



ELECTIVE ENGLISH

Maximum Marks: 80

Time Allotted: Three Hours

Reading Time: Additional Fifteen Minutes

Instructions to Candidates

1. You are allowed an **additional fifteen minutes** for **only** reading the question paper.
2. You must **NOT** start writing during reading time.
3. This question paper has **9 printed pages**.
4. It is divided into **three sections** and has **eleven questions** in all.
5. **Section A** has **three** questions that are compulsory. Attempt **any three** questions from **one novel, one drama and any four questions from poetry**.
6. While attempting **Multiple Choice Questions** in Section A, you are required to **write only ONE option as the answer**.
7. **Section B** has **three** questions which are short answers. Attempt **any five** subparts from **one novel, one drama and poetry**.
8. **Section C** has **five questions** which are long answer questions. You are required to attempt at least one question from **one novel, one drama and poetry**.
9. The intended marks for questions are given in brackets [].

Instruction to Supervising Examiner

Kindly read **aloud** the Instructions given above to all the candidates present in the examination hall.

Note: The Specimen Question Paper in the subject provides a realistic format of the Board Examination Question Paper and should be used as a practice tool. The questions for the Board Examination can be set from any part of the syllabus, though the format of the Board Examination Question Paper will remain the same as that of the Specimen Question Paper.

SECTION A – 10 MARKS

Question 1

Choose the most appropriate option to answer *any three* questions on *any one* Novel.

NOVEL – THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak

- (i) Which historical event forms the background of the novel? **(Recall)** [1]
(a) The Second World War and the Holocaust
(b) The breaking of the Berlin Wall and Glasnost
(c) The Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune
- (ii) The narrator is confident that everyone will know him well enough because: **(Understand)** [1]
(a) a meeting with the narrator is inevitable for everyone.
(b) the book thief will tell his story once the danger passes.
(c) the narrator hates those who are left over to signify his failure.
- (iii) The reference to Liesel Meminger’s stealing books as an “illustrious career” is significant because this career: **(Analyse)** [1]
(a) infuses humour in the dull narrative.
(b) is intrinsic to the symbolism in the novel.
(c) is indicative of fighting imminent massacre.
- (iv) What can you infer from Death’s confession, “Even death has a heart”? **(Understand)** [1]
(a) It proves Death’s initial claim of being “nice”.
(b) Death enjoys his task of claiming souls by colour.
(c) Affection and regret mark Death’s feelings towards Rudy.
- (v) Read the two statements given below from the novel and choose the correct option from the ones that follow. **(Analyse)** [1]
Statement I: Thursday was the only delivery day left for Liesel Meminger.
Statement II: It was mid-April 1941.
(a) Statement I and Statement II are unrelated.
(b) Statement I is the result of Statement II.
(c) Statement II is the result of Statement I

OR

NOVEL – THE NAMESAKE by *Jhumpa Lahiri*

- (vi) What does Ashima struggle with most after moving to America? **(Understand)** [1]
(a) Eating American fast food
(b) Learning a different language
(c) Loneliness and homesickness
- (vii) Why was Gogol embarrassed with his name as a child? **(Evaluate)** [1]
(a) It was too Bengali a name and led to merciless teasing elsewhere.
(b) He disliked literature and resented the connection to his father's story.
(c) It set him apart from other children highlighting his immigrant identity.
- (viii) What does Ashima's refusal to address Ashoke by his name suggest? **(Analyse)** [1]
(a) Her belief and adherence to Bengali marital traditions
(b) Her resistance to the patriarchal norms within her marriage
(c) Her rebellion against an arranged relationship she vehemently opposed
- (ix) Where does Ashima move after Ashoke's death? **(Recall)** [1]
(a) Boston, to live with her son Gogol
(b) Calcutta, India, to be closer to her extended family
(c) A smaller apartment in Cambridge, to live independently
- (x) Why does Ashoke name his son "Gogol"? **(Understand)** [1]
(a) He does not want to associate himself with Indian culture.
(b) He wants his son to become like Gogol, the Russian author.
(c) He connects the name to his life-altering personal experience.

Question 2

Choose the most appropriate option to answer *any three* questions on *any one* Drama.

DRAMA – AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE by *Henrik Ibsen*

- (i) What discovery does Dr. Stockmann make about the Baths? **(Recall)** [1]
(a) The Baths need expansion.
(b) The Baths are not profitable.
(c) The Baths are contaminated.

- (ii) Read the two statements given below from the play and choose the correct option from the ones that follow. [1]
(Analyse)

Statement I: The newspaper initially agrees to publish Dr. Stockmann's report about the Baths.

Statement II: Hovstad believes the report can be used to attack the existing authorities.

- (a) Statement I is true but Statement II is false.
(b) Statement II is the reason for Statement I.
(c) Statement I and Statement II are unrelated.
- (iii) What does the shift in the newspaper's stance about publishing Dr. Stockmann's report reveal about the press? [1]
(Evaluate)

- (a) It values scientific integrity above profit.
(b) It is committed to truth and public benefit.
(c) It is easily influenced by power and majority opinion.

- (iv) Which of the following is **NOT** a statement made by Dr. Stockmann during the public meeting? [1]

(Recall)

- (a) The water supply of the town was poisoned.
(b) The might is with many but the right is with the majority.
(c) His one wish had been to work untiringly for the welfare of his native town.

