

**DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, GNCT OF DELHI**

**PRACTICE PAPER (SESSION 2025 – 26)**

**CLASS-XII**

**ENGLISH CORE (CODE-301)**

**Time allowed: 3 Hrs.**

**Maximum Marks: 80**

**General Instructions**

- I. Read the following instructions very carefully and follow them:
- II. This question paper has 13 questions. All questions are compulsory.  
This question paper contains three sections:  
Section A: Reading Skills,  
Section B: Creative Writing Skills  
Section C: Literature.
- III. Attempt all the questions based on the specific instructions for each part. Write the correct question number and part thereof in your answer sheet.
- IV. Separate instructions are given with each question/part, wherever necessary.
- V. Adhere to the prescribed word limit while answering the questions.

<b>SECTION A: READING SKILLS</b>		22
1.	<p><b>1. Read the following passages.</b></p> <p>Dear reader, it rests with you and me, whether, in our two fields of action, similar things shall be or not. Let them be! We shall sit with lighter bosoms on the hearth, to see the ashes of our fires turn grey and cold.</p> <p>There is a wisdom of the Head, and a wisdom of the Heart. The first will never do alone. We must have both, to bring us to perfection. The heart must be educated, the affections trained, the feelings cultivated, or the mind is but a poor, cold instrument, that may strike with precision, but without melody.</p> <p>Sissy Jupe, the simple-hearted girl, who had known so much sorrow, was the comforter of many. She had no learning of the head, but she had a store of love and gentleness that never failed her. Her cheerful spirit and her kind heart shed brightness upon all around her. Wherever she went, she carried tenderness and hope.</p> <p>Louisa Gradgrind, after her trials, found peace at last. Her life was quiet, but not lonely; for Sissy was her constant companion, and the children who gathered about them learned early that love is better than pride, and faith more beautiful than knowledge.</p> <p>Mr. Gradgrind, humble before the wisdom of the Heart, kept to the end of his life a conscience sore and tender for the mistakes of his early training.</p>	12

He had learned, in his own sharp experience, that rigid Facts and cold Reason are not all in all; that the graces and gentlenesses of life are its soul; and that imagination, pity, and affection are not to be banished from its duties, or denied their share in its rewards.

Thus, out of the ruin of his former system, something nobler arose. He had been a man made of facts and calculations, but he became a man touched by sorrow and made wise by love.

And so, among the smoke and the machinery of Coketown, there were still hearts that beat with kindness, still homes where tenderness and pity dwelt. There were children taught to believe in goodness, and men and women who learned, from the example of Sissy Jupe, that no life is wasted which brings comfort to another.

So ends this story. Not all lives are bright or successful, not all hearts are happy; but in the darkest streets, there shines, here and there, a small light — the light of love, of faith, and of compassion — which, if it be followed, will lead us at last to peace.

*Source: Hard Times by Charles Dickens (Book III, Chapter 9 – “Final”)*

**Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.**

- I. Dickens contrasts “wisdom of the Head” with “wisdom of the Heart” to emphasize- 1
  - A) the need for emotional balance in human life
  - B) the superiority of facts over feelings
  - C) the decline of education in industrial England
  - D) the importance of strict reasoning
  
- II. Through the character of Sissy Jupe, Dickens symbolizes — 1
  - A) the failure of modern education
  - B) the power of compassion and moral strength
  - C) the decline of industrial society
  - D) the importance of wealth and success
  
- III. Mr. Gradgrind’s transformation at the end of the story reflects Dickens’s belief that- 1
  - A) intellect alone can solve social problems
  - B) emotional growth leads to true wisdom
  - C) punishment ensures moral reform
  - D) success depends on discipline
  
- IV. The “light of love, faith, and compassion” that shines in the darkest streets is a symbol of —

