

Analysis of Pupil Performance

ISC Year 2018
Examination

Languages

ELECTIVE ENGLISH



Research Development and Consultancy Division

**Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations
New Delhi**

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FOREWORD

This document of the Analysis of Pupils' Performance at the ISC Year 12 and ICSE Year 10 Examination is one of its kind. It has grown and evolved over the years to provide feedback to schools in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in handling the examinations.

We commend the work of Mrs. Shilpi Gupta (Deputy Head) of the Research Development and Consultancy Division (RDCD) of the Council and her team, who have painstakingly prepared this analysis. We are grateful to the examiners who have contributed through their comments on the performance of the candidates under examination as well as for their suggestions to teachers and students for the effective transaction of the syllabus.

We hope the schools will find this document useful. We invite comments from schools on its utility and quality.

October 2018

**Gerry Arathoon
Chief Executive & Secretary**

The Council has been involved in the preparation of the ICSE and ISC Analysis of Pupil Performance documents since the year 1994. Over these years, these documents have facilitated the teaching-learning process by providing subject/ paper wise feedback to teachers regarding performance of students at the ICSE and ISC Examinations. With the aim of ensuring wider accessibility to all stakeholders, from the year 2014, the ICSE and the ISC documents have been made available on the Council's website www.cisce.org.

The documents include a detailed qualitative analysis of the performance of students in different subjects which comprises of examiners' comments on common errors made by candidates, topics found difficult or confusing, marking scheme for each answer and suggestions for teachers/ candidates.

In addition to a detailed qualitative analysis, the Analysis of Pupil Performance documents for the Examination Year 2018 have a component of a detailed quantitative analysis. For each subject dealt with in the document, both at the ICSE and the ISC levels, a detailed statistical analysis has been done, which has been presented in a simple user-friendly manner.

It is hoped that this document will not only enable teachers to understand how their students have performed with respect to other students who appeared for the ICSE/ISC Year 2018 Examinations, but also provide information on how they have performed within the Region or State, their performance as compared to other Regions or States, etc. It will also help develop a better understanding of the assessment/ evaluation process. This will help teachers in guiding their students more effectively and comprehensively so that students prepare for the ICSE/ ISC Examinations, with a better understanding of what is required from them.

The Analysis of Pupil Performance document for ICSE for the Examination Year 2018 covers the following subjects: English (English Language, Literature in English), Hindi, History, Civics and Geography (History and Civics, Geography), Mathematics, Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology), Commercial Studies, Economics, Computer Applications, Economic Applications, Commercial Applications.

Subjects covered in the ISC Analysis of Pupil Performance document for the Year 2018 include English (English Language and Literature in English), Hindi, Elective English, Physics (Theory), Chemistry (Theory), Biology (Theory), Mathematics, Computer Science, History, Political Science, Geography, Sociology, Psychology, Economics, Commerce, Accounts and Business Studies.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of all the ICSE and the ISC examiners who have been an integral part of this exercise, whose valuable inputs have helped put this document together.

I would also like to thank the RDCD team of, Dr. M.K. Gandhi, Dr. Manika Sharma, Mrs. Roshni George and Mrs. Mansi Guleria who have done a commendable job in preparing this document.

October 2018

Shilpi Gupta
Deputy Head - RDCD

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INTRODUCTION

This document aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the performance of candidates in the subject. It comprises of two sections, which provide Quantitative and Qualitative analysis results in terms of performance of candidates in the subject for the ISC Year 2018 Examination. The details of the Quantitative and the Qualitative analysis are given below.

Quantitative Analysis

This section provides a detailed statistical analysis of the following:

- Overall Performance of candidates in the subject (Statistics at a Glance)
- State wise Performance of Candidates
- Gender wise comparison of Overall Performance
- Region wise comparison of Performance
- Comparison of Region wise performance on the basis of Gender
- Comparison of performance in different Mark Ranges and comparison on the basis of Gender for the top and bottom ranges
- Comparison of performance in different Grade categories and comparison on the basis of Gender for the top and bottom grades

The data has been presented in the form of means, frequencies and bar graphs.

Understanding the tables

Each of the comparison tables shows N (Number of candidates), Mean Marks obtained, Standard Errors and t-values with the level of significance. For t-test, mean values compared with their standard errors indicate whether an observed difference is likely to be a true difference or whether it has occurred by chance. The t-test has been applied using a confidence level of 95%, which means that if a difference is marked as 'statistically significant' (with * mark, refer to t-value column of the table), the probability of the difference occurring by chance is less than 5%. In other words, we are 95% confident that the difference between the two values is true.

t-test has been used to observe significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, gender wise differences within regions (North, East, South and West), gender wise differences within marks ranges (Top and bottom ranges) and gender wise differences within grades awarded (Grade 1 and Grade 9) at the ISC Year 2018 Examination.

The analysed data has been depicted in a simple and user-friendly manner.

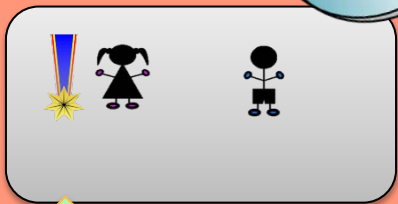
Given below is an example showing the comparison tables used in this section and the manner in which they should be interpreted.

Comparison on the basis of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SE	t-value
Girls	2,538	66.1	0.29	11.91*
Boys	1,051	60.1	0.42	

*Significant at 0.05 level

Girls performed significantly better than boys.



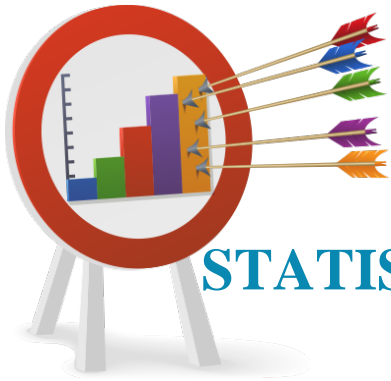
The results have also been depicted pictographically. In this case, the girls performed significantly better than the boys. This is depicted by the girl with a medal.

The table shows comparison between the performances of boys and girls in a particular subject. The t-value of 11.91 is significant at 0.05 level (mentioned below the table) with a mean of girls as 66.1 and that of boys as 60.1. It means that there is significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in the subject. The probability of this difference occurring by chance is less than 5%. The mean value of girls is higher than that of boys. It can be interpreted that girls are performing significantly better than boys.

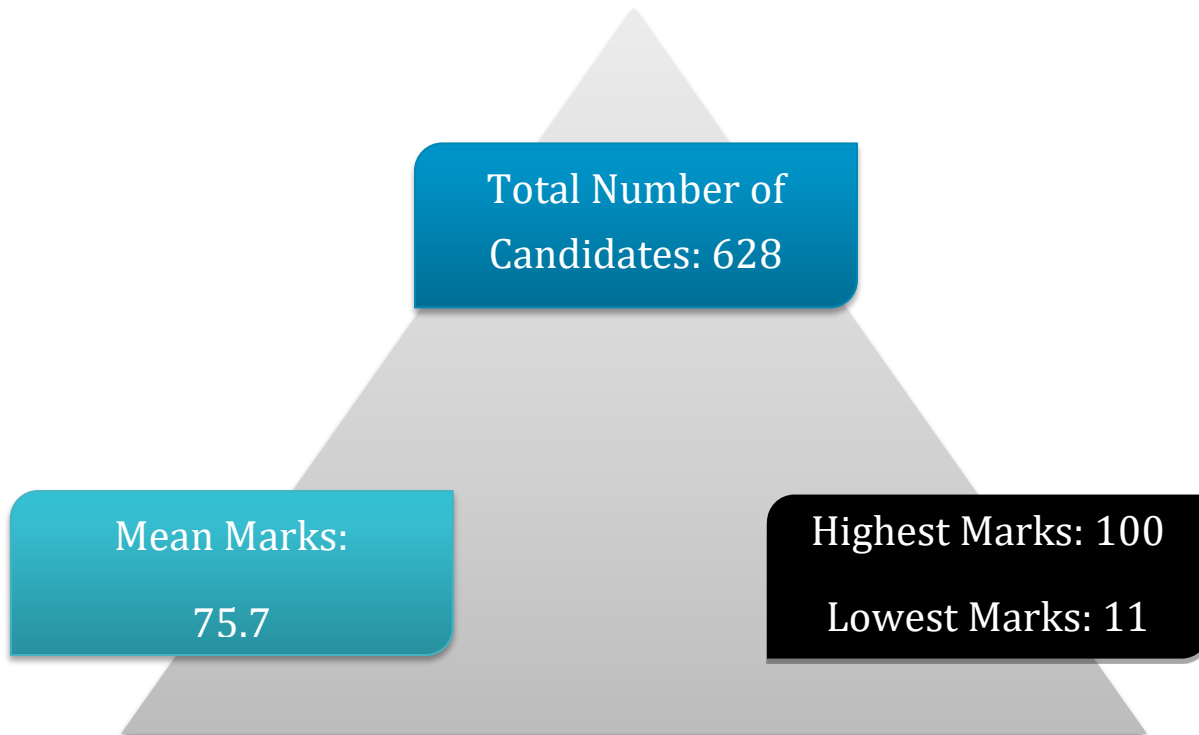
Qualitative Analysis

The purpose of the qualitative analysis is to provide insights into how candidates have performed in individual questions set in the question paper. This section is based on inputs provided by examiners from examination centres across the country. It comprises of question wise feedback on the performance of candidates in the form of *Comments of Examiners* on the common errors made by candidates along with *Suggestions for Teachers* to rectify/ reduce these errors. The *Marking Scheme* for each question has also been provided to help teachers understand the criteria used for marking. Topics in the question paper that were generally found to be difficult or confusing by candidates, have also been listed down, along with general suggestions for candidates on how to prepare for the examination/ perform better in the examination.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

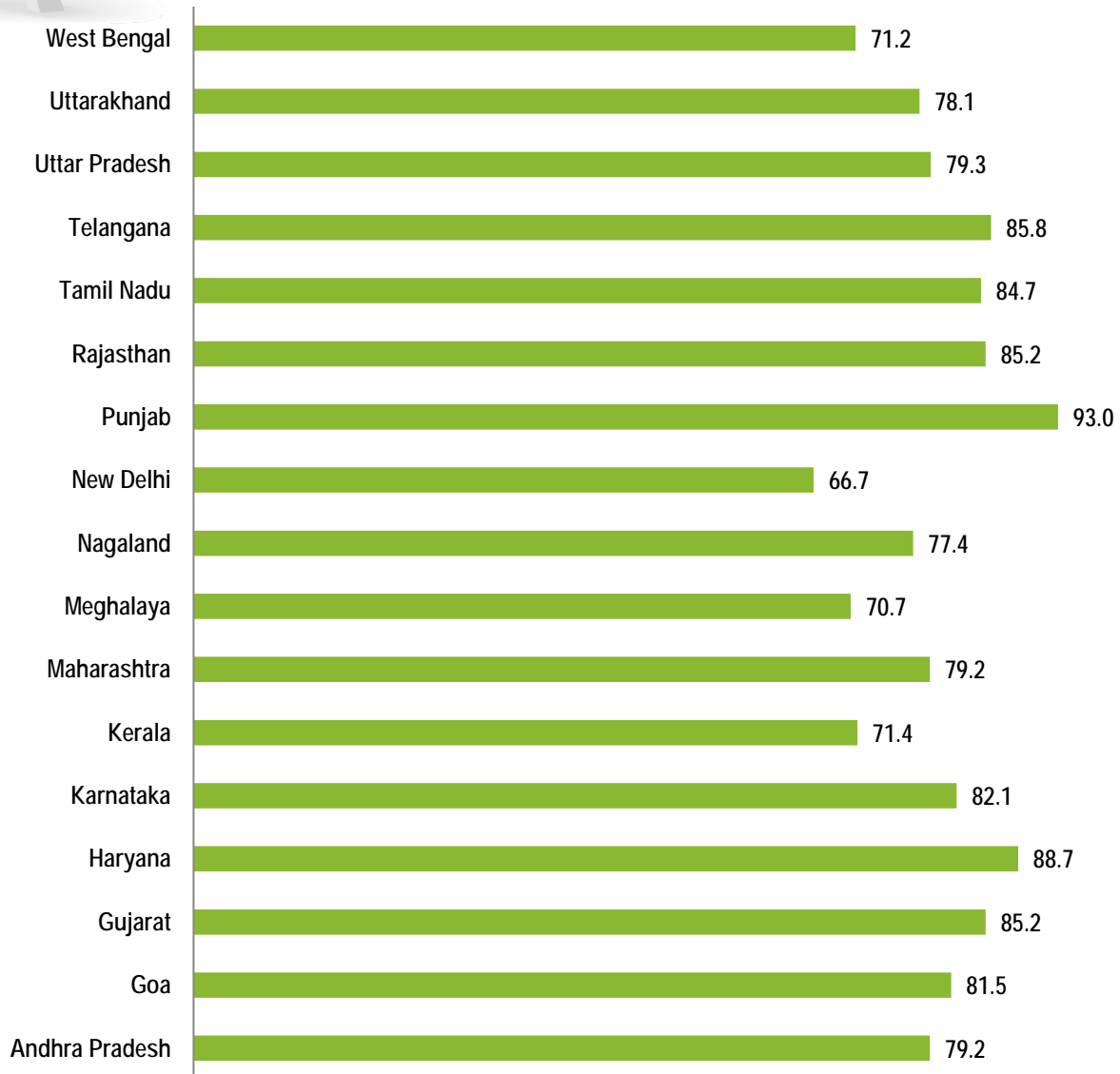


STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

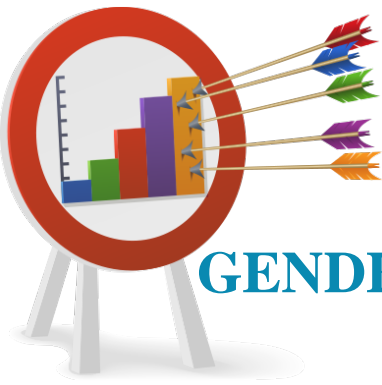




PERFORMANCE (STATE-WISE)



The State of Punjab secured highest mean marks.