- (v) Why does Dr. Stockmann decide to stay in the town despite opposition? [1]

(Understand)

- (a) He reconciles with his brother and loves his hometown.
(b) He cannot afford to move because of financial difficulty.
(c) He wants to fight for truth and educate the next generation.

OR

DRAMA - TUGHLAQ by Girish Karnad

- (vi) Which dynasty is the play about? (Recall) [1]

- (a) The Mughals
(b) The Caliphate
(c) The Delhi Sultanate

- (vii) Read the two statements given below from the play and choose the correct option from the ones that follow. [1]

Statement I: The citizens of Delhi become suspicious of Tughlaq's rule.

Statement II: Tughlaq is accused of parricide and fratricide.

(Analyse)

- (a) Statement I and Statement II are independent of each other.
(b) Statement I is the reason for Statement II.
(c) Statement I is the result of Statement II.
- (viii) What was the outcome of the attempt to reinstate public prayers in the kingdom? [1]

(Recall)

- (a) Increased religious fervor
(b) Riots and death of thousands
(c) Successful reinstatement of prayers
- (ix) The play represents the conflict between _____. [1]

(Understand)

- (a) the ideal and the real
(b) the royal and the ministerial
(c) the courtly and the pastoral
- (x) Which statement **BEST** illustrates the "tragic flaw" in Tughlaq's character? [1]

(Evaluate)

- (a) His lack of foresight about consequences of idealistic policies
(b) His decision to pray regularly and welcome every spiritual leader
(c) His constant desire for companionship and advice of Hindu subjects

Question 3

Choose the most appropriate option to answer *any four* questions on Poetry.

POETRY - FIREFLIES (A Collection of Poems)

- (i) In the poem, *Mirror* by Sylvia Plath, what does the "terrible fish" in the final line symbolise? [1]

(Understand)

- (a) The reflection of the wall opposite the mirror
(b) The woman's old, wrinkled face in the mirror
(c) A creature in the lake presented by the mirror

- (ii) What imagery does Maya Angelou use in her poem, *Still I Rise*, to show the inevitability of her rising? [1]
(Recall)
(a) Dust, air and tides
(b) Stones, fire and water
(c) Chains, whips and blood
- (iii) What is the overarching theme of T.S. Eliot's poem, *Journey of the Magi*? [1]
(Analyse)
(a) The pain of spiritual rebirth
(b) The joy of finding the Messiah
(c) The physical hardships of travel
- (iv) In the poem, *A Different History*, why does Sujata Bhatt advise turning pages of a book gently without disturbing Sarasvati? [1]
(Understand)
(a) Reading is not easy and requires intense concentration and silence.
(b) The poet believes that today's readers do not value education properly.
(c) Books are sacred objects, embodying divine knowledge and natural life.
- (v) 'I come from a beautiful place
Where they hate my shade of skin'
What paradox does Benjamin Zephaniah bring out in these lines? [1]
(Understand)
(a) Indifference to a beloved place
(b) Ugly racism in a beautiful place
(c) Disliking a place for its natural environment
- (vi) In *Preludes*, T.S. Eliot uses imagery to reveal _____. [1]
(Evaluate)
(a) lack of spirituality and wisdom
(b) alienation and decay in urban life
(c) fragmentary ambitions and absolution
- (vii) What figure of speech describes the Saurashtra Express waiting at the platform in Gieve Patel's poem, *From Bombay Central*? [1]
(Understand)
(a) Personification
(b) Hyperbole
(c) Metaphor

SECTION B – 10 MARKS

(Attempt any five subparts from one Novel, one Drama and Poetry)

Question 4

Briefly answer *any two* questions from **one** Novel.

NOVEL – THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak

- (i) Why is *The Gravediggers Handbook* significant for Liesel? (Understand) [2]
- (ii) What is the meaning behind the name ‘Pfiffikus’? How does this character smash Liesel’s impression of serenity about him? (Recall) [2]
- (iii) Why did the arrival of Max give rise to “Anxiety, disbelief, paranoia”? (Analyse) [2]

OR

NOVEL – THE NAMESAKE by Jhumpa Lahiri

- (iv) How does Ashima overcome loneliness after moving to America? (Understand) [2]
- (v) Where do Gogol and Maxine meet? What does their relationship symbolise? (Analyse) [2]
- (vi) How does Ashima’s reaction to Ashoke’s death reveal both her emotional dependence on him and her inner strength? (Evaluate) [2]

Question 5

Briefly answer *any two* questions from **one text** on Drama.

DRAMA – AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE by Henrik Ibsen

- (i) What was Aslaksen’s initial reaction to the report? How and why does it change later? (Analyse) [2]
- (ii) Mention *two* reasons why the Mayor, Peter Stockmann, was against publishing Dr. Stockmann’s report. (Understand) [2]
- (iii) Describe *any two* consequences Dr. Stockmann’s family faces after the meeting. (Recall) [2]

OR

DRAMA - TUGHLAQ by Girish Karnad

- (iv) What is the significance of chess in the play? (Analyse) [2]
- (v) How does the play end for Tughlaq? (Recall) [2]
- (vi) Explain how *any two* of the measures introduced by Tughlaq turned out to be his failures. (Analyse) [2]

Question 6

Briefly answer **any one** of the following questions from Poetry.