	<p>1</p> <p>A) industrial progress B) material success C) moral hope in a corrupt world D) the fires of the factory</p> <p>V. How does Dickens use contrast in this passage to strengthen his moral message? 1</p> <p>VI. What does Sissy's influence reveal about Dickens's attitude toward education and morality? 1</p> <p>VII. In what way does Louisa's quiet life at the end serve as a form of redemption? 1</p> <p>VIII. How does the ending of <i>Hard Times</i> reflect Dickens's overall social vision? 1</p> <p>IX. Explain how Charles Dickens uses the character of Mr. Gradgrind to criticize the education system of his time. 2</p> <p>X. Discuss how the imagery of "light" in the passage symbolizes Dickens's moral message. 2</p>																	
2.	<p><b>Answer the following questions, based on the given passage.</b></p> <p><b>Delhi's Air Quality Deteriorates to 'Severe' Levels</b></p> <table border="1"> <caption>Delhi AQI Levels Over the Past Week (Nov 4-10, 2025)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>AQI (Approx.)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Nov 4</td><td>320</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 5</td><td>340</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 6</td><td>360</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 7</td><td>380</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 8</td><td>400</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 9</td><td>420</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 10</td><td>440</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The air quality in Delhi-NCR has worsened sharply, with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recording Air Quality Index (AQI) values above <b>400</b> in several areas — categorised as "Severe." The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) has now moved to <b>Stage III</b>, triggering stricter controls on construction, industrial activity, and vehicle movement.</p>	Date	AQI (Approx.)	Nov 4	320	Nov 5	340	Nov 6	360	Nov 7	380	Nov 8	400	Nov 9	420	Nov 10	440	10
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Meteorological factors have worsened the situation. Calm winds and low temperatures have trapped pollutants close to the ground, while post-Diwali fireworks and stubble burning in neighbouring states have added to the particulate load. Levels of **PM2.5 and PM10** — the most harmful particles — have remained dangerously high.

A **bar graph of daily AQI values for the last seven days** shows a clear upward trend, with readings consistently in the “Very Poor” to “Severe” range. The week began with an average AQI of around **320**, rising above **400** by the weekend and peaking at nearly **450** in some localities. Even brief improvements were minor, showing that pollution remains persistent rather than temporary.

According to reports from *The Times of India* and *Reuters*, visibility has dropped across the city, and morning smog has become denser. The Environment Ministry and Delhi Pollution Control Committee are monitoring the situation and may impose **Stage IV** measures if conditions do not improve.

Health experts warn that prolonged exposure to such air increases the risk of respiratory infections, asthma, and cardiovascular disease. Citizens are advised to stay indoors when possible, wear **N95 masks**, use air purifiers, and avoid outdoor exercise.

The continuing pattern reflected in the bar graph highlights that air pollution in Delhi is not a seasonal or one-day event, but a chronic crisis linked to urban planning, transport emissions, and agricultural burning. Without stronger regional coordination, temporary curbs under GRAP may bring only limited relief.

**Answer the following questions, based on the given passage.**

I. Fill in the Blanks: 1  
The levels of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are the main contributors to Delhi's poor air quality.

II. Which measure is part of the GRAP Stage III restrictions? 1  
a) Closure of schools  
b) Ban on fireworks  
c) Control on construction and industrial activity  
d) Free public transport

III. Using the bar graph, explain the trend of Delhi's AQI levels over the week and what it suggests about the city's pollution pattern. 2

**For Visually Impaired Candidates**

Based on the summary, describe how Delhi's air quality changed during the week and what this indicates about pollution levels in the city.

IV. What does the red dashed line at AQI 400 in the bar graph

represent?

- a) Beginning of winter season
- b) Threshold for the “Severe” category
- c) Mark for “Good” air quality
- d) Maximum measurable AQI

**For Visually Impaired Candidates**

According to the CPCB classification, an AQI reading above 400 belongs to which category?

- a) Poor
- b) Very Poor
- c) Severe
- d) Hazardous

V. Discuss how the combination of meteorological conditions and human activities worsened Delhi’s air quality.

2

VI. According to the report, Delhi’s air quality fell into which category during the week?

1

- a) Moderate
- b) Poor
- c) Very Poor
- d) Severe

VII. The bar graph shows that Delhi’s AQI peaked at nearly \_\_\_\_\_ on November 10, 2025.

**For Visually Impaired Candidates**

According to the report, Delhi’s AQI reached its highest level of about \_\_\_\_\_ during the week of November 4–10, 2025.

1

VIII. Which of the following factors mainly caused the rise in Delhi’s pollution levels?

1

- a) Heavy rainfall
- b) Fireworks and stubble burning
- c) Industrial shutdown
- d) Cold front and clean winds

**SECTION B: CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS**

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3. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words.

1x4=4

A. As the Secretary of your school’s Eco-Club, draft a notice in about 50 words informing students of Class XI and XII about a declamation competition on the topic ‘**Role of an Individual in Improving Delhi’s Air Quality.**’ Include details like date, venue, and registration process.

