CBSE EXAMINATION PAPER-2026

ENGLISH

(Solved)

Time allowed : 3 hours | Maximum Marks : 74

General Instructions :

Read the following instructions carefully and follow them :

i. This question paper contains **29 questions.** All questions are **compulsory.**

ii. This question paper is divided into **10 sections.**

iii. **Section A** – questions number **1 to 2** are unseen passage

iv. **Section B** – questions number **3 to 8** are case based questions

v. **Section C** – questions number **9 to 17** are short answer

vi. **Section D** – questions number **18 to 19** are notice

vii. **Section E** – questions number **20 to 21** are formal invitation

viii. **Section F** – questions number **22 to 25** are long answer

ix. **Section G** – questions number **26 to 26** are letter

x. **Section H** – questions number **27 to 27** are job application

xi. **Section I** – questions number **28 to 28** are article

xii. **Section J** – questions number **29 to 29** are report

xiii. There is no overall choice given in the question paper. However, an internal choice has been provided in few questions.

xiv. Use of calculator is NOT allowed.

Section A

Question 1.

Read the following passage carefully :

(1) Jonathan Seagull discovered that boredom, fear and anger are the reasons a gull's life is so short and with those gone from his thought, he lived a long, fine life indeed.

(2) They laughed at him. The other gulls scorned him. 'Such nonsense', they would squawk, as he practised flying, not for food but for the joy of flight itself. But Jonathan, undeterred, flew higher and faster than any gull before him. He learned that the secret to flight was not merely flapping wings, but in knowing the purpose of flying.

(3) 'Break the chain of your thought', he told himself, 'And you break the chains of your body.' In solitude, he mastered loops, dives and rolls. He flew at speeds that blurred the ocean below. The flock cast him out for defying tradition, he discovered that exile was not the end but a beginning. Alone, he found peace. Alone, he found the sky.

(4) One morning, soaring silently above the clouds, Jonathan was joined by two radiant gulls. Their wings shone with light and their presence was calm and sure. 'We've been watching you', they said. 'You're ready to come with us.'

'Where ?' Jonathan asked blinking in the sunlight.

'To a higher level of being,' they answered.

'You have learned much but there is more – more to flying, more to being a gull.'

(5) He followed them into a realm where flight was pure thought and time had no meaning. There, gulls didn't fight over scraps of bread or squawk at one another in fear. They flew to understand themselves to explore the limitless. There Jonathan met Chiang, the wisest gull, who told him : 'The only true law is that which leads to freedom – there is no other.'

(6) Jonathan began to teach others what he had learned, sharing not just flight techniques but freedom of thought. 'You can go as far as you wish,' he would say. 'Because you have the right to learn. You have the right to be free.' No longer bound by rules, written in sand, Jonathan soared not just through the skies but through understanding. And as he flew, he knew that greatness is not measured in a wingspan but in the courage to break free. (365 words)

Source : Jonathan Livingstone Seagull by Richard Bach.

Answer the following questions, based on the above passage :

> **(1) According to Jonathan, what was the secret of living a long life ? (para-1)**
>
> [1 Marks]

(2) How did Jonathan's unconventional passion for flying lead to his exclusion from the flock ? (para-2)

[2 Marks]

(3)

Read and complete the following sentence suitably :

'Break the chains of your thought and you break the chains of your body', suggests : (para-3)

Choose the correct response from the two options to complete the sentence :

(A) freedom is achieved through physical strength.

(B) mental liberation is the key to true freedom.

[1 Marks]

(4)

What do the two radiant gulls who approached Jonathan, most likely represent ? (para-4)

(A) rivals sent to watch his skills.

(B) a hallucination formed out of his loneliness.

(C) fellow gulls returning from his original flock.

(D) spiritual guides leading him to a higher plane.

[1 Marks]

(5)

Complete the following suitably with ONE advantage with reference to paragraph 3.

It was ironical that Jonathan Seagull's exile did not mean isolation but _____.