POETRY - FIREFLIES (A Collection of Poems)

- (i) In *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, why is Prufrock unwilling to compare himself to Hamlet? Whom does he identify himself with? **(Analyse)** [2]
- (ii) Explain the allusion to “Hagar’s daughter” in the poem, *The Mothering Blackness*. What is the purpose of this allusion? **(Understand)** [2]
- (iii) How does Seamus Heaney show that people are afraid to speak openly in the poem, *Whatever You Say Nothing?* **(Understand)** [2]

SECTION C - 60 MARKS

Attempt either Question 7 or Question 8 on the novel

NOVEL – THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak

Question 7

- (i) Comment on Markus Zusak’s choice of the narrator in his novel, *The Book Thief*. **(Evaluate)** [20]

OR

- (ii) Write short notes on:
 - (a) Rudy’s Jesse Owens incident **(Recall)** [10]
 - (b) The consequences of Hans Hubberman’s act of giving bread to a Jewish prisoner **(Understand)** [10]

NOVEL - THE NAMESAKE by Jhumpa Lahiri

Question 8

- (i) Evaluate the portrayal of cultural gap between first-generation immigrants and their American-born children in the novel, *The Namesake*. **(Evaluate)** [20]

OR

- (ii) Write short notes on:
 - (a) Role of Russian literature in shaping Ashoke’s personality and his relationship with his grandfather. **(Understand)** [10]
 - (b) The birth and naming of Gogol Ganguli. **(Recall)** [10]

Attempt either Question 9 or Question 10 on Drama

DRAMA - AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE by Henrik Ibsen

Question 9

- (i) “Dr. Thomas Stockmann emerges as a moral idealist who values truth above social acceptance.” Do you agree with the above statement? Justify your opinion with close reference to the play. [20]
(Evaluate)

OR

- (ii) Write short notes on:
- (a) what Dr Thomas Stockmann says at the public meeting at Captain Horster’s house that annoys his listeners [10]
(Recall)
- (b) Character and role of Hovstad [10]
(Understand)

DRAMA - TUGHLAQ by Girish Karnad

Question 10

- (i) Explore how the similarities and differences between Emperor Tughlaq and Aziz bring out Tughlaq’s character in the play. [20]
(Analyse)

OR

- (ii) Write short notes on:
- (a) Religious tolerance as a political strategy [10]
(Analyse)
- (b) The role of the stepmother in the play [10]
(Recall)

Attempt any one question on Poetry

POETRY - FIREFLIES (A Collection of Poems)

Question 11

- (i) How does Seamus Heaney explore the theme of heritage and the tension between tradition and personal identity in his poem, *Digging*? [20]
(Evaluate)

OR

- (ii) Write short notes on:
- (a) The panther as a metaphor to convey fear in Sylvia Plath’s *Pursuit*. [10]
(Analyse)
- (b) The portrayal of nature’s resilience in Gieve Patel’s *On Killing a Tree*. [10]
(Understand)



ELECTIVE ENGLISH

ANSWER KEY

SECTION A – 20 MARKS

(Attempt *any ten* subparts on *one novel, one drama and poetry.*)

Question 1

Candidates should select and write **ONLY ONE** option as the answer.

NOVEL – THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak

- (i) (a) The Second World War and the Holocaust [1]
- (ii) (a) a meeting with the narrator is inevitable for everyone. [1]
- (iii) (b) is intrinsic to the symbolism in the novel. [1]
- (iv) (c) Affection and regret mark Death's feelings towards Rudy. [1]
- (v) (b) Statement I is the result of Statement II. [1]

OR

NOVEL – THE NAMESAKE by Jhumpa Lahiri

- (vi) (c) Loneliness and homesickness [1]
- (vii) (c) It set him apart from other children highlighting his immigrant identity. [1]
- (viii) (a) Her belief and adherence to Bengali marital traditions [1]
- (ix) (c) A smaller apartment in Cambridge, to live independently [1]
- (x) (b) He connects the name to his life-altering personal experience. [1]

Question 2

Candidates should select and write **ONLY ONE** option as the answer.

DRAMA – AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE by Henrik Ibsen

- (i) (c) The Baths are contaminated. [1]
- (ii) (b) Statement II is the reason for Statement I. [1]
- (iii) (c) It is easily influenced by power and majority opinion. [1]
- (iv) (b) The might is with many but the right is with the majority. [1]
- (v) (c) He wants to fight for truth and educate the next generation. [1]

OR

DRAMA - TUGHLAQ by Girish Karnad

- | | | |
|--------|--|-----|
| (vi) | (c) The Delhi Sultanate | [1] |
| (vii) | (c) Statement I is the result of Statement II. | [1] |
| (viii) | (b) Riots and death of thousands | [1] |
| (ix) | (a) the ideal and the real | [1] |
| (x) | (a) His lack of foresight about consequences of idealistic policies. | [1] |

Question 3

Candidates should select and write **ONLY ONE** option as the answer.

POETRY - FIREFLIES (A Collection of Poems)

- | | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| (i) | (b) The woman's old, wrinkled face in the mirror | [1] |
| (ii) | (a) Dust, air and tides | [1] |
| (iii) | (a) The pain of spiritual rebirth | [1] |
| (iv) | (c) Books are sacred objects, embodying divine knowledge and natural life. | [1] |
| (v) | (b) Ugly racism in a beautiful place | [1] |
| (vi) | (b) alienation and decay in urban life | [1] |
| (vii) | (c) Metaphor | [1] |

SECTION B – 10 MARKS

The answers provided in Section B and Section C are suggestive and not exhaustive. Candidates are required to develop their answers on the prompts given. They may also write their own interpretation and substantiate them with textual evidence.

