

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.

SECTION A: READING SKILLS (20 Marks)

1. Read the following passage. [10]

The Underrated Value of Boredom in a Child's Day

1. In an age when almost every free moment can be filled with a screen, a growing number of psychologists and educators are making an unusual argument: children need more, not less, boredom in their daily lives. This may sound counterintuitive to parents who often feel a quiet guilt whenever their child announces, with theatrical despair, that there is 'nothing to do'.
2. The argument rests on a simple observation: boredom, uncomfortable as it feels in the moment, often pushes children toward their own imagination rather than relying on external entertainment. A child left without a scheduled activity or a screen to occupy them will, after an initial period of restlessness, frequently invent a game, build something from household objects, or simply daydream, all of which exercise creative and problem-solving skills that structured activities rarely demand.
3. This is not to suggest that all structured activities are harmful. Sports coaching, music lessons and organised clubs offer genuine benefits, including discipline, skill-building and social interaction. The concern raised by educators is more about balance: when every hour of a child's day is planned by an adult, from school to tuition to extracurricular classes, there is little time left for the kind of unstructured boredom that builds independent thinking.
4. Several schools have begun experimenting with short, deliberately unstructured periods during the day, sometimes called 'free time' or 'choice time', where children are given no specific task and only limited access to prescriptive games or screens. Initial observations from teachers suggest that after early resistance, most children begin using this time constructively, often inventing their own games or engaging in quiet, self-directed reading.
5. Parents attempting something similar at home often report a similar pattern: an initial period of complaints and restlessness, followed by children gradually settling into some form of self-directed play or exploration. The key challenge, according to most experts, lies not in creating boredom itself, but in resisting the urge to immediately solve it for the child with a screen or a new toy.
6. As conversations around screen time and childhood development continue, boredom may deserve a more sympathetic reputation: not as a problem to be eliminated, but as a necessary, if uncomfortable, space in which independent thought and creativity are allowed to grow.

Created for academic usage / 400 words

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

I. Why might the argument in paragraph 1 seem 'counterintuitive' to many parents? [1]

II. According to paragraph 2, boredom is valuable mainly because it: [1]

- A. keeps children occupied without any adult involvement
- B. pushes children toward using their own imagination and creativity
- C. guarantees better academic performance
- D. eliminates the need for structured activities altogether

III. Complete the following: Structured activities like sports coaching and music lessons are described as offering genuine _____ (harm / benefits) to children. (Paragraph 3) [1]

IV. Select the option that is True regarding schools' 'free time' periods, as per paragraph 4. [1]

- A. Children immediately use this time constructively with no resistance at all.
- B. Most children eventually use this unstructured time constructively after initial resistance.
- C. These periods are used mainly for additional homework.
- D. Teachers strictly plan every activity during this time.

V. Complete the analogy: unstructured boredom : independent thinking :: structured activity : _____ (Paragraph 3) [1]

- (a). discipline and skill-building
- (b). complete elimination of creativity

VI. Why do experts consider it a challenge for parents to allow boredom rather than immediately 'solving' it? (Paragraph 5) [2]

VII. What are the main ideas of paragraph 2 and paragraph 4? [1]

- i). Boredom often pushes children toward imaginative, self-directed activity.
- ii). Structured activities are entirely harmful to children's development.
- iii). Some schools have introduced deliberately unstructured time in the school day.
- iv). Children never adjust to unstructured free time, regardless of effort.
- v). Free time in schools is used only for extra academic instruction.

Select the correct option.