GENDER-WISE COMPARISON



GIRLS

Mean Marks: 78.2

Number of
Candidates: 475



BOYS

Mean Marks: 67.9

Number of
Candidates: 153

Comparison on the basis of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SE	t-value
Girls	475	78.2	0.63	6.72*
Boys	153	67.9	1.40	

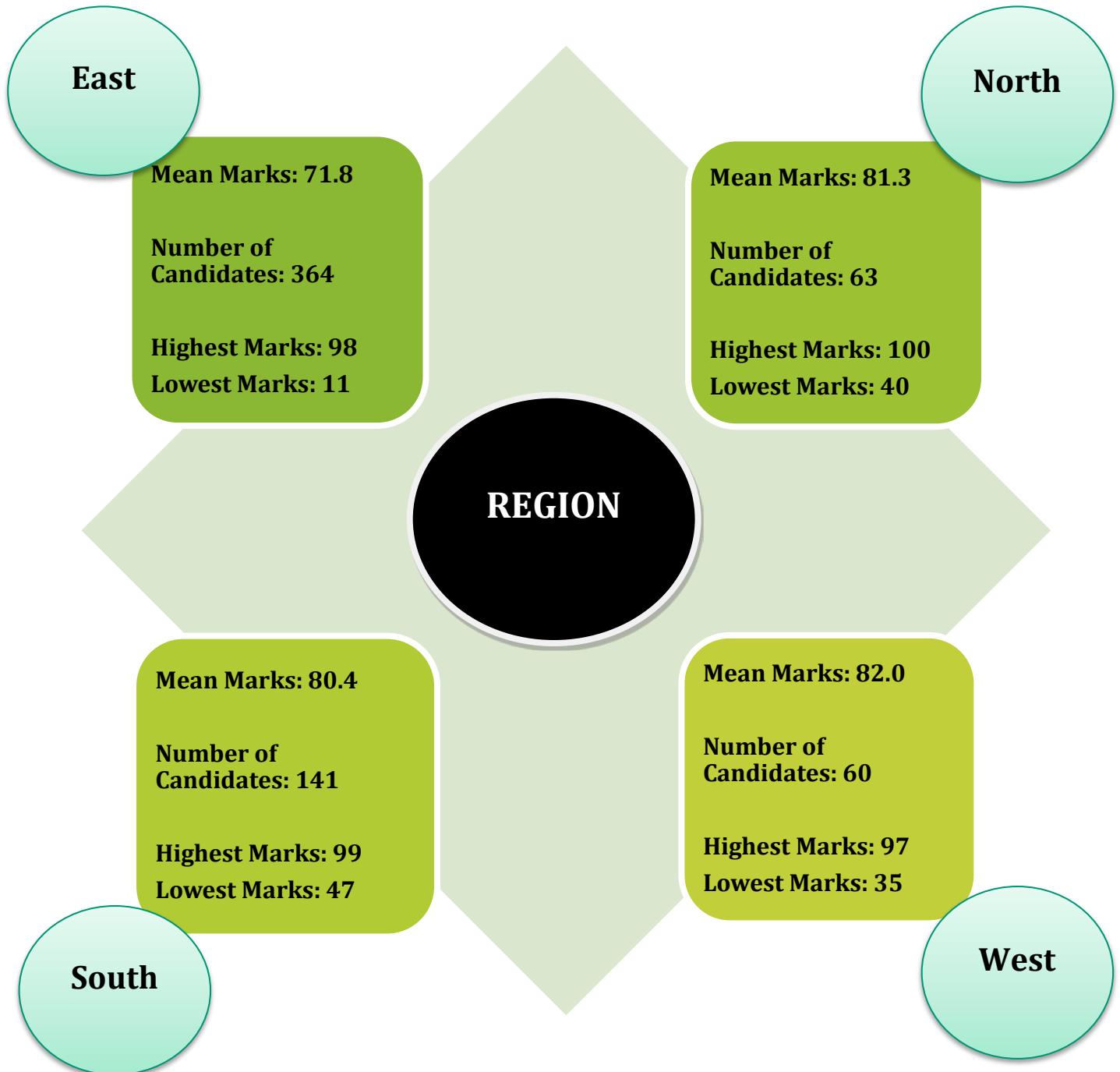
*Significant at 0.05 level

**Girls performed
significantly better than
boys.**

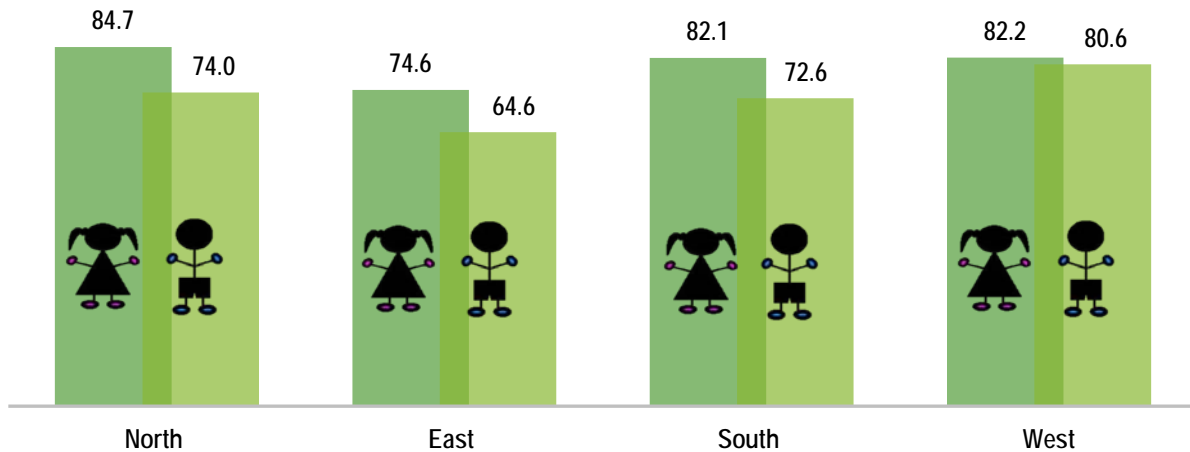




REGION-WISE COMPARISON



Mean Marks obtained by Boys and Girls-Region wise



Comparison on the basis of Gender within Region

Region	Gender	N	Mean	SE	t-value
North (N)	Girls	43	84.7	1.78	2.87*
	Boys	20	74.0	3.26	
East (E)	Girls	263	74.6	0.91	4.98*
	Boys	101	64.6	1.79	
South (S)	Girls	116	82.1	0.99	4.18*
	Boys	25	72.6	2.04	
West (W)	Girls	53	82.2	1.55	0.19
	Boys	7	80.6	8.54	

*Significant at 0.05 level

The performance of girls was significantly better than that of boys in the northern, eastern and southern region. In western region no significant difference was observed.

REGION (N, E, S)





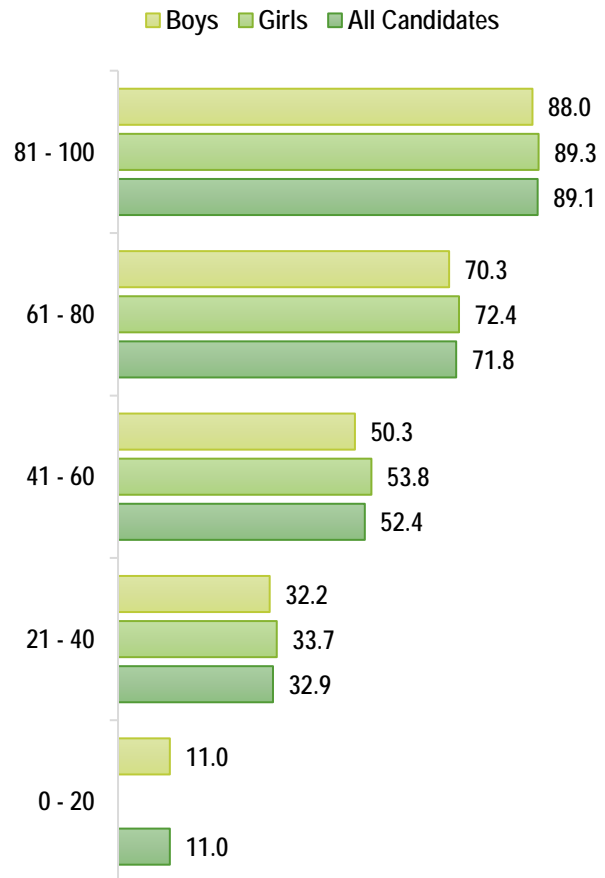
MARK RANGES : COMPARISON GENDER-WISE

Comparison on the basis of gender in top and bottom mark ranges

Marks Range	Gender	N	Mean	SE	t-value
Top Range (81-100)	Girls	229	89.3	0.35	1.50
	Boys	39	88.0	0.83	
Bottom Range (0-20)	Girls	0	0	0	-
	Boys	1	11.0	0	

Marks Range (81-100)

No significant difference was observed between the average performance of girls and boys.





GRADES AWARDED : COMPARISON GENDER-WISE

Comparison on the basis of gender in Grade 1 and Grade 9

Grades	Gender	N	Mean	SE	t-value
Grade 1	Girls	129	93.3	0.24	0.79
	Boys	18	92.8	0.61	
Grade 9	Girls	3	30.7	2.85	2.44*
	Boys	4	20.0	3.32	

*Significant at 0.05 level

Grade 1

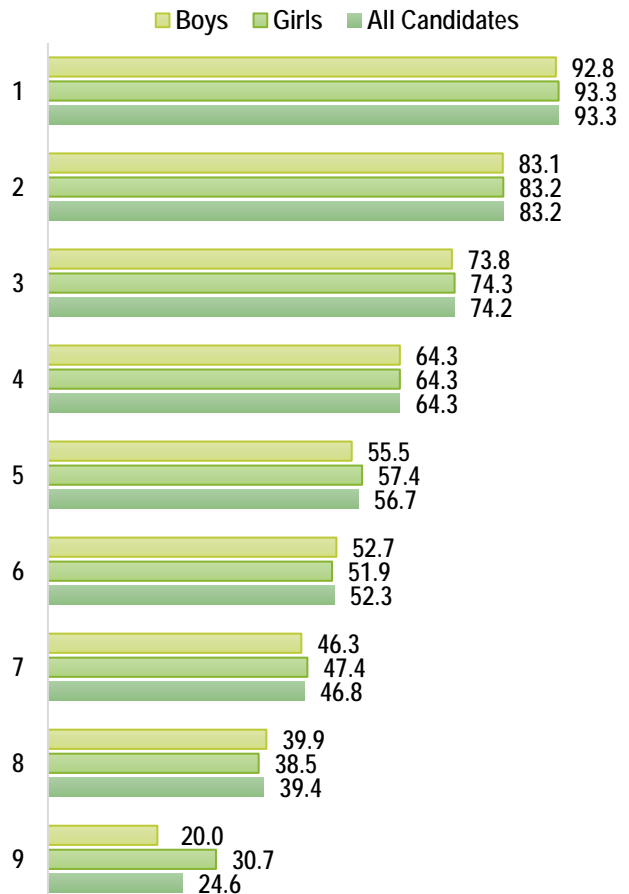
No significant difference was observed between the average performance of girls and boys.

Grade 9



Grade 9

The performance of girls was significantly better than that of boys in grade 9.



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Attempt **five** questions, covering at least **three** of the prescribed textbooks.

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD – Harper Lee

Question 1

Narrate what happened outside the Maycomb County Jail one evening when Tom Robinson was in a cell there. Comment on the significance of this incident in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

[20]

Comments of Examiners

Most candidates attempted this question well. Almost all candidates were able to handle the part about Scout and Cunningham. Some missed out the point about Atticus sitting alone under the light bulb (single-handed protection, courage), Atticus's warning the mob about the presence of Heck Tate and the response to this. Another common oversight was Tom Robinson's query at the end and the presence of Underwood guarding Atticus.

Some candidates confused this with the trial and gave a narration of the trial. A number of candidates misunderstood the question and narrated the trial, giving this incident as a brief introduction to that answer. While some candidates wrote a general essay on slavery.

Others gave a long introduction or story of the entire novel, with the result they glossed over what the question asked about the incident.

A few candidates forgot the second part of the question (significance) or did not adequately address the aspect of the growing up of the children, thus relating the incident to the novel being a bildungsroman. Those who addressed this part of question did well. Some candidates used the term 'negro' without the punctuation.

Suggestions for teachers

- Encourage students to focus on the content and every narrative detail in sequence for incident-based questions.
- While reading text in class, mark important points in sequence to ensure the narrative sequence is complete in answers.
- Analysis or critique should be linked to the narration and length of it should be in keeping with the balance suggested by the question.
- Give sufficient practice in reading and understanding a question and identifying the narration asked for. Specific textual referencing must be taught.
- Train students to write the long answer balanced in terms of content.

Factual inaccuracies or vagueness were observed in a number of answers – Atticus was reading a ‘book’ (the text says he folded his newspaper), ‘some’ cars came. A few candidates cooked up words spoken by characters or added details of anger not there in the novel.

The word ‘play’ instead of ‘novel’ was often written by candidates.