Question 4

NOVEL – THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| (i) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first book Liesel 'steals'• Marks the last time she sees her brother and mother• She learns to read with this book• Reading it helps her cope with nightmares | [2] |
|-----|--|-----|

- (ii)
 - The name was given because his real name was not known [2]
 - Appropriate for someone who liked to whistle (constantly whistling Radetzky March)
 - Stood erect and became abusive – called a ten-year-old girl a “slut”
- (iii)
 - Max Vandenburg was a Jew. [2]
 - Disbelief because unexpected showing up – obligation to be fulfilled by Hans (for the saving of Hans’ life in war)
 - Surrounded by deep-rooted Nazism
 - Persecution of Jews had started, and it was dangerous to harbour one – neighbours watchful and suspicion could easily be aroused

OR

NOVEL – THE NAMESAKE by *Jhumpa Lahiri*

- (iv) Ashima copes with loneliness by [2]
 - holding on to Bengali traditions
 - cooking familiar foods
 - participating in festivals
 - relying on letters and visits from and to family in India
- (v)
 - Gogol meets Maxine at a party in New York City [2]
 - Their relationship represents his desire to embrace American culture and assert independence from his Bengali heritage
- (vi)
 - Ashima is devastated and feels completely lost. [2]
 - Despite grief, she learns to take responsibility and live independently.

Question 5

DRAMA – AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE by *Henrik Ibsen*

- (i)
 - Aslaksen initially supports the publication of the report. [2]
 - Withdraws his support when he realises it may harm the town’s economy (fixing the problem will result in higher taxes) and majority opinion
 - (ii)
 - The Mayor, Peter Stockmann believes that the town’s main source of income would be affected if the news about the contamination of the Bath waters becomes public. [2]
 - Repairing the Baths would cost the town a large sum of money, asking for higher taxes, possibly resulting in panic.
 - Due to his position in the committee, the news threatens his reputation and authority.
- (Any two)*

- (iii)
 - Petra loses her job as a teacher.
 - The landlord gives them the notice to vacate the house.
 - The boys are asked to stay at home and not attend school for a few days.
 - Dr. Stockmann and his family are socially boycotted by the townspeople. [2]
(Any two)

OR

DRAMA - TUGHLAQ by Girish Karnad

- (iv) Tughlaq plays alone - symbolises the detached, strategic, and cold-blooded maneuvering in his life – manipulation of opponents and subjects as pawns, isolation and alienation from his people – governance as an intellectual game rather than a human need or crisis [2]
- (v) The play ends with Tughlaq completely isolated, surrounded by failure and bloodshed, finding refuge in a deep, weary sleep after his ideals have crumbled. [2]
- (vi)
 - Shifting the capital to Daulatabad with the aim of greater unity and cohesiveness ended up devastating in terms of cost and human suffering
 - Introducing copper currency to address silver shortage led to counterfeiting and economic chaos and collapse of the state treasury
 - Taxation in the Doab region to replenish an empty treasury and finance other measures led to famine and revolts
 - Removing the jizya tax was meant to foster secularism but ended up alienating Muslims and making Hindus suspicious
 - Administrative changes such as appointing more Hindu officials and allow citizens to sue the Sultan fostered corruption, suspicion, alienation [2]
(Any two)

Question 6

POETRY - FIREFLIES (A Collection of Poems)

- (i)
 - Prufrock does not identify himself with Hamlet for he feels that he is too weak and ordinary for such a heroic role. He knows that his life is small and dull and he cannot match Hamlet's role in greatness or decision.
 - He confesses that he is the "attendant lord", a background figure who plays a minor role. His thoughts show his sense of inferiority and failure. [2]
- (ii)
 - The allusion refers to the Biblical Hagar, an enslaved African woman who endured exile and exploitation, yet survived. She symbolises resilience, and endurance.
 - By identifying herself as "Hagar's daughter", the speaker embraces a lineage of strength, resilience and survival, countering narratives that diminish Black female history. [2]

- (iii) • People use cautious, indirect language to avoid direct political opinions. [2]
This shows fear of saying the “wrong” thing.
- Silence becomes a form of self-protection.
 - Heaney mocks this careful speech, showing how fear controls everyday life and prevents honest communication.

SECTION C – 60 MARKS

Attempt **three** questions on the prescribed textbooks. Ensure you attempt **one** question from **one novel, one drama, and poetry.**

