

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

ICSE Board Class X Exam

(2024)

(English Paper-I)

Answers

Question 1**[20]**

(Do not spend more than 30 minutes on this question.)

Write a composition (300 – 350 words) on **any one** of the following:

- (i) Write an original short story entitled 'A Strange Visitor'.
- (ii) Narrate an incident from your experience in which your parents had entrusted you with a difficult task. Give details of the task, how you carried it out and your feelings at the end.
- (iii) Describe how you spend your time on a holiday afternoon. Why do you think it is necessary to have these times of quietness and solitude?
- (iv) Express your views either for or against the statement 'Junk food should be banned'.
- (v) Study the picture given below. Write a story or a description or an account of what it suggests to you. Your composition may be about the subject of the picture, or you may take suggestions from it; however, there must be a clear connection between the picture and your composition.

**Solution 1****(i) Story writing**

Format – (Title)

Content – (The story must be original. There must be clarity of plot, logical sequence of events, well defined characters and an apt conclusion).

Expression – (Creativity, grammatical accuracy, appropriate words, spellings, coherence and relevance, originality of idea and style)

The elements of story writing:

Theme – Something important that the story tries to tell

Plot – The systematic arrangement of events

Structure – A good story needs a good structure. You can choose to write either in "first person" or in "third person". It should be consistent in tense usage-either in present tense or in past tense.

Characters – Know your characters well; main character should be someone whom readers can feel something in common with.

Setting/Style and Tone – Use language that is right for your story. Use action and speech to let the readers know what’s happening. Use simple words and sentences with idioms to enhance expression.

Climax – The twist in the tale that keeps the reader engaged.

Conclusion – The end of the story must be definite.

Suggested Value Points:

- In the bustling city of Delhi, where the cacophony of construction drowned out whispers of inequality, lived Maya, a single mother, alongside her young daughter, Aaradhya.
- Maya toiled as a construction worker, her hands calloused from hard labour, her spirit resilient despite the challenges she faced as a woman.
- Hailing from a small village in rural Uttar Pradesh, Maya had left her home with her husband in search of better livelihood opportunities in the city.
- However, the cruel urban society treated them harshly, offering little support and subjecting them to discrimination and exploitation.
- Maya’s husband Ashok, died one day during work due to extreme exhaustion.
- Meanwhile, Amrita, once a fiery activist fighting for women’s rights in a reputed university, had faced her own battles with gender bias and a glass ceiling.
- Despite her passion and qualifications, she had been forced to leave her job and start her own start-up business, which eventually made her wealthy but hardened her heart over time.
- As Maya and Aaradhya sought refuge in the city, their paths crossed with Amrita’s, who initially ignored Maya’s plea for shelter, consumed by her own privilege.
- But as the night grew colder, Maya’s persistence wore down Amrita’s indifference, and reluctantly, she allowed Maya and Aaradhya into her house.
- As they sat in the lavish living room, Maya shared her story of hardship while Amrita listened with a newfound empathy stirring within her.
- Maya’s struggles resonated with Amrita, reminding her of the compassion and humility she had once possessed in her younger days.
- Reflecting on her own journey, Amrita realised the stark contrast between her lavish lifestyle and Maya’s humble existence, prompting her to re-evaluate her priorities.
- In the dim glow of the evening, Maya and Amrita found common ground, their shared experiences transcending the barriers of class and privilege.
- As dawn broke over the city, Amrita made a vow to herself – to use her privilege for good, to uplift those like Maya who had been marginalised and overlooked.
- Maya and Amrita remained connected by the bond they had forged.

(ii) **Narrative composition**

TITLE: Preparing my brother for “Tell the Tale” Competition.

Suggested Value Points:

- Last month my grandfather suddenly fell sick and got hospitalised. Hence, my parents entrusted me with the responsibility of preparing my younger brother, Aarav for “Tell a Tale” Competition, that was to be held the next day.

