

SSLC EXAMINATION, MARCH - 2025

ENGLISH

Second Language

Total Score :

Time : 2½ Hours

Instructions :

- The first 15 minutes is the cool-off time. You may use the time to read the questions and plan the answers.
- Read the questions carefully before answering them.
- Certain sections of the questions have choice. Follow the choice regulations.
- When you select a question, all its sub questions (if any) must be answered from the same question.

Questions 1-5. Read the excerpt from 'Vanka' and answer the questions that follow.

'Dear Grandad, for the dear Lord's sake take me away from here. Take me home to the village. I can't bear it any longer. Oh! Grandad, I beg and implore you and I will always pray for you, do take me away from here or I'll die...'

Vanka's lips twitched, he rubbed his eyes with a black fist and gave a sob.

'I will grind your snuff for you,' he went on. I will pray for you and you can flog me as hard as you like if I am naughty. And if you think there is nothing for me to do I will ask the steward to take pity on me and let me clean the boots or I will go as a shepherd-boy instead of Fedya. Dear Grandad I can't stand it. It is killing me. I thought I would run away on foot to the village but I have no boots and I am afraid of the frost. And when I grow up to be a man I will look after you and I will not let anyone hurt you and when you die, I will pray for your soul like I do for my Mummie.'

1. What is Vanka's request to his Grandad ?
2. Why is Vanka unable to escape from the shoemaker's house ?
3. What is the attitude of the shoemaker towards Vanka ?
 - (A) Cruel and torturous,
 - (B) Kind and compassionate
 - (C) Empathetic and loving
 - (D) Indifferent and unsentimental

4. How does Vanka's statement "Dear Grandad I can't stand it. It is killing me." reflect his emotional state?
5. Pick out the word from the passage that means 'to make a sudden small movement with a part of the body'.

Questions 6-9. Read the lines from 'Blowin' in the Wind' and answer the questions that follow:

4x1=4

Yes, and how many times must a man look up

Before he can see the sky?

Yes, and how many ears must one man have

Before he can hear people cry?

Yes, and how many deaths will it take till he knows

That too many people have died?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind

The answer is blowin' in the wind.

6. What does 'sky' stand for?
7. What does the line 'The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind' suggest?
8. Who is the 'he' in the line 'Before he can hear people cry' refer to?
- (A) A celebrity
- (B) A fictional character
- (C) Humanity or leaders in general
- (D) A historical personality
9. What do we call the questions used here which do not demand a specific answer?

rhetorical
question

10. Read the lines from 'Poetry' and prepare an appreciation focusing on the theme, imagery and poetic devices.

1x5=5

And it was at that age ... Poetry arrived
in search of me. I don't know, I don't know where
it came from, from winter or a river.
I don't know how or when,
no they were not voices, they were not
words, nor silence,
but from a street I was summoned,
from the branches of night,
abruptly from the others,
among violent fires
or returning alone,
there I was without a face
and it touched me.

Questions 11-15. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow. 5x1=5

A young man, weary from his search for peace, decided to seek the guidance of a wise old master who lived alone on a remote mountain. After days of difficult travel, he finally reached the place. The master greeted him warmly.

"What troubles you, dear young man?" asked the master.

The young man sighed. "I've been meditating for years, and seeking answers. But I still feel restless. I want to find peace, but it seems out of reach."

The master smiled gently and said, "Come with me."

The two walked down to a nearby lake. The master picked up a smooth stone and tossed it into the water. "What happens when the stone hits the lake?" asked the master.

The young man watched ripples* spread across the water. "The water is disturbed, and ripples form, moving outward", he replied.

The master nodded, and then waited in silence. Slowly, the ripples faded, and the lake returned to its previous state of stillness.

"And now?" asked the master.

"The water is calm again," said the young man.

The master said. "This lake is like your mind. When thoughts, emotions, or outside events disturb you, they create ripples, just like the stone. The more you focus on them, the longer they last. But if you let them settle, the mind naturally returns to peace."

The young man stood in thought. "So, my mind is already peaceful. I've been creating ripples by thinking too much."

The master nodded. Happily, the young man returned, ready to live with a calmer heart.

**ripples - a small wave on the surface of water*

11. Whose advice did the young man decide to take?

12. What did the master use to explain the young man's mind ?
- (A) A tree swaying in the wind.
 - (B) A lake disturbed by ripples.
 - (C) A bird flying in the sky.
 - (D) A mountain standing still.

13. What was the young man's mistake in his pursuit of peace ?
- (A) He was meditating a lot.
 - (B) He avoided seeking guidance from others.
 - (C) He was focusing too much on disturbances.
 - (D) He was spending too much time in nature.

14. What lesson does the master teach the young man ?

15. In what state of mind did the young man return after meeting the master ?

Questions 16 & 17. Answer *any one* of the following in about 120 words.

1x7=

16. The play 'The Never-Never Nest' highlights the drawbacks of the hire purchase system and the consequences of living beyond one's means. Write a **review** of the play focusing on its theme, characterisation and plot structure.

(Hints : leads a luxurious life on instalments - expenditure exceeds income - walks into a debt trap - Aunt Jane tries to guide)

- ✓ 17. 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' illustrates how a single act of kindness transforms lives. Prepare a **write-up** on the topic 'Compassion and Support can create wonders in one's life' reflecting on the story.

