

ENGLISH PAPER 1 (LANGUAGE)

Question 1

Write a composition (in approximately 450-500 words) on any **one** of the following subjects: [30]

(You are reminded that you will be rewarded for orderly and coherent presentation of material, use of appropriate style and general accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.)

- (a) Courage does not mean the absence of fear, but implies an attempt to conquer fear. Describe some of your worst fears and how you managed to overcome them.
- (b) Grandparents are a source of joy to us. Narrate the most memorable experience you have had with your grandparents.
- (c) 'Films should be made to escape from reality, not to remind us of how grim life is.' Argue for or against this statement.
- (d) How far do you agree that nice people are seldom successful and thoroughly successful people are seldom nice?
- (e) Eyes.
- (f) Write an original story beginning with the following words:

'The news came as a pleasant surprise.....?'

Comments of Examiners

- (a) This was a descriptive topic where the candidates were required to write on 'fear' and how to 'conquer' fear. Most candidates wrote only on 'courage' without writing on 'fear' and how to conquer it, while in some cases only 'fear' was highlighted. There was evidence of lack of planning, repetition of ideas, linguistic and structural errors and rambling.
- (b) A large number of candidates attempted this topic. Most did a good job but in some cases, a general account of how their grandparents were and the relationship between them was given but an account of a 'memorable incident' was left out. As a result, marks were lost.
- (c) Most of the candidates who attempted this topic did not take a stand. A large number first wrote that films should be for entertainment and then contradicted themselves. Many of the essays were long and rambling, which led to repetition of ideas. Essays lacked lucidity, coherence and planning.

Suggestions for teachers

- Teach students to plan logically before writing the essay.
- Practice in essay writing is a MUST in class.
- Special emphasis should be laid on maintaining the tense, correct usage of verbs, prepositions and conjunctions
- Teach students to read and understand key words in the topic before writing the essay.
- Explain the necessity of taking a 'STAND'
- Students to be told not to use vernacular idioms or their translations in the essays.
- There should be an open discussion on various topics in class for circulation of ideas.

(d) There was much confusion between 'nice' and 'successful' in this essay. Many candidates drifted away from the topic and failed to give their own viewpoint. The essays tended to lack a personal perspective.

– Teach students the essential components of a short story, such as plot, characters, dialogues, a proper beginning and an end.

(e) This one-word topic 'Eyes' was attempted by a fairly large number of candidates. Many wrote from a scientific point of view – about the eye, how it works, its several parts, the problems faced by those who lack eyesight, and so on. Most essays were well-written and properly organized; however some lacked focus and creativity and were full of errors.

(f) Story writing was attempted by quite a few candidates. However, most essays consisted of a simple narrative only. Many were neither original nor creative, without a plot, story, characters, dialogues and a proper conclusion. A large number lacked coherence and lucidity and were full of errors.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 1.

The quality of language employed, the range of appropriateness of vocabulary and sentence structure, syntax, the correctness of grammatical constructions, punctuation and spelling decided the overall grade of the essay.

Marks were deducted for gross errors like – errors of agreement and number, serious tense errors, wrong verb form, elementary errors of sentence construction, misuse of vocabulary, errors in spellings, punctuation or lack of it. Marks were also deducted for use of incorrect or irrelevant idioms, misuse of pronouns, articles and preposition.

(a) This was a descriptive topic. The candidate were required to describe his or her worst fears and how he / she managed to overcome them.

(b) This was a narrative topic. It called for a true account of a personal experience. Candidates needed to write about any incident with their grandparents during their lives which was particularly memorable. (as a teenager/17 year old could also talk of a single grandparent)

(c) This was an argumentative topic. Candidates had to take a definite stand and express it clearly. The stand had to be supported by effective argumentation. Candidates could NOT sit on the fence. Candidates were not penalized for holding a view different from that of the examiner.

(d) This was a reflective topic. The candidates were required to write in some detail, their opinion on how nice people are seldom successful and thoroughly successful people are seldom nice. Candidates had to agree or disagree with the topic or even give their general views.