- Preparing this first grader for a competition like this one was no less than trying to tame a busy bee.
- Still with a heavy heart, and with no other escape, I accepted this impossible-looking project.
- He chose “Mooshik and His Books” and decided to perform it on the stage. I read the story to him and he looked totally uninterested. Then I tried to make him learn by threatening him to do so. But that didn’t work either.
- I had given up already in my mind. Suddenly I received a video from my friend on WhatsApp.
- This gave me an idea.
- We searched the story on YouTube and to our surprise, we found it as well.
- We both sat together to watch.
- Thereafter when I asked him to narrate, he did that in one go.
- I helped him with expressions and voice intonation.
- After few retakes and practices he was all set to rock the stage, next day.
- I felt very relieved and proud.
- A task like this one I had never imagined I could do.
- I was elated to see him tell the story to mom and dad as soon as they arrived home.

(iii) **TITLE:** Embracing Solitude and Tranquillity in the Quaint Rural Life

Description of Spending Time on a Holiday Afternoon in Kogram

Suggested Value Points:

- Visiting Kogram, a village in West Bengal where my uncles reside, invokes memories of my childhood spent there.
- I relish solitary explorations of muddy village roads, tranquil ponds, and vast agricultural fields.
- Exploring old temples and mango orchards allows me to reconnect with childhood friends and distant relatives.
- The age-old gossips, jokes, and ghost stories shared by my uncles feel familiar and refreshing.
- I unwind on the rooftop, falling asleep under the stars while listening to music and watching clouds drift by.
- Fresh vegetables from the village taste far better than those in the city, invoking nostalgia and contentment.
- Reconnecting with my childhood in Kogram fills me with both joy and melancholy.
- While I cherish the simplicity of village life, I ponder the implications of urbanisation and its impact on rural communities

Reasons for Embracing Solitude and Tranquillity

Suggested Value Points:

- Quietness offers an opportunity for the mind to find peace and rejuvenate.
- Solitude brings clarity and inspires creativity, allowing for self-expression and introspection.
- Reflecting on Wordsworth's words, I understand the value of emotion recollected in tranquillity.
- Solitude provides the space to pursue hobbies and engage in self-care activities that nurture the soul.
- These moments of solitude serve as a necessary respite from the fast-paced demands of modern life, re-energising us to face challenges again.

(iv) **Format** : (Topic introduction, mention for/against the idea)

Content : (Cohesive, well-constructed, logical argument and ideas, reasoning based on personal experience)

Expression : (Grammatical accuracy, appropriate words and spellings, coherence and relevance of ideas and style)

Topic : Junk food should be banned

In Favour

Suggested Value Points :

- People these days eat large amount of junk food. These tempting food items such as fries and burgers cause more harm than good.
- Junk food is highly unhealthy and can transform fit, healthy human beings into obese, and lazy people.
- According to recent studies, junk food contributes majorly in the development of health problems such as obesity, coronary heart disease and diabetes.
- Often commercial advertisements make these unhealthy food items look tempting and eventually persuade the youth to buy and consume more of it.
- Banning junk food will likely to have a positive impact on one's daily diet.
- This way people will switch over to homemade healthy food stuff. Like we all observed, during Covid-19 when these markets and food outlets were shut, everyone turned towards their kitchens, trying out and experimenting with different food stuff.
- Home cooked food definitely has more nutritional values and benefits.

Against

Suggested Value Points :

- Junk food contains low nutritional value, however banning the same will not work overnight.
- The word health refers to maintaining a state of emotional, mental and physical well-being.
- Anything that is done limitlessly, causes harm. Whether it is eating food from restaurants or cooking the same food which contains fats at home itself, will cause the same ill effects.
- Having junk food occasionally and in limits can please your taste buds without causing any harm.
- Rather it brings mental and emotional satisfaction.
- Junk food could be an appropriate option when you are on trips or in a rush, without making it a habit.
- Consuming items like pizza and pasta after a busy day or stressful day can help you release your stress.
- Eating a variety of food items make your gut strong and helps you survive in different conditions, where your preferred food items may not be available.
- Therefore, banning junk food items will not hardly bring any change in the eating habits of people.