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

VIII. Why does the writer suggest that boredom deserves 'a more sympathetic reputation'? (Paragraph 6) [2]

2. Read the following passage. [10]

Survey: Preferred Roles in Group Projects

1. A survey of 350 students who had recently completed group projects examined their preferred roles within a team, comparing responses across two categories: students who described themselves as 'naturally organised' and those who described themselves as 'naturally creative'.
2. Among students identifying as naturally organised, 66% preferred taking on planning and coordination roles, such as setting deadlines and assigning tasks, citing a sense of control over the project's progress as the main reason. The remaining 34% in this group still preferred content-related roles, mainly because their assigned topic personally interested them. Among students identifying as naturally creative, 72% preferred roles involving design, presentation or idea generation, citing enjoyment and a sense of ownership over the final output, while 28% were comfortable taking on planning roles when required.
3. When asked about the biggest challenge faced during group work, 41% of naturally organised students cited difficulty getting other members to meet deadlines, while 35% pointed to unequal distribution of effort within the group. Among naturally creative students, 49% cited difficulty translating their ideas into a structured, presentable format, while 24% mentioned discomfort with strict timelines.
4. The findings suggest that group projects tend to function more smoothly when teams consciously match individual strengths, whether organisational or creative, to specific roles, rather than assigning tasks randomly or leaving them entirely to chance.

Created for academic usage / 210 words

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.

I. Why did the survey likely divide students into these two specific categories? (Paragraph 1) This is so because these groups _____. [1]

- A. always perform equally well regardless of their assigned role.
- B. reflect distinct natural strengths that influence preferred roles in teamwork.
- C. were the only students available for the survey.
- D. never take on roles outside their described category.

II. Identify the phrase in paragraph 2 that refers to organised students' sense of control over a project. [1]

III. Complete the following: Aditi, who enjoys designing posters and generating fresh ideas for a project, most likely identifies as _____ (naturally organised / naturally creative). (Paragraph 2) [1]

- IV.** What does the writer mean by 'a sense of ownership' while describing creative students' preference in paragraph 2? [1]
- V.** Complete the following with the correct option. When the writer states projects work 'more smoothly' when strengths are matched to roles, in paragraph 4, s/he means that _____. [1]
- A. all students should always be assigned the exact same role regardless of the project.
 - B. deliberately aligning tasks with individual strengths improves how well a group functions.
 - C. planning roles are more important than creative roles in every project.
 - D. matching roles to strengths guarantees a project will need no revisions.
- VI.** Complete the following appropriately. One likely reason why some naturally organised students still prefer content-related roles, despite their organisational strength, is _____. (Paragraph 2) [1]
- VII.** How are 'difficulty meeting deadlines' and 'discomfort with strict timelines' connected as challenges faced by the two groups? (Paragraph 3) [1]
- VIII.** Elaborate how teachers could use these survey findings when forming groups for future projects. (Paragraph 4) [2]
- IX.** Fill in the blank with ONE suitable word. (Paragraph 4) Group projects tend to function more smoothly when individual strengths are consciously _____ to specific roles. [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 newsletter: The annual cultural fest was _____ (attend) by students from over twenty schools this year.
- II.** Identify the error and write the correction, from a school announcement: 'Each of the winners have been given a certificate and a small trophy.'
- III.** Fill in the blank with the correct form of the verb given in brackets: By the time we reached the auditorium, the performance already _____ (begin).
- IV.** Read the statement: He said to the librarian, 'I will return this book by Friday.' Report it correctly: He told the librarian that _____.
- V.** Fill in the blank by choosing the correct option to complete a formal invitation: You are cordially invited to be present _____ the annual day celebration.
- A. on
 - B. in
 - C. at
 - D. for
- VI.** Report the following: 'Please submit your feedback forms by Monday,' the coordinator said to the participants. The coordinator requested the participants _____.
- VII.** Complete the given opinion by filling the blank with the correct option: The farewell speech left many students _____ nostalgic about their years in school.
- A. having felt
 - B. feeling
 - C. felt
 - D. feels
- VIII.** The following sentence has an error. Identify the error and its correction: 'Neither the coach nor the players was informed about the change in venue.'
- A. Neither → Either
 - B. was → were
 - C. informed → inform
 - D. change → changes
- IX.** Report the following question: The visitor said to the guard, 'Where is the main office located?'
- X.** Fill in the blank with the correct option from brackets: Given the dark clouds gathering quickly, it _____ (must / might) rain before evening.

XI. Fill in the blank to complete a sentence from an examination notice: _____ candidate must carry a valid admit card to the examination hall.

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

XII. Choose the correct option to fill the blank: There is hardly _____ information available about the new syllabus yet.

