

Date: 21/02/2026



SET-3

CODE 2/1/3

Corporate Office : AESL, 3rd Floor, Incuspaze Campus-2, Plot-13, Sector-18, Udyog Vihar,  
Gurugram, Haryana-122015

Time: 3 Hours

**ENGLISH**

Max. Marks: 80

**(LANGUAGE & LITERATURE)**

**CBSE Class-X (2026)**

**Answers & Solutions**

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Read the instructions very carefully and strictly follow them:

(i) This question paper comprises **11** questions. **All** questions are compulsory.

(ii) The question paper contains **THREE** sections -

**Section A** – Reading Skills

**Section B** – Grammar and Creative Writing Skills

**Section C** – Literature Text Book

(iii) Attempt questions based on specific instructions for each part.

## SECTION-A (20 Marks)

### (READING SKILLS)

1. **Read the following text:** [10]

- (1) Pancakes, a beloved breakfast dish across the world, has a surprisingly long and diverse history. Archaeological evidence shows that people were cooking pancake as food as far back as 30,000 years ago on hot stones and primitive griddles.
- (2) In ancient Greece and Rome, pancakes were made from wheat flour, olive oil, honey, and curdled milk. They were often served as a sweet treat during festivals or special occasions. In medieval Europe, pancakes became a popular dish during Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent began. In France, thin crepes became a national delicacy, often filled with sweet or savoury ingredients. In Russia, blinis were made using buckwheat flour and served with sour cream or caviar. In Ethiopia, the spongy injera became a staple food, made from teff flour and used as both a plate and utensil. Similarly, in China, pancakes are often savoury while in Japan, fluffy “soufflé pancakes” have become a modern favourite.
- (3) The American version of pancakes, thick and soft, gained popularity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The use of baking powder made them light and airy, and they were often served with butter and maple syrup—a symbol of hearty comfort food. Over time, pancakes became a universal dish, symbolizing community and celebration. Whether sweet or savoury, thick or thin, every culture has found a way to adapt this simple food to its own taste and traditions.
- (4) India has its own rich tradition of similar dishes that have been enjoyed for centuries. Across the country, almost every region has a version of a pancake—whether sweet or savoury—made from grains, pulses, or rice. These Indian pancakes not only satisfy hunger but also reflect the diversity of India’s culinary culture. In South India, dosas and adai are the most famous forms of pancakes. Made from a fermented batter of rice and lentils, dosas are crisp and light, while adai is thicker and more filling. The fermentation process adds a unique sour flavor and makes them nutritious and easy to digest. In Kerala, the appam, made with fermented rice batter and coconut milk, is soft in the center and crispy at the edges. Moving north, we find the western style cheela, a simple and wholesome Indian pancake made from gram flour, spiced with onions, chillies and coriander. In Maharashtra, the thalipeeth is a multigrain pancake that uses flours like jowar, bajra and rice mixed with spices and vegetables. It is both flavorful and filling, providing a good balance of carbohydrates and proteins.
- (5) In the eastern parts of India, pitha is a traditional pancake made during festivals and special occasions. Varieties like patishapta in Bengal are sweet, filled with coconut and jaggery. In Assam and Odisha, pithas can be steamed, fried, or roasted, depending on the custom and region. In the western deserts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, people prepare chilla and handvo, which are savoury western pancake-like dishes baked in traditional ovens. These pancakes are a blank canvas for toppings, waiting for a splash of fruit or a scattering of condiments.
- (6) Today, pancakes continue to evolve with new recipes, from vegan and gluten-free varieties to those infused with fruits, oats, or even protein powder. Despite their many forms, they remain a timeless reminder of how food connects mankind through shared history and creativity. Each pancake tells a story of regional identity, food traditions and a deep love for food that brings people together. Pancakes are warm, edible hugs that are a perfect comfort on a bleak day.