[1 Marks]

(6) In Chiang's statement, "the only true law is that which leads to freedom – there is no other", what does the phrase 'the only true law refer to ? (para-5)

[1 Marks]

(7)

Provide one textual evidence with reference to paragraph 4 to prove the following :

You are ready to come with us.

[1 Marks]

(8)

Complete the analogy with ONE word from paragraph 6 : free : bound dropped : _____

(A) soared

(B) learned

(C) measured

(D) break

[1 Marks]

(9)

Select the option that best explains Jonathan's transformation after meeting Chiang.

(A) becomes more aggressive and fearless

(B) forgets that past and returns to his flock.

(C) learns to use his skills to dominate the other gulls.

(D) internalises freedom and shares his wisdom with others.

[1 Marks]

(10) In what way did Jonathan's journey challenge traditional beliefs ? Give an example.

[2 Marks]

Question 2.

Read the following passage carefully :

(1) Introduction : India faces a serious road safety challenge. According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, over 4.8 lakh road accidents were reported in 2023, leading to 1.72 lakh deaths. Many of these could have been avoided by simple precautions – wearing helmets, fastening seatbelts and following speed limits. These statistics aren't just numbers; they represent lives lost and family dynamics changed forever.

(2) Methodology : Recognising this, several cities are becoming proactive, especially near school zones. The municipal corporations and traffic police have introduced stricter school-zone safety measures – speed bumps, zebra crossings and digital signboards. This led to a 30% drop in minor accidents near schools, within a year. The success lay in combining infrastructure with awareness. Parents, teachers and traffic marshals helped monitor traffic during school hours.

(3) Survey : It's not just governments stepping up. In many cities, class XI and XII students launched a campaign called 'Ride Right', promoting helmet use among two-wheeler riders. They handed out stickers, ran roadshows and launched a 'No Helmet, No Selfie' challenge that went viral. Over 2000 riders pledged to wear helmets daily. Their success even led to invitations from the municipal body to speak in other schools – proof of how youth-led efforts can spark policy engagement.

(4) Results : Technology is also playing a significant role. Automation through AI-powered traffic cameras, digital signs and automated lights is being implemented in metros to reduce human error and improve monitoring including Pilot projects such as iRASTE and AI based road safety pilot to predict and prevent accidents using real time data and alerts for drivers. These systems have led to a 40% rise in fine collection, showing improved rule enforcement. GPS based alert systems in school buses now notify parents of speeding or unscheduled stops – another step towards safer school commutes.

(5) Implication for interventions : Still, personal responsibility is the most powerful safety tool. Whether it's a student cyclist using the left lane or a pedestrian waiting for the signal, every right choice sets an example. A popular slogan in school says it best : 'I follow, I influence.' Road safety is about respecting life, valuing time, and leading by example.

Answer the following questions, based on the given passage :

Causes of Road Accidents in India (2023)		
S. No.	Causes	%
1.	Overspeeding	56
2.	Drunk driving	8
3.	No seatbelt/helmet	15
4.	Distraction (mobiles)	6
5.	Mechanical failure	4
6.	Weather/road condition	6
7.	Others	5

(1)

What strategy does the author use in paragraph (1) to highlight the seriousness of road accidents ?

(A) use of statistics and emotional appeal.

(B) humour and satire

(C) technical jargon and neutrality

(D) personal anecdotes and optimism

[1 Marks]

(2)

What evidence from the passage suggests that stricter school zone measures were effective ?

(A) the number of schools increased rapidly.

(B) there was a 30% drop in minor accidents near schools.

(C) teachers and parents opposed the new rules.

(D) students stopped commuting by bicycle.

[1 Marks]

(3)

What would the following be classified as ?

Students launched a campaign called “Ride Right” promoting helmet use among two wheeler riders. Select the appropriate response :

(A) primary purpose

(B) secondary objective

(C) method of analysis

(D) research outcome

[1 Marks]

(4) Give two points to support the success of the No Helmet – No Selfie Challenge.

[2 Marks]

(5)

Analyze why does the author emphasise that both technology and personal responsibility are important in promoting road safety.