(e) This was a one-word topic. The content had a wide range / scope. All relevant interpretations / approaches were accepted.

(f) Candidates were required to begin their story with the given words. The story had to be original and not plagiarised or lifted partly or wholly from any source. It needed to have all the necessary elements such as: plot, characterisation and dialogue. It was not to be a mere narration of events. Originality of thought and a creative bent of mind were given credit.

Question 2

Write an article for your School magazine on a competition that was recently held in your school. [20]

Write the article in about 300 words using the points given below:

Name of the competition – nature of event – organisers – number of participants – chief guest – judges – quality of the competition – criteria for judgement – winners – overall experience.

Comments of Examiners

This was a question based on amplification of given points on a 'competition' held in school. Many candidates scored because all the points were present in the piece of writing. However, a lot of candidates could not differentiate between 'competition', 'tournament' and 'fest'. Many copied the points word by word from the question paper; this led to the word limit not being maintained. There was lack of awareness regarding rules and regulations of competitions and 'criteria for judgement'.

Suggestions for teachers

- Practice in writing a variety of reports is a MUST in class.
- Students must be encouraged to read newspapers so that the correct usage and style of language is maintained.
- Instructions on how to write a proper report must be given to students.
- Special care must be taken to add to the vocabulary of students; technical terms and event-related words must be dealt with.
- Importance of the word-limit should be explained.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 2

This was an exercise in amplification. There had to be effective linking of points. Candidates could use the points in any order they chose; however, all points had to be used. If there was no development of points, marks were deducted.

Question 3

Answer sections (a), (b) and (c).

- (a) In each of the following items, sentence **A** is complete, while sentence **B** is not. Complete sentence **B**, making it as similar as possible to sentence **A**. Write sentence **B** in each case. [10]

Example:

- (0) (A) If you want to earn well, you must work hard.
(B) To earn.....

Answer: (0) To earn well, you must work hard.

- (1) (A) Sachin is an outstanding sportsman and a good artist.
(B) Besides.....
- (2) (A) Mother said to Paul, "A courier came for you yesterday."
(B) Mother told Paul that.....
- (3) (A) As soon as the minister took the oath, the spectators started applauding.
(B) No sooner
- (4) (A) He is so short that he cannot be a soldier.
(B) He is too
- (5) (A) The lawyer examined the documents with utmost care.
(B) The documents.....
- (6) (A) I will buy the horse if it is quite sound.
(B) Unless.....
- (7) (A) Only Shakespeare could write such a tragedy.
(B) No one.....
- (8) (A) Rita is a journalist and writer.
(B) Not only
- (9) (A) Although Lakshmi worked very hard, she failed in the examination.
(B) Notwithstanding Lakshmi's
- (10) (A) No one would deny that he was totally fit before his death.
(B) Everyone

(b) Fill in each blank with a suitable word. (Do not write the sentence.)

[5]

- (1) Do you want to take _____ every single object from the box?
- (2) The plane must take _____ before dark.
- (3) The children spoke _____ a whisper as they were scared.
- (4) We must not speak ill about a person _____ his back.
- (5) He disliked the play so much that he walked _____ in the middle of the first act.
- (6) Walking barefoot _____ the grass is very good for health.

- (7) This rule does not apply _____ you as you are less than eighteen years old.
- (8) You must apply _____ the job immediately.
- (9) They have been living in Delhi _____ ten years.
- (10) Mrs. Kapur has been living in Chennai _____ 2000.

- (c) Fill in the blanks in the passage given below with the appropriate form of the verb given in brackets. Do not write the passage, but write the verbs in the correct order. [5]

Two carpenters _____(1)(work) on Mr. Sharma's roof. When they _____(2) (stop) work at 6 p.m., they _____(3) (leave) their ladder _____(4)(lean) against the house. At 7 p.m., Raju, a thief, passed by the house and _____(5)(see) the ladder. The house _____(6)(be) now empty as Mr. and Mrs. Sharma _____(7) (go) to the market. Raju _____(8) (climb) up the ladder, _____(9)(get) in through a first-floor window, and _____(10)(go) straight to the main bed room where he stole all of Mrs. Sharma's jewellery.