NOVEL – THE BOOK THIEF by *Markus Zusak*

Question 7

- (i) • Death first person, omniscient narrator – makes it clear that became interested in the girl, Liesel – story of her as told by Death – “I will tell you a story.” – the story of beauty and brutality in the human world as seen through the eyes of Death – gives a philosophical dimension to the Holocaust as a mature narrative voice focused on a nine or ten year old girl rather than the girl narrating – provides a narration of events and a mature comment on events [20]
- Diary entries: While Death narrates as the omniscient narrator the lives of Liesel, Rudy, Max, and the Hubermanns, he also gets introspective as in ‘Death’s Diary: 1942’ – this is thematically significant in its comment against war and human responsibility - Death says he will help show what he truly looks like but asks for “a mirror” – when humans crank up things and “increase the production of bodies and their escaping souls.” – the Jews and the chimneys, the Russian soldiers with inadequate arms, the bodies on the French coast – ‘Death’s Diary: Cologne’ – “five hundred souls” – as novel and war progress, interspersed diary entries of feelings, tiredness, search for comfort - Death as an escape for Jews in ‘The Long Walk to Dachau’
 - Narrative time is between 1939 – 1943 but narration is not chronological – flashback and flash forward as from Liesel’s time with Sister Maria to September 1943 – concludes with the end of the war in 1945 and the death of Liesel as an old woman
 - Character of death as narrator: amiable, agreeable, affable but not nice (“Nice has nothing to do with me.”); upset by survivors (“leftover humans”) – compassionate – not violent or malicious but “all bluster” – a “result” – Death seen as performing a job in the aftermath of human actions and choices - Death often tired of war and it demands that keeps him busy – has a heart and is “haunted by humans” – seems more human and sentimental than a cold, skeletal persona – seemingly “unflappable” but actually “unnerved, untied, and undone” as people die

- Colours are important to Death: A colour “perched” on Death’s shoulder as he carries soul away – colours help Death relax – the distraction helps Death cope and stay sane – Stalingrad – image of bed-sheet white splashed with blood, wrung out and stretched white again – the image showing the heavy loss of life – as the body count increases, so do the colours for Death
- Death takes away: Liesel’s brother at the age of six, the pilot, Rudy – by 1942, death was so overpowering that the Death as narrator says, “Forget the scythe, God damn it, I needed a broom or a mop. And I needed a holiday.” – almost takes Max but withdraws – ‘The End of the World’ – Himmel Street bombed and only Liesel survives – the sense of loss and waste of war brought out through Death’s narration of Liesel’s grief
- Death foreshadows: no mystery left since death during war is inevitable and expected; instead, reader left knowing the end and wanting to work the way to it – Rudy, how the accordion was a story that would arrive at 33 Himmel Street one morning (“Of course, I’m being rude. I’m spoiling the ending, not only of the entire book, but of this particular piece of it.”) – Death says mystery is boring but the “machinations that wheel us there” that are interesting

(Quotes and a student analysis (drawn from above narration / description) of role / impact on novel of death as narrator)

OR

- (ii) (a) • 1936-Olympics – Jesse Owens had completed 4 × 100 metre relay and won four gold medals – racist attitude then – Hitler refused to shake his hand – Rudy impressed by Owens [10]
- Rudy Steiner painted himself black and ran hundred metres at the local sporting field (Hubert Oval) one night
 - Smeared himself with charcoal, even hair, took his brother’s bike to Hubert Oval – took extra charcoal in case some of it wore off later
 - Did stretches, dug starting holes, paced around, shook imaginary hands of other athletes
 - Imagined starter, crowd cheering for Rudy as ‘Jesse Owens’- felt the rush and the tape break as he became “The fastest man alive.”
 - Victory lap – Rudy’s father asked for an explanation – Rudy thought being Jesse Owens was “the most natural thing on earth”
 - Father caught his son’s ears and dragged him home – talked politics to him – Rudy understood what he had done later but too late for it to matter anymore.
 - Later, at the farm as the children were escaping a farmer, Arthur Berg called out “The name is Owens” for Rudy.

(Appropriate quotes, if used, to be given credit)

- (b) [10]
- Hans Hubermann “was caught in one of the most dangerous dilemmas a German citizen could face. Not only that, he’d been facing it for close to a year.”
 - Hans Hubermann appreciated fairness – his life had once been saved by a Jew
 - Jews were marched through Molching on the way to Dachau
 - Hans watched the staggering Jews pushed by soldiers and Death again warns in advance that Liesel would see what happens to one who helps them
 - An older man – beard and torn clothes – “eyes the colour of agony” – he fell several times – Hans Hubermann gave him a piece of bread and the Jew thanked Hans
 - A soldier studied the kneeling man and Hans and then the crowd – the Jew was whipped six times and cursed – then Hans Hubermann was whipped on the street – struck four times and he hit the ground
 - Liesel and Rudy helped Hans up, the bread lay on the ground and was snatched by a passing Jew
 - Hans was called a “Jew-lover” – some silently helped Hans
 - Hans horrified at the danger he had put Max in – forced departure of Max from the basement out of fear of the Gestapo – brings attention to his family
 - To punish Hans and break his spirit, he was drafted into the army – letter accepting application to join NSDAP and then statement to say he was being drafted - most undesirable position on the home front – LSE (Air Force Special Unit) – to remain above ground during air raids and put out fires, prop up walls and rescue the trapped (Dead Body Collectors) -clean up towns in between raids

(Appropriate quotes may be given to substantiate the answer)

OR

NOVEL - THE NAMESAKE by Jhumpa Lahiri

Question 8

- (i) [20]
- The novel highlights the many challenges immigrants face in America, particularly emotional isolation, cultural displacement, and identity conflict.
 - Immigrants face generational divides within their own families, as their children adopt American values more easily. Through these struggles, Lahiri shows that immigration involves not only physical relocation but also deep emotional and cultural adjustment.
 - Ashima and Ashoke, as first-generation immigrants, cling to Bengali traditions to preserve a sense of home and continuity. From daily routines to festivals, meals, and rituals, their lives are deeply rooted in Indian culture.