- 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 Arjun / Ananya, Cultural Secretary of your school. You believe the school should host an inter-school folk dance competition to celebrate cultural diversity. Write a letter to the Principal, in about 120 words, proposing the event and outlining its possible benefits. [5]

OR

4B. You are Meher / Manav, a resident of Sunrise Enclave. You have noticed that the streetlights in your area have not been working for several weeks, creating safety concerns after dark. Write a letter to the local corporation office, in about 120 words, requesting urgent repair of the streetlights. [5]

5A. Study the bar chart below, showing the number of books read per month by 100 surveyed students across four months. [5]

January: 2 books | February: 3 books | March: 1 book | April: 4 books

Analyse the data in a paragraph, commenting on the possible reasons for this pattern and what it suggests about students' reading habits across the months. (100-120 words)

OR

5B. Two students, Yashvi and Kabir, have shared how they manage screen time on school nights. [5]

Yashvi: Uses her phone for 30 minutes after homework, keeps it outside her room while sleeping, and mainly uses it for messaging family.

Kabir: Uses his phone frequently throughout the evening, keeps it beside his pillow at night, and mainly uses it for gaming and social media.

Analyse the two habits in a paragraph and comment on which approach is likely to support better sleep and academic focus, 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

"The letter had arrived three days late, its edges softened by rain that had somehow found its way through the postman's bag. Nusrat turned it over twice before opening it, half expecting bad news simply because of how long it had taken to arrive. Instead, she found her brother's familiar, slanted handwriting apologising for the delay, explaining only that the mountain roads had been blocked again, and ending with a line that made her laugh out loud in the empty kitchen: some things are worth waiting for, especially good news travelling uphill."

I. Why does Nusrat expect bad news before opening the letter? [1]

II. Select the option that best explains Nusrat's reaction after reading the letter. [1]

- a). She feels relieved and amused once she realises the delay was harmless.
- b). She remains anxious even after reading her brother's message.

III. What can be inferred about the physical journey the letter has undergone? [1]

IV. What does the closing line of the letter suggest about the brother's attitude toward the delay? [2]

OR

B. Drama

GRANDDAUGHTER: (*holding up an old photograph*) Who is this, standing next to you? You look so young here.

GRANDMOTHER: (*taking the photograph gently*) That is your great-uncle. We built this house together, plank by plank, long before either of your parents were born.

GRANDDAUGHTER: Why does nobody in the family talk about him?

GRANDMOTHER: (*pausing*) Perhaps because some stories feel too large for ordinary conversation. But you asked, so tonight, I will tell you everything I remember.

I. What does the Grandmother's reaction to the photograph suggest about her connection to the past? [1]

II. Select the option that best explains why the family rarely discusses the great-uncle. [1]

a). The story is considered too significant or emotional for casual conversation.

b). The family has completely forgotten who he was.

III. What change occurs in the Grandmother's willingness to share the story by the end of the extract? [1]

IV. What does the Grandmother's closing line suggest about the value of a child's curiosity in preserving family history? [2]

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

A. Poetry

"The candle does not fear the dark / that waits beyond its trembling light; / it burns, aware its every spark / is bound to end before the night."

I. What quality of the candle is suggested by the phrase 'does not fear the dark'? [1]

II. Select the option that best conveys the meaning of 'bound to end before the night'. [1]

a). The candle's light is temporary, yet it continues to burn regardless.

b). The candle burns forever without ever going out.

III. What does the word 'trembling' suggest about the candle's flame? [1]

IV. What broader idea about effort or purpose, despite eventual endings, does the poem convey? [2]

OR

B. Poetry

"Old photographs forget to age, / though we who hold them slowly do; / the same smile fills the fading page / long after childhood's slipped from view."

I. What contrast is highlighted between the photograph and the people who hold it? [1]

II. Select the option that best explains the meaning of 'childhood's slipped from view'. [1]

a). Childhood has permanently disappeared without leaving any trace at all.

b). Childhood has passed with time, even though its memory remains preserved in the photograph.