[2 Marks]

(6)

Which word from paragraph 4 best conveys the idea of ‘ensuring compliance through authoritative measures’ especially in the context of traffic systems ?

(A) collection

(B) enforcement

(C) monitoring

(D) automation

[1 Marks]

(7) Complete the following with a suitable reason : Road safety is about personal responsibility because _____.

[1 Marks]

(8)

Which of the following inferences is best supported by the data in the table ?

(A) enforcement of helmet and seat belt rules would address the cause of road deaths.

(B) speeding is the key issue, which requires technological and behavioural interventions.

(C) mobile phone use while driving is the fastest growing cause of accidents.

(D) drunk driving accounts for more deaths than 'no helmet/seat belt' and distractions combined.

[1 Marks]

Section B

Question 3.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions:

It would be an exotic moment

without rush, without engines.

we would all be together

in sudden strangeness

Fishermen in the cold sea

would not harm whales

and the man gathering salt

would look at his hurt hands.

(Keeping Quiet)

(1)

What does the phrase ‘an exotic moment’ in the extract signify ?

(A) surreal pause from mechanized human activity enabling reflection and unity

(B) ceremonial halt wherein humans acknowledge traditional and ecological wisdom

(C) spontaneous event where all human labour becomes obsolete

(D) rare disruption of routine that highlights cultural diversity and isolation

[1 Marks]

(2)

Complete the following sentence suitably :

The words ‘we’ and ‘together’ signify _____.

[1 Marks]

(3)

Select the option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank :

The excerpt tells us that the poet _____ (condemns/glorifies) the moment ‘without rush, without engines’.

[1 Marks]

(4)

Choose the correct option that BEST reflects the tone of the poet in the given extract :

(A) despairing and cynical

(B) aggressive and accusatory

(C) meditative and hopeful

(D) humorous and sarcastic

[1 Marks]

(5)

Complete the sentence :

The phrase 'hurt hands' is a symbol of _____.

[1 Marks]

(6) What message is the poet conveying through the given extract ?

[1 Marks]

Question 4.

You have the money, but if you want to be mean

Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along

The hurt to the scenery, wouldn't be my complaint

So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid :

Here far from the city we make our roadside stand

And ask for some city money to feel in hand

To try if it will not make our being expand,

And give us the life of the moving – pictures' promise

That the party in power is said to be keeping from us.

(A Roadside Stand)

(1) What does the speaker imply in the statement ‘The hurt to the scenery wouldn’t be my complaint’

[1 Marks]

(2)

What emotion does the speaker reveal when he says, ‘if you want to be mean, why keep your money (this crossly) and go along’ ?

(A) curiosity

(B) bitterness

(C) indifference

(D) detachment

[1 Marks]

(3)

Complete the following suitably :

The word ‘expand’ in the line ‘to see if it will not make our being expand’ implies an aspiration to _____.

[1 Marks]

(4)

Read the two statements and choose the correct option :

Assertion (A) : The speaker critiques the governing party for withholding opportunities from the rural poor.

Reason (R) : The extract praises the government for their promises of a life of the moving pictures'. (A) Both the Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of the Assertion (A).

(B) Both the Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

(C) Assertion (A) is true, but the Reason (R) is false.

(D) Assertion (A) is false, but the Reason (R) is true.

[1 Marks]

(5)

Which of the following concerns is NOT explored in the extract ?

(A) political manipulation of rural dreams

(B) discrimination faced due to different religious policies.

(C) transactional disconnection between the city and the village.

(D) impact of unfulfilled expectations.

[1 Marks]

(6)

State in one sentence :

What advice your address to the politicians from this extract is most likely to include ?

[1 Marks]

Question 5.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions :

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother, I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's ! In my anguish, I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

(Memories of Childhood)

(1) Complete the following suitably "Then I lost my spirit", indicates that the speaker _____.

[1 Marks]

(2) What does Zit Kala-Sa imply about the prejudice prevailing in society when she talks of having 'suffered extreme indignities' ?