- Ashima experiences isolation and nostalgia while navigating life in Cambridge, Massachusetts where she “feels as if she is a spectator in her own life, an outsider in a strange land,” emphasizing her emotional displacement.
- She relies on customs and memories to maintain a connection to her homeland, such as celebrating Durga Puja, cooking Bengali food, and waiting for letters from relatives. Even small decisions, like naming their son, carry profound cultural significance. Ashima wishes to follow tradition by consulting her grandmother in India, while Ashoke, aware of practical constraints, names the child “Gogol” after the Russian writer whose book he was reading during a life-threatening train accident: “The first time he had read Gogol, he had been saved by the book.” This incident highlights how immigrant identity can be shaped by both personal experience and heritage.
- In contrast, Gogol, born and raised in the United States, is influenced by American social norms and peer culture. He struggles with his parents’ traditions, particularly his unusual name, which causes him embarrassment. He wants to be like everyone else and does not want to be the only one with a strange name. His decision to legally change his name to Nikhil illustrates the generational and cultural divide and reflects the American-born children’s negotiation between parental expectations and personal identity.
- Gogol’s connection with Maxine allows him to embrace freedom and American individuality, while his later relationship with Moushumi highlights the complexities of shared heritage yet conflicting personal desires.
- Lahiri emphasises the cultural gap through contrasts in language, social behavior, and emotional responses.
- Ashima seeks comfort in family and community, whereas Gogol gravitates toward independence and assimilation. Moments of tension, like Gogol avoiding family rituals or feeling embarrassed by Bengali customs, juxtaposed with his eventual understanding of his father’s intentions, show that bridging the gap requires empathy and reflection.
- After Ashoke’s death, Gogol finally appreciates the significance of his name. Through these portrayals, Lahiri not only highlights the challenges faced by immigrant families but also explores broader themes of identity, belonging, and the negotiation between heritage and modernity.

OR

- (ii) (a) From a young age, Ashoke is captivated by books, particularly Russian classics. His paternal grandfather, a former professor of European literature at Calcutta University, had read from them aloud in English translations when Ashoke was a boy which would offer both intellectual stimulation and emotional refuge. While his siblings played outside, Ashoke would curl up beside his grandfather during daily reading sessions. These quiet, intimate moments create a space for emotional connection and admiration. When his grandfather goes blind, he requests [10]

Ashoke's company specifically, to read him *The Statesman* in the morning, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy in the afternoon.

- The grandfather's guidance to "Read all the Russians and then reread them. They will never fail you" instills in Ashoke a lifelong respect for literature as a source of wisdom and continuity. It also shows the importance of intergenerational mentorship in passing down values and intellectual curiosity.
 - He carried two suitcases, the first one containing clothes and gifts, the second empty as his grandfather had said, that the books in his glass-fronted case, collected over a lifetime and preserved under lock and key, would be given to Ashoke. The books had been promised to Ashoke throughout his childhood, and for as long as he could remember he had coveted them more than anything else in the world.
 - Reading becomes a way for Ashoke to cultivate discipline, focus, and introspection, as "Nothing roused him. Nothing distracted him. Nothing caused him to stumble." Literature becomes more than entertainment; it shapes his habits, character, and worldview.
 - The most significant instance is the naming of his son: he chooses "Gogol" after Nikolai Gogol because he was reading Gogol's work during the train accident that nearly killed him.
- (b) [10]
- Ashima rushed to Mount Auburn Hospital two weeks before due date
 - Feels alone in the hospital curtained cubicle, without Ashoke and surrounded by strangers
 - As the contractions come, Ashima thinks of home in India and the apprehensiveness of motherhood in a foreign land
 - Ashoke waits in the waiting room, reading and thinking back on his life – the railway accident that he survived, reasons for claustrophobia
 - Thanks Gogol, the writer, for saving his life
 - Baby born at five past five in the morning – 'Baby Boy Ganguli'
 - Ashima despondent at no family present – birth only "half true"
 - Telegram sent – Ashima's grandmother has to name the baby – parents ignore forms, waiting for the letter from India mailed by the grandmother
 - Days pass without the letter arriving – "Names can wait" – "daknam" (pet name) and the "bhalonam" for the outside world
 - Fourth day – mother and baby to be discharged and a name must be chosen for the birth certificate for a baby to be released from hospital according to American rules
 - If 'Baby Boy Ganguli' retained, a later tedious process of amending the permanent record when a name finally decided

- Cannot name after ancestor because names not meant to be inherited or shared
- Wilcox, the compiler for birth certificates, suggests naming baby after someone they admire – Ashoke thinks of Gogol with gratitude and whispers, “Hello, Gogol.”
- Ashima approves because the name stands for her son’s life and her husband’s – pet name not to be taken seriously, she feels

DRAMA - AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE by *Henrik Ibsen*

Question 9

- (i) ***Expression of opinion (agree / disagree) - Candidates should consider following points to justify opinion.*** [20]

- On observing people are falling ill, Dr. Stockmann gets the Bath waters tested in a laboratory and discovers contamination harmful to public health.
- He believes truth should be made public immediately.
- He initially trusts society to support him.
- Confrontation and refusal to back down: he refuses to hide the report despite pressure, confronts Peter’s authority boldly, rejects financial excuses for suppressing truth.
- Belief: believes public health outweighs economic gain
- Courage: exposes hypocrisy in civic leadership, criticises the press when it withdraws support, refuses to compromise his principles, challenges the concept of majority rule, declares that “the majority is never right.” His final speech affirms individual courage.
- Resilience: withstands public humiliation, faces loss of job and social boycott, remains firm despite family suffering, decides not to leave the town, resolves to educate independent thinkers.
- He symbolises moral integrity and intellectual independence.

