

**General Instructions:**

1. This question paper has 11 questions. All questions are compulsory.
  2. This paper is divided into three sections:  
Section A – Reading Skills, Section B – Writing Skills and Grammar, Section C – Language through Literature.
  3. Attempt questions as per the specific instructions for each part.
  4. Marks are indicated against each question in square brackets.
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**SECTION A: READING SKILLS (20 Marks)**

1. Read the following passage. [10]

**The Quiet Revival of Community Libraries**

1. In many neighbourhoods across the country, a quiet but meaningful change is taking place: small community libraries are being revived after years of decline. These modest reading rooms, often tucked inside old buildings or newly built community centres, are once again drawing in readers of every age, from young children discovering their first storybooks to elderly residents rediscovering the joy of borrowing a paperback rather than owning one.
2. The revival owes much to volunteer effort. Retired teachers, students and local residents frequently give their free time to catalogue books, repair damaged covers and organise weekend reading sessions for children. Unlike large public libraries that depend heavily on government funding, these community-run spaces survive mostly on donated books and small, voluntary contributions, which keeps them flexible and closely tied to the needs of their immediate neighbourhood.
3. One of the clearest benefits of this movement is the sense of shared ownership it creates. When residents themselves stock the shelves and decide which genres to prioritise, the library begins to reflect the tastes and concerns of the community it serves. A locality with many young families might build a strong picture-book section, while another with many working professionals might stock more non-fiction and skill-based reading. This local responsiveness is something large, centrally managed libraries often struggle to replicate.
4. Community libraries also play a quiet role in bridging the digital divide. For children whose homes do not have space, money or internet access for extensive reading material, a free, walkable library within the neighbourhood becomes the only reliable source of books beyond the school syllabus. Several of these libraries have also begun offering basic digital literacy sessions, helping older members learn to use email or search the internet safely, alongside their traditional lending services.
5. However, sustaining this revival is not without challenges. Many of these libraries depend on a handful of committed volunteers, and their work can slow considerably if even one or two step back due to personal commitments. There is also the ongoing task of raising small amounts of money for rent, electricity and basic repairs, since most operate without any steady institutional support.
6. Despite these difficulties, the steady, low-cost model followed by community libraries offers a valuable lesson: meaningful public spaces do not always require large budgets, only consistent local commitment. As more neighbourhoods look for ways to bring people together outside of screens and shopping centres, these small reading rooms may well continue to multiply, one shelf at a time.

Created for academic usage / 420 words

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

- I. Why is the change described in paragraph 1 called 'quiet but meaningful'? [1]
- II. According to paragraph 2, community libraries survive mainly through: [1]
  - A. government grants
  - B. corporate sponsorship
  - C. donated books and voluntary contributions
  - D. membership fees

**III.** Complete the following by selecting the correct option from those given in brackets. The local responsiveness of community libraries makes them more \_\_\_\_\_ (rigid / flexible) than large public libraries. (Paragraph 3) [1]

**IV.** Select the option that is True regarding the role of community libraries, as per paragraph 4. [1]

- A. They only serve children below age ten.
- B. They can help bridge gaps in access to books and digital skills.
- C. They replace the need for school libraries entirely.
- D. They are funded solely by the government.

**V.** Complete the analogy by selecting the correct option: volunteer effort : sustaining the library :: steady funding : \_\_\_\_\_ (Paragraph 5) [1]

- (a). reducing membership
- (b). ensuring stability

**VI.** Why might the work of a community library 'slow considerably', according to paragraph 5? [2]

**VII.** What are the main ideas of paragraph 3 and paragraph 4? [1]

- i). Community libraries can help address the digital divide.
- ii). Community libraries reflect the tastes of their neighbourhood.
- iii). Community libraries are funded entirely by the state.
- iv). Community libraries discourage the use of the internet altogether.
- v). Community libraries mainly serve retired teachers.

Select the correct option.

