

CBSE BOARD EXAMINATION 2025

CLASS X — ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (Code 184)

SET 1 | Set Code: 2/1/1 | Date: 15 February 2025

Time Allowed: 3 Hours Maximum Marks: 80

General Instructions: (i) This paper is divided into three sections — A, B, and C. All questions are compulsory. (ii) Separate instructions are given with each section and question. Read these carefully and follow them. (iii) Do not exceed the prescribed word limit while answering the questions.

SECTION A — READING SKILLS [20 Marks]

Read the following passages carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1 (Q1–Q10) — Discursive Passage [10 Marks]

Forests are sometimes called the lungs of the Earth. They absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, making life on this planet possible. Forests also regulate the water cycle, prevent soil erosion, and provide habitat for about 80% of the world's land-based species. Despite their immense value, deforestation continues at an alarming rate. Every minute, the world loses about 27 football fields of forest. The primary drivers of deforestation are agriculture, logging, and urbanisation. In tropical countries, vast tracts of forest are cleared to grow soya beans or palm oil — crops used in processed foods and cosmetics sold around the world. The consequences are devastating. When forests disappear, the carbon stored in trees is released into the atmosphere, accelerating climate change. Indigenous communities that have lived in forests for centuries lose their homes and livelihoods. Rivers dry up, and droughts become more frequent. Scientists warn that at current rates of destruction, many of the world's remaining rainforests could disappear within decades. Fortunately, conservation efforts are gaining momentum. Countries such as Brazil, Norway, and India have implemented large-scale reforestation programmes. Community forest management, where local people are given rights over nearby forests, has proved particularly effective. Research shows that forests protected by indigenous communities have lower rates of deforestation than those managed by governments alone. Technology is also helping — satellite imaging and artificial intelligence can now detect illegal logging in near-real time. Yet these efforts must be scaled up dramatically. Protecting forests is not merely an environmental issue; it is a matter of justice, economics, and survival.

Answer the following questions based on Passage 1:

Q1. (i) What two gases are primarily exchanged by forests that make them essential for life? [1]

◆ Answer: Forests absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, making them essential for sustaining life on Earth.

Q1. (ii) What percentage of the world's land-based species depend on forests for their habitat? [1]

◆ Answer: About 80% of the world's land-based species depend on forests for their habitat.

Q2. What are the three primary drivers of deforestation mentioned in the passage? [1]

◆ Answer: The three primary drivers of deforestation are agriculture, logging, and urbanisation. In tropical countries, forests are also cleared for growing soya beans and palm oil.

Q3. Identify and explain any two consequences of deforestation as described in the passage. [2]

◆ Answer: (i) Climate change: Carbon stored in trees is released into the atmosphere when forests are destroyed, accelerating global warming. (ii) Loss of livelihoods: Indigenous communities who have lived in forests for centuries lose their homes and means of living. Rivers also dry up and droughts become more frequent.

Q4. What does the phrase 'lungs of the Earth' suggest about forests? Pick the most appropriate answer. [1] (a) Forests are underground structures. (b) Forests breathe like humans do. (c) Forests perform for the planet the same life-giving function that lungs perform for the body. (d) Forests cause respiratory diseases.

◆ Answer: (c) Forests perform for the planet the same life-giving function that lungs perform for the body.

Q5. Why has community forest management proved particularly effective according to the passage? [2]

◆ Answer: Community forest management gives local people rights over nearby forests. Research shows that forests protected by indigenous communities have lower rates of deforestation than those managed by governments alone. Local communities have a direct interest in protecting forests as their livelihoods and homes depend on them.

Q6. Find a word from paragraph 2 of the passage that means 'the process of cutting down and removing trees for commercial purposes'. [1]

◆ Answer: Logging

Q7. The author says protecting forests is 'not merely an environmental issue.' What other dimensions does the author suggest? [1]

◆ Answer: The author suggests that protecting forests is also a matter of justice (for indigenous communities), economics (livelihoods and industries), and survival (human existence itself depends on healthy forests).