**OR**

B. As the Cultural Secretary of your school, draft a notice in about 50 words

	<p>inviting students for auditions to form a <b>Western Music Band</b>. Include details about the date, venue, and categories (vocals and instruments). Put your notice in a box</p>	
4.	<p><b>Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words.</b></p> <p>A. As the Sports Secretary, <b>Aarav Mehta</b>, of <b>Sunrise Public School, Indore</b>, draft an <b>invitation</b> for the <b>Annual Sports Meet</b>, inviting <b>Ms. Kavita Sharma</b>, a national-level athlete, to be the <b>chief guest</b> and inaugurate the event. Provide the essential details in about <b>50 words</b>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>B. You are <b>Ravi Narayan</b>, currently residing at <b>22, Green Park, Bengaluru</b>. You have been invited to judge an <b>inter-school debate competition</b> at your alma mater, <b>St. Joseph's High School, Mysuru</b>. Write a <b>formal reply</b> in about <b>50 words</b>, accepting the invitation and expressing your appreciation.</p>	1x4=4
5	<p><b>Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words</b></p> <p>A. You are <b>Aditi Menon</b>, residing at <b>27, Lake View Colony, Kochi</b>. Write a <b>letter to the Editor of The Daily Herald</b>, highlighting the <b>need to promote reading habits among students</b> in the digital age. Emphasise how schools, parents, and libraries can work together to revive interest in books. Use your own ideas as well as the cues given below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining reading habits due to excessive screen time</li> <li>• Importance of reading for imagination and empathy</li> <li>• Role of school libraries and book clubs</li> <li>• Encouraging parents to model reading at home</li> <li>• Building a culture of lifelong learning and curiosity</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>B. You are <b>Rohan Malhotra</b>, residing at <b>23, Maple Residency, Pune</b>. You have come across the following advertisement in <i>The City Chronicle</i> for the post of an <b>Assistant Content Writer</b> at a reputed publishing house. Write a <b>letter of application</b> for the post, enclosing your <b>bio-data</b>.</p>	1x5=5

	<p><b>VACANCY — ASSISTANT CONTENT WRITER</b>      Bright Minds Publishing Pvt. Ltd., a leading name in educational and digital publishing, invites applications for the post of <b>Assistant Content Writer</b>. <b>Requirements:</b> Excellent English writing skills, creativity, and proficiency in Office. Fresh graduates may apply. <b>Location:</b> Pune <b>Salary:</b> As per industry standards. Apply with a detailed resume to: <b>The HR Manager, Bright Minds Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Pune.</b> Email: hr@brightminds.in</p>	
	<p><b>6</b> <b>Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words:</b></p> <p>A. Environmental conservation has become a global priority in the face of rapid urbanisation and climate change. Individuals, schools, and communities play a crucial role in protecting natural resources. You are Riya Arora. Write an article for the monthly magazine edition of <i>The Green Voice</i> on the topic “Youth and Their Role in Environmental Conservation.” Use your own ideas as well as the cues given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and responsibility among youth</li> <li>• Sustainable lifestyle choices</li> <li>• School and community initiatives</li> <li>• Building a greener, cleaner future</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>The Annual Sports Meet of Sunshine Public School, Jaipur, was held recently with great enthusiasm and participation. As the senior editorial board member, Aarav Khanna, write a report for the school magazine, highlighting the key events and the spirit of sportsmanship. Use your own ideas as well as the cues given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and inauguration</li> <li>• Major events and competitions</li> <li>• Student participation and teamwork</li> <li>• Prize distribution and overall impact</li> </ul>	<b>1x5=5</b>
	<p><b>SECTION C: LITERATURE</b></p> <p><b>7</b> <b>Read the following extracts and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B).</b></p> <p>A.      but after the airport's security check,      standing a few yards away,      I looked again at her,      wan, pale as a late winter's moon</p>	<b>40</b>

and felt that old familiar ache,  
my childhood's fear,  
but all I said was, see you soon,  
Amma, all I did was  
smile and smile and smile.