- Teach students to read and understand the question, and address it completely.
- With terms considered politically incorrect today, that are used in the novel for its time, advise candidates to use inverted commas to show special use or quote.
- Insist on factual accuracy and key specifics. Quotes or direct speech should be correct and relevant to the question, not chosen randomly or cooked up. E.g. the most frequently used quote about killing a mockingbird is less relevant here than Atticus’s, “Do you really think so?” if a candidate decides to quote.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 1

One evening Heck Tate and some others came to the Finches’ house to warn Atticus that Tom Robinson was being shifted to the Maycomb County Jail.

Once Tom Robinson was at the County Jail, after supper one evening Atticus told the children he was going out for a while. The children knew something was wrong when he took the car. **At about ten, Jem decided to follow him and agreed to take Scout and Dill along.**

On not finding Atticus in his office in the courthouse, the children went to the hideous, Gothic building that was the County Jail. **A solitary light was shining above the entrance, under which sat Atticus propped on an office chair. He was reading a newspaper** by the light of the bulb, oblivious of the night bugs that danced around his head. **The children stood quietly** at the corner, reluctant to disturb him. **Four cars approached** and stopped before the door. Atticus slowly folded the newspaper; he seemed to be expecting them. In ones and twos, men emerged from the cars and went up to where Atticus was sitting.

Atticus tried to pleasantly warn them that Heck Tate was around, but the men dismissed that possibility knowing that he was out on a snipe hunt. Atticus claimed he was aware of Heck Tate’s absence and that it changed things. **Scout recognised the menace in his silky “Do you really think so?” and ran towards him.** Instead of surprise, fear flashed across his face. Scout was dismayed to note that the men were perfect strangers to her.

Atticus was thrown off guard and **instructed Jem to take the children home. Jem was firm in his refusal.** When one of them tried to collar Jem, **Scout kicked him** causing him to move back in pain. She looked around the overall-clad sullen-faced men and finally **recognised Mr. Cunningham. She called out to him about his “entailment”.** When he did not respond, she **tried to remind him** of the

hickory nuts he had brought them and that she was his son Walter's class mate. Scout continued trying to make polite conversation about school and entailments, much to the **surprise of the other men** who stood with their mouths open. Finally, **Cunningham knelt by Scout and said he would convey her greetings to his son**. He then instructed the others to leave and **all the men got into the cars and drove away**.

Atticus leant against the wall. **A timid voice asked if "they" had gone. Another voice called out that the men would bother nobody. It was Mr. Underwood** who had had his gun trained on that spot all the while.

This incident highlights the racial bigotry in Maycomb as the men come together as a lynch mob to string up Tom Robinson even before the trial and its verdict. It brings to the fore Atticus's courage as he goes alone to protect his client single-handedly. Jem's bravery and stubbornness are equal to his father's as they stare at each other in "mutual defiance" and the boy reveals his maturity in refusing to leave his father alone in what is obviously a threatening situation. Atticus allows Dill to carry his chair for him, the honour being the only thing Dill asks for the entire time. As they walk back, Atticus ruffles Jem's hair in his "one gesture of affection". Contrasted to the mob is the solitary Underwood who is ready to protect Atticus and help him, indicating Maycomb is not all prejudice but has its decency as well. This is the same Underwood who writes a scathing editorial on the killing of mockingbirds later on. In the midst of such a grave situation, childhood innocence is reiterated through Scout's reaction and behaviour as she tries hard to follow Atticus's advice on conducting a polite conversation and actually saves the day through her innocent prattle.

(Any four points of significance, quotes to be given credit)

Question 2

Describe the character and role of Miss Maudie in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. [20]

Comments of Examiners

Many candidates could not distinguish between 'character' and 'role'.

Candidates scored well in bringing out Miss Maudie's character (her qualities with illustrations) but could not address what role she played in the novel as well. Many forgot her role in explaining the significance of the statement about killing a mockingbird.

Quote was mandatory and candidates got credit for the frequently used 'sin to kill a mockingbird' quote. However, there were some candidates who did not quote. In some cases, this was a well answered question delineating character, role, textual substantiation and relevant quotes. In other cases, unnecessary detailing was done of one incident or trait while the others were excluded.

Suggestions for teachers

- Discuss in class the qualities and traits that emerge in the novel of a character in it.
- Ask students to separately discuss how that character takes the plot forward, interacts with other characters and brings out themes for role.
- Give practice in how to select quotes and how to use them in given questions. Quotes must be placed within quotation marks to identify them as quotes and correctly attribute them to writer / character.
- Encourage balance in answers, planning answers to include entire character-role analysis rather than segments.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 2

Character:

Miss Maudie was, according to Scout, a **benign presence** in the neighbourhood.

She was **a widow, who worked in her flower beds in an old straw hat and men's overalls. She loved everything that grew in God's earth, even the weeds. She was fair and tolerant, disapproving of malicious gossip.**

Her speech was crisp. She **could be sharp-tongued** as when she gave a curt reply to the hypocritical and biased ladies at the Missionary Circle tea.

When she grinned, she revealed two-minute gold prongs clipped to her eye-teeth. She made the best cakes in the neighbourhood. She inspired faith in Jem and Scout: she had never told on them, had never played cat-and-mouse with them; she was not at all interested in their private lives.

When Miss Maudie's house caught fire, the whole of Maycomb came rushing to help carry furniture from Miss Maudie's house to the yard. **Even though the house was destroyed, Miss Maudie was cheerful.** She said she always wanted a smaller house and a bigger garden with more room for her azaleas, and her house was about the only thing she had, according to Atticus. Her kindness was not just for people but even for her plants - the probable cause of the fire was the fire she kept in the kitchen for her potted plants.

She barely thought of herself. With most of her possessions gone and her beloved yard destroyed, she still took a lively and cordial interest in Jem's and Scout's affairs. While her house was on fire, she was worrying about the neighbourhood- the fact that the whole neighbourhood could have gone up. She was especially worried about Mr Avery who would be in bed for a week. She talked about baking him a cake.

Role:

Jem and Scout considered Miss Maudie to be their friend

She satisfied Scout's curiosity with regard to whether Boo Radley was alive. She told Scout his name is Arthur and he was alive, because she hadn't seen him carried out yet.

She told Scout Arthur Radley stayed in the house because he did not want to come out. His father was a foot-washing Baptist but the stories the children had heard about Boo Radley were all made up- "three- fourths coloured folks and one-fourth Stephanie Crawford."

When the children had a question, they approached Miss Maudie. Atticus bought the children air rifles; he told them he wasn't interested in guns and urged them to shoot at tin cans in the backyard instead of shooting birds. He added they could shoot bluejays but not mockingbirds. It was a sin to kill a mockingbird. Scout asked Miss Maudie about it and she explained. Mockingbirds made music for them to enjoy; they didn't eat up people's gardens, or nest in corncribs, do anything but sing their hearts out for human beings. That's why it was a sin to kill a mockingbird. She reinforces the theme here.

Even with regard to their own father, they did not hesitate to ask Miss Maudie. In Scout's opinion, Atticus couldn't do anything. Miss Maudie told Scout there was life in him yet. Atticus was the best checker-player in Maycomb. Scout and Jem beat him at the game because he let them. Atticus could play the Jew's harp. However, Scout was unimpressed and rather embarrassed at her father's modest accomplishments.

When Atticus killed the mad-dog, the children were aghast. It is from Miss Maudie that they learn about “One-Shot Finch”. Miss Maudie asked Scout if she was still ashamed of her father. She asked Jem if he would change his opinion about his father now. She also told them why Atticus never talked about his accomplishments: He was civilised in his heart. Moreover, people in their right minds never took pride in their talents. Miss Maudie’s role here is of educating the children about people like Boo Radley, and also about their own father. She is responsible, to a very great extent in helping the children to discover their father and revise their low opinion of him.

She passed on moral values to the children. From the incident of her house burning down and her response to it, the children learnt what it meant not to be too attached to one’s material possessions, and to be brave and strong in the face of losing what one had. She stood for tolerance, understanding, fairness, justice, strength and loyalty as a friend. In her own way, she educated the children as much as Atticus did.

After Tom Robinson was pronounced guilty by the jury, Jem cried and told Atticus it wasn’t right. Later Dill told Jem and Scout of Miss Rachel’s reaction to the events at the court: “If Atticus Finch wants to butt his head against a stone wall it’s his head.” Later Miss Maudie called the children and gave them some cake to eat. The children understood it was her way of saying that as far as she was concerned, nothing had changed. She consoled Jem by telling him: “Things are never as bad as they seem. She told the children there were some men in this world who are born to do their unpleasant jobs. And Atticus was one of them. She pointed out to Jem that Judge Taylor had named Atticus to defend Tom for a good reason. Moreover, it was only Atticus who could keep a jury out so long in a case like that. This she thought was a small step towards change. Jem asked Atticus why people like them and Miss Maudie did not sit on juries. The children regarded Miss Maudie highly and thought she would do a fine job. Atticus told Jem Miss Maudie could not because she was a woman.

(The answer should discuss character traits and role distinctly, with quotes)

Question 3

With close reference to the text, illustrate how both good and evil exist in Maycomb.

[20]

Comments of Examiners

This was largely a well attempted answer. The better answers took incidents, characters and concept and showed how each had a good and an evil side to it. These answers brought out the co-existence and showed critical analysis of a theme.

Since there were plenty of illustrations in the text, most candidates could write, quote or refer to sufficient textual information to score creditably in this. Despite this, there were some candidates who did not balance the answer well, merely giving textual narration rather than linking it to good and evil. Some papers, candidates repeated points by giving different examples for the same point instead of moving on to another instance of good and evil.

Where good and evil were presented, many focused on evil and limited good to Atticus's character, leaving out other characters. Many candidates repeated the mockingbird quote through all answers in the novel. Others gave rambling introductions running into two pages.

Suggestions for teachers

- Such answers require both analysis and well-chosen quotes. Teach students to sieve salient points and use relevant examples to justify opinion.
- Discuss themes and encourage critical analysis skills.
- Encourage students to write high order answers combining textual referencing and conceptual / contextual thought.
- Tell students that quotes should not be repeated from answer to answer. Relevance of detail must be judged. Content counts, not length.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 3

The answer gives possible illustrations but candidate can write them in any combination.

- **Strong prejudices:** Social – old, landed families who had a sense of superiority – Aunt Alexandra and the ladies of the Missionary Circle – racial feeling exists within the negro community too – Lula – offset by Atticus's teachings and Calpurnia and the warmth of the congregation who welcome the Finch children at the service
- **Social hierarchy:** Rigid codes and stereotypes – Atticus teaches his children otherwise – Cunninghams just above "white trash" like the Ewells – abject poverty yet self-respecting – pay Atticus in kind for his legal aid
- **Adult world corrupts the innocence of the young:** Sins against mockingbirds – Boo, Tom, Jem – Boo locked up by a "foot-washing Baptist" of a father and brother – Nathan Radley blocks his efforts to establish a connection with children – Tom is punished for kindness towards Mayella – Jem's fervent belief in justice and people is rudely shaken by the trial – yet essential human kindness shines through – Tom as 'clean-living' and simple, dear to even white folks like Link Deas – Jem's maturity and bitterness but his courage in looking after Scout and perceptiveness in understanding Atticus's precepts – Boo the unlikely hero who saves the children's lives and ends evil in the form of Bob Ewell – bitterness countered by Scout's innocence and optimism till the end
- **Characters** such as Bob, Stephanie Crawford, ladies at the Missionary Circle tea, Miss Gates typify prejudice, evil, hypocrisy and callousness – balanced by characters such as Atticus, Miss Maudie, Calpurnia – even at the trial, despite obvious prejudice, "baby step"- a Cunningham

holds out the longest – Judge Taylor chooses Atticus to give Tom the best chance he has – Link Deas speaks up for Tom and takes care of Helen – Heck Tate is honest and uses his position to let the past bury its dead – Even Aunt Alexandra for all her bias is caring and genuinely loves her brother – Mayella can be pitied for her circumstances – red geraniums – yet, she causes the death of an innocent man and lies.

- **Education:** on one side is institutional – Caroline – Dewey Decimal system – Burris and truancy – failure of system – true education by Miss Maudie and Atticus – Calpurnia's lessons in manners and sensitivity

(Relevant quotes)

THE HUNGRY TIDE – Amitav Ghosh

Question 4

Describe the circumstances in which Piya meets Fokir for the first time in the novel *The Hungry Tide*. How does Fokir assist her in her research? [20]

Comments of Examiners

Although this is an important incident, very few candidates could bring out all the details of it. Candidates could not decide where to begin and end the narration. The part about Fokir's assistance got a poor response from candidates except in a few cases. Many answers depended on the background details rather than events leading up to the meeting.

The point about Fokir helping Piya to map the river bed was completely overlooked by many candidates. The part up to Piya getting on to the forest department boat was very detailed and the bit after that a summary.

Suggestions for teachers

- Encourage students to read the novel thoroughly and regularly to have a thorough knowledge about incidents. Their sequence should be marked out in class.
- Give adequate practice in writing answers. This will help ensure a balanced narration rather than excessive detail of some parts to the exclusion of other equally important parts.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 4

Piya is an American cetologist- she studies marine mammals like dolphins and whales. She **wants to do a survey of the marine mammals in the Sunderbans and is assigned a guard and a launch by the Forest Department.** Mej-da, the owner of the launch is supposed to be a seasoned guide who knows the area better than anybody else.

Piya set out with them to sight the dolphins. She had two bag-packs and a display card with the picture of the two species of river dolphin known to inhabit the waters- the Gangetic dolphin and the Irrawaddy dolphin. She was a little suspicious of the two men, but thought it wiser to start her research rather than go back to the Forest Department.

When she showed the card to Mej-da, he thought it was a bird. She could barely manage to hide her smile. The two men behave rather awkwardly with her and she is not very comfortable with them in the decrepit diesel steamer. Moreover, **Piya spent the entire afternoon without a single sighting.**

Towards the end of the day she **sighted a fishing boat** in the distance. She signalled to the two men to take her to the boat. With the help of her binoculars she saw the fisherman casting his net and her observation of him told her he was experienced. He was thin and has a beard. She thought the fisherman might be able to help her with the dolphins.