[1 Marks]

(3) Why did Zit Kala-Sa yearn to be with her mother in her moment of anguish ?

[1 Marks]

(4)

The tone of the narrator in the extract can be best described as

(A) bitter and strong willed

(B) detached and impersonal

(C) pained and despairing

(D) grateful and reflective

[1 Marks]

Question 6.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions:

Derry : But I'm not…. I'm not afraid [pause] people are afraid of me.

Mr. Lamb : Why should that be ?

Derry : Everyone is. It doesn't matter who they are, or what they say, or how they look. How they pretend. I know. I can see.

Mr. Lamb : See what ?

Derry : What they think ?

Mr. Lamb : What do they think, then ?

Derry : You think…. 'Here's a boy'. You look at me… and then you see my face and you think. That's bad. That's a terrible thing. 'That's the ugliest thing I ever saw.' You think, 'poor boy'. But I'm not. Not poor. Underneath, you are afraid. Anybody would be – I am. When I look in the mirror, and see it, I'm afraid of me.

Mr. Lamb : No, not the whole of you. Not of you.

Derry : Yes !

(On the Face of It)

(1)

Complete the following suitably :

According to Derry, the people put up a pretence when they see him because _____.

[1 Marks]

(2)

Which emotion dominates Derry's dialogue in this extract ?

(A) superiority

(B) shrewdness

(C) vulnerability

(D) indifference

[1 Marks]

(3)

Complete the following suitably :

When Mr. Lamb says, 'No, not the whole of you. Not of you.' He means _____.

(A) Your face will get healed and your ideas about your appearance will change.

(B) You are not just your face or your injury. That is not the sum total of who you are.

(C) I am afraid of your face and your appearance.

(D) You shouldn't look into the mirror so that you don't get the feeling of dejection.

[1 Marks]

(4)

State in one sentence :

What advice will you give to the people who pretend to look away when they see Derry's face ?

[1 Marks]

Question 7.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions:

The make-up room had the look of a hair-cutting salon with lights at all angles around half a dozen large mirrors. They were all incandescent lights, so you can imagine the fiery misery of those

subjected to make-up. The make-up department was first headed by a Bengali who became too big for the studio and left. He was succeeded by a Maharashtrian who was assisted by a Dharwar Kannadiga, an Andhra, a Madras Indian Christian, an Anglo Burmese and the usual local Tamils. All this shows that there was a great deal of National Integration long before A.I.R. and Doordarshan began broadcasting programmes on national integration. This gang of nationally integrated make-up men could turn any decent-looking person into a hideous crimson hued monster with the help of truckloads of pancake and a number of other locally made potions and lotions. Those were the days of mainly indoor shooting, and only five percent of the film was shot outdoors. I suppose the sets and studio lights needed girls and boys to be made to look ugly in order to look presentable in the movie. A strict hierarchy was maintained in the make-up department.

(Poets and Pancakes)

(1) Why did the make-up room have a look of a hair-cutting salon ?

[1 Marks]

(2)

What does 'fiery misery of those subjected to make-up' suggest ?

(A) emotional stress faced by the actors.

(B) physical discomfort due to heat and lighting.

(C) anger of the make-up artists due to irritation.

(D) the discomfort caused by the cramped room.

[1 Marks]

(3)

Complete the following suitably :

The tone of the author in the phrase 'hideous crimson hued monster' is _____

[1 Marks]

(4) What does ‘became too big for a studio and left’ imply about the Bengali make-up artist ?

[1 Marks]

(5)

Why was excessive make-up considered a cinematic necessity at Gemini Studios during that era ? (A) minimised the cost of set design and costumes.

(B) was a mandated practice by the studio’s creative heads and lead actors.

(C) aligned with the theatrical traditions the studio admired.

(D) compensated for the lack of advanced lighting and camera technology.

[1 Marks]

(6)

Complete the sentence with a suitable reason :

The author refers to the presence of people from different regions in the make-up department to _____.