Passage 2 (Q8–Q13) — Case-Based / Factual Passage with Data [10 Marks]

The table below shows the screen time (hours per day) reported by students across three age groups in India in 2023 and 2024, along with experts' recommended limits. Age Group | Avg. Screen Time 2023 | Avg. Screen Time 2024 | Recommended Limit 6–10 yrs | 3.2 hrs | 3.8 hrs | 1–2 hrs 11–14 yrs | 5.1 hrs | 6.0 hrs | 2 hrs 15–17 yrs | 7.4 hrs | 8.2 hrs | 2–3 hrs Excessive screen time has been linked to poor sleep, reduced physical activity, and declining academic performance. In a 2024 survey by the Indian Paediatrics Association, 68% of parents reported that their children spent more time on screens than on outdoor activities. However, 42% of parents admitted they themselves exceeded recommended screen time limits. Experts suggest that screens are not inherently harmful; the quality and purpose of usage matter. Educational content, when consumed in moderation, can enhance learning. The problem arises when screens replace physical activity, face-to-face interaction, and sleep. Schools across India have begun 'digital wellness' campaigns encouraging students to take regular screen breaks, practise the 20-20-20 rule (every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds), and engage in at least one hour of outdoor play daily.

Q8. By how many hours did average screen time increase for the 11–14 age group between 2023 and 2024? [1]

◆ Answer: Average screen time for the 11–14 age group increased by 0.9 hours (from 5.1 hours in 2023 to 6.0 hours in 2024).

Q9. Which age group shows the highest average screen time in 2024, and how does it compare to the recommended limit? [2]

◆ Answer: The 15–17 age group shows the highest average screen time in 2024 at 8.2 hours. This is significantly higher than the recommended limit of 2–3 hours — approximately 5 to 6 hours more than advised by experts.

Q10. What does the 20-20-20 rule recommend, and why might it be beneficial? [2]

◆ Answer: The 20-20-20 rule recommends that every 20 minutes, one should look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This is beneficial because it relaxes the eye muscles that focus on a screen at close range, reducing eye strain and digital fatigue caused by prolonged screen use.

Q11. According to the survey, what did 42% of parents admit? [1]

◆ Answer: 42% of parents admitted that they themselves exceeded the recommended screen time limits, making it harder for them to set a good example or enforce screen-time restrictions for their children.

Q12. In one sentence, state what experts say about whether screens are harmful. [1]

◆ Answer: Experts say that screens are not inherently harmful — it is the quality and purpose of usage that matters, and problems arise only when screens replace physical activity, interaction, and sleep.

Q13. Suggest a suitable title for Passage 2. [1]

◆ Answer: A suitable title could be: 'Screens and Children: Growing Concern in India' or 'Rising Screen Time Among Indian Students: Trends and Solutions'.

SECTION B — WRITING SKILLS AND GRAMMAR [20 Marks]

Attempt all questions.

Q14. Formal Letter / Analytical Paragraph Writing [5 Marks each — attempt either 14(a) or 14(b)]

Q14(a). You are Aarav Mehta, residing at 45 MG Road, Bengaluru. Write a letter to the Editor of a national newspaper expressing your concern about the increasing levels of noise pollution in your city. Suggest at least two practical measures that can be taken to control it. [5]

◆ Answer: 45 MG Road, Bengaluru 15 February 2025
The Editor
The Times of India
Bengaluru
Sub: Rising Noise Pollution in Bengaluru — An Appeal for Action
Sir/Madam, Through the esteemed columns of your newspaper, I wish to draw the attention of the concerned authorities to the alarming rise in noise pollution in our city. The constant blaring of horns, loud music from commercial establishments, and construction activity at odd hours have made it increasingly difficult for residents to lead a peaceful life. Studies have shown that prolonged exposure to high noise levels can cause hearing impairment, stress, and sleep disorders. I respectfully request the authorities to: (1) Strictly enforce the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, imposing

heavy fines on violators; (2) Ban the use of pressure horns and enforce silence zones near schools, hospitals, and residential areas. I hope this matter receives the urgent attention it deserves. Yours sincerely Aarav Mehta

Q14(b). Write an analytical paragraph on the following data about the reading habits of students. Reading daily for pleasure: Class 8 — 62%, Class 9 — 48%, Class 10 — 31%. [5]

◆ Answer: The data reveals a significant and concerning decline in pleasure reading as students progress through secondary school. While 62% of Class 8 students read daily for pleasure, the figure drops to 48% in Class 9 — a fall of 14 percentage points — and plummets further to just 31% in Class 10, the lowest across the three classes. This steady downward trend suggests that academic pressure increases sharply with each year, leaving students with less time and motivation for leisure reading. The decline may also reflect the growing influence of digital entertainment as students grow older. It is noteworthy that nearly two-thirds of Class 8 students still read for pleasure, indicating that the habit exists but gradually erodes under exam-oriented schooling. Schools should introduce structured reading programmes and book clubs to sustain this habit even as academic demands rise.