The steamer turned towards the boat. Suddenly the **fisherman was alarmed. There was also a child with him** in the boat. The man pulled out a pair of oars and started rowing furiously, while the boy ran and hid under the covering on the boat. Piya concluded the man was fishing in an off-limits area and was frightened when he saw the Forest Department steamer. The guard was ready with his rifle, threatening to open fire. Piya **rushed at him and lunged at his arm, trying to push away the barrel of the gun.** He saw her coming and thrust out his elbow. It caught her unawares and sent her reeling back. The display card went flying from her grip as she steadied herself.

The guard accused the fisherman of being a poacher. The **fisherman would now have to pay either a fine or a bribe.** Piya noticed that the fisherman was about her own age, in his late twenties. His frame was lean. **As the fisherman saw her he rolled down the sarong and acknowledged her presence. The gesture touched Piya.** She then held out the card. **He saw the card and pointed upriver. To her astonishment he pointed at the picture of the Irrawaddy dolphin. He said something in Bengali and held up six fingers.** Piya was suddenly very excited.

Meanwhile the **guard had boarded the boat and snatched the notes that were in the child's hand.** Piya tried to throw some notes at the boat. The guard, seeing that came rushing towards Piya. One of his feet crashed into the chair, **threw Piya off her balance and she fell into the waters.** The waters were muddy and she inhaled mud. The mud had entered her mouth, her nose, her throat and her eyes. She tried to lift herself from the waters. **The fisherman dived to rescue her.** He sucked the mud out of her mouth and she could breathe some air. He managed to lift her onto his boat.

He sucked the water out of her mouth and pumped some more air. As the two men saw her struggling to breathe, they exchanged whispers. When the guard saw she had opened her eyes, he signalled at his watch. The sun was setting. Piya did not want to go back to the launch. She looked at the fisherman and asked "Lusibari"? "Mashima"? The fisherman seemed to know. He nodded and gave her a smile.

Piya managed to get her two bag-packs from the two men in exchange of some money. She was glad to see the launch go away.

She learnt that the **fisherman's name was Fokir. She introduced herself. She noticed that the child was about five years old. She learnt that he was Fokir's son, Tutul.**

She dressed and changed. She slept with Fokir keeping guard. She knew she could trust Fokir. Next morning there was a dense fog but Fokir could steer the boat. He knew the waters. Suddenly Piya could hear the dolphins. They were in the vicinity of the boat- some near and some far. Fokir was not surprised. He almost knew he would find them there and seemed to have steered the boat deliberately in their direction. He took the boat to a certain point and anchored. The dolphins were circling.

By midday Piya had enough data to estimate the size of the group. She wondered why the dolphins were circling there and what they were waiting for. What had brought them there, she wondered.

In the afternoon, as the waters began to rise, Piya noticed that the dolphins had begun to disappear. It seemed the animals had begun to disperse with the turning of the tide. They had gathered there to wait

until the water rose again. Piya needed to find out if the Irrawaddy dolphins had found a novel way of adapting their behaviour to the tidal ecology.

She had been sent to the Sunderbans for a fortnight, to do a small survey, on a shoestring budget.

She wondered how long Fokir would be willing to stay on. But he stayed on and father and son fell asleep. Later Fokir helped her to map the riverbed. That gave him the opportunity to do some fishing as well. The habitat was hospitable to both dolphins and crab. Crabs were Fokir's livelihood and without them he would not have known to lead her to the pool where the dolphins came. Piya was happy to discover that their jobs were not entirely incompatible. Piya and Fokir did not share a common language but they shared companionable silence. And Fokir was as amazed by it as Piya was.

Fokir was in no hurry to return and Piya could spend a lot of time studying the dolphins. Later he took her safely to Lusibari where she met Kanai. From Lusibari Piya went on yet another trip with Fokir to study the dolphins, this time Horen and Kanai joining them. Piya knew Fokir was completely in tune with his surroundings. He, like her, was a very good observer of nature. Piya appreciated his "incredible instincts". "It's as if he can see right into the river's heart", she told Kanai. She thought working with him as a team she could achieve a lot. She was already contemplating an extended stay. Being with Fokir was, she told Kanai: "one of the most exciting experiences of my life."

Sadly, Fokir lost his life in the storm in trying to save Piya's life. He was instrumental in opening Piya's eyes to the richness of the local folklore, myth, history and the struggle for survival.

(Relevant quotes)

Question 5

Write short notes on:

[20]

- (a) Mashima
- (b) Kusum

Comments of Examiners

Short notes are based on basic and simplified points about character and incident in the question. Many candidates knew even less about the character than the essential points expected.

Their answers were general narrations of incidents involving the characters rather than anything revealed about the characters through those incidents or their significant role in them.

The short note on 'Mashima' was better done than the one on 'Kusum', although the reference to the 'trust' was very vague.

Kusum – key information such as the Nirmal – Horen – Kusum relation, her suffering, her activism was omitted by many candidates.

Suggestion for teachers

- Discuss characters in two ways in class: the basic, bare-bones information about that character (not incident revolving around her) and then the more detailed discussion about revelation of trait and how that revelation is made in the course of the novel.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 5

Short notes on:

(a) Mashima:

Kanai's Mashima, or Nilima Bose had chosen to dedicate her life for the betterment of the people living in the Sunderbans. The president had decorated her with one of the country's highest honours.

She was 76 years old, small in height and wore her wispy hair, more dark than white in a knot at the back of her head. She wore sarees woven in the workshops of the Badabon Trust, which she ran in one of the islands called Lusibari. Nilima lived in a small building within the compound of the Badabon Trust. The building was also used as a guest house for the Trust's visitors. It was a two-storeyed house separated from the hospital by a pond and some coconut trees. It was brightly painted. On the ground floor of this house Nilima and her late husband, Nirmal had lived since the mid-1970s.

Nilima had first come to Lusibari with Nirmal in 1950 looking for a safe haven. They had been married less than a year Nilima was from a family well known for its tradition of public service. She was a student at Ashutosh College, where she met Nirmal, who was her professor. They fell in love and married in 1949, even though Nilima's family opposed the marriage. Circumstances forced them to come to Lusibari, where Nirmal joined as teacher.

Gradually the couple learnt that in Lusibari hunger and catastrophe were a way of life. The soil bore poor crops and most families subsisted on only one daily meal. Most of the settlers were of farming stock but the poor quality of the soil had driven them to hunting and fishing, and the results were often disastrous. Many died of drowning. Others were killed by crocodiles, sharks or tigers. Thousands risked their lives to collect honey, wax, firewood and the sour fruit of the kewra tree.

Nilima started the Mohila Satnagthon (the Women's Union) to help the women of the region. This grew into the Trust, which offered medical, paralegal, agricultural and other services.

She was loved and respected by everybody.

She called her nephew, Kanai to Lusibari because her late husband, Nirmal has left a packet containing a notebook for him. Kanai discovered that Nilima's practical desire to preserve her Trust estranged her from her revolutionary husband. She was pained by it and his attraction to Kusum but carried on living with dignity.

(b) Kusum:

The triangle of Kanai –Piya –Fokir is similar to that of Nirmal –Kusum –Horen. Just like Kanai who with all his learning could not enter the heart of Piya, Nirmal could not enter Kusum's heart. Kusum chose the illiterate Horen over the educated Nirmal. Nirmal on the other hand found himself to be torn between his wife Nilima and Kusum:

“I felt myself torn between my wife and the woman who had become the muse I'd never had.”

Kusum was from Satleja, an island of Sundarbans. Her father was killed by a tiger while foraging for firewood. He had no permit for that; hence Kusum's mother didn't get any compensation from the Government. They were left with no means of living. A land owner from that village sold her to a brothel house in the name of a job. Then he tried to do the same to Kusum. At this

juncture Horen, a man from the village, saved her and kept her under the custody of Lusibari Women's Union headed by Nilima Bose. During her short stay at Lusibari in 1970 she met Kanai, who was at his aunt's house and they played together.

The land owner came to Lusibari in search of Kusum. So, Horen helped her to escape. She got into a train and was taken to Dhanbad. At the railway station she stood with a big question of where to go. There she met Rajen, a lay man from tide country, who was selling Ghugni in the Railway station. She stayed with Rajen in his house for many days in search of her mother. There she came to know about her mother. Rajen and Kusum went to see her. Kusum's mother was in pathetic situation in a brothel house. They managed to get her away from there. In 1974 in her presence Kusum and Rajen got married. After three months Kusum's mother died. Then they had a son, Fokir.

In 1978 Rajen died in a train accident leaving Kusum and Fokir to their fate. In that helpless condition Kusum longed to come back to the tide country. Kusum said "Walking on iron, we longed for the touch of the mud; encircled by rails, we dreamed of the Raimangal in flood..... We thought of high tide, and the mohanas mounting, of islands submerged like underwater clouds. By night we remembered, we talked and we dreamed-by day coal and metal were the stuff of our lives".

Kusum heard about a group of people moving towards east along the railway tracks secretly in darkness. They were refugees going from Dandakaranya to the tide country. Kusum joined them and came back to her homeland. Along with them she settled in Morichjhapi. When the government forces tried to evict them, Kusum actively participated in the movement. Along with others she fought with the Police. During this fight she met Nirmal Bose and Horen, who were very sympathetic towards Kusum and other settlers. During the economic blockade, she suffered a lot and became weak. She said "the worst part is not the hunger and the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the Police making announcements, hearing them say that our lives, our existence was worthless than the dirt or dust." During the siege she fed her son while she subsisted on a wild green. Palatable enough at first, these leaves had proved deadly in the end, for they had caused severe dysentery. But hunger did not leave her a weak person. She decided to protest the government until the last moment.

Her anger at the government's hunger for acquiring fund for its Project Tiger and at the environmentalists who are mindless of the poor people are explicitly stated in her words to Nirmal and Horen:

" The worst part was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless,

..... who love animals so much that they are willing to kill us for them? "

At the end of the struggle she sent Fokir along with Horen. On the final day when the Police attacked the settlers, many people died. A few women along with Kusum were taken away, raped, killed and thrown away into the waters of the tide country, which she loved so much.

Though illiterate, Kusum makes every effort to mobilize people to help the refugees at Morichjhāpi. She approaches Nilima for medical aid to the refugees. When Nilima refuses to help, Kusum seeks Nirmal's help. She invites Nirmal to attend the feast at Morichjhāpi. This shows how Kusum tries to mobilize others and change their perception about the "squatters." She exhibits great strength and courage during the siege of Morichjhāpi. Kusum starves herself to feed her son. Hunger cannot make her weep but the harsh words of the police that the refugees are "worth less than dirt or dust" hurt her. She narrates the story of Bon Bibi to Fokir to instil courage in him. She gets killed in the massacre but, before dying, passes Fokir into the safe hands of Horen.

Question 6

Narrate what happens in the chapter *The Killing* when people corner the tiger to kill it. [20]
Comment on the differences in the reactions of Piya and Fokir to the apparent cruelty to the tiger.

Comments of Examiners

Not many candidates attempted this question.

Narration of a central incident in the novel, identified by name of the chapter was largely inadequate and superficial. The second part of the question, i.e. reactions and differences was better attempted.

Suggestions for teachers

- Discuss all incidents, especially the crucial ones, to mark out their sequence, significance and impact on characters.
- Discourage students from writing general summaries.
- Explain to students that where the answer requires narration plus opinion and analysis, detailed textual references and / or substantiating quotes are essential.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 6

The small party on the boat could see from its rails that something was going on in the village. Burning torches and voices were clear. Fokir too was not sure but he said he would take his boat and go and find out. When they reached the shore, they realised the crowd was congregating at the corner Horen's relatives lived. They could make out it was a mob.

In the light of a flashlight, **Kanai and Piya saw a mark on the ground**- it was the print of a tiger's paw. The beam showed a trail of similar depressions, leading towards the embankment from the shore. The animal must have passed the Megha but since all were asleep, it was not spotted. The mark on the dust indicated the point from where the animal must have surveyed the village and picked prey, and then sprung to attack. Horen was anxious.

By the light of the torches, they saw the village with its clusters of mud huts and a small mud-walled structure with a thatched roof. **More than a hundred people had gathered round this, most men, many armed with sharpened bamboo poles. These they were plunging into the hut repeatedly. Their faces were contorted with fear and rage. Many women and children were shrieking, "Maar! Maar! Kill! Kill!"**

Horen explained that the buffalo giving birth had started it. The big cat had heard the sound across the water and come there. **The family to whom the livestock hut belonged had been awakened by a crashing sound, followed by frenzied cries of their livestock**. The darkness blanketed the view but the sound was clearly that of a large animal trying to claw a hole in the straw roof. A crashing sound had confirmed that the predator had been successful.

The six men in the house seized the opportunity presented by the vulnerable tiger in their pen. The tiger had killed before. The family got together fishing nets to fling over the thatch and tied them with crab lines. When the tiger tried to jump, it got entangled in the lines and fell back into the pen. As it struggled to free itself, one of the boys blinded it with a sharpened pole.

Piya interrupted the translation to ask if the tiger was still there. She heard the roar and the people dropped their staves and scattered. **Once it became clear that the tiger was still captive and incapacitated, the crowd regrouped.** Piya wanted to do something but Kanai did not think there was anything they could do except go back to the Megha. Kanai did not want her to see the tiger being killed. He could understand the hostility of the villagers towards the predator but Piya was intent on putting a stop to it all. She thought she could depend on Fokir.