**Answer the following questions, based on the passage above:** [10]

I. In paragraph 1, what does the phrase ‘has a surprisingly long and diverse history’ mean? [1]

**Sol.** It means pancakes have existed for a very long time in many different places and cultures.

- II. Complete the following with the correct option from the two given:  
 The uniqueness of the spongy injera, is that \_\_\_\_\_. [1]  
 (A) it is both a savoury and a sweet  
 (B) it can be used for cooking and also for eating

(Paragraph 2)

- Sol.** (B) it can be used for cooking and also for eating  
 III. How are American pancakes made light and fluffy? When did the American-style pancakes gain popularity? (Paragraph 3) [2]

**Sol.** The American version of pancakes gained popularity in the 18th century. The use of baking powder made them airy and soft and made them light and fluffy. They became a representation of comfort food over time and were frequently served with butter and maple syrup.

- IV. State whether the following statement is True or False:  
 Every culture has adopted the pancake and tempered it with its own ingredients, flavour and taste. [1]

(Paragraph 3)

**Sol.** True

- V. The writer mentions 'fermentation process'. Based on the information given in the passage, which of the following pancakes are made from the fermentation process? [1]

- (A) Dosa and appam (B) Chilla and thalipeeth  
 (C) Blinis and soufflé (D) Pitha and patishapta

**Sol.** (A) Dosa and appam

- VI. Select the option that best explains the phrase about pancakes being, 'a blank canvas' (Paragraph 5) [1]

- (A) Like a painter starts with a blank canvas, a diner can get creative.  
 (B) Pancakes reflect the 30,000 old lineage of being the first food.

**Sol.** (A) Like a painter starts with a blank canvas, a diner can get creative.

- VII. List any two points from the passage that support the statement, 'pancakes are a timeless reminder of how food connects people.' (Paragraph 6) [2]

**Sol.** Pancakes connect people because every culture has adapted them according to its own traditions, ingredients, and tastes, showing shared creativity across the world. According to the passage, each pancake expresses a tale of local identity and culinary customs, illustrating how food unites people across time and cultural differences.

- VIII. Fill in the blank with the correct option from those given:

In the line 'warm, edible hugs that are a perfect comfort on a bleak day' the phrase 'warm, edible hugs' refers to \_\_\_\_\_. (Paragraph 6) [1]

- (A) comfort food that provides a sense of emotional security  
 (B) the pancake that represents the history of the region  
 (C) the choice of eating hot steaming pancakes  
 (D) the food that gives you energy

**Sol.** (A) comfort food that provides a sense of emotional security

2. **Read the following text :** [10]

- (1) Rate of Internet Reach in India : 2014-2024

The rate of internet reach in India rose over 52% in 2024 from about 14% in 2014. Although these figures seem relatively low, it meant that more than half of the population of 1.4 billion people had internet access that year. This also ranked the country second in the world in terms of active internet users.

- (2) Internet availability and accessibility

By 2021 the number of internet connections across the country tripled in urban areas because of a higher density of population leading to an increase in the number of connections. However, despite of incredibly low internet prices, internet usage in India has yet to reach its full potential. Lack of awareness about the

internet in India persists, especially in rural areas and among women, driven by digital divide, infrastructure limitations, and a lack of perceived need for the internet. This hinders digital adoption, with many not knowing how to use the internet or even being aware of its existence. Targeted awareness campaigns and digital literacy programs are crucial to bridge this gap and ensure people understand and can benefit from the digital ecosystem.

(3) Digital living

Home to one of the largest bases of netizens in the world, India is abuzz with internet activities being carried out every moment of every day. From information and research to shopping and entertainment to living in smart homes, Indians have welcomed digital living with open arms.

Rate of Internet Reach in India		
S. No.	Year	Percentage
1.	2017	24.0
2.	2018	28.5
3.	2019	33.7
4.	2020	43.4
5.	2021	46.3
6.	2022	48.1
7.	2023	51.5
8.	2024	52.4
9.	2025	55.3

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above :

- I. What does the use of the term "active internet users" convey? [1]
- (A) Active people who use internet                      (B) Active people who use active internet  
(C) People who use active internet                      (D) People who use internet actively

**Answer (D)**

**Sol.** People who use internet actively.

- II. Select the option that is true for the **Assertion** and **Reason** given below : [1]

**Assertion** : India is home to one of the largest bases of netizens in the world.

**Reason**: Lack of awareness and a tangible gender gap lie at the heart of the matter.

- (A) Both the Assertion and the Reason are true and the Reason is the correct explanation of the Assertion.  
(B) Both the Assertion and the Reason are true, but the Reason is not the correct explanation of the Assertion.  
(C) The Assertion is true, but the Reason is false.  
(D) The Assertion is false, but the Reason is true.