(v) **Picture Composition**

Topic: Plight of Poverty OR Lost Spring of Childhood

Suggested Value Points:

- Describe the terrible condition of poor children.
- These children are those who didn't get to enjoy childhood because of the prevailing socio-economic condition in this world.
- This is something that one can see all over the world.
- These children don't have the opportunity for schooling.
- The sad position of poor children who are forced to have a wretched life and forgo the fun times of childhood due to their social circumstances.
- These children are compelled to labour from an early age and are not given the opportunity to pursue an education.
- Child exploitation must be stopped and all children could enjoy their happy, springtime days.

Question 2**[10]***(Do not spend more than 20 minutes on this question.)*Select **any one** of the following:

- (i) Your friend was absent from school on a day when an unfortunate incident took place for which you were blamed. Write a letter to your friend giving details about the incident, your role in it and how the matter was finally resolved.
- (ii) You wish to stage a play to create awareness about the importance of saving electricity. Write a letter to the Manager of a nearby shopping mall/supermarket requesting permission to use the space in front of the shopping mall/supermarket to stage the play. Give him/her details about your requirements and state why the play will be beneficial to the shoppers.

Solution 2**(i) Informal Letter :****Format :** (Sender's address, Date, Salutation, Body, Subscription, Sender's name)**Content :** Introduction, Main body, Conclusion**Expression :** (Grammatical accuracy, appropriate words, spellings, coherence, relevant ideas, style & tone-informal)**Suggested Value Points :**

- An informal letter illustrates a person's feelings, with a touch to one's thoughts.
- The tone has to be friendly
- Start with a greeting asking the recipient about their well-being
- State the reason for writing the letter
- Elaborate upon details of the incident
- End by paying your regards
- Write complimentary close

(Sample letter)

D-16/28

Rohini

New Delhi-1100xx

21st February, 2024

Dear Aayush

How are you doing now? I hope your injured foot is a bit better. You have no idea, how much I missed you today at school. It was the toughest and worst day of my life.

As you know, it was Math assessment today though, I wasn't very confident after getting the questions paper in my hands, however I was trying to my best. To my surprise, I heard our physical education teacher, Ms. Era shouting my name. She saw a paper lying beside my seat with some Math problems. And I had no clue about that piece of paper. She blamed me for cheating. I was totally dumbstruck. It was so embarrassing, I can't explain it to you.

I tried every possible way to convince her that the piece of paper wasn't mine. But she didn't pay any heed to my plea.

It was after Shreya's intervention that, I got a narrow escape. Shreya brought into Ma'am's notice that the questions on the paper were not part of our syllabus. It probably belonged to one of our seniors who came for extra classes after the school hours.

Finally, she let me complete my assessment thereafter.

Truly speaking the whole scenario was very scary for me. How, I wished you were there.

Yours affectionately

Karan

(ii) **Formal Letter** : Letter to the manager of shopping mall

Format : (Senders address, date, receiver's address, subject, salutation, complimentary close)

Content : Introduction, Main Body, Conclusion

Expression : (Grammatical accuracy, correct spellings, coherence, relevance of ideas and style)

Suggested Value Points :

- Requesting permission to use the space in front of the shopping mall to stage a play.
- How it would be beneficial to the shoppers.
- What are the requirements for the play.
- Concluding by requesting to allow distribution of flyers and social media promotion for better footfall.

(Sample letter)

Rani Bagh

Pitampura

21st February, 2024

The Manager

Unity One Mall

Rohini, New Delhi

Subject: Request for providing space for performing a play

Sir,

This is to hereby request you for providing concourse of your mall for performing an awareness skit on the importance of saving electricity. The program will serve as a reminder for the shoppers for saving electricity. The event focuses on providing tricks and tips, that will further help parents and their children save electricity. This initiative is definitely going to help them cut down on their heavy electricity bills as well.

For this purpose all we need from you is the front space with the availability of stage and two power plugs for mics.