Fokir was in the front ranks of the crowd, helping a man sharpen a bamboo pole. Piya elbowed her way through and saw that the staff had blood stains and pieces of black and gold fur on it. The animal was cowering inside. **Piya snatched the pole from the man next to Fokir and broke it in two.** On getting over his surprise, the man showered his wrath on her. **Fokir took hold of her elbow and literally carried her to the boat from where he did not want her to return.** She could see the arc of flames on the roof of the pen and the sound of the “maddened bloodlust” of the crowd.

Piya could not believe that the crowd had set a tiger on fire and that Fokir had countenanced that. The belief was that a tiger came to a human settlement when it wanted to die. Piya just wanted to get away from the place and Horen also wanted to draw the anchor and leave before the officials came and riots, shooting and arrests began. Kanai tried to explain to Piya that this was the way of the world there and that they could have done nothing.

Reactions:

Piya anxious to save tiger – saw it as inhuman and cruel to treat the animal that way – furious at helplessness – saw the tiger as a creature and humans as cruel and savage

Fokir – part of the killing crowd – took Piya away when she tried to stop them – believed the tiger wanted to die – saw it as predator

Explanation – clash and conflict – man versus nature – environmental versus human survival – official support to environment against human settlement

A DOLL’S HOUSE– *Henrik Ibsen*

Question 7

What is your impression of the character of Torvald Helmer in the play *A Doll’s House*? Do you believe he gets what he deserves at the end of the play? Justify your opinion. [20]

Comments of Examiners

Important character traits were left out by many candidates: Torvald's dislike of debt, his inability to face anything ugly, his lack of courage, etc. Some candidates relied on narration but failed to make a point on character.

Most candidates gave the statement of opinion asked for in the question and provided justification, but in some cases, this was missed out.

In a number of answers, quotes were sparse, just the words "skylark" and "squirrel" were given.

Spelling and vocabulary errors made by many candidates diluted readability and sense *e.g.*, 'depth' for 'debt' – 'depth in the house is not beautiful' – no reference to the point of aversion to debt plus an incorrect statement in itself. Spelling errors were made in name of character, even though the name was given in question – written as 'Torwald' or 'Trovald'.

Suggestions for teachers

- Discuss characters to identify traits and vocabulary to describe those traits.
- Support each quality of a character by reference to an incident, action or words in text to prove it.
- Tell students that opinion statements should be categorically made, not left for the examiner to assume.
- Instruct students to give relevant quotes. - quotes should be a phrase or a line; single words repeated across questions have a limited value. Analytical answers must have a judicious use of quotes and explanation.
- Spelling and usage must be checked, and gross inaccuracy penalized.
- Copy the words correctly from the question paper.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 7

Torvald Helmer is **Nora's husband** and responsible for making his house a doll's house by exercising the **authority given as husband and man of the house** over his wife, reducing her to a 'doll', a mere adornment who has little intelligence. He always talks down to her, patronises her and gives her no credit for anything of substance. She is his skylark, squirrel; he admonishes her as a child for eating macaroons.

He delights in his **new position at the bank**, not only in its authority but also in the more secure financial position. He **hates debt** and obligation and is greatly **concerned with his position and image** in society. When Nora's indiscretion is revealed to him, despite his professed love for her, he immediately repulses her, blames her family for her flaws and announces she is unfit to be any sort of influence on the children. As strongly as he feels about her supposed immorality, he nevertheless asks her to stay on to maintain appearances of a happy house. The moment he knows that Krogstad has withdrawn the letter and his image is safe, he attempts to reconcile with Nora. It is not love for her that is paramount. He strongly believes that she as the woman needs shelter, protection and correction.

He condescends to moralise on financial prudence and revels in the need to teach Nora to dance. More than a companion or husband, he seems to have **taken on Nora's father's place** in her life. His **hypocrisy** is evident in his grand claims that he wishes she were in some danger so that he could rescue her, even if meant risking his life for her. All too soon, at the first sign of such danger, he rejects her and blames her father for her wrongs. He can be **petty**, his aversion to Krogstad being not for professional reasons as much as for reasons of over familiarity. Even his friendship with Dr. Rank seems superficial – he does not seem overly concerned at his illness and impending death.

Contrary to his outer protective air, he is a weaker character than Nora, and as such he can be seen as a foil to her. He **does not have the resolve or courage** to stand up for what he sees is against his moral grain and stature. **Nor can he face anything ugly**, an observation Dr. Rank is quick to make.

Given the norms of the time, his character is a plausible one, typical of heads of middle class households then. It appears he stands for all the social beliefs and ills that Ibsen was writing against at the time: shallowness, pride and vanity, a lack of respect for others especially his wife, inner weakness, hollow moralising without the backing of true conduct.

Opinion on just deserts at the end in context of above

Accordingly, justification:

- Product of his times and upbringing – cannot help his behaviour – could have been given a second chance
- He alone is not responsible for the unequal relationship – Nora in accepting it and indulging in him is equally responsible for her subservient position
- Nora had made sacrifices and taken a risk for his sake – his health – she had been desperate and had spent years trying to repay the obligation – cruel of him to turn away when she most needed him, especially since he was the reason she took the so-called immoral action
- Pathetic picture in the end – pleading with Nora / shock at her decision – unheard of the at the time

Appropriate quotes. Some examples:

- From now on, forget happiness. Now it's just about saving the remains, the wreckage, the appearance. (Torvald)
- I have been performing tricks for you, Torvald. That's how I've survived. You wanted it like that. You and Papa have done me a great wrong. It's because of you I've made nothing of my life. (Nora)
- Nora! Just like a woman. Seriously though, Nora, you know what I think about these things. No debts! Never borrow! There's always something inhibited, something unpleasant, about a home built on credit and borrowed money. (Torvald)
- Why shouldn't I look at my dearest treasure? - at all the beauty that is mine, all my very own? (Torvald)
- Do you know, Nora, I have often wished that you might be threatened by some great danger, so that I might risk my life's blood, and everything, for your sake. (Torvald)
- It's a sweet little bird, but it gets through a terrible amount of money. You wouldn't believe how much it costs a man when he's got a little song-bird like you! (Torvald)
- Many a man can save himself if he admits he's done wrong and takes his punishment. (Torvald)
- Almost everyone who has gone to the bad early in life has had a deceitful mother. (Torvald)

Question 8

Narrate the sequence of events in Act III of the play *A Doll's House*, from the conversation between Mrs. Linde and Krogstad to the point Torvald reads the letter revealing Nora's secret. [20]
What realisation dawns on Nora on seeing his reaction?

Comments of Examiners

While the broad points were covered by most candidates, details of sequence were found to be missing in many answers. Dr. Rank's arrival was sometimes missed out. Narration was based more on Mrs. Linde and Krogstad's conversation and their reunion. Mrs. Linde's motivation for leaving Krogstad was often given in great detail although such detail and that point was not required here. Although the beginning and the end-point were specified, the many answers had general summaries of entire play or details from other scenes. Narration includes setting (opening, dance, music) which was not specified by many candidates. 'Realization' was well covered by several candidates but some missed out on Nora's realization on seeing Torvald's reaction.

Suggestions for teachers

- Help students to get the sequence of narration in parts of the play right and complete. Also discuss the significance.
- Tell students that narration of specified portions must be of that part only and not borrowed from other scenes. In drama, narration of a scene should include setting, stage directions, entry and exit of characters.
- Instruct students to read and understand all parts of the question. Understanding key words of a question is necessary.
- Give regular practice in similar questions and provide feedback to students.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 8

CLIMAX: Torvald reads Krogstad's letter and erupts angrily.

FALLING ACTION: Nora's realization that Torvald is devoted not to her but to the idea of her as someone who depends on him; her decision to abandon him to find independence.

The act opens in the same room on the next night, Boxing Day. **Mrs. Linde is absentmindedly trying to read. As the sounds of dance music suggest, Torvald and Nora are upstairs at the party.** Mrs. Linde is waiting for Krogstad so that she can talk to him about Nora's situation. When Krogstad arrives, he and Mrs. Linde turn almost immediately to a discussion of why Mrs. Linde jilted him (for her now-deceased husband) many years ago. Mrs. Linde explains that, though she has questioned her decision many times, she had to pursue her former husband's money given that her mother and brothers depended on her to survive. Krogstad reveals that her departure left him "a shipwrecked man clinging to a spar." **Mrs. Linde replies that she is now in his position and that**

she longs for them to come together. She tells him that he is the reason that she came to town. She still wants a family to look after.

The music of the tarantella is heard above, and Mrs. Linde urges Krogstad to be quick. **Krogstad now grows suspicious, questioning whether she is saying all of this simply on behalf of Nora.** She denies it, and he then **offers to take the letter back.** She now **urges him not to, admitting that this had been her original intention after all. She explains that, since her first discovery of the problem the day before, she has witnessed enough in the house to convince her that Torvald must read the letter.** The Helmers need a “full understanding” of their situation in order to maintain a successful marriage. **Krogstad leaves, promising Mrs. Linde that he will meet her in a few minutes.** Hearing Nora and Torvald coming, Mrs. Linde prepares to leave, commenting on what a difference having people to care for makes in her life.

The Helmers appear in costume: Nora is a Neapolitan fisher-girl, and Torvald is in evening wear and a black coat. **Torvald is bringing Nora into the room almost by force. She is trying to get him to return to the party upstairs. Torvald refuses, citing their earlier agreement.** They greet Mrs. Linde, who explains that she stayed up in order to see Nora in her dress. **Torvald brags about how lovely Nora looks, describing his wife’s successful evening. He tells Mrs. Linde that Nora danced the tarantella marvellously—even if her performance was “a trifle too realistic.”** He tried to make her exit equally artistic by ushering her around the room for a last bow and then disappearing into the night, but Nora did not appreciate his exit attempts. “An exit,” Torvald claims, “should always be dramatic.” Torvald then leaves to light some candles and air out the house a bit, **giving Nora a chance to ask Mrs. Linde** for news from Krogstad. Mrs. Linde says that Nora must tell Torvald everything. Nora is not shocked; she simply thanks Mrs. Linde for telling her, and she now knows what she must do.

Torvald returns and Mrs. Linde soon leaves. Nora then asks Torvald if he is tired, telling him that she is quite sleepy. Torvald replies that he is quite awake and has been waiting to be alone with his wife all evening. He calls her beautiful and fascinating, his “treasured possession.” He observes that she must still have the alluring tarantella in her blood. He launches into an explanation of why he pretends not to know her at parties: it is his fantasy about meeting and seducing her for the first time. **He likes to feel that she is his new bride about to be his for the first time. Nora tries to push him off, much to his confusion and displeasure.**

They are **interrupted by Dr. Rank. The three talks about the ball and all its finery.** Unknown to Torvald, **Dr. Rank reveals to Nora through his conversation that he will soon die.** Dr. Rank eventually leaves, and Nora calls to him, “Sleep well.” Torvald begins to head out to empty the mailbox so that the newspapers can be delivered in the morning. Nora unsuccessfully tries to stop him. **At the mailbox, Torvald is surprised to find that someone has tried to pick the lock with one of Nora’s hairpins.** Nora tells him that it must have been one of the children.

Torvald is surprised to **find two visiting cards from Dr. Rank with black crosses just above his name. Torvald comments on the gruesomeness of the mark, and Nora confirms that he has used it to announce his death.** Torvald thinks it might be “best this way,” for now he and his wife have only each other. Torvald embraces Nora, telling her how much he cares for her. **He wishes that he could somehow save her from some great danger so that he could risk everything for her sake.** Nora disengages herself from his embrace. She tells him with resolution that he must now read his letters; she no longer is delaying the inevitable but is avoiding his advances. Torvald agrees that something ugly has come between them—he believes it is because of the news of Dr. Rank—and that it would be best to spend the night apart. They separate, and Torvald goes off to read his letters.

Alone, Nora prepares to rush off to commit suicide by jumping into the icy depths of the river, throwing on Torvald's coat and her shawl. As she bids adieu to her family and rushes out the door, Torvald hurries out of his room and stops her, letter in hand. Torvald asks her if she knows what is in the letter, but Nora still tries to leave. He stops her, locking the door. He continues to wonder out loud how the letter's allegations could be true. He dismisses her pleas that all was done out of love. He protests that he will not suffer at her hands.

Nora realizes that Torvald has no intention of taking the burden of this problem upon himself; he is blaming her for ruining his life. She grows still and cold while Torvald berates her and her character. Not allowing Nora to speak, Torvald speculates about their future. They will keep up appearances but, of course, Nora will not be allowed near the children and the normal aspects of their marriage will no longer be maintained in private.

Despite his subsequent change of heart, Nora explains that she will not sleep tonight, and **she asks him to sit down with her in order to "face facts."** She tells him that he has never understood her and that, before tonight, she has never understood him. She points out that, over eight years of marriage, they have never before sat down to have a serious discussion.

Nora tells him that she has been greatly wronged by both her father and her husband. Nora realises that he has never loved her for herself but has only thought it pleasant to be in love with her. She explains to him that, just as her father did, Torvald has treated her as a doll to be played with, arranging everything to suit himself and forcing her to live only to entertain him. As a result, she has not made anything of her life and has never been truly happy.

She describes his selfish perspective and her own horror at having realized that she had lived with and borne children with a stranger for eight years. Torvald sadly acknowledges the gulf between them but asks if there is still a way to fill it. Nora reiterates that they both will be better off apart. She somewhat formally releases him from all obligations to her. She says that there must be perfect freedom on both sides. They return their wedding rings to each other, and she leaves her keys.

Nora adds that a future relationship of some sort would only be possible if "the miracle of miracles" were to happen—if they both change in such a way that they could have a real marriage. She leaves.

Nora has awoken to the reality that she is living a doll's life and needs to move on with her own life, with or without Torvald. Her new life has already begun, and we have little hope that Torvald will rise to the challenge anytime soon.

The extent of Torvald's investment in a fantasy world and the importance of his false characterization of Nora are revealed when he describes how, at parties, he pretends not to know her so that he may seduce her all over again.

