

CBSE BOARD EXAMINATION 2025

CLASS X — ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (Code 184)

SET 3 | Set Code: 2/1/3 | 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) Read instructions carefully. (iii) Do not exceed the word limit.

SECTION A — READING SKILLS [20 Marks]

Read the passages carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1 (Q1–Q7) — Discursive Passage [10 Marks]

In the 21st century, mental health has emerged as one of the most pressing global health concerns. According to the World Health Organisation, approximately one in eight people worldwide live with a mental disorder. Depression is now the leading cause of disability globally, yet mental health services remain severely underfunded. High-income countries spend, on average, 5.1% of their health budgets on mental health; low-income countries spend less than 1%. The consequences of this neglect are devastating. Untreated mental illness costs the global economy \$1 trillion every year in lost productivity. Young people are disproportionately affected. Nearly half of all mental disorders begin before the age of 14, yet most countries have only one child psychiatrist for every one to four million people. Schools are often the first place where mental health issues become visible, yet teachers rarely receive training to identify and support struggling students. The stigma attached to mental illness is another major obstacle. In many societies, admitting to a mental health problem is considered a sign of weakness or a cause for shame. This prevents countless individuals from seeking help. A 2022 survey in India found that 70% of young people experiencing mental health problems did not seek help because they feared judgement from family and friends. Social media is a double-edged sword. On one hand, online communities can provide vital support and reduce isolation for individuals who feel alone in their struggles. On the other hand, research consistently shows that excessive use of social media is associated with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and poor self-image, particularly among adolescent girls. Experts argue that addressing mental health requires a multi-pronged approach: increased government funding, destigmatisation campaigns, integration of mental health support into school curricula, and greater investment in community-based care. Mental health, experts stress, is not a luxury — it is a fundamental human right.

Answer the following questions based on Passage 1:

Q1. What does the WHO say about the number of people affected by mental disorders globally?

[1]

◆ Answer: According to the WHO, approximately one in eight people worldwide live with a mental disorder.

Q2. What is the economic cost of untreated mental illness globally? [1]

◆ Answer: Untreated mental illness costs the global economy \$1 trillion every year in lost productivity.

Q3. Why is mental health stigma described as 'a major obstacle'? Use evidence from the passage. [2]

◆ Answer: Mental health stigma is a major obstacle because it prevents people from seeking the help they need. Many individuals fear being judged or shamed. Evidence: A 2022 India survey found that 70% of young people experiencing mental health problems did not seek help because they feared judgement from family and friends.

Q4. How is social media described as a 'double-edged sword'? [2]

◆ Answer: Social media is 'double-edged' because it has both positive and negative effects on mental health. Positively, online communities can provide vital support and reduce isolation for those who feel alone. Negatively, research shows that excessive social media use is associated with increased anxiety, depression, and poor self-image — especially among adolescent girls. Thus it both helps and harms.

Q5. List any three measures the passage suggests for addressing the mental health crisis. [2]

◆ Answer: (i) Increased government funding for mental health services; (ii) Destigmatisation campaigns to remove shame and fear; (iii) Integration of mental health support into school curricula; (iv) Greater investment in community-based care. (Any three)

Q6. What does 'disproportionately' mean as used in the passage? [1]

◆ Answer: 'Disproportionately' means to a greater degree than is fair or expected relative to the whole — here, young people are affected by mental disorders to an extent that is larger than their share of the population would suggest.

Q7. Why do experts describe mental health as 'a fundamental human right'? [1]

◆ Answer: Experts describe mental health as a fundamental human right because well-being — including mental well-being — is essential for a person to live with dignity, participate in society, and exercise other rights. Neglecting mental health is therefore a form of deprivation of a basic right, not merely a health issue.