- a. What comparison does the poet use to describe her mother's face? 1
  - a) As bright as the sun
  - b) Pale as a late winter's moon
  - c) As fresh as a flower
  - d) Shining like gold
- b. What does the phrase "*that old familiar ache*" refer to? 1
- c. What does the word "*wan*" mean in the context of the poem? 1
- d. Identify one poetic device used in the line "*pale as a late winter's moon.*" 1
- e. Why does the poet smile repeatedly at the end of the poem? 1
  - a) To hide her fear and sadness of losing her mother.
  - b) Because she is genuinely happy to leave for her journey.
  - c) To mock her mother's old age.
  - d) Because she is relieved that her mother is sleeping peacefully.
- f. Who is "Amma" in the extract, and what emotion does the poet express toward her? 1

**B.**

Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering through her wool  
Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.  
The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band  
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.

- a. What is Aunt Jennifer doing in the extract? 1
  - a) Weaving a tapestry
  - b) Painting a picture
  - c) Knitting with wool
  - d) Writing a letter
- b. What does the phrase "*fluttering fingers*" suggest about Aunt Jennifer? 1
- c. What does the poet mean by "*the massive weight of Uncle's wedding band*"? 1
- d. Identify one poetic device used in the line "*The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.*" 1
- e. Why does Aunt Jennifer find it hard to pull the ivory needle? 1
- f. What contrast does the poet draw between Aunt Jennifer and her tigers in the poem? 1
  - a) Both are bold and fearless.
  - b) Aunt Jennifer is timid, while her tigers are fearless and strong.

	<p>c) Aunt Jennifer is dominant, and her tigers are submissive. d) Both are oppressed and weak.</p>	
8	<p><b>Read the following extracts and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B).</b></p> <p>A.</p> <p>Yes, I keep looking for the third level at the Grand Central Station. I've tried dozens of times. Sometimes I think I'm just imagining it. But I know it's there. For one thing, the President of the New York Central tells me there are only two levels. And I told him there may be, but I've been to the third. I've walked down that corridor that leads to the old wooden turnstile and the flickering gaslights, and I've heard the clang of horses' hooves and the murmur of people in derby hats and beards.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(The Third level)</p> <p>a. Why does the narrator mention the President of the New York Central? 1</p> <p>b. The narrator describes hearing the <i>clang of horses' hooves</i> and the <i>murmur of people in derby hats</i> to show that _____. 1</p> <p>c. What mood or tone is created through the description of the third level? 1</p> <p>d. What made the narrator believe in the existence of the third level? 1</p> <p>a) He read about it in a newspaper. b) He had dreamt of it. c) He had personally been there and experienced it. d) A friend had told him about it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>B.</p> <p>Mr. Lamb: You're a boy of fourteen. You've got your whole life in front of you. Whatever's wrong with your face — it's not the end of the world.</p> <p>Derry: You think I don't care about being lonely? You think I don't see people looking at me, turning away, pretending I'm not there?</p> <p>Mr. Lamb: People are never just what you see with your eyes. There's more inside everyone — waiting to be found. You can shut yourself away and feel safe, or you can open the gate and climb the ladder, and see the world for yourself. It's your choice, lad. Things aren't always as bad as you think.</p> <p>a. What does Mr. Lamb mean when he says, "<i>People are never just what you see with your eyes</i>"? 1</p> <p>b. What advice does Mr. Lamb give to Derry in the extract? 1</p> <p>a) To stay away from people who mock him</p>	4x1=4

	<p>b) To shut himself away from the world  c) To face the world positively and not lose hope  d) To ignore everyone completely</p> <p>c. Mr. Lamb tells Derry that whatever is wrong with his face _____.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1</p> <p>d. How does Derry feel when people look at him and turn away? _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1</p>	
	<p><b>9</b>Read the following extracts and solve ANY ONE of the given two, (A) or (B).</p> <p>The next morning, when the ironmaster and his daughter came to the breakfast table, they found a letter on it. The rattrap peddler had gone, but he had left behind a small package. Inside was a rattrap and thirty kronor. Along with it was a note that read: "Honoured and noble Miss, since you have been so kind to me as if I were a real captain, I want to be nice to you in return. I do not wish to be caught in this world's rattrap. You can give the money to the old man who needed it. Signed, Captain von Stahle." (The Rattrap)</p> <p>a. What did the peddler leave behind at the ironmaster's house? 1  a) Thirty kronor and a letter for the ironmaster  b) A rattrap, thirty kronor, and a note addressed to Edla  c) A rattrap and his uniform  d) Only the thirty kronor he had stolen</p> <p>b. The peddler signed his note as _____. 1  a) The Rattrap Seller  b) Captain von Stahle  c) The Ironmaster's Guest  d) Edla Willmansson</p> <p>c. Why did the peddler return the thirty kronor? 1  a) He was afraid of being caught  b) He wanted to thank Edla for her kindness and regain his self-respect  c) He had no use for money  d) He wanted to trick the ironmaster again</p> <p>d. What does the "rattrap" symbolize in the story? 1</p> <p>e. How did Edla's behavior influence the peddler's transformation? 1</p> <p>f. Complete the sentence: 1  The peddler's letter and gift to Edla show that _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>B.</p> <p>Sophie walked home in a kind of dream. The evening light glowed softly, and her mind was still filled with the image of Danny Casey — tall, fair, and gentle-eyed. She imagined the surprise on Jansie's face when she would tell her about meeting him near the arcade. "He spoke to me, Jansie. Danny Casey actually spoke to me!" she would say. In her thoughts, Sophie replayed the moment — his shy smile, the way he promised to meet her again next week. Her heart raced at the idea of it. She could already see herself walking with him along the canal, everyone staring, whispering. The excitement fluttered inside her like wings. Reality — the small house, her father's gruff voice, the dirty streets —</p>	$1 \times 6 = 6$