I would also request you to allow us to distribute flyers and do social media promotion for a better footfall. Kindly grant permission for the same.

Yours Truly

Gautam

Question 3

- (i) Your school is hosting an Inter School Dance Competition. Write a notice to be put up on your school notice board informing the students about the event. [5]
- (ii) Write an email to the Principal of a neighbouring school to request him/her to send their dance teacher to act as a judge for the competition. [5]

Solution 3

(i) **Notice Writing**

Format : [Include creative title, date, time, venue]

Expression : Focus upon grammatical accuracy and vocabulary

Suggested Value Points :

- Convey the purpose of the notice *i.e.*, Inter School Dance competition
- Detail - date, time, venue, how and where to register names
- Appeal – Prizes / Rewards
- Name of the contact person for registration and how, when and where to reach him/her
- Put the notice in a box

(Sample)

ANYBODY CAN DANCE!

Inter School Dance Competition

Date: 15th June 2024

Time: 4pm to 6pm

Venue: The Auditorium of St. Agnes School

Prize: Cash Rewards up to 25K

Interested students from class VIII to XII may register with the Vice-Principal before 30th June, 2024.

(ii) **Email Writing:**

Format - Email ID, Subject, Salutation, Opening Sentence, Closing Sentence, Subscription

Content

Expression – (grammatical accuracy, spellings)

(Sample)

To: principal@St.Thomas.org

Subject: Request to send dance teacher as a Judge for competition

Dear Madam,

As the Academic Head St. Agnes School, I would like to inform you that we are conducting an Inter School Dance competition on 15th June 2024, between 4pm to 6pm for students of class VIII to XII. The winners will get a chance to participate in Mumbai International Dance Tournament. The detailed itinerary is enclosed herewith.

We invite you to send dance teacher from your school to preside as a judge in the competition.

Anticipating a positive response

Yours faithfully

Ankita Sharma

Academic Head

St. Agnes School

Question 4

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Ashamanja Babu lived in a small flat in Bhowanipore. A clerk in the registry department of Lajpat Rai Post Office, Ashamanja Babu was fortunate as he could walk to his office in seven minutes flat without having to fight his way into the buses and trains of Calcutta. He lived a rather carefree life as he was not the kind of person to sit and brood about what might have been had Fate been kinder to him. On the whole, he was quite content with his lot. Two Hindi films and fish twice a week - these were enough to keep him happy. The only thing that **perturbed** him at times was his lack of companionship. A bachelor with few friends and relatives, he often wished he had a dog to keep him company. It need not be a huge Alsatian like the one owned by the Talukdars, who lived two houses down the lane; it could be any ordinary little dog which would follow him around morning and evening, wag its tail when he came home from work and obey his orders faithfully. Ashamanja Babu's secret desires were that he would speak to his dog in English. 'Stand up', 'Sit down', 'Shake hands' - how nice it would be if his dog obeyed such commands! That would make him really happy.

On a cloudy day marked by a steady drizzle, Ashamanja Babu went to the market in Hashimara to buy some oranges. At one end of the market, beside a **stunted** kul tree, sat a man. As their eyes met, the man smiled. Was he a beggar? His clothes made him look like one. Ashamanja Babu noticed at least five sewn-on patches on his trousers and jacket. But the man didn't have a begging bowl. Instead, by his side was a shoe-box with a little pup sticking its head out of it.

'Good morning!' said the man in English. Ashamanja Babu was obliged to return the greeting.

'Buy dog? Dog buy? Very good dog.' The man had taken the pup out of the box and had put it down on the ground. 'Very cheap. Very good. Happy dog.'

The pup shook the raindrops off its coat, looked at Ashamanja Babu and wagged its minuscule two-inch tail. Ashamanja Babu moved closer to the pup, crouched on the ground and stretched out his hand. The pup gave his ring finger a lick with its pink tongue. Nice, friendly dog.

'How much? What price?'

'Ten rupees.'