III. What does the phrase 'fading page' suggest about the physical photograph itself? [1]

IV. What does the poem suggest about the relationship between memory and the passage of time? [2]

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

I. How does Mijbil's playful and curious nature, as described in 'Mijbil the Otter', make him a memorable character? [3]

II. What does the poem 'The Ball Poem' suggest about a child's first experience of loss? [3]

III. How does 'The Proposal' use exaggeration and conflict to create comic effect? [3]

IV. What does the repetition in the poem 'Amanda!' reveal about the pressure placed on the young speaker? [3]

V. How does Anne Frank's diary entry in 'From the Diary of Anne Frank' reflect both the ordinary struggles and unusual courage of a young girl in hiding? [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 title story 'Footprints without Feet' use the idea of invisibility to explore both freedom and isolation? [3]

II. What does Matilda's experience in 'The Necklace' reveal about the dangers of valuing appearance over honesty? [3]

III. How does 'The Book that Saved the Earth' use humour to comment on human knowledge and assumptions? [3]

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

A.. Discuss how humour or wit is used to convey a deeper message in any one chapter or poem studied in 'First Flight'.

OR

B.. Examine how the poems 'The Trees' and 'Fog' explore ideas of change, growth or impermanence.

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

A.. Critically discuss how irony or an unexpected twist shapes the ending of any two stories from 'Footprints without Feet'.

OR

B.. Discuss how curiosity, knowledge or vision helps a character overcome a significant challenge 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.

SECTION A: READING SKILLS (20 Marks)

Q1. The Underrated Value of Boredom in a Child's Day (10 Marks)

- I. Because most parents assume they should keep their child constantly occupied, so the idea that boredom itself might be beneficial goes against common instinct. [1]
- II. B. pushes children toward using their own imagination and creativity [1]
- III. benefits [1]
- IV. B. Most children eventually use this unstructured time constructively after initial resistance. [1]
- V. (a) discipline and skill-building [1]
- VI. Because it requires parents to resist their natural instinct to immediately fix their child's boredom with a screen or new toy, even though sitting with the discomfort is what allows independent thought to develop. [2]
- VII. A. i, iii [Paragraph 2 highlights how boredom encourages imaginative activity (i); paragraph 4 describes schools introducing unstructured free time (iii)] [1]
- VIII. Because boredom, though uncomfortable, creates space for independent thought and creativity to develop, making it a necessary part of healthy development rather than simply a problem to be removed. [2]

Q2. Survey: Preferred Roles in Group Projects (10 Marks)

- I. B. reflect distinct natural strengths that influence preferred roles in teamwork. [The study aims to explore how personal strengths shape role preference, which differs between organised and creative students.] [1]
- II. 'a sense of control over the project's progress' [1]
- III. naturally creative [1]
- IV. By 'a sense of ownership', the writer means that creative students feel personally invested in and responsible for the final design or presentation, as though it reflects their own individual contribution. [1]
- V. B. deliberately aligning tasks with individual strengths improves how well a group functions. [1]
- VI. They may still feel personally interested in the specific topic assigned to the group, making a content-related role appealing despite their organisational strength. [1]
- VII. Both challenges are linked to time-related pressure within group work: organised students struggle when others miss deadlines, while creative students feel uncomfortable being bound by strict timelines themselves. [1]
- VIII. Teachers could survey students' natural strengths before forming groups, and deliberately assign planning-oriented tasks to organised students and design or idea-based tasks to creative students, helping projects run more smoothly. [2]
- IX. matched [1]

SECTION B: WRITING SKILLS AND GRAMMAR (20 Marks)

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

- I. attended [1]
- II. Error: have | Correction: has [1]
- III. had already begun [1]
- IV. ...he would return that book by Friday. [1]
- V. C. at [1]
- VI. ...to submit their feedback forms by Monday. [1]
- VII. B. feeling [1]

VIII. B. was → were [1]

IX. The visitor asked the guard where the main office was located. [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 propose an inter-school folk dance competition, mention its value in celebrating cultural diversity, and outline expected benefits such as student participation and cultural awareness.

Q4B (Letter to corporation office): Should describe the non-functional streetlights, mention the safety concerns this creates after dark, and request urgent repair with a reasonable timeline.

Q5A (Analytical paragraph on bar chart): Should note the dip in March compared to other months, suggest possible reasons such as exams or other commitments, and comment on how reading habits fluctuate with schedule pressure across the year.