When she finally leaves, she seems to have decided to move on positively with her life rather than to commit suicide. Before Torvald confronted her with the letter, she was thinking seriously commit suicide, determined that Torvald should not have to sacrifice his life for hers. But she became extremely disappointed to discover that he clearly had no intention of sacrificing himself for her.

Nora realizes that before she can be a wife, she must first discover herself in the world. She leaves as an awakened soul, determined to become a full person rather than the doll of the male figures in her life.

(Relevant quotes)

Question 9

What is the role of the following characters in the play *A Doll's House*:

[20]

- (a) Krogstad
- (b) Dr. Rank

Comments of Examiners

- (a) This part was fairly well written except by candidates who had obviously not studied the text well. Some points that were missing were: his personal circumstances, the motivation behind the conflict or antagonism created in the play.
- (b) Many candidates tended to repeat points. Some points were also missed out: Dr. Rank's jealousy of Mrs Linde, his playing the passionate music, character as a symbol of contagion and corruption. In some cases, while mention was made of his father's profligacy, the point was not analysed fully. Others missed that he treated Nora with more courtesy than did Torvald.

Suggestions for teachers

- Tell students that short notes require concise information about the character asked about. The question is not just about character but more the role, which was: creation of conflict and tension (blackmail narration), revelation of truth and catalyst (Nora's final decision, not just a mere narration of leaving the letter), complexity in play (shades of grey).
- Help students understand the distinction between *character sketch* and *role of a character*. Character study – actions, motivations, thematic and dramatic role need attention.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 9

Role of the characters in the play *A Doll's House*:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (a) | <p>Krogstad:</p> <p>'Krogstad' is Norwegian for the stick shepherds carry while minding their sheep. Thus, the idea of crookedness or villainy is built into his name and character.</p> <p>He always enters the Helmer home silently and unexpectedly, like a thief. He is first seen in Act One. He knocks on the front door when Nora is playing with her children. He leaves after threatening Nora. Nora likens him to a beast.</p> <p>Helmer tells Nora that Krogstad had forged a signature and instead of confessing his guilt, he had tried to "wriggle out of it with tricks and subterfuges." He calls Krogstad a corrupt man and a moral outcast.</p> <p>Krogstad's plan is <u>to blackmail</u> both Nora and Helmer.</p> |
|-----|--|

In Act Two, Krogstad threatens Nora yet again and tells her that he wants a good job at the bank. And once he is in, he says in a year's time he shall be the Manager's right-hand man. He tells her: "It'll be Nils Krogstad who runs the Bank, not Torvald Helmer."

Krogstad threatens Nora with blackmail and disclosure. He pressurizes her relentlessly and mercilessly.

To take his revenge on Helmer for losing his job at the bank, he writes Helmer a letter disclosing Nora's secret.

Dr Rank describes Krogstad as a morally sick man, "rotten to the core", whose vocation in life is to ferret out and exploit moral weakness and corruption. His view is that people like Krogstad should receive no sympathy since: "That's turning the community into a regular hospital."

Helmer believes Krogstad poisons the environment he inhabits.

However, Krogstad himself believes he does it for his children and the need to regain his respectability in society.

Krogstad brings out the worst in both Nora as well as Helmer. At the same time he acts as a catalyst to enable them to know themselves better.

(b) Dr. Rank:

In Act One Nora introduces Dr Rank to Mrs Linde as an old friend who visits the Helmers at least once a day. He is rich and Mrs Linde is suspicious that it is he from whom Nora has borrowed money.

Nora "always has time" for him and reveals to him, albeit playfully, many of her most troubling thoughts about Helmer.

Dr Rank is suffering from a mysterious disease of the spine, the result of his father's amusements as a gay young subaltern. He tells Nora that when he feels his death is very near, he will send her his card with a black cross on it. Significantly, Dr Rank confides in Nora and not in Helmer about his impending death. He considers Nora more mature than Helmer. He tells her: "Helmer's too sensitive to be able to face anything ugly."

He is the symbol of contagion and moral corruption in the play. He acts as Ibsen's mouthpiece to represent the inherent morbidity of contemporary society. Rank's hidden disease, the result of his father's profligacy, hints at the cancer eating away at the core of both society and the institution of the family.

Dr Rank loves spending time with Nora, talking to her "intimately". He is jealous of Mrs Linde and believes that after he is gone she will easily fill his absence.

Nora calls him her "best, most faithful friend". She is always "tremendously glad" to see him. She tells Dr Rank: "There are some people that one loves, and others that perhaps one would rather be with."

When Krogstad threatens to expose Nora, she pleads with her husband to let Krogstad keep his place at the bank. Helmer refuses and Nora, in desperation, thinks of asking Dr Rank to lend her the money so that she can repay the debt and get back the bond from Krogstad. She wants to ask Dr Rank for "a great proof" of his friendship, "a really great favour." But before Nora can share her secret with Dr Rank, he professes his love for her and tells her he could

give his life for her. This admission stops Nora from telling him what was on her mind. She refuses to take his help.

To Dr Rank, Nora is a “mystery”. He misunderstands her desire to spend time with him and believes she loves him. He treats Nora like a woman and not a plaything. It is he who plays the passionate music of the tarantella to which Nora dances, while her husband stands by like a schoolmaster, critiquing her movements.

His final exit will be wearing a big black hat as he himself describes it: “There’s a big black hat- you’ve heard of the Invisible Hat? – you put it on, and then no one can see you.”

(Any ten of twelve points or three clear roles demarcated)

DEATH OF A SALESMAN – *Arthur Miller*

Question 10

How does Arthur Miller bring out the American Dream through the characters of Willy Loman, Charley and Bernard? [20]

Comments of Examiners

In many cases, this question was attempted well with clarity on the American Dream as seen in the characters given in the question, although in several cases the focus was more on Willy than the other two. Answers that scored well had a brief explanation of the American Dream to set the context and show how Willy had misunderstood it as opposed to Charley and Bernard.

Several candidates missed out on the brief explanation of what the American Dream was all about in general. Some based their answers on Willy’s failure as a salesman and his extra marital affair.

Willy’s choices including ignoring his inborn talent of working with hands, was often omitted. Dave Singleman as inspiration too was overlooked. Charley as friend, neighbour, lender of money and his offer of a job was at times left out. The contrast between Charley and Willy and impact on their respective sons to show how they grew up differently was not always brought out. Similarly, Willy’s obsession with being ‘well-liked’ was brought out but his considering good looks to be another important factor was not brought out. Some candidates confused the roles of Ben and Bernard.

Suggestions for teachers

- Clearly explain the concepts that form the background of a play or motivation of characters.
- Teach students to relate the play to the context (in brief) in their answers. Understanding of character includes his characterization in that context and how the author / dramatist uses that character to present a view of that context.
- Character’s actions and circumstances are important but some more so than others to the focus of the question – Make this clear to students through discussions in class.
- Tell students that when two or more characters are to be discussed in context, analysis should show if all respond in the same way or there is a difference between them.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 10

Willy Loman is a 63-year-old salesman, who stands baffled by his failure. He inhabits “the greatest country in the world” and wonders if he took the wrong path. He looks to the next generation to give him back that life by achieving what had slipped through” his own fingers.

Willy **tries to follow success “on a smile and a shoeshine”** and look for applause and success he believes to be his due. He **believes that success comes from good looks and popularity**. Throughout the play he tells his two sons Biff and Happy that success depends on being “well- liked”. Being “liked” is not enough. He also thinks that success comes from luck and looks up to his brother, Ben who “walked into the jungle” when he was seventeen and walked out a rich young man when he was twenty-one because by a stroke of luck he found diamonds in Africa.

To Willy the world is an oyster, “but you don’t crack it open on a mattress.”

Willy travels from store to store trying to get past the secretaries who guard the buyers from him. That is when one of the secretaries portrayed in the play as The Woman “picks” him because Willy, she says, has got a sense of humour.

Willy thinks that in the business world “appearance” matters more than ability or knowledge.

He is thankful both his sons are built like “Adonises”. He tells his sons even though Bernard gets the best marks, in the business world it is Biff and Happy who are going to be “five times ahead of him.” He says: “...the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want.” He gives his own example and says he never has to wait in line to see a buyer: “Willy Loman is here! That’s all they have to know, and I go right through.” A little later in the scene, it is The Woman who promises to put him right through to the buyers.

To Willy, Bernard is a “worm” and Biff is the one with “spirit” and “personality” and there is no doubt in his mind as to who would go further in life.

He dreams of having his own business, “bigger than Uncle Charlie” and when he can’t, he encourages Biff and Happy as they talk about selling sporting goods and opening a chain called “Loman Brothers”. He listens excitedly to their plans and says: “Lick the world! You guys together could absolutely lick the civilised world.”

When Willy was young he contributed a lot to the business, but now that he is old nobody wants him. He has the feeling that “the woods are burning”. According to his wife, Linda Willy is exhausted. He has tried many times to smash his car and kill himself. In Willy’s own words, he can’t drive a car anymore. Linda also discovers a length of rubber pipe behind the fuse-box in the cellar.

When Willy goes to meet Howard and ask for work in New York, he is refused. Howard tells him “business is business” and there is no place for Willy in New York.

Willy’s idol is **Dave Singleman**, who at 84 made a living without ever leaving his room. He would pick up the phone and call his buyers. That was when Willy decided that selling was the best career a man could have. Again, in Willy’s own words, times have changed. He tells Howard: “In those days there was personality in it... **There was respect, and comradeship, and gratitude in it.** Today it is all cut and dried, and there is no chance for bringing friendship to bear- or personality.” Willy contradicts himself by saying the above to Howard, and at the same time he tries to tell him that he has worked for his father, Wagner and the day Howard was born, Wagner came to him and asked what he thought of the name ‘Howard’, implying that he and Wagner were friends, and therefore he, Willy, deserves to be treated a little better by the son.

Even before meeting Howard Willy is confident he will come home with a New York job and an advance. He says: "I'm gonna knock Howard for a loop, kid."

Later in Act Two Charlie tells Willy that the only thing one has is what one can sell. Willy is a salesman and ought to know this! Willy tells Charlie his idea of success was being well-liked, being impressive...

Finally, Willy is overcome with guilt for he knows Linda has suffered. He wants to end his life so that the twenty-thousand dollars can help his family. He dreams of a grand funeral. Truly, as Ben put it: "The jungle is dark but full of diamonds." Willy is lost in this concrete jungle called New York. He is confused as he cannot find any diamonds. As Biff puts it very succinctly in the Requiem: "**He had the wrong dreams**" and "He never knew who he was."

Charlie, who is the only one present at the funeral along with his son, Bernard tells Biff that Willy was a salesman and a salesman rides "on a smile and a shoeshine."

Charlie is Willy's neighbour and he drops in to ask if everything was all right: "I heard some noise. I thought something happened." He likes Willy and wants to help him. He lends him fifty dollars a week because Willy has lost his job and lives on commission.

Charlie informs Willy that Ebbets Field just blew up. **He asks Willy when he was going to grow up.** Willy pays no attention to Charlie and dismisses him: "When this game is over, Charley, you'll be laughing out of the other side of your face. They'll be calling him another Red Grange. Twenty-five thousand a year. He calls Charley stupid and ignorant, and insults him.

Bernard is seen in Act One for the first time when he comes to call Biff. The two are supposed to study together. Willy insults him by calling him "anaemic" and "a pest" **He gets the best marks in school, takes his studies and his professors seriously.**

Later in Act Two one sees a self-assured young Bernard. Willy has come to meet Charlie in his office and comes to know **Bernard is going to Washington for a case.** Bernard is married and his wife has just had another boy.

He's got tennis rackets with him because the friend in Washington he will be staying with has a court. Willy tells Bernard lies about Biff- that Biff is working on a very big deal, that Bill Oliver "wants Biff badly", and that Biff has been doing "very big things in the West."

Willy cannot get over the fact that the friend Bernard will be staying with has his own private tennis court. He is filled with emotion and asks him what the secret of his success is. Willy tells Bernard that Biff's life ended after that Ebbets Field game. "From the age of seventeen nothing good ever happened to him." Bernard's reply is simple: "He never trained himself for anything."

Bernard acknowledges that he thought well of Biff and loved him, although the latter had always taken advantage of him.

Willy calls Bernard "a very brilliant man" and earlier he had called him "anaemic" and "a pest". He says he values his advice. Both talk about Biff and why he did not go to summer school. Bernard wants to know what happened in Boston that upset Biff so. That makes Willy very angry. Bernard tells him after Boston he knew Biff had given up on life...

Charlie comes out of his office. He informs Willy that Bernard was going to argue a case in the Supreme Court. **Willy is surprised that he did not even mention it to him, whereas Willy had been telling him so many lies about Biff's achievements.**

Charlie again gives Willy fifty dollars. Willy asks for a hundred and ten. Says he has to pay his insurance.

Charlie had offered Willy a job but Willy had refused it. He tells Charley he has already got a job. Charlie wants to know why Willy will not work for him. Willy informs him Howard fired him.

Charlie tells Willy: “The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell.”

Willy refuses the job Charlie once again offers him. Charlie knows Willy is jealous of him. Yet he gives him the money to pay his insurance.

Charlie and Bernard both work hard and harbour no illusions about life. Unlike Willy, they are not chasing any diamonds.

Question 11

Describe the relationship between Willy and Linda in the play *Death of a Salesman*.

[20]

Comments of Examiners

This question was largely well attempted.

However, in some cases, the answer was more to do with Linda, leaving out Willy. Her protectiveness, care, devotion and acceptance of lies was usually noted. Even where Willy’s part was ignored, most noted his love and guilt. Some candidates made the answer a character sketch of Willy. Linda’s responsibility for Willy’s downfall was omitted in many cases as also her bewilderment at his funeral and loyalty for husband over sons. Other textual references to support the relationship were missing in several answers. Some answers tended to be repetitive in content. A few answers were a series of examples and made no point about what those examples showed about the relationship.