- A. ii, i
- B. iii, iv
- C. v, ii
- D. i, v

**VIII.** Why does the writer suggest that meaningful public spaces do not always require large budgets? (Paragraph 6) [2]

2. Read the following passage. [10]

### **Survey: Preferred Time of Day for Studying**

1. A survey conducted among 500 secondary school students explored their preferred time of day for focused study, along with the reasons behind their choice. Students were grouped into two categories: those who identified as 'early risers' and those who identified as 'night owls', and were asked to select their most productive study window along with a supporting reason.

2. Among students identifying as early risers, 68% reported studying most effectively between 5 a.m. and 8 a.m., citing a quiet household and a fresh mind as the leading reasons. The remaining 32% in this group still preferred late evening study, mainly due to extracurricular commitments earlier in the day. Among students identifying as night owls, 74% reported peak concentration between 9 p.m. and midnight, attributing this to fewer distractions and a natural alertness that set in later in the day. Only 26% of this group considered early morning study effective.

3. The survey also asked students about the biggest obstacle to consistent study, regardless of their preferred time. For early risers, 45% cited tiredness from waking up too early, while 30% pointed to household noise later in the day. For night owls, 52% cited difficulty waking up on time for school the next day, while 20% mentioned pressure from family members to sleep earlier.

4. The findings suggest that study schedules built around a student's natural rhythm, rather than a single recommended routine, may improve both concentration and overall wellbeing, provided schools and families remain flexible about when meaningful study actually happens.

Created for academic usage / 230 words

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

**I.** Why did the survey most likely divide the 500 students into two specific groups? (Paragraph 1) This is so because these groups \_\_\_\_\_. [1]

- A. represent every possible student personality type.
- B. reflect natural differences in when students feel most alert.
- C. were the easiest categories to survey across schools.
- D. always study for the same number of hours.

- II.** Identify the phrase in paragraph 1 that refers to the students' most effective period for studying. [1]
- III.** Complete the following: Rohan, who feels most alert after 9 p.m. and struggles to concentrate before school hours, most likely identifies as a \_\_\_\_\_ (early riser / night owl). (Paragraph 2) [1]
- IV.** What does the writer mean by 'natural alertness' while describing night owls in paragraph 2? [1]
- V.** Complete the following with the correct option. When the writer says 'study schedules built around a student's natural rhythm' in paragraph 4, s/he means that \_\_\_\_\_. [1]
- A. all students should be made to study only at night.  
 B. study routines are most effective when matched to a student's own alertness pattern.  
 C. early risers should be discouraged from evening study altogether.  
 D. schools should ignore a student's natural preferences entirely.
- VI.** Complete the following appropriately. One likely reason why some early risers still prefer evening study, despite identifying as morning people, is \_\_\_\_\_. (Paragraph 2) [1]
- VII.** How are 'tiredness from waking up early' and 'difficulty waking up for school' connected as challenges faced by the two groups? (Paragraph 3) [1]
- VIII.** Elaborate how schools could use the survey's findings to support students of both groups. (Paragraph 4) [2]
- IX.** Fill in the blank with ONE suitable word. (Paragraph 4) Matching study routines to a student's natural rhythm may improve both concentration and overall \_\_\_\_\_. [1]

## **SECTION B: WRITING SKILLS AND GRAMMAR (20 Marks)**

### **GRAMMAR (10 Marks)**

- 3.** Complete any ten of the following twelve tasks, as directed. [10x1=10]
- I.** Fill in the blank using the correct form of the word given in brackets, from a school notice board announcement: The annual inter-house quiz competition will be \_\_\_\_\_ (organise) next Friday in the main auditorium.
- II.** Identify the error and write the correction, from a motivational speech: 'Success are not achieved overnight; it requires patience and consistent effort.' Use the format: Error / Correction.
- III.** Fill in the blank with the correct form of the verb given in brackets: By the time the bell rang, the students \_\_\_\_\_ (finish) their group discussion.
- IV.** Read the statement: He said to me, 'I will submit my project by tomorrow.' Report it correctly: He told me that \_\_\_\_\_.
- V.** Fill in the blank by choosing the correct option to complete a formal notice: All students are requested to be present \_\_\_\_\_ time for the assembly.
- A. on  
 B. in  
 C. at  
 D. by
- VI.** Report the following: 'Please switch off the lights before leaving the classroom,' the teacher said to the students. The teacher requested the students \_\_\_\_\_.
- VII.** Complete the given sentence from a school magazine article by filling the blank with the correct option: The trip to the science museum left the students \_\_\_\_\_ inspired to pursue research-based careers.
- A. having felt  
 B. feeling  
 C. felt  
 D. feels
- VIII.** The following sentence has an error. Identify the error and its correction: 'Neither of the two teams were ready for the sudden change in schedule.'
- A. Neither → Either  
 B. were → was  
 C. sudden → suddenly  
 D. schedule → schedules
- IX.** Report the following question: She said to him, 'Have you completed your assignment?'