[1 Marks]

Question 8.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions:

‘Now I am going to tell you, Mr. Ironmaster, how things are’, he said. ‘The whole world is nothing but a big rattrap. All the good things that are offered to you are nothing but cheese rinds and bits of pork, set out to drag a poor fellow into trouble. And if the sheriff comes now and locks me up for this, then you, Mr. Ironmaster, must remember that a day will come when you yourself may want to get a big piece of pork, and then you will get caught in the trap.

The ironmaster began to laugh.

‘That was not so badly said, my good fellow. Perhaps we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve.’ (The Rattrap)

(1)

What does the speaker mean when he says ‘The whole world is nothing but a big rattrap’ ?

(A) The world offers many chances for success and prosperity.

(B) Temptations in life are traps that lead people into trouble.

(C) Good deeds are always rewarded with cheese rinds.

(D) Justice and fairness are not guaranteed for everyone.

[1 Marks]

(2)

What does the following phrase from the extract showcase : ‘Cheese rinds’.

(A) temptation

(B) affirmation

(C) gluttony

(D) deprivation

[1 Marks]

(3)

What does the following line from the extract showcase about the ironmaster’s nature ?

‘Perhaps, we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve.’

(A) materialistic

(B) understanding

(C) conniving

(D) enterprising

[1 Marks]

(4)

Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank :

By calling himself a 'poor fellow', the speaker emphasises his _____. (vulnerability/credibility)

[1 Marks]

(5)

Complete the following with a suitable reason :

In the extract, it is implied that the speaker would be locked up because _____.

[1 Marks]

(6) What does the speaker imply through his warning to the ironmaster ?

[1 Marks]

Section C

Question 9.

The poem explores the relationship between a mother and daughter. Comment.

(My Mother at sixty six)

[2 Marks]

Question 10.

What does Umberto Eco mean when he says he is 'a professor who writes novels on Sundays' ? (The Interview)

[2 Marks]

Question 11.

The British landlords agreed to refund 25% of the money to the sharecroppers in the Champaran dispute. What is the significance of this event ? (Indigo)

[2 Marks]

Question 12.

How did Douglas' experience at the beach in California affect him ?

(Deep Water)

[2 Marks]

Question 13.

The constraints of Aunt Jennifer's married life leave her terrorised and emotionally scarred. Elaborate. (Aunt Jennifer's Tigers)

[2 Marks]

Question 14.

"Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons ?" What does Franz's remark suggest about the imposition of German in school in Aloace ?

(Last Lesson)

[2 Marks]

Question 15.

What does Bama's decision to excel in academics reveal about her character ? (Memories of Childhood – We Too are Human Beings)

[2 Marks]

Question 16.

How did the newspaper 'The World' contribute to Charley's belief in the existence of the third level ? (The Third Level)

[2 Marks]

Question 17.

Evaluate the role of the court astrologer in shaping the trajectory of the Tiger King's life. (The Tiger King)

[2 Marks]

Section D

Question 18.

Your school is organising a career counselling session for students of classes XI and XII to help them make informed decisions about their future career choices. As the Head Girl / Head Boy of M.L.C. School, draft a notice informing them about the session. Include all necessary details. You are Riya/Rohan. Put the notice in a box.

[4 Marks]

Question 19.

You are Kavya/Karan Chief Editor of ‘Parakh’ the school magazine. Draft a notice inviting contributions in the form of articles, stories, poems, artwork etc. for the special annual edition. All contributions are to be submitted to the Chief Editor. Include necessary details. Put your notice in a box.

[4 Marks]

Section E

Question 20.

Draft an invitation to invite the M.L.A. of your Constituency, to be the Chief Guest at a felicitation function to honour eminent residents who have contributed to the upliftment of the colony. Mention one compelling highlight of the programme. You are Satupa/Satish,

President of the Surya Vikas, RWA.

[4 Marks]

Question 21.

You are Dr. Vora, a certified art therapist from Manipur. You have been invited by Green Valley Public School, Jammu to conduct a seminar on ‘Art Therapy, the Way Forward’ for the students. Draft a reply accepting the invitation.