Passage 2 (Q8–Q13) — Case-Based Passage [10 Marks]

The following data shows the career aspirations of Class X students surveyed in 2024 across urban and rural areas in India: Career Choice | Urban Students | Rural Students Engineering/Tech | 38% | 22% Medicine | 24% | 19% Government Service | 11% | 31% Arts/Design/Media | 14% | 5% Agriculture | 2% | 12% Others | 11% | 11% The survey was conducted among 5,000 students — 2,500 urban and 2,500 rural. Respondents were also asked what most influenced their career choice: 48% said family expectations, 27% said personal interest, 16% said salary potential, and 9% said peer influence. Guidance counsellors who analysed the data noted that rural students showed a markedly higher preference for stable, government-assured employment, reflecting concerns about economic security. Urban students, with greater exposure to technology and private sector opportunities, showed stronger interest in Engineering/Tech and creative fields. The counsellors recommended that schools in both settings provide exposure to diverse career options through workshops, mentorship programmes, and industry visits, so that aspirations are shaped by informed choice rather than limited awareness or social pressure.

Q8. Which career choice is most popular among urban students? How does it compare to rural students? [2]

◆ Answer: Engineering/Technology is most popular among urban students at 38%. In comparison, only 22% of rural students choose this field — a difference of 16 percentage points, reflecting

urban students' greater exposure to the technology sector and private-sector opportunities.

Q9. What does the high preference for Government Service among rural students (31%) suggest? [2]

◆ Answer: The high preference for Government Service among rural students suggests a strong desire for economic security and job stability. Rural students, facing greater economic uncertainty and fewer private-sector opportunities, view government employment as a reliable, steady career. This reflects practical concerns about financial security rather than a lack of ambition.

Q10. What single factor most influences students' career choices according to the survey? [1]

◆ Answer: Family expectations most influence students' career choices, cited by 48% of respondents — nearly half the students surveyed.

Q11. Only 2% of urban students prefer Agriculture as a career. What might explain this? [2]

◆ Answer: The extremely low interest in Agriculture among urban students (2%) can be attributed to: (i) Urban students' limited exposure to and knowledge of agricultural work; (ii) The perception of farming as a low-status, low-income profession; (iii) Greater awareness of higher-paying sectors like technology and medicine; and (iv) Urban environments offering very few opportunities to observe or practise farming.

Q12. What do the guidance counsellors recommend and why? [2]

◆ Answer: The guidance counsellors recommend that schools in both urban and rural settings provide exposure to diverse career options through workshops, mentorship programmes, and industry visits. The reason is to ensure that students' career aspirations are shaped by informed, broad awareness rather than by limited knowledge, family pressure, or social expectations alone.

Q13. Suggest a suitable title for the data and passage. [1]

◆ Answer: 'What Class X Students Want to Become: Career Aspirations Across Urban and Rural India' OR 'Dreaming Different: Career Choices of Indian Students in 2024'.

SECTION B — WRITING SKILLS AND GRAMMAR [20 Marks]

Q14. Writing Task [5 Marks each — attempt either 14(a) or 14(b)]

Q14(a). You are Kavya Iyer, a student of Class X at Sunrise International School, Chennai. Write a letter to the Municipal Commissioner of your city drawing attention to the problem of waterlogging in your residential area during the monsoon season. Describe the problems caused and suggest measures to address them. [5]

◆ Answer: Sunrise International School Chennai 15 February 2025
The Municipal Commissioner
Chennai Municipal Corporation Chennai Sub: Persistent Waterlogging in T. Nagar Residential Colony — Request for Urgent Action
Respected Sir/Madam, I am Kavya Iyer, a student residing at 12, Gandhi Street, T. Nagar, Chennai. Through this letter, I wish to draw your urgent attention to the severe waterlogging that has plagued our colony every monsoon season for the past three years. Even moderate rainfall causes knee-deep water stagnation in our lanes for days. This has led to: (i) Breeding of mosquitoes causing dengue and malaria outbreaks; (ii) Damage to property, vehicles, and household goods; (iii) Difficulty in movement for elderly residents and schoolchildren;

(iv) Stench from stagnant water affecting health. I respectfully request that your office: (1) Urgently de-silt and widen the drainage channels in our area; (2) Install additional pumping stations; (3) Repair all potholes and raise road levels where needed. I trust that you will treat this as a priority matter. Yours sincerely Kavya Iyer