X. Fill in the blank with the correct option from brackets: The weather forecast suggests it \_\_\_\_\_ (might / must) rain heavily this weekend, so the sports day may be postponed.

XI. Fill in the blank to complete the sentence from a librarian's notice: \_\_\_\_\_ book must be returned within fourteen days of issue.

- A. All
- B. Every
- C. Few
- D. Several

XII. Choose the correct option to fill the blank: There was hardly \_\_\_\_\_ time left to revise before the exam began.

- A. many
- B. few
- C. any
- D. a few

### **WRITING SKILLS (10 Marks)**

NOTE: All details presented in the writing questions are imaginary and created for assessment purposes only.

4A. You are Aarav / Aarohi, Head Boy / Head Girl of your school. You have noticed that the school playground remains locked most afternoons despite students wanting to use it for informal sports. Write a letter to the Principal requesting that the playground be kept open under supervision after school hours, in about 120 words. [5]

**OR**

4B. You are Kabir / Kiara, a resident of Green Park Colony. You have noticed that stray construction debris has been left uncleared on the pavement outside your colony for several weeks, causing inconvenience to pedestrians. Write a letter to the Municipal Commissioner, in about 120 words, requesting prompt removal of the debris and better monitoring of construction waste in the area. [5]

5A. Study the bar chart below, showing the hours spent weekly by 100 surveyed students on four activities. [5]

Sports: 4 hours | Reading: 3 hours | Screen Time: 9 hours | Music Practice: 2 hours

Analyse the data in a paragraph, commenting on what this distribution suggests about students' weekly habits and what changes might be beneficial. (100-120 words)

**OR**

5B. Two students, Meher and Devansh, have shared their preparation routines for the upcoming board exams. [5]

**Meher:** Studies for 3 hours daily, revises previous chapters every weekend, takes short 10-minute breaks every hour, and sleeps for 7 hours a night.

**Devansh:** Studies for 6 hours daily only in the two weeks before exams, rarely revises older chapters, studies continuously without breaks, and sleeps for 5 hours a night during exam preparation.

Analyse the two routines in a paragraph and comment on which approach is likely to be more effective and sustainable, giving reasons. (100-120 words)

### **SECTION C: LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE (40 Marks)**

Note: All extracts in this section are original compositions created for practice purposes and are not taken from any prescribed textbook.

6. Read the given extract and answer ANY ONE of the two options. [5]

#### **A. Prose**

"Mira stood at the edge of the diving board for the third time that morning, her toes curled over the rough edge. Down below, the water looked darker than usual, and every previous attempt had ended the same way — a hurried step back and a mumbled excuse to her coach. But today something felt different. She thought of her grandmother's voice, calm and unhurried, telling her that fear only grows louder the longer you listen to it. Mira exhaled, closed her eyes for half a second, and let herself fall forward before her mind could change itself again."

I. What does Mira's behaviour on the previous attempts suggest about her state of mind? [1]

II. Select the option that best explains why Mira succeeds on this attempt. [1]

- a). She stops thinking about her fear entirely and acts before doubt returns.

b). Her coach physically pushes her off the diving board.

III. What can be inferred about the role of Mira's grandmother in this extract? [1]

IV. What does the phrase 'before her mind could change itself again' reveal about Mira's fear of overthinking? [2]

OR

### **B. Drama**

**NARRATOR:** The old clock tower had stopped working sometime last winter, though nobody in the town could say exactly when.