[4 Marks]

Section F

Question 22.

Sophie in ‘Going Places’ and Mukesh in ‘Lost Spring’ aspire for a better life yet external forces shape their realities and opportunities.

Discuss.

[5 Marks]

Question 23.

How is the transient nature of beauty and life portrayed in the poems ‘My Mother at Sixty Six’ and ‘A Thing of Beauty’ ?

[5 Marks]

Question 24.

Examine how the presence of school students on the expedition contribute to the message of environmental responsibility and hope.

(Journey to the End of the Earth)

[5 Marks]

Question 25.

How does Pearl S. Buck explore the theme of humanitarianism versus patriotism in the lesson ‘The Enemy’ ? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

[5 Marks]

Section G

Question 26.

You are Kaneshta/Shirish, an avid yoga follower. Write a letter to the editor expressing your views and urging people especially students and young adults to incorporate yoga into their daily lives. You may use some of the given cues along with your own ideas.

● need to follow a disciplined exercise routine

● reduces stress, improves physical and mental health

● increases focus

● schools and educational establishments must encourage practice of yoga

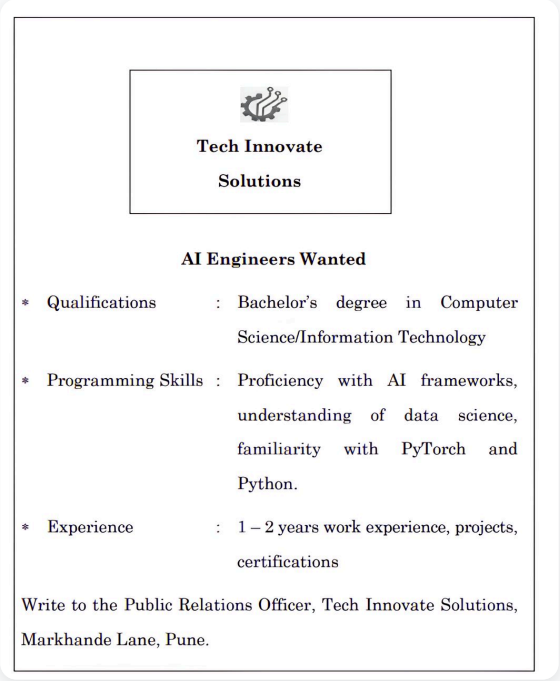
[5 Marks]

Section H

Question 27.

You are Roshni/Rohan, a final year student pursuing a degree in Computer Science. You have read the following advertisement in 'The National Times'. You find yourself suitable for the job and wish to apply for the post. Write this job application along with your bio-data.

[5 Marks]



Tech Innovate Solutions

AI Engineers Wanted

* Qualifications : Bachelor's degree in Computer Science/Information Technology
* Programming Skills : Proficiency with AI frameworks, understanding of data science, familiarity with PyTorch and Python.
* Experience : 1 – 2 years work experience, projects, certifications

Write to the Public Relations Officer, Tech Innovate Solutions, Markhande Lane, Pune.

Section I

Question 28.

You are Aanya/Ankit. You are deeply disturbed by how moments of silence and relaxed living are vanishing from today's fast-paced, lives. You decide to write an article for the newspaper on 'The Vanishing Art of Slowing Down'.

You may use the following cues along with your own ideas:

● impact of hustle culture and technology on mental well-being.

● losing connection with nature, people and self.

● importance of mindful celebrations and slow/relaxed living.

● role of schools, communities, and media.

● need for digital boundaries, reflection, and simple joys.

[5 Marks]

Section J

Question 29.

Your school organised a ‘Tastes of India’ Week to educate students on the diversity of Indian cuisine. Write a comprehensive report detailing the activities conducted during the week. Describe the events, participation details, chief guest, and the overall impact of the programme on the school. You are Arti/Aryan a student of Std. XII and the Secretary of the School Magazine Editorial Board. You may organise your report on the basis of

What – When – Where – Who – Why – How

[5 Marks]