Grammar (Q15–Q20) [10 Marks]

Q15. Fill in the blank with the correct form of the word in brackets: 'By the time we reached the station, the train _____ (already / leave).' [1]

◆ Answer: had already left (Past Perfect — the action of the train leaving was completed before we reached the station.)

Q16. Fill in the blank choosing the correct option: 'Neither the students nor the teacher _____ ready for the surprise inspection.' (a) were (b) was (c) are (d) have been [1]

◆ Answer: (b) was — When 'neither...nor' connects two subjects, the verb agrees with the subject closest to it. 'Teacher' is singular, so 'was' is correct.

Q17. The following sentence has an error. Identify and correct it: 'She suggested that he goes to the doctor immediately.' [1]

◆ Answer: Error: 'goes'. Correction: 'She suggested that he go to the doctor immediately.' (Subjunctive mood is used after 'suggest' — the verb remains in base form.)

Q18. Rewrite the following sentence in reported speech: 'The teacher said to the students, "Complete your assignments before Friday.'" [2]

◆ Answer: The teacher told the students to complete their assignments before Friday.

Q19. Rewrite the following sentence in passive voice: 'The municipality has repaired all the roads in the colony.' [2]

◆ Answer: All the roads in the colony have been repaired by the municipality.

Q20. Choose the correct option to complete the sentence: 'If I _____ you, I would apologise immediately.' (a) am (b) was (c) were (d) be [1]

◆ Answer: (c) were — This is a conditional Type 2 sentence expressing an imaginary situation. 'If I were you' is the grammatically correct subjunctive form.

Q21. Rearrange the following words/phrases to make a meaningful sentence: 'reading / of / the / is / one / most / benefits / improved / concentration' [1]

◆ Answer: One of the most benefits of reading is improved concentration. OR Improved concentration is one of the most benefits of reading.

SECTION C — LITERATURE TEXTBOOKS [40 Marks]

First Flight (Prose & Poetry) and Footprints Without Feet

Extract-Based Questions — Prose (Q22) [5 Marks]

Q22. Read the following extract and answer the questions: 'All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience.' (From: A Letter to God) (i) Who is Lencho and what situation has led him to think about God? [2]

◆ Answer: Lencho is a hardworking farmer whose entire crop of corn was destroyed by a devastating hailstorm. He has no money and his family faces starvation. With no one else to turn to, his only hope is God, leading him to think about writing a letter to God for financial help.

(ii) What does the extract reveal about Lencho's faith in God? [2]

◆ Answer: The extract reveals Lencho's absolute, unwavering, and childlike faith in God. He believes God is omniscient — that God sees everything, including the deepest secrets of one's conscience. His faith is so total that he considers God his only hope, without any doubt or hesitation.

(iii) Find a word from the extract that means 'moral sense of right and wrong'. [1]

◆ Answer: Conscience

Extract-Based Questions — Poetry (Q23) [5 Marks]

Q23. Read the following extract and answer the questions: 'I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong, I shun the love that lurks in all delight— The love of thee is light and grief and night.' (From: For Anne Gregory — W.B. Yeats) (i) Why does the speaker say 'I must not think of thee'? [2]

◆ Answer: The speaker says this because thinking of Anne Gregory fills him with deep longing and sorrow. Her beauty is irresistible, yet the love it inspires brings grief and emotional pain. He tries to discipline himself to stop thinking of her because such love is not based on the inner soul but on physical beauty, which is transient.

(ii) Identify the poetic device used in 'love of thee is light and grief and night'. [2]

◆ Answer: The poetic device used is Paradox / Oxymoron — 'light' and 'night' are contradictory images placed together. It is also an example of Imagery, combining visual and emotional experiences to show that love brings both joy (light) and sorrow (night/grief).