Q5B (Analytical paragraph comparing habits): Should note that Yashvi's limited, purposeful phone use away from her bed likely supports better sleep and focus, while Kabir's frequent use close to bedtime, especially for gaming and social media, is likely to disrupt sleep and reduce academic concentration.

SECTION C: LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE (40 Marks)

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

Option A (The delayed letter, prose extract)

I. Because the letter's unusual delay makes her assume something has gone wrong, associating the delay with bad news. [1]

II. a) She feels relieved and amused once she realises the delay was harmless. [1]

III. The letter has physically travelled a difficult route, being softened by rain and delayed due to blocked mountain roads. [1]

IV. It suggests the brother views the delay light-heartedly, finding humour in the situation rather than treating it as a serious problem. [2]

OR Option B (Grandmother and photograph, drama extract)

I. It suggests she feels a strong emotional connection to the past, treating the photograph and its memory with care. [1]

II. a) The story is considered too significant or emotional for casual conversation. [1]

III. She moves from reluctance to openness, agreeing to share the full story now that her granddaughter has asked. [1]

IV. It suggests that a child's genuine curiosity can be the reason older, meaningful family stories are finally shared and preserved. [2]

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

Option A (The candle)

I. It suggests calm acceptance rather than anxiety about its own eventual end. [1]

II. a) The candle's light is temporary, yet it continues to burn regardless. [1]

III. It suggests fragility or vulnerability in the flame's light. [1]

IV. The poem suggests that effort and purpose remain meaningful even when they are temporary, and that awareness of an ending need not stop one from continuing to act. [2]

OR Option B (Old photographs)

I. The photograph remains unchanged over time, while the people who hold it continue to age. [1]

II. b) Childhood has passed with time, even though its memory remains preserved in the photograph. [1]

III. It suggests the photograph itself is old and physically deteriorating with age. [1]

IV. The poem suggests that while time changes people physically, memories captured in photographs can remain preserved, offering a lasting connection to the past. [2]

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

- I. Mijbil's playful curiosity, shown through his fascination with running water and his skill at juggling marbles, along with his affectionate, mischievous nature, makes him a vivid and memorable character. [3]
- II. The poem suggests that losing a cherished possession, like the boy's ball, can be a child's first real encounter with loss, introducing them to feelings of grief that are part of growing up. [3]
- III. The play uses exaggerated reactions, sudden mood changes and absurd arguments between the characters over trivial matters to create humour while poking fun at human vanity and greed. [3]
- IV. The repeated commands directed at Amanda reveal the constant pressure and control placed on her by adults, contrasted with her imaginative escapes that reflect her desire for freedom from these expectations. [3]
- V. The diary entry reflects Anne's ordinary teenage struggles, such as family tension and boredom, alongside her unusual courage and hope in continuing to write and reflect despite living in hiding during wartime. [3]

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

- I. The story uses the protagonist's invisibility to show how it grants him freedom from social restrictions, while also isolating him from genuine human connection, illustrating that freedom without belonging can become a burden. [3]
- II. Matilda's decision to borrow a necklace to appear wealthier than she is, followed by years of hardship after losing it, shows the danger of prioritising appearance and pride over honesty and acceptance of one's circumstances. [3]
- III. The story uses a humorous, exaggerated future scenario to comment on how assumptions and gaps in knowledge, even among supposedly educated people, can lead to absurd and dangerous consequences. [3]

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

Option A: A strong response should identify a chapter or poem that uses humour or wit, describe how this humour is created, and reflect on the deeper message or observation about human behaviour that lies beneath the comic surface.

OR Option B: A strong response should discuss how 'The Trees' and 'Fog' each explore change or impermanence through their central images, comparing their tone and the ideas they convey about growth, freedom or the passage of time.

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

Option A: A strong response should identify two stories with an ironic or unexpected twist ending, explain how each twist reshapes the reader's understanding of the story, and reflect on what this technique adds to the overall impact.

OR Option B: A strong response should discuss one story where curiosity, knowledge or vision helps a character overcome a significant challenge, tracing how this quality is shown through the character's actions and choices.