**MAYOR:** (*checking his pocket watch*) Well, it hardly matters now, does it? Nobody looks up at the tower anymore. They all have their phones.

**CLERK:** Begging your pardon, sir, but my grandmother still looks up at that tower every morning. She says a town that stops fixing its clock has stopped caring about its own time.

**MAYOR:** (*pausing, thoughtful*) Perhaps. Send for the repairman first thing tomorrow. Let's see if an old habit is worth saving after all.

I. What does the Mayor's initial reaction to the broken clock suggest about his attitude at the start of the extract? [1]

II. Select the option that best explains why the Clerk mentions his grandmother. [1]

a). To argue that older habits and symbols still hold meaning for some people.

b). To complain about his grandmother's daily routine.

III. What change do we notice in the Mayor's attitude by the end of the extract? [1]

IV. What does the phrase 'worth saving' suggest about the Mayor's final decision? [2]

7. Read the given extract and answer ANY ONE of the two options. [5]

### **A. Poetry**

"The river does not ask the stone / to move aside, to break, to bend— / it simply flows, patient, alone, / until the stone becomes its friend."

I. What quality of the river is highlighted in the first two lines? [1]

II. Select the option that best conveys the meaning of 'the stone becomes its friend'. [1]

a). The stone eventually wears away and yields to the river's steady flow.

b). The river changes its course to avoid the stone completely.

III. What does the word 'patient' suggest about the river's approach to obstacles? [1]

IV. Fill in the blank: The poem suggests that lasting change often comes through \_\_\_\_\_ rather than force. [2]

OR

### **B. Poetry**

"Grandfather's chair still holds his shape, / though he has not sat there in a year; / we dust it every Sunday, / as if his laugh might still appear."

I. What does the phrase 'still holds his shape' suggest about the chair? [1]

II. Select the option that best explains why the family dusts the chair every Sunday. [1]

a). They are keeping the house clean out of habit.

b). They are preserving a connection to the grandfather's memory.

III. What emotion is most strongly conveyed in the last two lines? [1]

IV. What does the poem suggest about the way people cope with the absence of a loved one? [2]

8. Answer ANY FOUR of the following five questions, in about 40-50 words each, from FIRST FLIGHT. [4x3=12]

I. Describe any two qualities that make the letter written by Lencho, in 'A Letter to God', an example of unwavering faith. [3]

II. How does the poem 'Dust of Snow' convey a shift in the poet's mood through a small, ordinary incident? [3]

III. What does Valli's journey in 'Madam Rides the Bus' reveal about her curiosity and independence? [3]

IV. How does Nelson Mandela's account in 'Long Walk to Freedom' show that courage is not the absence of fear? [3]

V. What does the poem 'Fire and Ice' suggest about human emotions like desire and hatred through its central comparison? [3]

9. Answer ANY TWO of the following three questions, in about 40-50 words each, from FOOTPRINTS WITHOUT FEET. [2x3=6]

I. How does the story 'A Triumph of Surgery' highlight the consequences of pampering a pet excessively? [3]

II. Briefly discuss how honesty and trust shape the relationship between Hari Singh and Anil in 'The Thief's Story'. [3]

III. How does Bholi's transformation in the story 'Bholi' reflect the importance of confidence and education for girls? [3]

10. Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words, from FIRST FLIGHT. [6]

A.. Discuss how the theme of overcoming fear or hesitation is portrayed through the experiences of any one character from the chapters you have studied in 'First Flight'.

**OR**

B.. Examine how the poems studied in First Flight explore the idea of freedom, whether physical, emotional or symbolic, with reference to any two poems.

11. Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words, from FOOTPRINTS WITHOUT FEET. [6]

A.. Critically comment on how ordinary characters in 'Footprints without Feet' often display extraordinary honesty or courage in unexpected situations, with reference to any two stories.

**OR**

B.. Discuss the significance of trust and second chances as explored in any one story from 'Footprints without Feet'.

General Instructions: The value points below are suggested guidelines only and do not constitute the sole acceptable answer. Award marks for any correct alternative expression or reasoning.