(iii) What does 'night' symbolise in the extract? [1]

◆ Answer: 'Night' symbolises darkness, sorrow, grief, and hopelessness — the emotional pain that the speaker experiences because of his love for Anne Gregory.

Short Answer Questions — First Flight (Q24–Q27) [2 Marks each]

Q24. What does Nelson Mandela say about the 'twin obligations' every man has? (Long Walk to Freedom) [2]

◆ Answer: Mandela says every man has twin obligations — first to his family (parents, wife, and children), and second to his people, his community, and his country. In a free society, people can fulfil both. But in apartheid South Africa, a black man who tried to fulfil his duty to his community was punished and prevented from fulfilling his duty to his family.

Q25. Why did the young seagull's family finally leave him alone on the ledge? (Two Stories About Flying) [2]

◆ Answer: The young seagull's family left him alone on the ledge and even threatened and scolded him to force him to overcome his fear of flying. They called to him, threatened to let him starve, and his mother tantalised him with food just out of reach to compel him to fly. Eventually they left him alone, hoping hunger and loneliness would force him to take the plunge.

Q26. Why does Anne Frank say she wants 'a true friend' even though she has loving parents and thirty friends? (From the Diary of Anne Frank) [2]

◆ Answer: Anne says she wants a true friend because, despite having loving parents and many acquaintances, she has no one with whom she can share her deepest thoughts, feelings, and secrets without fear of being misunderstood or judged. She feels emotionally lonely and creates the diary 'Kitty' as her imaginary confidante.

Q27. Why did Wanda Petronski say she had a hundred dresses? Was she lying? (The Hundred Dresses – I) [2]

◆ Answer: Wanda said she had a hundred dresses because she had actually created a hundred beautiful dress designs through her drawings. She was not lying — she was telling the truth, but in a way that others could not understand. Her hundred dresses existed as artistic creations, not as physical garments in her closet.

Short Answer Questions — Footprints Without Feet (Q28–Q30) [2–3 Marks each]

Q28. What was Griffin's first 'experiment' in London? Why was it unsuccessful? (Footprints Without Feet) [3]

◆ Answer: Griffin's first experiment in London was to walk the streets of London in an invisible state. However, it was January and bitterly cold, so he suffered greatly from the cold without clothes. He was forced to slip into a large London store to warm himself. There he ate, drank, and put on warm clothes, but when morning came, he had to remove the clothes to become invisible again, leaving him cold and vulnerable once more.

Q29. Why did the landlord of the inn at Iping find Kemp's description of Griffin useful? (Footprints Without Feet) [2]

◆ Answer: The landlord had been robbed by Griffin, who had mysteriously appeared and disappeared. When Kemp provided a description of Griffin — an albino, medium height, with an unusual accent — it helped the landlord understand who had robbed him and gave the police a lead to track Griffin down.

Q30. How does the story 'The Hack Driver' reveal that appearances can be deceptive? [3]

◆ Answer: In 'The Hack Driver', the narrator is deceived by Oliver Lutkins (Bill), who appears to be a simple, friendly, helpful hack driver. The narrator trusts Bill completely and spends an entire day searching for Lutkins with Bill's help. He does not realise that Bill IS Lutkins himself. The next day, an acquaintance identifies Lutkins/Bill, revealing how easily a likeable, charming exterior can hide a deceptive identity.

Long Answer Questions (Q31–Q32) [6 Marks each — internal choice]

Q31(a). 'The postmaster's action in A Letter to God shows that even small acts of kindness can preserve someone's faith.' Discuss this statement with reference to the story. [6]

◆ Answer: The postmaster in 'A Letter to God' displays extraordinary kindness and empathy when he reads Lencho's letter addressed to God asking for 100 pesos. Rather than laughing at what might seem like a foolish act, he is deeply moved by Lencho's simple, unwavering faith in God. He understands that if Lencho receives no response, his faith will be shattered, which would be a profound loss. The postmaster therefore takes practical action — he approaches his employees and friends, requests donations, and even contributes from his own salary. He manages to collect 70 pesos, places them in an envelope, and signs it 'God'. This small act of collective generosity preserves Lencho's faith entirely. Lencho never doubts that the money came from God. Even when he finds only 70 pesos instead of 100, his faith in God remains intact — he simply blames the 'dishonest' post office employees. The irony here is profound: the very people who helped him are the ones he suspects. Yet the postmaster's action succeeded in its real purpose — Lencho's faith was preserved. The story teaches us that kindness does not require recognition or reward. The postmaster knew Lencho might never discover the truth and might even be ungrateful, yet he helped anyway. Such selfless acts, however small, can have a profound impact on human lives and beliefs.