(Appropriate quotes may be used to substantiate the answer)

OR

- (ii) (a) [10]
- Angry at not being allowed to speak about the baths
 - Begins on the pollution – his “discovery that all the sources of our moral life are poisoned and that the whole fabric of our civic community is founded on the pestiferous soil of falsehood.”
 - Desire to work for the people – “eider-ducks”
 - Criticism of the authorities (including the mayor) and ignorance-foolish and dying but not the main poisoners – later attacks the ‘People’s Messenger’

- The tyranny of the majority – prefers intelligent, free-thinking minority – common majority is outdated – truth and lies - These “majority truths are like last year's cured meat—like rancid, tainted ham; and they are the origin of the moral scurvy that is rampant in our communities.”
- Uses comparisons such as billy-goats, vermin
- Connects freethinking to morality

(Appropriate quotes may be used to substantiate the answer)

- (b) • Hovstad is the editor of the newspaper ‘People’s Messenger’ [10]
- He initially presents himself as a liberal and supporter of progressive ideas - he promises to publish Dr. Stockmann’s report exposing the contamination of the Baths.
 - At first, he sees the report as an opportunity to criticize the town’s authorities. He also sees this as an opportunity for getting into the good books of Petra whom he admires.
 - He claims to stand for truth and the welfare of the common people but withdraws his support when he realizes the financial consequences of the report and Petra’s lack of interest in him.
 - He prioritises public opinion and economic stability over scientific truth.
 - His change of stance shows his opportunistic and self-interested nature.
 - Through Hovstad, Ibsen criticises the unreliability and hypocrisy of the press.
 - Ultimately, Hovstad represents how media can fail its moral responsibility when faced with social and economic pressure.
 - Represents the “compact majority” thought Dr Stockmann criticises at meeting.

(Appropriate quotes may be used to substantiate the answer)

DRAMA - TUGHLAQ by *Girish Karnad*

Question 10

- (i) • Tughlaq, who is a king and the main character of the play - Aziz, a washerman, assumes importance when juxtaposed with the character of the emperor as a foil [20]
- Muhammad is an idealist who wants to shift his capital and change the currency for the welfare of his subjects - Aziz is a realist and a practical man to the core
 - The appearance of Aziz and Aazam in the camp on Delhi-Daulatabad road and their daily routine of cheating others punctures Muhammed’s claims of an ideal king of an ideal state.
 - The appearance of Aziz and Aazam in the camp on Delhi - Daulatabad road and their daily routine of cheating others punctures Muhammed’s claims of an ideal king of an ideal state – He lives by cheating others of their

money. He manipulates the orders and decisions of the Sultan and cons people in the name of law.

- The court's judgement in favour of the disguised Aziz makes a mockery of Muhammed's slogans of secularism and justice - the underground life of Aziz and his associate Aazam mounts a parody of Muhammed's ideals of the welfare state. Aziz becomes an instrument to expose the cruelty and corruption in Muhammed's regime when he refuses to help a woman with a dying son in her lap when she asks for medical aid.
- In pursuit of realizing his dream to be rich by any means whatsoever, he manipulates the decision of the government giving compensation to those whose land has been confiscated by the state. He is a Muslim but in order to get the compensation, he disguises himself as a Brahmin. Thus, he makes a mockery of the king's welfare policies. He brings to the fore how Muhammed too has disguised his true self and poses to be a very religious and benevolent king.
- Tughlaq's fall into isolation is paralleled by Aziz's rise
 - For Muhammed and Aziz, politics holds a common interest but for different reasons; Aziz comments, "Politics! It is a beautiful world-wealth, success, position, power — yet it is full of brainless people.....If one uses half that intelligence here, one can bet robes of power..." – vision and dream of Tughlaq for a unified secular state versus Aziz's opportunistic view of politics
 - Like Muhammed who manipulates religious leaders and political situations, Aziz makes use of religion and caste for his personal gains. He knows that even if the Hindu woman is allowed to leave the camp, she can't complain against him as she takes him for a Brahmin. Complaining against a Brahmin to a Muslim, according to a Brahminical dogma, will send her to hell straight.
 - Furthermore, he is cruel like Muhammed. He kills Ghiyas-ud-din and begins to dance after the killing, showing that he harbours no regrets. His singing and dancing over a dead body reminds the reader of the neurotic emperor who does not stop to kill either.

(Appropriate quotes should be used to substantiate the answer)

OR

- (ii) (a) • The play presents the Sultan as an idealistic, and often manipulative politician who employs religious tolerance as a strategic tool to unify a diverse empire. **[10]**
- His secular policies, like abolishing the jizya tax and appointing Hindus high positions, are shown as attempts to build a cohesive state - aims to bridge the gap between Hindus and Muslims for Tughlaq believed that orthodoxy was a barrier to building a secular state - abolition of the jizya designed to win the trust of his Hindu subjects, who formed the majority of the population - actively promotes Hindus in his administration – shift of capital to Daulatabad, with a large Hindu population

- believes that justice and religion should not be mixed up, a concept that was alien to the 14th century political structure - contempt for the Ulema stems from their narrow-mindedness, which he believes holds back progress
- However, these policies lead to his political isolation, for the orthodox Muslims turn against him - his strategy ultimately fails. His policies of tolerance alienate the orthodox Muslims who see him as an enemy of Islam while the Hindus are increasingly suspicious of his motives. This leads to chaos and unrest.
- Tughlaq comes across as a leader with two faces, one who is secular and the other who is a ruthless politician, out to gain control and this fractures his authority.