	<p>all faded away. Sophie's world sparkled with dreams, fragile yet beautiful, where anything seemed possible.</p> <p>a. Sophie's excitement after meeting Danny Casey primarily reveals —1      A. her desire to escape her ordinary life      B. her disappointment in reality      C. her genuine friendship with Jansie      D. her ambition to become a football player</p> <p>b. Sophie imagines walking with Danny Casey along the canal, which symbolizes her _____. 1      A. fear of failure      B. connection with her family      C. longing for recognition      D. guilt about lying</p> <p>c. Who does Sophie imagine being surprised by her story? 1      A. Geoff      B. Jansie      C. Her father      D. Danny Casey</p> <p>d. Why does Sophie's imagination blur the line between dream and reality? 1      e. What does the phrase "<i>the excitement fluttered inside her like wings</i>" suggest about Sophie's emotions? 1      f. Sophie's fantasy world contrasts sharply with _____. 1</p>	
10	<p><b>Answer any five of the following six questions in 40-50 words each:</b>  <math>5 \times 2 = 10</math></p> <p>I. How does Alphonse Daudet use the classroom setting in <i>The Last Lesson</i> to highlight the themes of language, identity, and loss? 2</p> <p>II. How does William Douglas describe his journey from fear to mastery over water, and what does it reveal about personal growth? (Deep Water) 2</p> <p>III. In what way does Keats present beauty as a source of spiritual healing in <i>A Thing of Beauty</i>? 2</p> <p>IV. How does the poet use silence and stillness as metaphors in <i>Keeping Quiet</i> to promote global peace and self-reflection? 2</p> <p>V. How does <i>The Interview</i> explore the ethical and moral dimensions of modern journalism? 2</p> <p>VI. What social issues does Anees Jung expose through the stories of Saheb and Mukesh in <i>Lost Spring</i>? 2</p>	
11	<p><b>Answer any two of the following three questions in 40 -50 words each:</b></p> <p>I. How do the extreme conditions of the Antarctic shape the explorers' character and teamwork? 2</p> <p>II. What can we infer about the author's understanding of society from his childhood experiences? 2</p> <p>III. Why is Mr. Lamb's advice to Derry about looking beyond appearances significant, and what does it teach about human perception? 2</p>	2 $\times 2 = 4$

12	<p><b>Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words.</b></p> <p>A. Both <i>Indigo</i> and <i>The Roadside Stand</i> depict the hardships faced by farmers due to exploitation and neglect. If society—whether planters, urban people, or authorities—had supported these farmers, how might their lives and work have changed? Explain with reasons.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>B. Both <i>Going Places</i> and <i>Poets and Pancakes</i> explore the dreams and ambitions of young people trying to assert their independence. If the protagonists in both stories had received guidance and encouragement from adults instead of being ignored or restricted, how might their choices and future have changed? Explain with reasons.</p>	1x5=5
13	<p><b>Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words:</b></p> <p>A. In <i>The Enemy</i>, Dr. Sadao faces a difficult choice when he discovers an injured enemy soldier on his shore. How does his decision to help the soldier reflect the importance of personal choices, and what does it teach us about morality and responsibility?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>B. How does Kalki use the structure of <i>The Tiger King</i>—including the sequence of events, suspense, and twist ending—to enhance the story and highlight its theme of pride and its consequences?</p>	1x5=5