Q14(b). Write an analytical paragraph based on the data: Causes of air pollution in Indian cities — Vehicles: 40%, Industry: 30%, Construction dust: 20%, Crop burning: 10%. [5]

◆ Answer: The data on the causes of air pollution in Indian cities presents a clear picture of the dominant sources of urban air contamination. Vehicular emissions are by far the largest contributor at 40%, which is hardly surprising given the exponential growth of private cars and two-wheelers in Indian cities and the continued prevalence of older, more polluting vehicles on the roads. Industrial emissions account for the second largest share at 30%, reflecting India's rapid industrialisation and the challenges of enforcing emission standards for factories. Together, vehicles and industry are responsible for 70% of urban air pollution, indicating that any serious attempt to address the problem must focus primarily on these two sources. Construction dust contributes 20% — a significant share given the scale of infrastructure development across Indian cities. Crop burning, at 10%, though the smallest contributor in this dataset, is particularly damaging because it occurs seasonally and in large volumes, causing acute pollution events that can raise AQI levels to hazardous levels within days. The data suggests that policy interventions must be multi-sectoral: promoting electric vehicles and public transport, enforcing industrial pollution norms, implementing dust-suppression measures at construction sites, and offering farmers viable alternatives to stubble burning.

Grammar (Q15–Q21) [10 Marks]

Q15. Fill in the blank with the correct form: 'By 2030, scientists _____ (develop) a cure for many currently incurable diseases.' [1]

◆ Answer: will have developed — Future Perfect Tense is used to express an action that will be completed by a specified future time.

Q16. Choose the correct option to complete the sentence: 'Each of the students _____ required to submit a project. (a) are (b) were (c) is (d) have been [1]

◆ Answer: (c) is — 'Each' takes a singular verb. 'Each of the students is required...'

Q17. Identify and correct the error: 'The principal along with all the teachers were present at the ceremony.' [1]

◆ Answer: Error: 'were'. Correction: 'The principal along with all the teachers was present at the ceremony.' When the subject is joined by 'along with', the verb agrees with the main subject ('the principal'), which is singular.

Q18. Rewrite in reported speech: 'The doctor advised the patient, "You must take complete rest for a week."' [2]

◆ Answer: The doctor advised the patient that he/she must take complete rest for a week. (OR: The doctor told the patient to take complete rest for a week.)

Q19. Rewrite in passive voice: 'The committee will announce the results next Monday.' [2]

◆ Answer: The results will be announced by the committee next Monday.

Q20. Fill in the blank: 'You _____ not smoke in a public place. It is against the law.' (a) could (b) would (c) must (d) might [1]

◆ Answer: (c) must — 'Must' expresses a strong obligation or legal prohibition, which is appropriate here since the sentence refers to a law.

Q21. Rearrange to form a meaningful sentence: 'is / the / of / key / regular / to / exercise / good / health' [1]

◆ Answer: Regular exercise is the key to good health.

SECTION C — LITERATURE TEXTBOOKS [40 Marks]

Extract-Based — Prose (Q22) [5 Marks]

Q22. Read the extract: 'Valli stood holding the bar of her seat. Her hair was all in a tangle, and there was some dirt on her dress. Now as she saw the crumpled, unmoving form of the young cow, she had a sudden feeling of sadness.' (From: Madam Rides the Bus) (i) Why does Valli feel sad at this moment? What had happened to the cow? [2]

◆ Answer: Valli feels sad because she sees the young cow lying crumpled and unmoving on the road — it has been killed, most likely struck by a fast-moving vehicle. This is the same cow that had been running playfully and joyfully in front of the bus during Valli's journey to town, making everyone laugh. Seeing it dead now fills Valli with sudden, unexpected grief.

(ii) What does Valli's sadness signify about her inner journey? [2]

◆ Answer: Valli's sadness marks a pivotal moment of emotional and psychological growth — her loss of innocence. The joyful, adventurous eight-year-old who boarded the bus full of excitement now confronts the sudden, irreversible reality of death. She learns that life and death coexist; that something full of energy and life can be gone in an instant. Her inner journey shifts from childhood excitement to a more complex, adult understanding of the world's sadness.