A little haggling and the price came down to seven rupees. Ashamanja Babu paid the money, put the pup back in the shoe-box, closed the lid to save it from the drizzle, and turned homewards, forgetting all about the oranges.

– Ashamanja Babu's Dog by Satyajit Ray

- (i) For each word given below choose the correct meaning (as used in the passage) from the options provided:

[2]

1. perturbed (*line 6*)
 - (a) frightened
 - (b) unsettled
 - (c) confused
 - (d) mocked
2. stunted (*line 13*)
 - (a) prevented from growing
 - (b) prepared for tricks
 - (c) prevented from taking action
 - (d) allowed to do stunts

- (ii) Which word in the passage means the opposite of the word 'expensive'? [1]
- (a) carefree
 (b) ordinary
 (c) cheap
 (d) haggling
- (iii) Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:
- (a) What kept Ashamanja Babu happy? [2]
 (b) What does this tell you about him? [2]
 (c) What is that one other thing he needed to complete his happiness? [1]
 (d) Why did Ashamanja Babu think the man was a beggar? [2]
 (e) Why did Ashamanja Babu forget about his oranges? [2]
- (iv) In not more than 50 words, narrate the series of events from the time the puppy was taken out of the box till it was paid for. [8]

Solution 4

- (i) 1. (b)
 2. (a)
- (ii) (c)
- (iii) (a) Ashamanja Babu found happiness in simple pleasures like watching Hindi films, eating fish twice a week, and having a short walkable commute to work.
 (b) As a person, Ashamanja Babu was quite content with his modest lifestyle. Since he didn't like to brood over the past and complaint against ill fate, it tells us that he was a humble person who enjoyed life the most in its little offerings with a content heart.
 (c) Ashamanja Babu felt the need for companionship, specifically desiring a dog.
 (d) Ashamanja Babu thought the man was a beggar because of his worn-out clothes, including trousers and a jacket with at least five sewn-on patches.
 (e) Ashamanja Babu desired a dog's company and, when life suddenly gave him the opportunity to fulfil that desire, he must have felt very content. That is why he forgot about his oranges.
- (iv) A man in the market offers Ashamanja Babu a puppy for sale. The puppy wags its tail, licks Ashamanja Babu's finger and eventually wins his heart. After some negotiation, he buys the puppy for seven rupees, puts it back in the shoe-box, and heads home, forgetting about buying oranges.

Question 5

- (i) Fill in each of the numbered blanks with correct form of the word given in brackets. Do not copy the passage but write in correct serial order the word or phrase appropriate to the blank space. [4]

Example:

Next day my uncle (0) _____ (spend) a lot of time.

Answer: (0) spent

He (1) _____ (select) clothes for me, and my aunt (2) _____ (give) my face a scrub and (3) _____ (groom) me. My uncle (4) _____ (follow) me about (5) _____ (utter) several pieces of advice before (6) _____ (let) me out. 'You must never scowl even if the sun (7) _____ (hit) you in the eyes. You must try (8) _____ (look) pleasant.'