Suggestions for teachers

- Give sufficient practice to help students distinguish between requirements of differently worded questions - The question was on a relationship between two people, not a single character-based question. (Linda as a wife versus Linda-Willy relationship). Linda’s devotion had to include her deliberate choice of not confronting him, her worrying about him and understanding him. Each is a distinct point and has supporting instances from the text. Other important points: her part in his failure, she offers hope.
- Tell students that textual detail to support the point being made about relationship is necessary. The answer should clearly state the point made about relationship rather than just stopping at examples.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 11

Linda is seen as a **devoted** wife. She adores her husband and appears to be blind to his faults. The truth is that she is aware of them but **chooses not to confront** them out of misplaced love and a desire for peace and harmony. She does not want him to lose his self-respect before her and does not reveal that she is aware of the truth to Willy but confides all to her sons. In fact, even when Biff attempts at the end to make Willy see the truth, she tries to silence him. As a result, Linda who could have helped Willy face the truth is **as much to blame** for his delusions as he is. However, her loyalty and love are prominent and the driving force:

He's the dearest man in the world to me, and I won't have anyone making him feel unwanted and low and blue.

Even when Willy was younger, he would exaggerate his sales and she would excitedly calculate his commission until he would scale down the figure closer to the truth. Always the **hope** was there, "Well, next week you'll do better." On the morning Willy is getting ready to go talk to Howard, she reminds of the two hundred dollars they need for final payments. She tries mild remonstrance when Willy encourages the wrong habits in his sons, whether it is stealing or treating girls roughly, but does little more than that to enforce the correct thing by annoying Willy.

Linda is not very fond of Ben despite Willy's open adoration of him. She is frightened when Ben teaches Biff never to fight fair with strangers. She is the one who dissuades him from taking up Ben's offer of going to Alaska, pointing out that Willy is doing well where he is. She tells him he is "well-liked" and refers to Dave Singleman, afraid that Willy will go off.

She knows he is on the verge of collapse and the play begins on a note of **worry** when she closely questions Willy on why he returned early, whether he smashed the car or if he felt well enough. She characteristically **makes excuses** for his clumsiness by blaming other things such as his glasses or the steering. Concerned about his exhaustion, she plants the idea in his head about giving up travelling and telling Howard that he should be placed in New York. When Willy expresses despondency at there being no one to live in a house one works a lifetime to pay for, she **consoles him** with practical advice, "Life is a casting off. It's always that way." When he admits his own failings, she says, "Willy, darling, you're the handsomest man in the world ... To me you are." When he forgets what happened to the watch Ben got for him, she gently reminds him that he pawned it for Biff's radio correspondence course. Linda reminds Willy of the futility of planting seeds because of the lack of sunlight, symbolic of the role she plays or could have played in making him face the truth. She confides in Biff that a "terrible thing" is happening to him and "attention must be paid". When she finds the rubber pipe and knows that Willy deliberately drove off the road, she is "ashamed" to mention it to Willy. She is the one **who truly knows Willy**, for instance about his being good with his hands, except she admits it in private or too late (at the funeral).

Willy treats her rather roughly, **his abrasiveness** aggravating the friction that already exists between Biff and him. Linda takes Willy's rudeness quietly when he reprimands her for getting American cheese, covering her hurt with a laugh. Yet, **he loves her** and appreciates her steadfast loyalty, calling her his "pal", "foundation" and his "support". He knows that she has suffered. His own insecurities take him into an extra-marital relationship, or even relationships. Linda is likely to be aware of his straying but chooses to remain silent. He is **racked by guilt at both his inability to be a good provider and at his infidelity**, and detests the sight of Linda mending her old stockings, especially since he gifted the new pair bought for her to The Woman in Boston. When he is agitated, Willy turns on her, as in the exchange between Biff and Willy when Linda tries to smoothen things down and

Willy lashes at her for interrupting. At the end, Willy is so unhappy that he ignores the only person who truly cares for him: he is unresponsive to Linda's attempts to make him feel better by asking if he has planted the seeds because his mind is only on Biff's plans.

Linda is desperate for father and sons to live together happily and for there to be peace between Willy and Biff. She attempts to **play peacemaker** whenever voices are raised and is puzzled why the adoration between the two suddenly changed to tension. When Biff asks her how long Willy's odd behaviour has been going on, she attempts to silence his questions, and expresses bitterness that the sons do not come around as often as they should. She does attempt to stand up for Biff when Willy criticises him, expressing mild disagreement with him in trying to make him more sensitive to Biff. She **wants him to understand that Biff** still has to find himself and hushes him when he calls Biff lazy loudly enough to be overheard. She pleads with her sons to return and make their father happy because she knows how much they mean to Willy. The morning Biff decides to visit Bill Oliver is a happy time at the Loman house and the optimism that opens Act II is tragic in view of the events to follow.

At the end, she makes her choice absolutely clear that even her **sons are less to her than Willy**. At the very beginning of the play, she warns, "Biff, dear, if you don't have any feeling for him, then you can't have any feeling for me." When the boys return from Frank's Chop House, she knocks the flowers to the floor and turned seething on her children. She asks them to get out of there, screaming at Happy about his "lousy rotten whores". She pleads with them to leave Willy alone. In her anguish is visible her pain, disillusionment with her sons, love for Willy and helplessness at what is happening to him.

Linda lives the middle class American Dream, saving to pay instalments and is genuinely happy when the last instalment is paid and the house is finally there. Willy's **death bewilders her** and she cannot even shed tears at the funeral. She says that in her mind he is out on one of his trips and will return. She sobs that they are finally free but "there'll be nobody home".

(Narration plus analysis. Quotes mandatory)

Question 12

Write short notes on:

[20]

- (a) The Woman
- (b) Ben

Comments of Examiners

- (a) The short note was well attempted by many candidates. Biff's visit and discovery of the affair were well detailed. However, some candidates could not say much about *The Woman* beyond details of Biff's visit. Her laughter too not commented upon. In some cases, *The Woman* was confused with Linda and points were given about Linda.
- (b) Very few candidates could write successfully about Ben's appearances in the play and his meetings with Willy. His relationship as the elder brother was not specified, nor his music noted. His valise and umbrella too were overlooked, as was the significance of his always looking at his watch (even where watch was mentioned.)

Suggestions for teachers

- Ask students to read the text thoroughly for accuracy and absolute clarity.
- Stage directions in the play are as important as the dialogues - discuss these in class.
- Give regular written practice of short notes as against a longer 20-mark answer.
- Tell students that answers must be in sentences and paragraphs (not bullet points).

MARKING SCHEME

Question 12

- (a) The Woman:
- Willy travels from store to store trying to get past the secretaries who guard the buyers from him. That is when one of the secretaries portrayed in the play as The Woman “picks” him because Willy, she says, has got a sense of humour. Willy, she says makes her laugh which is good for her. She also finds him sweet. Willy tells her he will see her the next time he is in Boston.
- She thanks Willy for the stockings and says she loves stockings.
- When Biff goes to meet his father in Boston after failing the Maths exam, he finds Willy with the Woman in the hotel room. The Woman hears knocking on the door and asks Willy if he will not open the door. Willy tells her he is not expecting anybody. She says the knocking is getting on her nerves. Willy asks her to stay in the bathroom and not come out.
- When Willy opens the door, he sees a young Biff with a suitcase. Biff tells Willy he has let him down. He failed the Maths exam and that he hasn't got enough credits to graduate. Biff asks Willy to talk to Birnbaum. He believes his Professor will change his marks after meeting Willy. Both laugh when Biff tells him he imitated his professor one day. The Woman joins in. Biff asks if there is somebody in there. The Woman laughs again. Willy insists the laughter is coming from the next room. The Woman comes in, says there's something in the bathtub. Biff is horrified. Willy tells him they are painting her room so he let her take a shower in his bathroom. Willy pushes the woman and asks her to go back. The Woman says she has to get dressed. He introduces her as 'Miss Francis', a buyer. The Woman asks for her stockings, says Willy promised her stockings and that he got her two boxes of size nine. Willy gives her the stockings and asks her to leave. Biff begins to cry after the woman leaves. Willy 'orders'

Biff to stop crying and says he will meet Birnbaum. Biff tells him Birnbaum will not listen to him. He tells him he is certainly not going to the University of Virginia. Biff cannot stop crying. Willy tells him he was lonely. Biff cannot believe that he gave her his mother's stockings. He calls Willy a liar and "phony little fake". He goes out with his suitcase.

The Woman's laugh is heard at other points in the play, a reminder to Willy of his infidelity.

(b)

Ben:

Ben is Willy's elder brother. He left home at seventeen to look for their father in Alaska but ended up in Africa. There he found diamond mines and became a rich man at twenty-one. Willy looks up to Ben as a model for success and hallucinates about him. Ben appears thrice in the play, carrying a valise and an umbrella. Given Willy's state of mind, memories of Ben are confused with hallucination. Ben's 'visits' coincide with great emotion of anxiety, failure or realisation (as of Biff's love) in Willy.

The first time Ben appears is when Willy and Charlie are playing cards. He is a stolid man in his sixties, with a moustache and an authoritative air. There is an aura of far places about him.

Ben enquires after their mother. Willy informs him that she died a long time ago. Willy asks Ben how he became so rich. They talk about their father. Willy introduces Ben to his sons and pleads with him to tell them about their father.

Their father played the flute. He also made flutes and sold them. They travelled in a wagon across America. Ben and Biff fight and Ben advises Biff never to fight fair with a stranger. One can never get out of the jungle that way.

Ben wants to leave. Says he'll be late for his train. Willy asks him how he should teach his sons. Ben tells him he walked into the jungle when he was seventeen and walked out rich when he was twenty-one. Willy tells Ben that is exactly the kind of spirit he wants to imbue the boys with. Ben is gone.

He appears again in Act Two. This is after Willy has met with Howard.

Ben's music is heard. Willy says he wants to talk to Ben but Ben has no time. Willy tells Ben nothing is working out. Ben tells Willy to get out of the cities and go to the new continent waiting at his doorstep.

Linda enters of old, with the washing. She tells Ben they are happy where they are and Willy need not go to Alaska. Ben again has no time and bids adieu.

Ben appears again for the third time. This is when Willy is sowing the seeds. Willy talks about the insurance money- twenty thousand dollars. Ben says they might not honour the policy and it was foolish of Willy to want to end his life.

Willy describes to Ben his grand funeral. Ben tells him not to make a fool of himself. He warns Willy that his sons will think he is a coward. Eventually, Willy imagines a final conversation with Ben in which Ben seems to approve of Willy's idea of suicide.

**NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY VERSE – Edited by
Chris Woodhead**

Question 13

Give a critical analysis of the poem *Piano* by D.H. Lawrence

[20]

Comments of Examiners

Critical analysis requires explanation of the poem as well as analysis incorporating literary terms which candidates in some cases missed out on. Not all answers had quotes, or had inaccurate quotes.

Some candidates could not distinguish between the song of the mother and of the woman. Other important points left out were: sense of being washed away (flood and deluge), the idea of manhood being cast down. While these were left out, ‘memory’ and ‘nostalgia’ were repeated by many candidates.

On the other hand, some candidates attempted this question well, with answers indicating understanding of poem and ability to critically analyse (including personal response.) Heightened answers had a comparison of *Piano* and *Discord in Childhood* although in some cases the latter took precedence over the poem the question was about.

Suggestions for teachers

- Give specific critical analysis-based questions for every poet with expectation of relevant contextual / biographical information, form and structure, flow, rhyme, theme, literary devices and figures of speech. A critical analysis is more than a summary of the poem.
- Discuss D. H. Lawrence’s belief in instincts, or blood over intellect, in context of response of adult in the poem.
- Mark out crucial images or emotions in the poem and link them to what is known about the poet, if relevant.
- Cultivate the ability of students to think and interpret on their own.
- Do not overlook errors of usage and spelling in class assignments.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 13

D. H. Lawrence’s *Piano* shows a man experiencing nostalgia as he listens to a woman singing which reminds him of his childhood.

The poem starts with the man hearing the soft singing of a woman which takes him on a mental journey down memory lane and he sees visions of his childhood flashing in front of him. The memory he focuses on is that of a small child who is sitting beneath a grand piano as his mother plays it, taking his mother’s elegant feet into his small hands and listening to the loud chords of music.

The man is reluctant to remember those days and be affected by them, but the song which the woman is singing seems to have a slow subtle impact on him and despite his hesitance he gives in to his emotions and yearns for the days of childhood: the cold Sunday evenings in winter when it used to snow outside and they, mother and son used to sit in the warm comfortable indoors and sing melodious hymns with the help of the piano.

The man who was listening to the lady singing now thinks that it would be useless for her to continue as he is already so affected by his memories that he is just physically present, his mind elsewhere. Without any thought of his adulthood, he bursts into tears remembering the blissful ignorance and innocence of his infant years. He starts weeping, thus bridging the gap between his past and his present. Lawrence uses words in such an intricate manner throughout the poem that they end up creating vivid and delightful **imagery**. By using the word 'vista' he propels the images of the reader's own childhood in front of his eyes so that one experiences the same thing that man experienced. These images 'take him back down' into the memories of his childhood. **Onomatopoeia** used in describing the 'boom' of the 'tingling' strings of the piano indicates that the man in the poem is none other but Lawrence himself, as the tiny detail that the piano would sound loud to a small child and consequently would be described as booming when later remembered even as an adult is so simply portrayed and thus removes all doubts that Lawrence is writing from personal experience. Further, the man remembers that his mother's feet were 'poised' betraying the respect and awe a little child has for its parents. Even at that tender age, the child identifies dignified elegance with his other.