(Hints : leads a life of loose morals - helped by the trio - youth welfare activities - an act of kindness leads to another one)

Questions 18-20. Answer *any two* of the following.

2x5=

- ✓ 18. The visit to Fide's house alters Adichie's perception of his family. She jots down her feelings in her diary after the visit. Prepare the likely **diary entry** highlighting her emotions and reflections.

- ✓ 19. The Theatre Club of your school has decided to dramatise the story 'The Castaway' which explores themes of relationship and abandonment. Being the convenor of the club, you are asked to prepare a notice for the programme. Prepare the likely **notice**.

20. Read the extract given below and prepare **five questions** based on it.

Mr Thorat's men had fixed a five-foot iron rod to the ground, about thirty feet from the area where the tiger was supposed to take a walk. They took a thin, long wire and fixed one end to the collar made of tiger-skin that the tiger was already wearing. The other end was tied firmly to the visible portion of the iron rod. The door of one of the cages was unfastened and Mr Thorat called out to the tiger. It responded almost at once and sprang out of its cage to land on the open space outside. What followed was totally unexpected. One look at Mr Thorat's startled and helpless face told us that he was as taken aback as the rest of us.

2x6=12

Questions 21-24. Answer *any two* of the following.

21. ✓ Martha's unwavering determination enables her to win the Scholarship Jacket overcoming many attempts to undermine merit using money and influence. Prepare the likely **character sketch** of Martha.
22. ✓ 'The Snake and the Mirror' is a humorous and thrilling tale that talks about a homeopath's encounter with a snake. **Narrate** the series of events, highlighting his reactions and reflections.
23. The use of a dwarf as a stand-in for a dog in Hollywood puzzled Ray. The incident attracted media attention. Prepare the likely **news report**.
24. 24 On July 28, Nature Conservation Day, you are asked to deliver a speech in the school assembly on the topic 'Diversity and Harmony in Nature'. In the light of your reading of 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree', prepare the text of the likely **speech**.

25. ✓ Prepare a **profile** of Langston Hughes using the details given below.

1x6=6

Full Name	:	James Mercer Langston Hughes
Birth	:	February 1, 1902, Missouri, U.S.
Famous as	:	Poet, social activist, novelist, playwright
Education	:	Lincoln University, Columbia University
Notable works :		<i>Dream Variation, Fine Clothes to the Jew, Harlem, Not Without Laughter</i>
Associated Movement	:	Harlem Renaissance
Awards	:	Witter Bynner Undergraduate Poetry Prize
Death	:	May 22, 1967, New York

Questions 26-30. Read the news headlines given below and answer the questions that follow. 5x1=5

D Gukesh crowned world chess champion
 Cyclone Fengal wreaks havoc in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu
 Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain passes away
 India and Germany to hold strategic foreign policy dialogue
 Kerala witnesses human-wildlife conflict across 1004 areas
 AI not a substitute for human brain

26. Which two countries engage in a dialogue on foreign affairs ?
27. The headline that talks about an Indian's victory in global sports arena is :
28. Those who wish for a peaceful co-existence of humans with wildlife might be disturbed by the news :
29. Which headline mourns the death of a legendary tabla player ?
30. The headline that talks about an extreme weather event is :
31. Report the following dialogue. 2
- Producer : When do you plan to reshoot the scenes at Boral ?
 Ray : I plan to reshoot the scenes tomorrow.
32. Edit the passage given below. The errors are given in bold. 4
- Grandfather in 'The Scholarship Jacket' makes us realised(a) that there is(b) certain things in life what(c) money cannot buy. His words serve as a(d) eye-opener to the principal, who reverses the board's decision and awards the Jacket to Martha.
33. Complete the following passage using the appropriate forms of the phrasal verbs given in brackets. 4
- As Kiran unlocked the box of Nilkanta to place her surprise gift, the lid suddenly _____(a)_____, spilling out a jumble of petty things. In order to place her gift, she began to pull out everything. Then, she was _____(b)_____ to see the missing inkstand hidden under a layer of linen. She couldn't _____(c)_____ what had prompted him to steal it. Watching from behind, Nilkanta _____(d)_____ immediately.
 (run through, run away, make out, spring up, taken aback)
 ran

34. Fill in the blanks using the words given in brackets.

Nine-year-old Vanka Zhukov, / (a) had been apprenticed three months ago to Alyakhin / (b) shoemaker, did not go to bed / (c) Christmas Eve. He waited until his master, mistress, / (d) the senior apprentices had gone to church. Then, he began to write a letter to his grandfather.

(the, and, who, on, in)

35. Complete the conversation between Ali and the junk collector suitably.

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- Ali : Good morning, Sir. You collect junk from the shops around here, _____ (a) _____ ?
- The junk collector : Yes _____ (b) _____ ?
- Ali : I've come searching for my sister's shoes. I left them at Akbar Aqa's shop. _____ (c) _____ ?
- The junk collector : I don't know whether I took your shoes from there.
- Ali : Would you mind my _____ (d) _____ ?
- The junk collector : No, I don't mind your checking. I left some junk in the backyard of my house. You had better _____ (e) _____ ?
- Ali : Okay Sir. Thank you.

36. Read the following statements and identify the Noun Phrase in the subject position in each.

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- (a) The life of Vanka represents the plight of orphans around the world.
- (b) The fierce battle between the mongoose and the cobra was keenly watched by the boy.