(iii) Find a word from the extract meaning 'in a crushed, irregular shape'. [1]

◆ Answer: Crumpled

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

Q23. Read the extract: 'After great pain, a formal feeling comes— The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs— The stiff Heart questions, was it He, that bore, And Yesterday, or Centuries before?' (From: The Trees — or a poem in the prescribed text) (Alternatively, for the poem 'Amanda!' by Robin Klein:) 'Don't bite your nails, Amanda! Don't hunch your shoulders, Amanda! Stop that slouching and sit up straight, Amanda!' (From: Amanda! — Robin Klein) (i) What is the speaker doing in the extract from 'Amanda!'? [2]

◆ Answer: The speaker (a parent or adult) is repeatedly nagging and correcting Amanda's behaviour — telling her not to bite her nails, not to hunch her shoulders, and to sit up straight. The speaker issues a series of commands, each punctuated with Amanda's name, creating a tone of constant, impatient criticism.

(ii) What does the repetition of Amanda's name at the end of each line achieve? [2]

◆ Answer: The repetition of 'Amanda' at the end of each command creates a sense of relentless nagging — it emphasises how incessant and overbearing the instructions are. It also creates a rhythm that mirrors the monotonous, never-ending nature of the instructions that Amanda receives. The effect is both humorous and poignant, making the reader sympathise with Amanda's desire to escape.

(iii) What literary device is used in the repeated commands in the extract? [1]

◆ Answer: Anaphora — the repetition of the imperative 'Don't' at the beginning of lines. Also Repetition of the name 'Amanda' at the end of each line.

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

Q24. What does the chapter 'Glimpses of India' reveal about the importance of regional traditions? [2]

◆ Answer: The chapter reveals that regional traditions — Goan bread-making, Coorgi martial culture, and Assamese tea cultivation — are deeply embedded in the identity and livelihoods of communities. These traditions connect people to their history, sustain local economies, and make India's cultural landscape rich and diverse. The chapter celebrates how traditions, even when influenced by external cultures (like Portuguese influence in Goa), become uniquely Indian over time.

Q25. How did Mijbil show his intelligence in his play with a rubber ball? (Mijbil the Otter) [2]

◆ Answer: Mijbil showed remarkable intelligence by discovering on his own that if he placed a rubber ball on the sloping rim of the bathtub, it would roll down. He then devised his own game — placing the ball at different positions on the slope to get different outcomes, and adjusting his technique to improve results. He spent hours repeating this self-invented game, demonstrating problem-solving ability, persistence, and creativity.

Q26. Why did the young seagull's mother use food to overcome his fear? What does this tell us about overcoming fear? [2]

◆ Answer: The mother used food because the young seagull was starving and his hunger was strong enough to overcome his paralysing fear. By holding fish just out of reach and forcing him to lean forward and eventually dive for it, she triggered his survival instinct. This teaches us that sometimes fear can only be overcome through action triggered by a pressing need — that the first step, however frightening, often unlocks abilities we did not know we had.

Q27. How does the title 'A Letter to God' contain irony? [2]

◆ Answer: The title is ironic on multiple levels. Lencho literally writes a letter to God — which in itself is an act of deep faith and naivety. The irony is that the letter is answered not by God but by the very humans Lencho distrusts — the post office employees. Further, Lencho receives the money and still calls the helpers 'a bunch of crooks', ironically directing his suspicion at the very people who acted as God's instruments to help him.

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

Q28. What are the qualities of a good scientist according to 'The Making of a Scientist'? [3]

◆ Answer: According to the story, a good scientist must have: (i) Curiosity — Richard Ebright's curiosity about nature began in childhood with butterfly collection; (ii) Persistence — he continued his research despite failures and setbacks; (iii) Willingness to learn from failure — his experiments led to new questions; (iv) Thinking beyond convention — his discovery of a new chemical theory came from looking at things differently; (v) Competitive spirit channelled productively — his science fair projects drove him to push boundaries.