**Answer (B)**

**Sol.** Both the Assertion and the Reason are true, but the Reason is not the correct explanation of the Assertion.

III. Identify the word that indicates that internet reach is 'comparatively' low. (Paragraph 1) [1]

**Sol.** Relatively

IV. Based on the table which of the following time period illustrates the maximum internet usage? [1]

- (A) 2017 to 2020 (B) 2023 to 2025  
(C) 2020 to 2023 (D) 2019 to 2022

**Answer (B)**

**Sol.** 2023 to 2025

V. From the passage identify one reason why there are less internet users among women? [1]

**Sol.** Lack of awareness / lack of perceived need of internet / digital literacy (any one)

VI. Fill in the blank with a suitable word given in brackets:

Infrastructure limitations \_\_\_\_\_ (impedes/spurs) digital adoption. [1]

**Sol.** impedes

VII. Complete the following with a suitable reason:

An increase in the number of connections in urban areas is because of \_\_\_\_\_ . [1]

**Sol.** higher density of population

VIII. Which are the two ways to bridge the gap of digital unawareness? [2]

**Sol.** Targeted awareness campaigns, Digital literacy programs

IX. In the context of the last paragraph how does the author justify the statement, 'Indians have welcomed digital living with open arms'. [1]

**Sol.** The author justifies it by stating that Indians actively use the internet for everyday activities such as information and research, shopping, entertainment, and smart home living, showing widespread acceptance of digital life.

## SECTION-B (20 Marks)

### (GRAMMAR AND CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS)

#### GRAMMAR

3. Complete ANY TEN of twelve of the following tasks, as directed : [10×1=10]

I. Fill in the blank with correct option to complete a message from Yogita to her friend Shobit:

Dear Shobit,

Let's meet at 5 p.m. for the rehearsal but I need to go home first as I \_\_\_\_\_ anything since morning. [1]

- (A) did not eat (B) had not eaten  
(C) have not eaten (D) am not eating

**Answer (C)**

**Sol.** had not eaten

- II. Read the given sentence from a self-help book. Identify the error and supply the correction in the given format:

To identifying your goal is the biggest step in your success story. [1]

Error	Correction

**Sol.**

Error	Correction
identifying	identify

- III. Yamini asked her friend Shifa, “Would you like to come for my birthday party tomorrow?”  
Report Yamini’s question correctly. [1]

**Sol.** Yamini asked her friend Shifa if she would like to come for her birthday party the next day.

- IV. Fill in the blank by choosing the correct option to complete a newspaper clipping:  
The verdict is yet to come since the members of the jury \_\_\_\_\_ (is/are) divided in their opinion. [1]

**Sol.** are

- V. Read Somil’s request to his mother :

“Can you teach me to swim?”

Report Somil’s request by completing the following sentence correctly :

Somil asked his mother \_\_\_\_\_ [1]

**Sol.** if she could teach him to swim.

- VI. Identify and correct the error in the given line taken from a critical review of a recently staged play :  
‘As an actor, Ravi Raj, is superior then any other contemporary actor.’ [1]

Options	Error	Correction
(A)	an	the
(B)	is	were
(C)	then	to
(D)	other	another

**Answer (C)**

**Sol.** then — to

- VII. Complete the given line from ‘Rules and Regulations’ section of a school diary :  
Minimum 75% attendance is \_\_\_\_\_ to appear for the final examinations. [1]

- (A) recorded (B) mandatory  
(C) secured (D) obtained

**Answer (B)**

**Sol.** mandatory

VIII. Detect the error and supply the correction for the given newspaper report on a proposal by a Member of Advisory Board :

After the meeting it was obvious that most stakeholders would not support \_\_\_\_\_ proposals. [1]

- (A) this (B) that  
(C) the (D) these

**Answer (C)**

**Sol.** the

IX. Report the dialogue between a flight attendant and a passenger by filling in the blank :

**Attendant** : Did you have your dinner, sir?

**Passenger** : Yes, thank you!

The flight attendant asked the passenger \_\_\_\_\_. The passenger replied in affirmation and thanked him. [1]