Comments of Examiners

- (a) Some candidates used the exact words of the question sentence. Many candidates made superfluous use of commas which caused them to lose marks. Rules of transformation were not clear to most candidates.
- (b) This part was mostly attempted satisfactorily. However, some candidates wrote more than one answer, and many were careless while writing, making errors in spelling.
- (c) This part of the question was attempted satisfactorily. However, once again, candidates erred in giving more than one answer. Some candidates did not follow the correct sequence of tenses; the passage then began to lack coherence.

Suggestions for teachers

- Rules of punctuation to be made clear to students.
- Enough practice must be given in transformation of sentences.
- Instruct students to write only ONE appropriate answer.
- Rules of tenses and sequence of tenses should be made clear to students.
- Give more practice in verbs and tenses and insist on the careful working out of the passage, following the correct order.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 3

- (a) The opening word of each answer (part B) had to be given as in the question paper. No other beginning was acceptable.
- (1) (B) Besides being an outstanding sportsman, Sachin is a good artist.
 - (2) (B) Mother told Paul that a courier had come for him the previous day / the day before.
 - (3) (B) No sooner did the minister take the oath than the spectators started applauding.
 - (4) (B) He is too short to be a soldier.
 - (5) (B) The documents were examined by the lawyer with utmost care.
The documents were examined with utmost care by the lawyer.
 - (6) (B) Unless the horse is quite sound, I will not buy it.
 - (7) (B) No one but Shakespeare could write such a tragedy.
No one save Shakespeare could write such a tragedy.
 - (8) (B) Not only is Rita a journalist but also a writer.
 - (9) (B) Notwithstanding Lakshmi's hard work, she failed in the examination.
 - (10) (B) Everyone would agree/accept/admit that he was totally fit before his death.
- (b) The candidates were advised not to copy the sentences (This was done with a view to save their time). However the strict order had to be maintained.
- (1) out
 - (2) off
 - (3) in
 - (4) behind
 - (5) out
 - (6) on
 - (7) to
 - (8) for
 - (9) for
 - (10) since
- (c) The candidates were advised not to copy the sentence. However the strict order had to be maintained.
- (1) were working / had been working
 - (2) stopped

- (3) left
- (4) leaning
- (5) saw
- (6) was
- (7) had gone
- (8) climbed
- (9) got
- (10) went

Question 4

Read the passage given below and answer the questions (a), (b) and (c) that follow:

- (1) To be encumbered with a corpse is to be in a difficult position. True, any doctor, even one just out of medical school, would have been able to diagnose the cause of death. The man had died of heart failure or what the doctors call cardiac arrest. The cause of his heart having stopped pumping blood was that someone had slid a sharp sliver of steel between his ribs just far enough to penetrate the great muscle of the heart and to cause a serious and irreversible leakage of blood so that it stopped beating. Cardiac arrest, as I said. 5
- (2) I wasn't too anxious to find a doctor because the knife was mine and the hilt had been in my hand when he died. I stood on the open road with the body at my feet and I was scared, so scared that the nausea rose in my throat to choke me. This particular body had been a stranger – I had never seen him before in my life. 10
- (3) I was unarmed, if you except the 'sgian dubh' – the black knife – which I always carry. The 'sgian dubh' is a much underrated weapon. Mine is at least a hundred and fifty years old. The ebony handle is ribbed on one side to give a good grip, but smooth on the other side so it draws clear without catching; the blade is less than four inches long; the stone set in the handle balances the knife so that it makes a superlative throwing weapon. I carry it in a flat sheath in my left sock. 15
- (4) This is how it had happened.
- (5) A little after I had driven out of the city, I saw a car ahead, pulled off the road, and a man waving the universally recognized distress signal of the stranded motorist. It turned out, quite naturally, that there was something wrong with his car and he couldn't get it to move. I got out, walked over to his car and peered at the exposed engine. 20