Q31(b). (Alternative) Nelson Mandela says 'the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed.' What does he mean by this? Do you agree? Explain. [6]

◆ Answer: Nelson Mandela, in his inauguration speech, makes a profound philosophical point about freedom. He argues that apartheid dehumanised not only its victims — the black South Africans who were oppressed — but also its perpetrators — the white South Africans who enforced oppression. The oppressors, Mandela explains, were enslaved by their own hatred, prejudice, and fear. A person who denies others their humanity cannot be fully human themselves. They are imprisoned by their own cruelty. Therefore, true liberation must free both the oppressed from chains of servitude and the oppressor from chains of prejudice and hatred. Mandela's vision of freedom is total and inclusive — it leaves no one behind. He believed that a society where only some are free is not truly free at all. Yes, this statement is absolutely true and profound. History shows that societies built on oppression become morally corrupt. The oppressors live in fear of retribution, cannot engage genuinely with those they oppress, and must constantly maintain systems of injustice at great moral and social cost. Their own freedom of conscience, expression, and humanity is compromised. Mandela's greatness lay in extending his vision of liberation to include even those who had imprisoned him — a truly magnanimous and wise perspective.

Q32(a). The story 'Bholi' (Footprints Without Feet) shows how education can transform a person's life and give them confidence to stand up for themselves. Discuss. [6]

◆ Answer: 'Bholi' is the story of Sulekha, nicknamed Bholi ('a simpleton'), a girl who stammers, has pockmarks on her face, and is considered the least intelligent child in her family. She grows up thinking of herself as worthless. Her life changes when she is sent to school — something that happens almost accidentally, as her parents think no one will marry her anyway. At school, Bholi encounters a kind, patient teacher who does not laugh at her stammer or her appearance. Instead, the teacher encourages her gently, gives her a book with colourful pictures, and helps her speak with confidence. This simple act of compassion and inclusion transforms Bholi. Education gives her knowledge, confidence, and a sense of self-worth. The transformation culminates in the most dramatic moment of the story — at her wedding. When Bishamber demands a dowry of five thousand rupees despite having agreed otherwise, Bholi refuses to marry him. She stands in front of the entire community, sheds her veil, and firmly declines, saying she will not marry a coward and a greedy man. This is a remarkable act of courage for a girl who was once too afraid to speak. Her father, initially shamed, ultimately understands and supports her. Education did not merely teach Bholi to read — it taught her to respect herself, to understand right from wrong, and to have the courage to act on that understanding.

Q32(b). (Alternative) Describe the character of Valli in 'Madam Rides the Bus'. How does her bus journey change her understanding of life? [6]

◆ Answer: Valli (Valliammai) is an eight-year-old Tamil girl who is curious, imaginative, determined, and independent beyond her years. She lives in a small village and has no outdoor playmates. Her world consists largely of watching the street from her doorway, and the bus that passes between her village and the town becomes the focus of her dreams. Valli's character is remarkable for a child — she plans her adventure with meticulous precision, saving every coin for months, resisting all temptations, and calculating the exact timings so she can travel without her mother's knowledge. She is also proud and refuses to be treated as a child, responding curtly to adult strangers who try to pamper or advise her. Her journey to town is filled with joy — the moving bus, the landscape, the funny cow running ahead, the conductor calling her 'Madam'. She feels grown-up and proud of her achievement. However, the return journey changes everything. Valli sees the same cow that had been so lively and playful lying dead on the road, struck by a vehicle. The sight of death — sudden, random, irreversible — strips the joy from her world. She refuses to look out the window anymore. She has encountered one of life's most profound truths: all living things are mortal. Life and death coexist at every moment. This is Valli's loss of innocence — she gains a new, more complex understanding of life. Though she returns home safely and keeps her secret, she is subtly, permanently changed.