**Sol.** if he had had his dinner

X. Select the correct option to complete the given sentence from the memoir of your grandparent :

'When I was the team Captain, I \_\_\_\_\_ often organise get-togethers to develop bonding among the team mates.' [1]

- (A) could (B) will  
(C) shall (D) would

**Answer (D)**

**Sol.** would

XI. Complete the given sentence about the reaction of a tourist to another, by selecting the correct option :

Yesterday you loved the spicy Indian curry, \_\_\_\_\_ you? [1]

- (A) hasn't (B) weren't  
(C) did (D) didn't

**Answer (D)**

**Sol.** didn't

XII. Read the conversation between a professional writer and a school student :

**Student** : What prompted you to become a professional writer?

**Writer** : My childhood library housed books of all kinds. I was fascinated with the compelling stories and wanted to create my own.

Report the student's question. [1]

**Sol.** The student asked the writer what had prompted him to become a professional writer.

### CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

**Note** : All details presented in the questions are imaginary and created for assessment purpose :

4. **Attempt ANY ONE from (A) and (B) given below :**

(A) You are Roshni / Roshan, a concerned resident of Aryan Colony. There is a school inside your colony because of which there is traffic chaos and congestion during drop off and pick up timings. This has resulted in episodes of road rage as well as injuries to both students and residents. Write a letter to the Traffic Commissioner drawing his attention to the problem. Press on the urgent need to find solutions to reduce traffic congestion during peak hours. [5]

### Sol. Complaint Letter

**Format:** (Sender's address, Date, Receiver's address, salutation, Subject Heading, Body, Complimentary close)

**Expression:** (Grammatical accuracy, appropriate words, Coherence and relevance of ideas and style)

**Content:**

**Suggested Value Points:**

- Purpose of writing
- Describing the terrible condition of roads at peak hours
- Consequences of this condition of traffic congestion
- Suggested measures
- Request to take strong actions

**Sample:**

15, Aryan Colony  
New Delhi

21 February 2026

The Traffic Commissioner  
New Delhi

**Subject:** Urgent Request to Address Traffic Congestion in Aryan Colony

Respected Sir,

I am writing to you as a concerned resident of Aryan Colony to draw your attention to a pressing issue that has been affecting our community. The presence of a school within the colony has led to severe traffic congestion during drop-off and pick-up hours.

The situation has become increasingly chaotic, with vehicles crowding the narrow internal roads, resulting in frequent traffic jams. This congestion has not only caused inconvenience to residents but has also led to episodes of road rage and, unfortunately, injuries to both students and colony members. The safety of children and residents is at serious risk if immediate measures are not taken.

I earnestly request your intervention to find practical solutions to ease traffic flow during peak hours. Possible measures could include:

- Deployment of traffic personnel during school timings.
- Designated drop-off and pick-up zones outside the colony.
- Strict enforcement of parking regulations.
- Coordination with the school authorities to stagger timings or arrange supervised transport facilities.

The matter is urgent, and timely action will go a long way in ensuring the safety and well-being of both students and residents.

I hope you will give this issue your immediate attention and take necessary steps to resolve it.

Yours sincerely  
Roshni / Roshan

**OR**

- (B) You are Arti/Ashok Shukla, a resident of Nirman Vihar, Karnal. You have witnessed the children of your locality taking charge of the neighbourhood clean up. They not only dedicated weekend mornings in cleaning parks but also put up posters spreading awareness of segregated waste management. This move has made the area an immensely pleasant experience for all residents. Inspired by your experience, write a letter to the editor of the Times of India sharing your views on the power of teenagers when it comes to community welfare. Add how their proactiveness for civic welfare adds to their wholesome personality development. **[5]**

**Sol. Letter to the Editor**

**Format:** (Sender's address, Date, Receiver's address, salutation, Subject Heading, Body and Complimentary Close)

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

**Content:**

**Suggested Value Points:**

- Introduction to the event
- Highlighting why such an event is important
- Conclusion with a request made to the editor to write an article about the event

**Sample:**

B-108, Nirman Vihar

Karnal

21 February 2026

The Editor

The Times of India

New Delhi

**Subject:** The Power of Teenagers in Community Welfare

Respected Sir/Madam

Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I wish to share my heartfelt appreciation for the teenagers of my locality who have taken remarkable initiative in improving our neighborhood. Over the past few weeks, these young residents have dedicated their weekend mornings to cleaning the parks and public spaces of Nirman Vihar. They have also put up posters to spread awareness about segregated waste management, encouraging all residents to adopt responsible practices. Their efforts have transformed our area into a cleaner, greener, and immensely pleasant place to live.