(Appropriate quotes, if used, to be given credit)

- (b) • Serves as the voice of restraint and love, in stark contrast to Tughlaq's chaotic rule. [10]
- The only female character in the play offering a glimpse into Tughlaq's personal life and emotional struggles - this humanizes him and makes his descent into tyranny tragic.
 - Shows deep love and concern for Tughlaq. She worries about his health, often questioning his impractical decisions, such as shifting the capital to Daulatabad and his reliance on Najib. Her rationality serves as a counterbalance to Tughlaq's impulsive nature.
 - She orchestrates Najib's murder, hoping to save Tughlaq from his own madness. This decision ultimately leads to her own downfall, as Tughlaq orders her to be stoned to death.
 - Her death is a point of no return for Tughlaq. It leaves him completely isolated, unable to trust or love anyone. He is surrounded by enemies and fear, a stark contrast to the loving relationship they once shared.
 - This tragic outcome serves as a commentary on the corrosive nature of power.
 - Role underscores the play's themes of power, isolation and the blurred lines between love and betrayal.

(Appropriate quotes may be used to substantiate the answer)

POETRY - FIREFLIES (A Collection of Poems)

Question 11

- (i) • The presence in the poem of the first person "I" who wields a pen, and the family reminiscences, identifies the speaker as Seamus Heaney: the poem is autobiographical and contains references to Heaney's native Ireland. The poet accepts that he does not have the skill to till the land and instead is happy to use his pen instead of the spade. [20]
- He is writing in his room and underneath he hears his father's spade in the gravel. His father is an expert, and his rhythmic movement shows the skill that he has inherited from the poet's grandfather.

- Sight and sounds of digging take Heaney back twenty years as he pictures his father, a much younger man and adept farmer, dig in rhythm, steadying the lug with his boots and the shaft of the spade against the inside knee.
- The image is of an expert, efficient farmer, working away quietly and gracefully. The cool feeling of the potatoes dug is a tactile image that drives home the point that this was a provider who worked in harmony with the earth.
- “By God the old man could handle a spade. Just like his old man.”
- Further back into the past, when the writer’s grandfather would dig the peat out of the bog, cutting more than any other in Toner’s Bog, again providing the fuel necessary for cooking and keeping warm. Heaney reminisces how he would take milk coked clumsily with paper, which he would drink in a gulp and fall to work straightaway
- Neat nicking and slicing, and going deep down once again conveys the quiet dignity and competence
- Onomatopoeia, alliteration and imagery– the “cold smell of potato mould”, the “squelch and slap of soggy peat” and the “curt cuts” of an edge demonstrate how Heaney has literally used his pen to capture his heritage -concludes with the admission that he has no spade with which to follow the men he obviously admires, but has a pen and that, “I’ll dig with it.”
- The family heritage and skill being passed down generations, even as Heaney accepts his responsibility in a different profession while openly voicing admiration of what his family did and his desire to acknowledge and embrace it through his chosen vocation.

(Relevant quotes)

OR

- (ii) (a) [10]
- The panther metaphor conveys the speaker’s fear and sense of impending doom, emotional turmoil, panic, unchecked desire
 - The central image, the panther, is a powerful symbol of an all-consuming and destructive predatory force that evokes both fear and desire.
 - The panther - “white-fanged” and possessing a “terrible beauty” - captures the paradoxical nature of the panther, suggesting that it is both terrifying and alluring.
 - Greed to consume everything around – snaring, burning - leading to ultimate demise – imagery of blood, hunger and thirst, muscular strength, lurking ardour
 - The narrator’s frantic escape and the claustrophobic atmosphere of the poem increase the sense of panic and dread, creating an inescapable feeling of doom.
 - The panther metaphor represents an intense attraction to a force that is also terrifying. The panther’s relentless pursuit creates a sense of helplessness, emphasizing the speaker’s powerlessness.
 - The panther could also be seen as a symbol of existential threat, representing the terrifying yet alluring nature of death. The speaker’s

fear is not just of the panther, but of the unknown and uncontrollable forces that it represents – could be sexual, mental illness, unchecked desire.

(Appropriate quotes may be used to substantiate the answer)

- (b) [10]
- Not a quick process – “much time”
 - Nor simple – more than a “simple jab”
 - Growth has been slow and steady – “consuming earth”, “feeding”, “absorbing” – sprouting life – building strength over years
 - Not even stronger actions like hacking and chopping will work
 - The tree (nature) can withstand and overcome pain, regenerate – “bleeding bark will heal” – can grow to “former size” if left “unchecked”
 - The only way a tree (nature) can be overcome is by attacking its root strength – haul the root out from deep within earth, which in itself is insufficient – needs scorching, choking
 - The finality of “then it is done” – only after great strength and effort
 - Resilience shown by drawing out the process and time – imagery of “leprous hide” and “bleeding bark” – ugliness and violence involved
 - Nature’s resilience can only be overcome by brutally violent and deliberate act.

(Appropriate quotes may be used to substantiate the answer)