- (6) He didn't use the gun straight away. He first tried to take a swipe at me with a well-designed little club. I turned my head and saw his upraised arm and dodged sideways. 25
If the club had connected with my skull it would have jarred my brains loose; instead it hit my shoulder and my whole arm went numb.
- (7) I hopped back and groped for the 'sgian dubh' as I went. Fortunately it's a left-handed weapon which was just as well because my right arm wasn't going to be of any use.
- (8) He came for me again but when he saw the knife he hesitated. He dropped the club and 30
dipped his hand beneath his jacket and it was my turn to hesitate. But his club had a leather wrist loop and the dangling weapon spoilt his draw and I jumped him just as the pistol came out.
- (9) I didn't stab him. He swung around and ran straight into the blade. He sagged against me with a look of surprise on his face. Then he went down at my feet and the knife 35
came free.
- (10) So there I was on a lonely road with a newly created corpse at my feet and a knife in my hand, a bad taste in my mouth and a frozen brain.
- (11) From the time I had got out of my car to the moment of death had been less than two 40
minutes.

Adapted from *Running Blind* by Desmond Bagley

- (a) (i) Given below are four words and phrases. Find the words which have [4]
a similar meaning in the passage:
(1) burdened
(2) enter
(3) not given much importance
(4) most effective
- (ii) For each of the words given below, write a sentence of at least [4]
ten words using the same word **unchanged in form, but with a different meaning** from that which it carries in the passage:
(1) arrest (*line 4*)
(2) draws (*line 17*)
(3) set (*line 18*)
(4) club (*line 28*)

- (b) Answer the following questions in your own words as briefly as possible:
- (i) How did the stranger die? [3]
 - (ii) Why was the narrator scared? [2]
 - (iii) Describe the narrator's weapon. [3]
 - (iv) Why did the narrator stop his car and get out? [2]
- (c) Describe the incident of the killing of the stranger in not more than 100 words (Paragraphs 5 to 9). Failure to keep within the word limit will be penalised. You will be required to:
- (i) List your ideas clearly in point form. [6]
 - (ii) In about 100 words, write your points in the form of a connected passage. [6]

Comments of Examiners

- (a) (i) Some candidates were unable to locate the correct word, especially for (3) and (4).
 (ii) A number of candidates had limited knowledge of the different meanings / functions of the same word. Instructions on usage in sentences were not followed in many cases. At times, the sentences were too short and the meaning was unclear.
- (b) (i) Many candidates misunderstood the question and wrote about the whole sequence of events that caused the stranger's death.
 (ii) Several candidates could not analyse what caused the narrator's fear; they wrote instead about the consequence of the fear.
 (iii) Most candidates answered this question satisfactorily. However, some could not present a systematic description of the weapon.
 (iv) Analysis of the exact answer was not done by a number of candidates who did not write the required points.
- (c) (i) Several candidates overlooked the hint given for answering the question (paragraphs 5 to 9). Note-making rules were not clear to a number of candidates as single words were written, which carried no meaning and had no relevance to the given question. At times, ideas were haphazardly noted, with no idea of the sequence of events. In some cases, only a few points were written, not sufficient to cover the complete answer.

Suggestions for teachers

- Encourage vocabulary and word building exercises. Encourage use of dictionary.
- Give practice in making sentences with words having multiple meanings / functions.
- Stress upon reading the instructions carefully.
- Teach students to analyse and distinguish between cause and effect.
- Tell students that when description is to be done, proper sequence of the features must be given.
- Teach students the basic rules of note-making. Practice must be given with the help of short unseen passages.
- Précis writing, using complete sentences, condensation and precision in presenting information correctly and relevantly should be made very clear by teachers.