This experience has convinced me of the immense power teenagers hold when it comes to community welfare. Their energy, enthusiasm, and sense of responsibility not only bring about visible change in society but also contribute significantly to their own personality development. By engaging in such civic activities, they learn teamwork, discipline, empathy, and leadership—qualities that will serve them well throughout their lives. Their proactiveness is a shining example of how the younger generation can inspire collective action and foster a spirit of harmony and responsibility among all age groups.

I believe such initiatives deserve wider recognition and encouragement. If more communities support and empower their teenagers in similar ways, our cities and towns will surely become cleaner, safer, and more vibrant.

Yours truly

Arti / Ashok Shukla

5. **Attempt ANY ONE from (A) and (B) given below :**

- (A) Improvements in sports infrastructure with a focus on multipurpose sustainable facilities as well as the integration of technology along with a grassroots centric approach is the key to bring Indian athletes on the world stage.

Write an analytical paragraph on the above statement in about **120** words, expressing your views on how improved infrastructure can help Indian athletes win accolades for the nation. **[5]**

**Sol. Suggested Value Points:**

1. **Importance of Sports Infrastructure:** Modern, well-equipped facilities boost training quality, Multi-purpose sustainable venues reduce costs and environmental impact.
2. **Role of Technology Integration:** Use of advanced tech (analytics, wearables) enhances performance monitoring, Improves injury prevention and personalized coaching.
3. **Grassroot-centric Approach:** Identifying talent from rural & urban grassroots levels, Encourages widespread participation and inclusivity in sports.
4. **Impact on Athlete Performance & National Recognition:** Better infrastructure and technology lead to improved skills and medal wins., Success of athletes brings prestige and inspires future generations for the nation.

**Sample Answer:**

Improved sports infrastructure with multi-purpose sustainable facilities is imperative for propelling Indian athletes onto the world stage. Consequently, modern, eco-friendly venues provide superior training environments that significantly enhance performance while reducing operational costs. Moreover, integrating advanced technology such as performance analytics and wearable devices enables precise monitoring, efficient injury management, and customized coaching, thereby sharpening athletes' skills substantially. Furthermore, a grassroots-centric approach ensures talent is scouted from every region, fostering inclusivity and expanding the athlete base dramatically. Thus, these synergistic advancements empower athletes to achieve international accolades, bringing recognition and pride to the nation and inspiring younger generations to pursue sports, hence strengthening India's sporting legacy profoundly.



II. According to Mandela, emancipation is not merely political. Elaborate. [2]

**Sol.** Mandela believes emancipation is not only political freedom but also freedom from poverty, deprivation, suffering, and discrimination. True freedom means equality, dignity, and justice for all people.

III. Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket : [1]

Mandela's speech swings between references to the past and a \_\_\_\_\_ (bleak/promising) future.

**Sol.** promising

IV. With reference to the extract explain the sentence, "The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement." [1]

**Sol.** The sentence means that achieving freedom and equality in South Africa is such a great human accomplishment that it will always be remembered as a glorious, eternal victory and historic achievement.

**OR**

**B.** OOP : I haven't a clue. I've been to seven galaxies, but I've never seen anything like this. Maybe they're hats. (He opens a book and puts it on his head.) Say, maybe this is a haberdashery!

OMEGA : (bowing low) Perhaps the Great and Mighty Think-Tank will give us the benefit of his thought on the matter.

THINK-TANK : Elementary, my dear Omega. Hold one of the items up so that I may view it closely. (Omega holds a book on the palm of her hand.) Yes, yes, I understand now. Since Earth creatures are always eating, the place in which you find yourselves is undoubtedly a crude refreshment stand.

OMEGA : (to Iota and Oop) He says we're in a refreshment stand.

OOP : Well, the Earthlings certainly have a strange diet.

