

DIRECTORATE OF GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS · SAMACHEER KALVI

TAMIL NADU SSLC · 10th STANDARD

2026 COMPLETE EXAM GUIDE

Pattern · Subject-wise Syllabus · Books · Preparation Tips

Tamil

English

Maths

Science

Social Science

An independent study companion for SSLC students, parents & teachers



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The Tamil Nadu Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) examination, conducted every year by the Directorate of Government Examinations (DGE) under the Samacheer Kalvi (uniform system) curriculum, is the first major public examination in a Tamil Nadu student's academic life. It marks the transition from secondary school to the higher secondary stage, and the choices students make right after — Science, Commerce, or Humanities — are often shaped by how they perform here.

This ebook is designed as a single, colourful reference that brings together everything a student, parent, or teacher needs at a glance: the exam pattern and marking scheme, a subject-wise breakdown of the syllabus, the official Samacheer Kalvi textbooks and useful reference books, and a practical, week-by-week style preparation strategy.

Who is this guide for?

- Class 10 students preparing for their first public board examination.
- Parents who want a clear, jargon-free picture of the exam structure.
- Teachers and tutors looking for a quick refresher on the current pattern.
- Students returning for supplementary / compartment exams.

The SSLC exam is conducted in offline (pen-and-paper) mode. Students must appear for five compulsory subjects — Tamil, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science — plus, in some schools, an optional language paper whose marks do not count toward the pass/fail result.

Introduction

Why this guide, and how to use it

Every subject in the TN SSLC exam is evaluated out of 100 marks. Science alone is split into a theory paper and a separate practical / internal assessment component; the other four subjects are evaluated through theory papers (with internal assessment built in for some subjects).

Subject	Total Marks	Theory	Practical / IA	Duration
Tamil (Paper I & II)	100	100	—	2.5–3 hrs
English (Paper I & II)	100	100	—	2.5–3 hrs
Mathematics	100	100	—	2.5–3 hrs
Science	100	75–80	20–25	2.5–3 hrs
Social Science	100	80	20 (IA)	2.5–3 hrs

Passing criteria & question style

- A minimum of 35% (35 marks out of 100) is required in each compulsory subject to pass.
- For Science, students need at least 20/75 in theory and 15/25 in the practical component.
- Marks scored in an optional language paper, where offered, are not counted toward pass/fail.
- There is no negative marking anywhere in the SSLC exam.
- Question papers mix multiple-choice, very short, short, and long-answer questions across four sections, testing understanding, application and problem-solving rather than rote recall.
- Students who do not clear one or more subjects can appear for the supplementary / compartment exam, usually held in June–July, with the same 35% passing requirement.

The final result is computed on the best-of-five subjects out of a total of 500 marks, so consistent performance across all five compulsory subjects matters more than excelling in just one.

Exam Pattern Overview

Marks, duration & passing criteria

The Tamil paper tests both literary appreciation and language application. It is generally split across two papers covering prose, poetry, drama/supplementary reading, and grammar.

Broad focus areas

- ■■■■■■■■ (Poetry) — appreciation, explanation and memory-based questions on prescribed poems.
- ■■■■■■ (Prose) — comprehension and analysis of prescribed prose chapters.
- ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ / ■■■■ ■■■■ (Supplementary text / drama) — themes, characters and moral value questions.
- ■■■■■■■■ (Grammar) — sandhi, vocabulary, idioms, sentence formation and error correction.
- ■■■■■■■■■■■■ (Creative writing) — letter writing, essay writing and summarisation.

Tamil is a compulsory core subject for students studying in Tamil medium; those in other language media study Tamil as one of the languages per the state's three-language policy, with the exact paper structure varying slightly by medium.

Subject Syllabus — Tamil

Paper I & Paper II

The English paper evaluates reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and writing skills through prescribed prose, poetry and supplementary reader content.

Broad focus areas

- Prose & Poetry — comprehension passages and appreciation questions from the prescribed reader.
- Supplementary reader — theme-based and character-based questions.
- Grammar & Vocabulary — tenses, articles, prepositions, synonyms/antonyms, one-word substitution.
- Writing skills — formal/informal letters, paragraph and essay writing, dialogue writing.
- Non-detailed / unseen passages — testing reading comprehension independent of the textbook.

Since English carries equal weight to every other subject, regular reading practice and writing full-length answers under time pressure — not just grammar drilling — makes the biggest difference to the final score.

Subject Syllabus — English

Paper I & Paper II

The Samacheer Kalvi Class 10 Mathematics textbook builds on Class 9 concepts and is organised around core branches of school mathematics that carry forward directly into Class 11 and 12.

Core units

- Relations and Functions — sets, relations, types of functions.
- Numbers and Sequences — Euclid's division lemma, arithmetic & geometric progressions.
- Algebra — polynomials, quadratic equations, simultaneous linear equations.
- Geometry — similar triangles, circles, Pythagoras theorem applications.
- Coordinate Geometry — area of triangles, section formula, straight lines.
- Trigonometry — heights and distances, trigonometric identities.
- Mensuration — surface area and volume of combined solids.
- Statistics and Probability — measures of dispersion, basic probability.