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## SECTION A: READING SKILLS (20 Marks)

### Q1. The Quiet Revival of Community Libraries (10 Marks)

- I. Because it is happening quietly, at a small, local scale, without large funding or publicity, yet it is bringing real value back into neighbourhoods through renewed access to books and shared community spaces. [1]
- II. C. donated books and voluntary contributions [1]
- III. flexible [1]
- IV. B. They can help bridge gaps in access to books and digital skills. [1]
- V. (b) ensuring stability [1]
- VI. Because these libraries depend on a handful of committed volunteers; if even one or two step back due to personal commitments, there are not enough people left to keep cataloguing, repairing and running weekend sessions, so the work naturally slows down. [2]
- VII. A. ii, i [Paragraph 3 highlights how libraries reflect community tastes (ii); paragraph 4 highlights their role in bridging the digital divide (i)] [1]
- VIII. The writer points out that community libraries function successfully on donated books, small voluntary contributions and volunteer effort rather than large budgets, showing that consistent local commitment, not money, is what sustains a meaningful public space. [2]

### Q2. Survey: Preferred Time of Day for Studying (10 Marks)

- I. B. reflect natural differences in when students feel most alert. [The study aims to explore how alertness patterns affect study preference, which naturally differ between individuals.] [1]
- II. 'most productive study window' [1]
- III. night owl [1]
- IV. By 'natural alertness', the writer means that night owls genuinely feel more awake and mentally sharp later in the day, without needing any external push to concentrate. [1]
- V. B. study routines are most effective when matched to a student's own alertness pattern. [1]
- VI. Extracurricular commitments earlier in the day leave them with no other option but to study in the evening, even though they identify as early risers. [1]
- VII. Both challenges arise because school timings do not naturally align with each group's body clock: early risers feel tired from waking too early, while night owls struggle to wake up for school after concentrating late into the night. [1]
- VIII. Schools could allow more flexibility in submission times, offer optional early or late study or doubt-clearing sessions, and avoid penalising students for preferring one study window over another, helping both groups perform to their natural strengths. [2]
- IX. wellbeing [1]

## SECTION B: WRITING SKILLS AND GRAMMAR (20 Marks)

### Q3. Grammar (10 Marks) - any ten of twelve, 1 mark each

- I. organised [1]
- II. Error: are | Correction: is [1]
- III. had finished [1]
- IV. ...he would submit his project by the next day / the following day. [1]
- V. A. on [1]
- VI. ...to switch off the lights before leaving the classroom. [1]

VII. B. feeling [1]

VIII. B. were → was [1]

IX. She asked him if he had completed his assignment. [1]

X. might [1]

XI. B. Every [1]

XII. C. any [1]

#### **Q4-Q5. Writing Skills (10 Marks)**

**Marking break-up for each:** Format - 1, Content - 2, Organisation of ideas - 1, Accuracy - 1 (Total 5 marks each)

**Q4A (Letter to Principal):** Should include a formal salutation and subject line; mention that the playground remains locked most afternoons; request that it be opened under supervision after school hours; and give a reason such as encouraging fitness and informal sports among students.

**Q4B (Letter to Municipal Commissioner):** Should include the address block, subject and formal tone; describe the uncleared construction debris and how long it has persisted; request prompt removal; and suggest better monitoring of construction waste going forward.

**Q5A (Analytical paragraph on bar chart):** Should note that screen time (9 hours) is disproportionately high compared to sports, reading and music combined; comment that this suggests an imbalance favouring passive activity; and suggest a more even distribution would likely benefit health, focus and skill development.

**Q5B (Analytical paragraph comparing routines):** Should note that Meher's routine, with regular hours, breaks and adequate sleep, is likely more sustainable and effective long-term, while Devansh's last-minute, break-free approach with less sleep may lead to burnout and poorer retention despite more total hours studied close to the exam.