(The Book that Saved the Earth)

I. "Elementary, my dear Omega." What is Think-Tank's tone in the sentence? [1]

- (A) patronising
- (B) admonishing
- (C) ironic
- (D) sarcastic

**Answer (A)**

**Sol.** patronising

II. Why does Omega call Think-Tank great and mighty? [2]

**Sol.** Omega calls Think-Tank "great and mighty" because she considers him as their intelligent and powerful leader. She flatters him and respects his authority.

III. Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket : [1]

After viewing the book closely, Think-Tank concludes that Earth creatures \_\_\_\_\_ (enjoy/dislike) eating food.

**Sol.** enjoy

IV. Why does Oop open the book and put it on his head? [1]

**Sol.** Oop opens the book and puts it on his head because he thinks it might be a hat or something to wear, as he does not understand what a book is.

7. **Read the given extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the two given:** **[5×1=5]**

**A.** Some say the world will end in fire some say in ice.

From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favour fire.

(Stanza 1)

But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

(Fire and Ice)

I. Complete the following suitably :

**[1]**

According to Robert Frost, fire refers to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Sol.** Destructive emotions like human desires, passions, and emotions such as greed, lust, conflict, and avarice

II. Why does the poet believe both fire and ice can destroy the world equally?

**[2]**

**Sol.** According to Frost, 'fire' stands for greed, conflict, fury, cruelty, lust and avarice whereas 'ice' stands for insensitivity, coldness, intolerance, indifference, rigidity and hatred. The poet believes that whether through the passionate, burning actions of "fire" or the cold, calculated destruction of "ice," the world will inevitably face destruction due to these human flaws.

III. Fill the blank with one word :

In the line "But if it has to perish twice", 'it' refers to the \_\_\_\_\_.

**[1]**

**Sol.** World

IV. Select the option with same rhyme scheme as lines in Stanza 1:

**[1]**

- (A) They are all gone away,  
The House is shut and still,  
There is nothing more to say.
- (B) Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!  
For the soul is dead that slumbers.
- (C) The dog chased the ball down the lane,  
He ran with such incredible speed,  
His tail was a blur, a joyful glee.
- (D) The Sun is high,  
The clouds drift past,  
In the blue sky which is so vast.

**Answer (D)**

**Sol.** Rhyme scheme - abb

OR

- B.** Though to distinguish beasts of prey  
A novice might nonplus,  
The crocodile you always may  
Tell from the Hyena thus:  
Hyenas come with merry smiles  
But if they weep they're crocodiles.

(How to tell Wild Animals)

- I. What is the most likely reason the poet uses the word 'nonplus' instead of confused? [1]

**Sol.** 'Nonplus' is used to create a specific rhyme with "thus," while enhancing the poem's humorous, formal tone.

- II. Explain the irony in the last two lines of the stanza. [2]

**Sol.** The lines distinguish between two predators: hyenas are recognized by their "merry smiles" (a laughing appearance), while crocodiles are identified by the "tears" they shed while attacking, often called "crocodile tears". The lines highlight the irony and contrast between deceptive appearances and the reality of the dangers they pose.

- III. Fill in the blank with one word: [1]

The word 'novice' signifies a/an \_\_\_\_\_ person.

**Sol.** A beginner / an immature person

- IV. What kind of atmosphere is created through these lines? [1]

Select the correct option:

1. humorous
2. mysterious
3. aggressive
4. confusing
5. fearful

**Options :**

- (A) 1 and 4
- (B) Only 5
- (C) 1, 2 and 3
- (D) 4 and 5

**Answer (A)**

**Sol.** humorous and confusing

8. **Answer ANY FOUR of the following five questions, in about 40-50 words each:** [4×3=12]

I. What is the important lesson of life that the boy learns from the loss of the ball? (The Ball Poem)

II. What unexpected event does Valli face and how is it ironically significant for the little child?  
(Madam Rides the Bus)

III. Give a brief description of Anne Frank's family. (From the Diary of Anne Frank)

IV. What was the cause of conflict between Natalya and Lomov? (The Proposal)

V. What is 'yellow hair' a symbol of in "For Anne Gregory"? Discuss. (For Anne Gregory)

**Sol. I. Suggested Value Points:**

- He understands that loss is a part of life — not everything we lose can be recovered, and one must learn to accept it.
- He gains maturity and learns about responsibility, understanding that he must manage his emotions and circumstances independently.
- He realizes that money cannot replace emotional attachment, because the ball had personal memories connected to it.
- He starts to grow up and become more resilient, learning how to move on and deal with setbacks in the future.