Q29. Why does Griffin keep changing his hiding places throughout 'Footprints Without Feet'?
[2]

◆ Answer: Griffin keeps changing hiding places because his invisibility, while giving him freedom from detection, leaves him vulnerable — he cannot wear clothes or carry possessions without them becoming visible. He is also constantly exposed as a criminal when he steals food, clothing, and money. In Iping, he is recognised and pursued. His violent behaviour and bizarre appearances make him a hunted figure, forcing him to move constantly to avoid arrest.

Q30. In 'The Necklace', how does one moment of pride and vanity change Matilda's entire life?
[3]

◆ Answer: Matilda Loisel borrows a diamond necklace from her friend Madame Forestier to wear to a party, unable to bear the thought of appearing poorly dressed. She loses the necklace and, too proud to confess the truth, she and her husband secretly buy a replacement for 36,000 francs — plunging them into crushing debt. To repay the debt, Matilda gives up her comfortable life, takes in lodgers, does heavy domestic work, and spends ten years in poverty. When she finally meets Madame Forestier and learns the original necklace was fake (worth only 500 francs), the tragic irony becomes clear. One night of vanity cost her a decade of her life. The story is a powerful lesson about how a single moment of false pride can have irreversible and devastating consequences.

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

Q31(a). 'Lencho's faith in God is admirable, but his lack of faith in humans is deeply troubling.' Discuss this with examples from A Letter to God. [6]

◆ Answer: The story 'A Letter to God' presents a fascinating and paradoxical portrait of Lencho's faith. His belief in God is extraordinary in its absoluteness and simplicity. When the hailstorm destroys his entire harvest, he does not despair or give up — he simply writes a letter to God, with the unwavering confidence that God will provide. This level of faith is genuinely admirable. It speaks to a pure, unquestioning spirituality that most people never achieve. However, Lencho's faith in humans is non-existent, and this is deeply troubling. When the postmaster and postal employees — moved by Lencho's innocent faith — collect money from their own pockets and send him 70 pesos in God's name, Lencho's reaction is shocking in its ingratitude and unfairness. He counts the money, finds it short of 100 pesos, and immediately concludes that the post office employees stole the remainder. He calls them 'a bunch of crooks' without a shred of evidence. He writes another letter to God asking him to not send the money through the mail next time. The irony is profound: the very humans he despises were the ones who acted as God's hands to help him. His complete trust in an unseen God and utter distrust of visible, kind humans reveals a troubling blind spot. The story invites us to ask: is faith truly complete if it excludes humanity? True wisdom perhaps lies in recognising that the goodness of God can be experienced through the goodness of people.

Q32(a). Kisa Gotami's journey in 'The Sermon at Benares' is not just physical but deeply spiritual. Discuss how her experience changes her understanding of life and death. [6]

◆ Answer: Kisa Gotami's journey in 'The Sermon at Benares' is one of the most powerful examples of experiential learning in literature. She begins her journey in a state of desperate denial — her young son has died, but she refuses to accept his death. Carrying his body from house to house, begging for medicine to revive him, she appears to her neighbours to have lost her mind with grief. This denial is entirely human and understandable. When she reaches Buddha, he does not simply tell her that death is universal — such words, in her state of grief, would have been meaningless. Instead, he sends her on a journey to find mustard seeds from a house where no one has ever died. At first, Kisa Gotami approaches this task with hope, believing she will quickly find such a house. But as she visits home after home — all willing to give seeds but all having experienced death — her understanding gradually shifts. Each door she knocks becomes a mirror reflecting her own loss back through the lens of others' loss. By evening, exhausted, she understands what Buddha knew she would discover: that death is not a personal tragedy that has singled her out, but an absolute law of nature that applies to every living being without exception. She returns to Buddha transformed. She no longer asks for medicine; she asks for wisdom. She cremates her son and becomes Buddha's follower. Her journey — from grief-stricken denial, through a night of searching, to quiet acceptance — mirrors the universal human journey toward spiritual maturity. The story teaches that grief is natural, but clinging to loss prolongs suffering; true peace comes from accepting impermanence.