Mathematics rewards daily practice more than any other subject. Working through the exercise problems in the textbook — not just formulas — is the most reliable way to build speed and accuracy for the exam.

Subject Syllabus — Mathematics

Units & focus areas

Science combines Physics, Chemistry and Biology into a single paper with an accompanying practical / internal assessment component, so time management across the three streams during revision is important.

Broad focus areas

- Physics — laws of motion, electricity, magnetism, optics and the measurement of physical quantities.
- Chemistry — periodic classification of elements, acids/bases/salts, carbon and its compounds, and everyday chemistry.
- Biology — heredity and evolution, plant and human physiology, health and diseases, and environmental science.
- Practical component — experiments, diagrams and observation-based questions assessed through internal/practical marks.

Diagrams matter in Science: a well-labelled diagram for a Biology or Physics concept often carries dedicated marks on its own, independent of the written explanation.

Subject Syllabus — Science

Physics · Chemistry · Biology

Social Science brings together four disciplines — History, Geography, Civics and Economics — in one paper, each contributing a defined share of the total marks.

Broad focus areas

- History — nationalism and the freedom struggle, world wars, and the making of independent India.
- Geography — natural resources, agriculture, industries, and map-based questions on India and Tamil Nadu.
- Civics — the Indian Constitution, fundamental rights and duties, and the structure of government.
- Economics — basic economic concepts, money and banking, and the Indian economy.

Map work in Geography and timeline-based questions in History are easy, high-return marks — practising outline maps and chronological event lists pays off disproportionately here.

Subject Syllabus — Social Science

History · Geography · Civics · Economics

The single most important resource for every subject is the official Samacheer Kalvi Class 10 textbook published by TNSCERT / Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation — exam questions are set directly from these books, available free in both Tamil and English medium (and several regional-language editions) on the official textbook portal.

Subject	Primary resource	Use it for
Tamil	Samacheer Kalvi Std 10 Tamil textbook	Prose, poetry, grammar & creative writing
English	Samacheer Kalvi Std 10 English textbook	Reader, grammar & writing skills
Mathematics	Samacheer Kalvi Std 10 Maths textbook	Worked examples & exercise problems
Science	Samacheer Kalvi Std 10 Science textbook	Physics, Chemistry, Biology concepts & diagrams
Social Science	Samacheer Kalvi Std 10 Social Science textbook	History, Geography, Civics & Economics

Beyond the textbook

- Previous 5–10 years' official SSLC question papers, freely available on the DGE website.
- School-issued question banks and one-mark/two-mark revision guides aligned to the current pattern.
- A good English–Tamil / Tamil–English dictionary for vocabulary-heavy language papers.
- An outline atlas or practice map booklet for Social Science geography and map questions.

Avoid piling on too many outside guidebooks. Mastering the official textbook thoroughly, then using past papers to test yourself, covers the vast majority of what the SSLC exam asks.

Recommended Books

Textbooks & reference material

A simple, sustainable preparation approach

- Start with the exam pattern, not the syllabus — knowing how marks are distributed tells you where to invest your time.
- Cover the full syllabus at least a month before the exam, leaving the final weeks for revision and practice papers only.
- Rotate subjects daily rather than studying one subject for days at a stretch — it keeps every subject fresh.
- Solve at least 5 years of previous question papers under real time limits, not just for practice but to build exam-day pacing.
- For Tamil & English, practise full answers (letters, essays) by hand — these are graded on structure, not just content.
- For Mathematics, keep a personal "mistake notebook" of problems you got wrong and revisit it weekly.
- For Science & Social Science, use flowcharts, timelines and labelled diagrams instead of long written notes.
- Sleep and revision beat late-night cramming — most students retain more from a well-rested morning revision session.

On exam day

- Reach the exam centre with your hall ticket well ahead of the reporting time.
- Read the full question paper in the first few minutes and plan how much time each section deserves.
- Attempt questions you're confident about first — momentum matters more than order.
- Leave a few minutes at the end to recheck answer numbering and unanswered questions.

"Consistency beats intensity." A steady one-to-two-hour daily routine sustained over months will always outperform an anxious week of last-minute cramming.

Preparation Tips

A study plan that actually works

The SSLC exam can feel like a huge milestone, and in many ways it is — but it is also just one well-structured, well-documented exam. The pattern is public, the syllabus is fixed, the textbooks are free, and thousands of students clear it successfully every year (Tamil Nadu's overall SSLC pass percentage has consistently stayed in the low-to-mid nineties in recent years). What separates a comfortable pass from a strong, confident score is almost always the same thing: a clear plan, steady daily effort, and enough practice papers to feel at home with the question format before the real exam day arrives.

Use this guide as a map, not a substitute for your school's teaching or the official DGE notifications — always verify exam dates, the final syllabus and any circular-based changes on dge.tn.gov.in closer to your exam.

All the best for your SSLC exams — study smart, stay consistent, and walk into that exam hall with confidence!