**II. Suggested Value Points:**

- During her first bus ride, Valli saw the same cow running playfully on the road and later witnessed its demise.
- The sight of the cow lying dead on the road comes as a shock to her, breaking her excitement and cheerful mood.
- Ironically, the playful cow that had made her laugh earlier now makes her realize the harsh reality of life and death.
- The little youngster suddenly matures as a result of this experience, realising that life is unpredictable and fleeting.

**III. Suggested Value Points:**

- Anne Frank lived with her parents, Otto and Edith Frank, and her elder sister Margot; they were a Jewish family who went into hiding during the war.
- Unlike most people, Anne had a strong link with her father, who was kind, understanding, and encouraging.
- In contrast to Anne's vivacious personality, her sister Margot was quiet, smart, and disciplined, and her mother was loving but stern.
- Despite hardships, the family showed love, unity, and resilience, supporting one another in difficult times.

**IV. Suggested Value Points:**

- The conflict started over the ownership of Oxen Meadows.
- Both argued claiming their ownership as their ancestral property.
- The heated argument turned into abusing and disregarding each other due to their ego and stubbornness.
- Furthermore, they began quarrelling over the superiority of their dogs and it became so intense that the real purpose of marriage proposal was forgotten.

**V. Suggested Value Points:**

- 'Yellow hair' is a symbol of physical beauty and outward appearance.
- The poet has presented a contrast between external beauty and inner beauty focusing on the fact that the true love is always associated with inner beauty.
- The poet is of the opinion that inner beauty surpasses the outward appearance so, real love should be beyond outward physical charm.

9. **Answer ANY TWO of the following three questions, in about 40-50 words each:** **[2×3=6]**

- I. Describe the extraordinary behaviour of the furniture when the Halls entered the stranger's room.  
(Footprints Without Feet)
- II. How does the statement “society must be protected from men like you” prove to be ironical in the story “A Question of Trust”?
- III. “The Midnight Visitor” illustrates that “Stereotypes are often misleading”. Justify.

**Sol. I. Suggested Value Points:**

- Furniture moves on its own as if alive.
- Chairs shift and rearrange themselves.
- Tables glide across the floor mysteriously.
- The clock starts swinging without a hand.
- Objects respond to an unseen magical force.
- The room feels eerie and supernatural.
- Mr and Mrs Hall experiences bewilderment and fear.
- The moving of things in the room suggests invisible presence.
- It creates an atmosphere of suspense.
- The incident hints at the stranger's magical powers.

**II. Suggested Value Points:**

- The phrase is used by deceitful character to accuse other (like the woman framing Horace).
- Suspicion breeds more suspicion, trapping innocent people (Horace gets caught due to circumstantial evidence).
- It shows appearance vs reality in accusations (the woman's true intent is hidden).
- Society prejudices without proof (Horace is judged based on his appearance).
- It critiques society's bias over truth-seeking (focus is on protecting reputation).
- “Men like you” are products of distrust environments (Horace's actions influenced by circumstances).
- Labelling someone untrustworthy causes damage (Horace's life is ruined).
- The phrase deflects blame onto scapegoats (the woman shifts blame to Horace).
- Distrust fractures relationships (Horace is ostracized).
- Society safeguards lie over truth (the woman's deceit is almost successful).

**III. Suggested Value Points:**

- Ausable, a secret agent, defies the stereotype of a typical spy.
- He's fat and sloppy-looking, unlike the expected "tough" agent.
- Fowler, a writer, expects excitement but gets a dull encounter.
- Max, the intruder, fits the "villain" stereotype but is outsmarted.
- Ausable uses his wit, not physical strength, to outmaneuver Max.
- The story subverts expectations of how a spy should look or act.
- Fowler is disappointed by Ausable's ordinary appearance.

- Max underestimates Ausable due to his appearance and falls into a trap.
- The twist shows intelligence is greater than physical appearance or stereotypes.
- Ausable's clever plan proves stereotypes about people are often wrong.

