B 1

II. representative 1

III. Audiobooks 1

For the Visually Impaired Candidates (alternate to III): that print books feel personal and permanently theirs to keep and return to.

IV. B 1

For the Visually Impaired Candidates (alternate to IV): B

V. Key points (1+1): Audiobooks/e-books allow reading or listening without needing to sit and focus visually / Their portability and hands-free nature suit long commutes better than print books. 2

VI. B 1

VII. Key points (1+1): Guided programmes could introduce and familiarise students with audiobooks, building comfort with the format / They could demonstrate the value of listening-based learning, encouraging sustained engagement. 2

VIII. B 1

SECTION B — CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS (18 Marks)

Marking scheme (applicable to Q3-Q6): Format — as indicated; Content — coverage of all required details/cues; Expression — accuracy of grammar, tone and register appropriate to the format. Any relevant and well-organised response covering the expected content should be awarded marks accordingly; the points below indicate the expected coverage, not verbatim wording.

3. Notice (Format 1, Content 2, Expression 1) 4

A. Expected content: heading 'NOTICE', issuing body (Nature Club, Green Valley Public School), date, day/time and venue of plantation drive, call to participate, contact/registration detail, name & designation of issuing authority (Aakash Verma, Secretary), enclosed in a box.

B. Expected content: heading 'NOTICE', issuing body (Sunrise Public School with Red Cross Society), date/venue/time of blood donation camp, eligibility/appeal for voluntary donors, contact detail, name & designation of issuing authority (Ritika Sharma, Head Girl), enclosed in a box.

4. Invitation / Formal Reply (Format 1, Content 2, Expression 1) 4

A. Expected content: sender's designation (Cultural Secretary, Vignesh/Meher Chopra), occasion (Annual Art Exhibition), name of invitee (Ms Radhika Nair) and purpose (inaugurate the exhibition), date/time/venue, RSVP request.

B. Expected content: sender's address and date, acceptance of invitation to be Chief Guest at Annual Sports Day, expression of gratitude/honour, confirmation of attendance, appropriate closing.

5. Letter (Format 1, Content 3, Expression 1) 5

A. Expected content: sender's address, date, editor's address, subject line, salutation, body covering: limited public libraries, students' dependence on restricted school libraries, libraries as distraction-free study spaces, role in bridging economic gaps in access to books, suggestion for neighbourhood reading rooms; closing and signature.

B. Expected content: sender's address, date, employer's address, subject line, salutation, body expressing interest in the Content Writer post, reference to relevant skills (writing/editing, SEO familiarity), request to consider application with attached bio-data, closing; separate bio-data with name, contact, qualification, skills, experience (if any).

6. Article / Report (Heading + Byline 1, Content 3, Expression 1) 5

A. Expected content: title, byline (Devansh Rao), coverage of cues — managing pocket money and budgets, understanding saving and value of money, avoiding impulsive spending/debt, preparing students for real-world financial responsibility; coherent paragraphing and a concluding thought.

B. Expected content: title, byline (Tanvi Iyer), coverage of cues — organisation and purpose of the competition, topics debated and participating schools, notable performances and audience response, overall outcome/results; factual, report-style tone.

SECTION C — LITERATURE (40 Marks)

7. Poetry Extract 6

A. 'My Mother at 66'

- I. Suggests the speaker's fear of her mother's mortality — the pale, lifeless appearance evokes the image of death. 1
- II. sudden 1
- III. It creates a sharp contrast between youthful vitality and the mother's ageing, heightening the underlying sadness of the moment. 1
- IV. fear of losing her mother / anxiety about ageing and mortality 1
- V. c 1
- VI. c 1

B. 'A Thing of Beauty'

- I. It means such beauty leaves a lasting impression that continues to bring joy long after it is first experienced. 1
- II. healing 1
- III. It suggests that beauty revitalises and refreshes the human spirit, much like fresh air restores physical health. 1
- IV. comfort / hope / healing 1
- V. b 1
- VI. c 1