### **SECTION C: LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE (40 Marks)**

#### **Q6. Reference to Context (5 Marks) - answer for the option attempted**

##### **Option A (Mira, prose extract)**

I. It suggests she was afraid and hesitant, backing out each time despite wanting to complete the dive. [1]

II. a) She stops thinking about her fear entirely and acts before doubt returns. [1]

III. The grandmother's remembered words act as a source of quiet encouragement and wisdom that helps Mira find the courage to act. [1]

IV. It suggests that Mira deliberately avoids giving herself time to reconsider, since overthinking might bring back her fear and stop her from jumping at all. [2]

##### **OR Option B (Clock tower, drama extract)**

I. It suggests he is indifferent and considers the clock tower irrelevant in a world where people now rely on phones. [1]

II. a) To argue that older habits and symbols still hold meaning for some people. [1]

III. He moves from dismissiveness to a thoughtful willingness to reconsider the value of the old habit, deciding to have it repaired. [1]

IV. It suggests that even when something is no longer strictly useful or accurate, it may still hold emotional or cultural value worth preserving. [2]

#### **Q7. Reference to Context - Poetry (5 Marks) - answer for the option attempted**

##### **Option A (The river)**

I. Its patience and quiet persistence, without force or confrontation. [1]

II. a) The stone eventually wears away and yields to the river's steady flow. [1]

III. It suggests calm, sustained effort rather than sudden or forceful action. [1]

IV. patience / gentle, sustained persistence [2]

##### **OR Option B (Grandfather's chair)**

I. It suggests the chair still carries the imprint of the grandfather's presence, as though he might return to it. [1]

II. b) They are preserving a connection to the grandfather's memory. [1]

III. A quiet sense of grief, longing and nostalgia for the grandfather. [1]

IV. It suggests people cope with loss by preserving small routines or objects connected to the person, keeping their memory alive through everyday acts of care. [2]

**Q8. First Flight - any four of five, 3 marks each (12 Marks)**

I. Lencho's faith is shown through his calm certainty that God would provide, his precise request for the exact amount lost, and his belief that any shortfall in the money was due to the postal workers rather than any doubt in God's willingness to help. [3]

II. The poem shows how a small, chance incident, dust shaken from a hemlock tree by a crow, unexpectedly lifts the poet's mood, suggesting that ordinary, unplanned moments can bring meaningful emotional change. [3]

III. Valli's curiosity is shown through her sharp observation of everything around her during the bus journey, while her independence is shown in her confident, unafraid manner despite being a young child travelling alone for the first time. [3]

IV. Mandela shows that courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to act despite it, describing how he felt afraid himself at times while still inspiring bravery and hope in others around him. [3]

V. The poem suggests that both desire (fire) and hatred (ice) are equally capable of destruction, showing that very different human emotions can lead to similarly devastating outcomes. [3]

**Q9. Footprints without Feet - any two of three, 3 marks each (6 Marks)**

I. The story shows how Mrs Pumphrey's excessive pampering and overfeeding nearly ruins Tricki's health, and it is only through proper diet, exercise and discipline at the Surgery that he recovers, highlighting that indulgence is not true care. [3]

II. Anil's quiet trust and kindness toward Hari Singh, despite knowing his past as a thief, gradually teaches Hari Singh the value of honesty without ever directly lecturing him, showing that values are often absorbed through experience rather than instruction. [3]

III. Bholi's access to education builds her confidence and self-respect over time, eventually giving her the courage to reject an unjust, dowry-driven marriage, showing how education can empower girls to assert their own worth. [3]

**Q10. First Flight - Long Answer (6 Marks) - answer for the option attempted**

**Option A:** A strong response should discuss a specific character's initial fear or hesitation, the turning point that helps them act despite it, and the broader idea that courage often means acting in spite of fear rather than its complete absence.

**OR Option B:** A strong response should discuss how two chosen poems present freedom, whether physical (captivity vs the wild), emotional (pressure vs self-expression) or symbolic, and compare how each poem builds this idea through its imagery.

**Q11. Footprints without Feet - Long Answer (6 Marks) - answer for the option attempted**

**Option A:** A strong response should identify two stories where ordinary characters display unexpected honesty or courage, explain the specific moment of choice in each, and connect this to the idea that integrity often appears in small, unnoticed decisions rather than dramatic acts.

**OR Option B:** A strong response should discuss one story where a character is given a second chance despite an earlier mistake, and reflect on how trust or forgiveness shapes the character's later choices and growth.