10. **Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words:**

- Examine the similarities and differences between the tiger in “A Tiger in the Zoo” and the dragon in “The Tale of Custard the Dragon”. **[6]**
- “The Sermon at Benaras” and “For Anne Gregory”, deal with the themes of ‘love’ and ‘life’. Discuss. **[6]**

**Sol. I. Suggested Value Points:**

**[6]**

- The tiger in “Tiger in the Zoo” by Leslie Norris and Custard in “The Tale of Custard the Dragon” by Ogden Nash are both strong, powerful animals, yet they are portrayed very differently in the poems.
- Both are naturally powerful creatures. The tiger is a fierce wild animal, and Custard is a dragon who can breathe fire. However, both are extremely different from others around them. The tiger is removed from his natural habitat and kept confined in a cage, while Custard is different from Belinda and her pets because he is considered timid and cowardly. Moreover, both the animals highlight the theme of reality versus appearance. The tiger appears ferocious but is helpless in captivity, while Custard appears cowardly but proves to be truly courageous in perilous times.
- When we look at their differences, the theme of freedom vs. captivity comes to the forefront. The tiger is imprisoned in a zoo. He walks angrily in his cage and longs for the freedom of the jungle. His power is restricted. Custard, on the other hand, lives freely in Belinda’s house.
- The tiger does not get a chance to show his strength because he is confined, but Custard proves his courage by fighting and killing the pirate when everyone else runs away. The tiger symbolizes suppressed strength and the loss of natural freedom, while Custard symbolizes hidden courage and the idea that true bravery is shown in action, not in words.
- Thus, while both the tiger and Custard are strong animals, the tiger represents helplessness in captivity, whereas Custard represents unexpected bravery. One evokes sympathy and sadness, while the other brings humour and admiration.

**II. Suggested Value Points:**

**[6]**

- “The Sermon at Benaras” by Betty Renshaw and “For Anne Gregory” by W. B. Yeats explore themes of love and life from different perspectives.
- In “The Sermon at Benaras,” the teachings of Gautama Buddha emphasize that life is full of loss and suffering as the result of attachment and desire. Buddha explains that death is inevitable and grieving excessively shows a lack of understanding of life’s true nature. He teaches that one must rise above worldly attachments to attain peace. Thus, the poem presents love as something that should not lead to sorrow or bondage.
- “For Anne Gregory” presents a contrasting picture and deals with romantic love. The poet suggests that people are often attracted to outward beauty rather than inner qualities. He highlights that true love should value a person’s inner self rather than physical appearance.
- Together, both works suggest that love must go beyond superficial or material attachments to understand the deeper meaning of life.

11. Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words:

- I. Evaluate how “A Triumph of Surgery” is a lesson in thoughtful parenting. [6]
- II. Evaluate how “The Necklace” critiques the obsession with appearances and social status. [6]

**Sol. I. Suggested Value Points:** [6]

- The story demonstrates how excessive indulgence can harm children’s health and growth.
- Mrs. Pumphrey pampers her dog Tricki with rich food and constant affection, mistaking indulgence for genuine care.
- Her lack of restraint results in Tricki’s illness, symbolizing the dangers of unchecked parental love.
- Dr. Herriot’s disciplined yet compassionate treatment restores Tricki’s vitality, proving that firm guidance is essential.
- The narrative teaches that thoughtful parenting requires balance—love must be paired with responsibility and moderation.
- It emphasizes that genuine care is shown through wise choices that prioritize well-being over indulgence.
- In conclusion, the story is a reminder that parenting should blend affection with discipline to ensure healthy development.

**Sol. II. Suggested Value Points:** [6]

- Mathilde is dissatisfied with her modest life, wrongly believing that material possessions define happiness and social worth. Her desire to appear wealthy leads her to borrow a fake necklace, symbolizing that her aspirations were based on a shallow, hollow illusion.
- To maintain the appearance of wealth, Mathilde and her husband endure ten years of poverty and hard labour to replace the lost necklace. The story shows that the obsession with “fitting in” with the rich brings only misery.
- The ultimate irony that the original necklace was fake, reveals the absurdity of her obsession with social status. Maupassant uses this irony to show that her suffering was entirely unnecessary, caused by her inability to appreciate her own life.
- Mathilde’s refusal to tell the truth, highlighting how social pressure can force people to take foolish, life-altering choices
- So, the story critiques shallow pride and shows that true happiness lies in contentment, honesty, and humility.