- (ii) Fill in the blanks with appropriate words. [4]
- (a) There's black cat sitting _____ the wall.
 - (b) The horse jumped _____ the hedge.
 - (c) Mother goes _____ the market every day.
 - (d) Several people have climbed Mount Everest _____ recent years.
 - (e) I often go to school _____ my friend.
 - (f) I have left my keys _____ home.
 - (g) Instead of talking, prove your worth _____ doing something.
 - (h) I have not slept _____ yesterday.
- (iii) Choose the correct option to make one complete sentence **without using and, but or so.** [4]
1. The magician took pity on the mouse. He turned it into a cat.
 - (a) Showing pity on the mouse he turned it into a cat.
 - (b) Taking pity on the mouse he turned it into a cat.
 - (c) The magician turned the mouse into a cat by taking pity.
 - (d) Taking pity on the mouse the magician turned it into a cat.
 2. This work must be completed. There is a deadline.
 - (a) Since this work must be completed, there is a deadline.
 - (b) This work must be completed because there is a deadline.
 - (c) This work must be completed through there is a deadline.
 - (d) This work must be completed when there is a deadline.
 3. He fled somewhere. His pursuers could not follow him.
 - (a) He fled where his pursuers could not follow him.
 - (b) He pursued somewhere his followers could not flee.
 - (c) He fled somewhere when his pursuers could not follow him.
 - (d) He fled where his pursuers cannot follow him.
 4. He began late. He finished first.
 - (a) He finished first and began late.
 - (b) He began first but finished late.
 - (c) Though he finished late, he began first.
 - (d) Though he began late, he finished first.
- (iv) Choose the correct option and rewrite the sentence according to the instruction given after each. [8]
1. Arun and Nikhil had climbed the mountain. (*Add a question tag*)
 - (a) Arun and Nikhil had climbed the mountain, didn't they?
 - (b) Arun and Nikhil had climbed the mountain, had they?
 - (c) Arun and Nikhil had climbed the mountain, hadn't they?
 - (d) Arun and Nikhil had climbed the mountain, did they?

2. The children have broken the window pane.
(Begin: *The window pane.....*)
- (a) The window pane had been broken by the children.
 - (b) The window pane has been broken by the children.
 - (c) The window pane has not been broken by the children.
 - (d) The window pane had not been broken by the children.
3. The apples are so cheap that they cannot be good.
(Use: *'too'*)
- (a) The apples are too cheap and good.
 - (b) The apples are too cheap as well as good.
 - (c) The apples are too good to be cheap.
 - (d) The apples are too cheap to be good.
4. She is very clever and beautiful.
(Use : *'not only'*)
- (a) Not only is she very clever but also beautiful.
 - (b) Not only was she beautiful and she was also clever.
 - (c) Not only is she clever she was also very beautiful.
 - (d) Not only was she very beautiful but is also clever.
5. I prefer a simple vanilla ice cream to fancy desserts.
(Begin: *I would rather....*)
- (a) I would rather have a simple vanilla ice cream to fancy desserts.
 - (b) I would rather have a simple vanilla ice cream than fancy desserts.
 - (c) I would rather prefer a simple vanilla ice cream than fancy desserts.
 - (d) I would rather have a vanilla ice cream than a fancy dessert.
6. He asked, "When do you intend to make the payment?"
(Begin: *He asked ...*)
- (a) He asked when he did intend to make the payment.
 - (b) He asked when she is intending to make the payment.
 - (c) He asked when I intended to make the payment.
 - (d) He asked when they are intending to make the payment.
7. If the rain does not stop, Mariam will not be able to do the laundry.
(Begin: *Unless ...*)
- (a) Unless the rain does not stop, Mariam will not be able to do the laundry.
 - (b) Unless Mariam does the laundry, the rain will not stop.
 - (c) Unless the rain stop, Mariam will not be able to do the laundry.
 - (d) Unless the rain stops, Mariam will not be able to do the laundry.

8. This is the best movie I have even seen.
(Begin: Never ...)
- (a) Never had I seen a good movie than this.
 - (b) Never I have seen a better movie than this.
 - (c) Never have I seen a better movie than this.
 - (d) I have never seen a good movie as this.

Solution 5

- (i)
 - (1) selected
 - (2) gave
 - (3) groomed
 - (4) followed
 - (5) uttering
 - (6) letting
 - (7) hits
 - (8) to look
- (ii)
 - (a) against/beside
 - (b) over
 - (c) to
 - (d) in
 - (e) with
 - (f) at
 - (g) by
 - (h) since
- (iii)
 - 1. Ans. (d)
 - 2. Ans. (b)
 - 3. Ans. (a)
 - 4. Ans. (d)
- (iv)
 - 1. Ans. (c)
 - 2. Ans. (b)
 - 3. Ans. (d)
 - 4. Ans. (a)
 - 5. Ans. (b)
 - 6. Ans. (c)
 - 7. Ans. (d)
 - 8. Ans. (c)