The words 'in spite of myself' and the **alliteration** 'betrays me back' show the immense struggle that the man goes through with his own warring desires. The need to remain solidly footed in his adulthood and the yearning to give that up for the innocence and joys of childhood tear him apart and he goes against his own desires by giving in to the latter. Again, the words used are so simple yet effective in describing the evenings spent by the fire that they paint a vivid image in the readers mind: one of comfort, warmth and unlimited acceptance. This scene **casts a melancholy shadow over the poem of bygone happy memories**.

This poem achieves that delicate balance between being cliché, sentimental and being full of self-pity; and expressing empathy. This is done because though the overview of the poem is simple and direct, there are some strong words which are sprinkled throughout with such apt accuracy that they intensify the powerful feelings that a man experiences when he is torn between his past and present lives.

The title of the poem, *Piano* suits as music is proven to be the strongest trigger of memories. Also it implies that playing the piano, and subsequently music, played a large role in the man's life: his mother used to play and sing hymns on the piano in his childhood, and even as an adult he finds the time to escape the responsibilities for a few hours by attending musical concerts as the woman singing and playing the piano could be seen as such. The piano was their guide in his childhood, and it still continues to show him the way through life.

Nostalgia is the central idea behind the poem, but one would not be wrong to say that it also throws light on the pains of growing up. The man in the poem has travelled the road of life and has reached his adulthood, a phase of life which is associated with freedom of will and power of right. But he still contemplates giving all that up; **his heart 'weeps to belong' and his 'manhood is cast down a flood of remembrance' as the 'glamor of childish days' overcomes him emotionally. He throws away the confines of his 'manhood', breaking the unspoken rule that men aren't supposed to show emotions by crying for his childhood.** The **metaphor** creates an image of a deluge of emotions. The idea of "manhood" being cast down leads to Lawrence's **central concern that social conditioning was distancing man from his natural impulses and instincts**. He loathed the imposition of norms that suppressed man's innate nature.

Thus, is *Piano* another one of Lawrence's masterpieces, as he once again portrays the complex workings and dealings of the human heart in such a refined, elegant yet simple manner that he pulls at all the right heartstrings and one finds oneself tearing up while remembering one's own childhood days. The poem is **short** and concentrated, rising to the **crescendo of feeling like the woman at the piano**.

Question 14

How do Seamus Heaney's poems *Digging* and *Follower* provide a link to his past?

[20]

Comments of Examiners

In some cases, this question was well attempted with full explanation of the poem and the link between the past and the present made clear. The question being divided between two poems, answers were satisfactorily balanced.

However, some candidates were confused about the time frame in *Digging* (gardening – present, farming – twenty years ago) and made the father dig for potatoes in the present. Some commonly omitted points: “I will dig with it.” The tone of *Follower* was hardly discussed – the attitude to the father in the present compared to the attitude in the past was overlooked in some answers.

Suggestions for teachers

- Give more written practice in class. Balance in discussing all poems asked about is an important skill that comes only with written practice.
- Biographical details are important to help students get to know the poet, if they do not use these details in answers. Teach students to identify the relevant biographical details for given questions. Themes – admiration of farmer and technique, respect for roots, are relevant to a present-past perspective.
- Clearly explain to students that Heaney's selected poems all deal with shifting time frames.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 14

Digging is a thirty-one-line poem written in free verse. It breaks up into stanzas of two to five lines, mirroring the jagged movement of the act it is named for. The presence in the poem of the first person “I” who wields a pen, and the family reminiscences, identifies the speaker as Seamus Heaney: the poem is **autobiographical** and contains references to Heaney's native Ireland.

The poem begins with an adult Heaney at the window, pen snugly in hand. From outside the window comes the “clean rasping” sound of digging: it is his father gardening. The sight and sounds of digging take Heaney back twenty years as he pictures his father, a much younger man and adept farmer, dig in rhythm, steadying the lug with his boots and the shaft of the spade against the inside knee. The image is of an expert, efficient farmer, working away quietly and gracefully. The cool feeling of the potatoes dug is a tactile image that drives home the point that this was a provider who worked in harmony with the earth.

By God the old man could handle a spade. Just like his old man.

This line takes us further back into the past, when the writer's grandfather would dig the peat out of the bog, cutting more than any other in Toner's Bog, again providing the fuel necessary for cooking and keeping warm. Heaney reminisces how he would take him milk corked clumsily with paper,

which he would drink in a gulp and fall to work straightaway. The description of the neat nicking and slicing and going deep down once again conveys the quiet dignity and competence. The single word “Digging” emphasizes the task and the manner of carrying it out. Onomatopoeia, alliteration and imagery go hand in hand as the picture is embellished in words – the “cold smell of potato mould”, the “squelch and slap of soggy peat” and the “curt cuts” of an edge demonstrate how Heaney has **literally used his pen to capture his heritage**. He concludes with the admission that he has no spade with which to follow the men he obviously admires, but has a pen and that, “I’ll dig with it.” Digging thus talks about the family heritage and skill being passed down generations, even as Heaney accepts his responsibility in a different profession while openly voicing admiration of what his family did and his desire to acknowledge and embrace it through his chosen vocation.

Follower is also about his childhood, when he hero-worshipped his father. Initially in the poem, the ‘follower’ is the **child who adoringly follows his father around**, hanging on to his every word and noticing every little thing about him. At the end, it appears the **roles have reversed and the child is the grown up youthful one while the father is the old, feeble ‘follower’** tottering after him requiring his patience, else it is the thought or ‘ghost’ of his father looking over his shoulder reminding him of all that he once wanted to emulate. The **Irish farming scene is brought to life through Heaney’s description of his father**. The rhyme scheme and regular lines of the stanzas reflect the dexterity and expertise of his father as he ploughs the land, clicking at the horse. He is unequivocally “An expert.” The sods also seem to roll away effortlessly as the sweating team equally effortlessly moves back and forth. Using nautical terms and imagery, Heaney notes how his father narrows his eyes, mapping the land exactly.

By contrast, the child is clumsy – stumbling in his “hobnailed wake”. The father, busy and occupied as he is, does not express impatience; instead he carries his son on his back and the imagery of the sea continues with the line about the boy “Dipping and rising to his plod”. The child wanted to become like him, although then all he did was to ‘follow’. The cycle of life come a full circle when he ends by saying, a bit abruptly, that today it is his father who is the follower who “will not go away”.

Both poems derive from **Heaney’s roots as an Irish farmer. He was born at his family farmhouse called Mossbawn in Northern Ireland**. Both poems are part of Heaney’s first significant published collection *Death of a Naturalist* (1966). They are concerned with **childhood memories and rural life**, a thread running through most of the 34 poems in this collection. The poems rely heavily on childhood experiences and connect with the poet’s farming roots. He is clearly **admiring of them**, in particular of his grandfather and father, even though he is not a farmer but a writer. Through his recollections and description, as well as his **desire to capture his roots with his pen, he challenges the stereotype of the Irish farmer as a boor, the “Paddy”, and clumsy**. These poems not only dig into Heaney’s past but also raise his **heritage to a mythical level with unabashed praise for the dignity and skill of the humble Irish farmer**.

Question 15

Analyse *The Thought Fox* by Ted Hughes as a poetic account of the act of writing poetry and seeking inspiration. [20]

Comments of Examiners

Poem seems to have been well understood by a number of candidates. However, in some cases, candidates could not make the connection between ‘thought’ and ‘fox’.

Candidates could analyse the fox as a symbol but tended to leave out *forest* and *star* as symbols. Some managed to make the connection between *forest* and *mind* clear but confused thought and inspiration in explanation. The key image of fox suddenly entering the head was often ignored.

Suggestion for teachers

- Stress upon the importance of giving accurate and relevant quotes.
- Discuss all metaphors and symbols – figurative use of language - and imagery in class
- Train students to recognize conventional symbols and images as well as those peculiar to individual poets.

MARKING SCHEME

Question 15

The Thought Fox is a frequently anthologised poem from Ted Hughes’ first collection, *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957). The poem is set in the late hours of the night, partly in a room in which the speaker is staring hopelessly at a blank sheet of paper before him, and partly in the snowy woods outside as a fox emerges from the trees. The **atmosphere** is one of desperation, as the speaker longs to concretise an idea in his mind and capture it on paper, and of an almost eerie presence of a creature outside, a creature that is a mix of violent ferocity and delicate grace.

The poem is short and crisp, consisting of **six stanzas** (quatrains), consisting of varying lengths of **lines and no uniform rhyme pattern**, although rhyme, eye rhyme and half rhyme is carefully placed at points (darkness / loneliness, snow / now). The movement of the lines and **enjambment** are intrinsic to the images created, conveying the quick movement or drawing it out. **Images** are visual, tactile and climax in brilliantly enthralling the sense of smell, sometimes emerging through **alliteration** and **repetition**. A hauntingly descriptive poem, it functions at a literal level of vivifying a creature gracefully yet ferociously emerging in the night and moving towards its lair, as well as at a symbolic level of an idea taking shape in the artist’s mind and emerging in its forefront with a quick violent movement.

The opening stanza paints of a picture of the silence of the night broken by the sound of the clock ticking that accentuates the “loneliness”. The page before the speaker is blank; he can sense the presence of a creature in the dark forest outside. **The alliteration “midnight moment’s”** hints at the symbolism that is to follow – the imagination senses “something” else is moving and the dark forest of the moment is to take on a wider connotation.

The speaker searches for ideas, the **star symbolising** inspiration. The repetition of “loneliness” heightens the solitude, even as he senses something moving out of the darkness. The alliteration brings out how that something is deeper within the darkness and yet closer than the star.

The slow line and the simile of the third stanza echo the slow movement of the fox as its cold wet nose first emerges cautiously, the **touch of the nose** keenly felt as it touches the twig and leaf as “delicately as the dark snow”. The darting eyes and the repeated “and now” similarly mirrors the quicker movement of the searching eyes.

Enjambment follows this repetition and the animal now walks slowly out of the protective cover of the trees, its neat prints in the snow visible as it stumbles in the layer of snow, a shadow approaching a stump. The image is sharp, as bold as the animal that decides to emerge into the clearing.

Yet another enjambment as the animal dares to come out and the poem moves into the fifth stanza that paints a vivid image of the creature’s widening green eyes “Brilliantly, concentratedly” looks around, taking in the surroundings before moving ahead. It is probably so close that the pair of eyes is now seen as a single eye.

The last stanza begins **with a “Till” that comes almost as a shock. The “sudden sharp hot stink of fox” is virtually a physical sensation**, the line, its quickness and sound effective in communicating the rapid dashing thrust of the fox as it enters its den – “the dark hole of the head”. By the end of the poem, although the silence punctuated by the clock remains and there is still no star outside, the page is no longer blank but “printed”.

The poem is a rich description of a fox as it moves out of a clump of trees in a forest into the clearing and rapidly into the fox hole. **The fox is more than a fox – it is a symbol of a faint idea stirring in the deep recesses of a writer’s imagination, the “forest”, its presence sensed yet the concrete though tantalising and out of reach.** Just as the fox is cautious and delicate at first, the idea then is weak and tentative. It is first shadowy, just as the fox is first a shadow walking unsteadily in the snow. The progress of the fox is that deep hidden inspiration evolving into a thought that the writer finally can grasp and put down on paper, as it comes out from the darker recesses of the mind into the forefront. The suddenness and unexpectedness with which it does so leaves one gasping. The inspiration is within the artist or the writer, although he seeks in vain for it outside as he notes the starless sky. It is for him to coax the formless stirring into concrete thought.

The fox is brought alive at a literal and a figurative level so keenly that Ted Hughes himself observed in *Poetry in the Making*, “that long after I am gone, as long as a copy of the poem exists, every time anyone reads it the fox will get up somewhere out of the darkness and come walking towards them.” The beauty of the poem is that the metaphor can be extended beyond a writer’s imagination to the sublimity of any creative process. Poetic – or any other – creation involves discomfort, unease, sensation, wariness emerging into bold rush and flow. The **symbolic element in the poem** makes the fox almost mythical, and indeed Hughes’ ‘animal’ poems have been read as both narratives for children as well as mythmaking compositions for those who wish to see more into them.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Topics found difficult by candidates

- Minute detailing, especially in narration, missed completely.
- Sequencing.
- Correct spelling and accurate quotes.
- Textual facts such as relationships and physical traits.
- Thematic and symbolic roles or significance of events.
- Input of biographical elements, especially in poetry.
- Literary devices for poetry analysis.
- Character – qualities.
- In poetry, question dealing with two poems in one question.
- Basic examination practice of numbering questions as per the question paper, rather than writing a different number to the one finally attempted.

Concepts in which candidates got confused

- Character and role.
- Relevant and irrelevant (to question) matter.
- Play or novel?
- In which work a character figures.
- Relationship between characters.
- Point made and substantiating textual illustration for it.
- Specific incidents within the work.
- Narration and significance of incident.
- Where to begin and end narration, what to include.

Suggestions for candidates

- Read the text thoroughly.
- Practise critical analysis of poems.
- Read about the life and times of authors/poets (not necessarily for inclusion in the answer).
- Read all parts of the question well and answer as per the requirements of the question.
- Revise all answers to ensure all parts of the question are attempted.
- Practise writing answers to a variety of questions.
- Avoid lengthy irrelevant detail.
- Answers should be based on textual study and classroom discussion, not on 'guide books' or notes from the internet.
- Introduction should be brief and connected to question – short notes do not need an introduction as the 20-mark answers do.
- Use self-study aids such as notes, flow charts or mind maps.
- Avoid errors of spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax.
- Present neat work, write in paragraphs.
- Be clear in communicating the point rather than leaving it to examiner to assume or 'fish' out.
- Number questions carefully and correctly.
- Answers must be written in smoothly flowing paragraphs.