8. Prose Extract

4

A. 'The Third Level'

- I. Suggests he values the past for its simplicity and modest costs, reflecting nostalgia rather than practicality. 1
- II. repeated attempts / persistent searching over time 1
- III. It is ironic because she initially discouraged his search out of concern, yet later joins him in searching herself. 1
- IV. b 1

B. 'The Enemy'

- I. A conflict between his professional duty as a doctor to save a life and his patriotic duty not to help an enemy soldier. 1
- II. sheltering an enemy soldier could endanger his family and invite serious consequences from the authorities 1
- III. It reveals his deep sense of humanity and professional integrity, which override his fear and hesitation. 1
- IV. a 1

9. Prose Extract

6

A. 'The Rattrap'

- I. B 1
- II. wariness 1
- III. B 1

IV. Any reasonable answer: she saw beyond his rough appearance and recognised his need for dignity and genuine kindness, not judgement. 1

V. Accept justification: Edla's insistence that he be treated as a human being — given proper food, shelter and dignity, not mere charity — shows her kindness went beyond material comfort. 1

VI. his long experience of being treated with suspicion and rejection by others, making him unable to trust unconditional kindness 1

B. 'Poets and Pancakes'

I. B 1

II. hopefully 1

III. B 1

IV. To show that ambition and hope exist even among the studio's ordinary, overlooked staff, not only among its famous personalities. 1

V. Since even the studio's biggest stars had to undergo make-up in the same small room, it reflects how the studio's glamour masked an underlying equality among its workers. 1

VI. despite his humble position, he held on to his dreams and used his circumstances to observe and learn 1

10. Any five of six (2 marks each) 10

I. German was imposed as the only permitted language of instruction during the annexation; Franz, who once disliked French lessons, comes to value them deeply once told he can no longer learn the language. 2

II. Facing one's fear directly and working at it systematically, rather than avoiding it, helps build genuine and lasting confidence. 2

III. Beauty offers a lasting form of comfort and hope, helping individuals endure and rise above life's disappointments and hardships. 2

IV. He hopes for a shared pause in the frantic pursuit of self-interest and progress, allowing humanity to reflect and move towards greater understanding. 2

V. His humble, self-deprecating response shows he values genuine intellectual engagement and finds public fascination with fame somewhat amusing. 2

VI. A personal, reflective voice lets readers connect emotionally with the realities of poverty, making the account more powerful than a purely factual report. 2

(Award full marks for any five relevant, well-expressed answers within the word limit; part marks for partially correct responses.)

11. Any two of three (2 marks each) 4

I. Such expeditions give young people first-hand exposure to fragile ecosystems, making concepts like glacial melting and climate change tangible and personally meaningful. 2

II. It shows that her hair carried deep cultural and personal meaning; its forced removal represents a violent erasure of her identity and autonomy. 2

III. It reveals a mix of superstition, arrogance and obsessive pride, as he prioritises defying fate over caution or sound judgement. 2

12. Long Answer (120-150 words) 5

A. Value points: both texts show exploitation of the powerless by those in authority — Indigo depicts direct economic exploitation of sharecroppers by British planters; A Roadside Stand shows the indifference of the wealthier urban world to rural poverty; both suggest genuine change requires those in power to listen and act, not merely make empty promises.

B. Value points: Franz initially takes learning for granted and only values French once it is taken away; Saheb's poverty denies him the chance to value education at all, as survival takes precedence; both texts show that opportunity is often fully appreciated only once it is lost or denied.

13. Long Answer (120-150 words)

5

A. Value points: Sadao actively drives the story's central moral tension, torn between medical duty and patriotism, and his choices carry the greatest consequences; Hana shares his anxiety and supports him, but the central dilemma and its resolution rest with Sadao.

B. Value points: the story uses irony and gentle satire in its narration, subtly critiquing the Maharaja's arrogance and superstition; the third-person narrative voice allows readers to appreciate this satire; the ironic twist ending (killed by a wooden tiger) reinforces the story's central theme.