- (ii) In some cases, the précis were not written in 100 words. In other cases, the summarised passage had no connection with the points in (c)(i). A number of candidates wrote the whole summary in the form of notes. Incomplete sentences and random phrases were written, with no regard for punctuation and articles, which made the passage meaningless and incoherent.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 4

- (a) (i) Candidates were instructed to find words, from the passage which had a similar meaning to those given in the question paper.
- (1) Encumbered
 - (2) Penetrate
 - (3) Underrated
 - (4) Superlative
- (ii) The candidates were instructed to use the following words in sentences of their own but with a different meaning from that used in the passage. If the form of the word was changed or if the meaning was the same as that of the passage, marks were deducted.
- (1) arrest – (as used in the passage: to stop the process of something) seize someone and take them into custody ; the action of arresting someone; arrest someone's attention.
 - (2) draws – (as used in the passage: pulls out) produces a picture; pulls curtains open or shut; attracts people to a place or an event; takes in a breath; finishes a contest with an even score.
 - (3) set – (as used in the passage: put in a specified place or position) give someone a task; fix a time; establish as an example; prepare a table for a meal; harden into a solid, semi-solid or fixed state; arrange hair; put a broken or dislocated bone into place for healing; a number of things or people grouped together; set of the sun or moon (not sunset); a set in tennis or any other game; a set in a play or a film; firmly fixed and unchanging; set off; set out; set in; set aside.
 - (4) club – (as used in the passage: a heavy stick used as a weapon) a stick with a heavy head used to play golf; a group of people who meet regularly for a particular activity; a place where members can relax, eat meals or stay overnight.
- (b) Candidates were required to answer the questions as briefly as possible and in their own words. Marks were deducted for excessive length and gross errors. Candidates had to draw their material only from the passage.
- (i) The stranger died of heart failure or cardiac arrest. Someone had slid a knife into his heart and caused a serious leakage of blood / damage to the heart muscles to stop it beating.
 - (ii) The narrator was scared because he was encumbered with a corpse; the knife that killed the corpse belonged to him; the hilt had been in his hand when the man had died; and he was standing on an open road with the body at his feet.

(iii) The narrator's weapon was a 'sgian dubh' – the black knife; it was a 150 years old; the ebony handle was ribbed on one side to give a good grip; it was smooth on the other side so it could draw out without catching on anything; the blade was less than four inches long; and the stone set in the handle gave it balance; superlative throwing weapon; carried in a flat sheath in his sock. *(any six of these eight points)*

(iv) The narrator had driven out of the city and a little ahead he had seen a car with its driver signalling for help. There was something wrong with the car.

(c) Summary:

(i) A minimum of six points are required. Marks were given for content. The following points could also be combined into six points.

(ii) Marks were awarded for expression and the candidate's ability to express the points clearly. Marks were deducted for linguistic errors.

Possible points for the summary:

- The narrator was driving on the road when he saw a car stopped on the side. 1
- He got out of his car to help the driver.
- The driver tried to hit him with a club-like weapon.
- The narrator dodged the weapon but got hit on his shoulder. 2
- His arm became numb.
- The narrator groped for his own knife.
- The knife was a left handed weapon so he could use it with his good hand. 3
- The stranger tried to take out his gun but could not.
- The narrator jumped on him just as he took his gun out. 4
- The stranger swung around and ran into the narrator's blade.
- He sagged against the narrator.
- He fell at the narrator's feet and the knife came free. 6

GENERAL COMMENTS

(a) Topics found difficult by candidates in the Question Paper:

- Q 1 – (a), (c), and (d)
- Q 3 – a
- Q 4 – (a) (i) and (a) (ii)
- Q 4 – (c) (i) and (c) (ii)

(b) Concepts in which candidates got confused:

- Narrative essay and short story
- Rules of transformation
- Argumentative and critical writing / composition
- Analysis, cause and effect
- Note-making and writing the key words
- Amplification
- Competition and Annual event / activity
- Organizing as hosts and participating as guests

(c) Suggestions for candidates:

- Read works in English, of good standard by noted writers
- Practice use of new words
- Use the dictionary and thesaurus extensively
- Practice listening and speaking skills in English to acquire competence in writing skills
- Pay close attention to the rubric, question-wise instructions, word-limit, key words of the composition topics
- Improve upon your stock of words and be aware of the changes taking place in English
- Remain true to the rules of grammar and don't experiment with the set rules
- Be careful of spelling errors, careless omissions and punctuation negligence
- Do smart work to get the maximum marks