

# ICSE Class 10 English Language Question Paper Solution 2017

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE (PAPER-1)

### Question 1

(Do not spend more than 35 minutes on this question.)

Write a composition (350 - 400 words) on any one of the following:

- (a) Write an original short story that begins with the words: "It was raining hard that night. In my hurry to get into the house, I didn't notice the black car parked across the road. I realized something was wrong when....."
- (b) "*School days are the happiest days of our lives.*" Express your views either **for** or **against** this statement.
- (c) Narrate an incident from your own experience when you helped a friend who was in trouble. Explain what happened. What did you do to make the situation better?
- (d) There has been heavy rain in your city/town. You went to school but found that it was closed because of the rain. Describe the sights and sounds near the school and narrate how you finally reached home and spent the rest of the day.
- (e) Study the picture given below. Write a story or a description or an account of what it suggests to you. Your composition may be about the subject of the picture or you may take suggestions from it; however, there must be a clear connection between the picture and your composition.



## Comments of Examiners

- (a) Many candidates failed to begin with the given lines. Those who did use the lines did not use it in its entirety and as usual, stories were lifted out of English text books films and television serials. In many cases there was no real connection between the opening lines and the story that resulted in a complete lack of logical sequence. Stories did not have the element of fear or surprise that was so necessary in this particular essay.
- (b) A large number of candidates chose this topic and surprisingly almost every one of them wrote in favour of the fact that 'schooldays are the happiest days of our lives' Repeatedly words like "enjoy", "fun", "study" and "boring" were used. However, the most glaring mistake was that the candidates did not present a logical argument to support their stand and as a result failed to identify it as an argumentative essay. They used sentiment and emotion to eulogise school and teachers, or in some cases, they gave details of bad behaviour to schools and teachers as moments of fun. The destruction of school property, description of vandalism and general misdemeanours all came under the garb of enjoyment. It is pertinent that as educators we must take moral education and character building a little more seriously. There is always a percentage of candidates who will argue on both sides and fail to follow rubric where they are instructed clearly to express their views either *for* or *against* the statement. A very small fraction of children chose to write against the topic and wrote feelingly about bullying, partiality, cramming and the overloaded school bag and syllabus as detrimental to true learning.
- (c) Candidates failed to recognise it as first person narrative and they wrote of their experiences as adult professionals who had assisted the community or society by some act of philanthropy. There was a remarkable similarity in the content of many candidates. One can only presume that these are topics to be found in workbook/guidebooks and that children seemed to have memorised the content. Also, it may be noted that many of the essays faulted on the use of tenses and the candidates made multiple errors by using contractions, non-English words and colloquialisms. This was a descriptive composition, however, candidates converted it into a short story or narrative or first person account and failed to address all parts of the question – description of the trip to school, description of the return, how the rest of the day was spent. All these features were largely ignored. Many candidates dealt with sights but not the sound.
- (d) Candidates who attempted this question wrote about cruelty to animals, poverty, and child labour with no mention of either the girl or the baby elephant. Many of the compositions were once again learnt from guide books and the picture which was poignant and evocative failed to elicit a suitable response. Candidates did not even study the picture correctly and referred to the elephant calf as a

### Suggestions for teachers

- Actively teach the children to use the given sentence in its entirety. Adequate drill work is vital for this.
- Stress the importance of cohesive connected story telling techniques so that the students learn to glean mood and tone from the given prompt and sustain the mood in their writing.
- A good way to teach story telling is to begin in the middle school and to ask each child to add one line or one sentence to the previous one. The results are entertaining and enjoyable and yet there is adequate learning on the story telling form.
- Explain that plagiarism is a form of theft. Many students are unaware of this.
- Conduct class level debates regularly.
- Students must be taught to build an argument by asking them to write down three reasons why...eg 'reading stories books is good for you'. Encourage them to use 'because' as it helps them think of reasons 'why' they are arguing for or against a motion.

pet dog! In a few compositions, the elements of the picture were merely itemised and there was no attempt to either describe or interpret the picture.

## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 1

(a)	The story must be <b>original</b> and <b>must begin</b> with the given sentence. The story may take any form but should convey the sequence of events following the narrator finding something amiss as he/ she approaches the front door of his/ her home.
(b)	Views for or against the motion are to be accepted. Credit is to be given for a cohesive, well-constructed, logical argument and ideas and reasoning based on personal experience. The child should take a clear stand and give valid reasons for whatever stand he takes regarding the topic <b>either for or against</b> the statement.
(c)	The candidate must write from his/her own experience. There must be an account of the <b>problem</b> and <b>solution</b> and stress on <b>the role of the narrator</b> in the resolution.
(d)	A clear description of the rain, flooded streets, traffic etc. Also, the difficulty in getting to school and returning with a brief account of the rest of the day.
(e)	Accept a wide interpretation. Any relevant ideas taken from the picture should be accepted and there must be a clear connection between the picture and the composition.

### Question 2

(Do not spend more than 20 minutes on this question.)

Select **any one** of the following:

- (a) A number of loose electric wires are hanging from a lamp post near the main gate of your school. Write a letter to the Municipal Commissioner explaining the problem, the danger it poses and suggest a quick solution.
- (b) You were a part of an organizing committee for an inter-school event which was very successful. You and the other committee members were congratulated and praised at the school assembly by the Principal. Write a letter to your grandmother telling her about the event and your feelings at being recognized and praised in front of the school.

## Comments of Examiners

### (a) Format:

A number of candidates are unable to write the format correctly. Terms like ‘Respected Sir’ are still used. In a number of cases, for the Subscription also, candidates used ‘xyz’, first names only and index or Centre numbers.

### Content:

A number of candidates merely mentioned ‘the danger’ without specifying electrocution, shock or even death. Candidates failed to have a realistic idea of the scale of the problem!

### Expression:

Candidates were unable to explain themselves in the correct register – language appropriate to the context. The tone was found to be too casual or informal and far too many colloquialisms were used.

### (b) Format:

Candidates are unclear about the format and how the date is to be written.

### Content:

A number of candidates failed to name the inter school event and have described the grandmother’s feeling of joy and pride instead of their own.

### Expression:

Candidates made spelling errors and errors of tense and agreement of subject with verb.

### Suggestions for teachers

- Adequate drill in format is necessary.
- Candidates must be taught to underline what is being asked in the question paper itself and address those questions in the body of the letters.
- Students must be taught to differentiate between the ‘Principle’ and ‘Principal’.

## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 2

	INFORMAL LETTER	FORMAL LETTER
	Address	From address
	Date	Date
	Salutation	To address
	X	Salutation
	Subscription	Subscription
	First name	Name + surname/ initial
(a)	<b>Formal Letter (Format, Content, Expression)</b> Location: Name of school/ proper postal address of the school Dangers: Wires hanging / electrocution / death / shock ( <i>Any two</i> ) Solution: Send electrician / shut off power / cordon off area ( <i>Any two</i> )	
(b)	<b>Informal Letter (Format, Content, Expression)</b>	

Specific **Name** of event

Exact **Role** e.g. announcing/ decorating / participating

Two feelings - joy, pride, achievement, etc.

## Question 3

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Every Monday, on his way back from work, Bipin Chowdhury would drop in at New Market to buy books. He had to buy at least five at a time to last him through the week. He lived alone, was not a good mixer, had few friends, and didn't like spending time in idle chat. Those who called in the evening got through their business quickly and left. Those who didn't show signs of leaving would be told around eight o'clock by Bipin Babu that he was under doctor's orders to have dinner at eight-thirty. After dinner he would rest for half an hour and then turn in with a book. This was a routine which had *persisted* unbroken for years.

Today, Bipin Babu had the feeling that someone was observing him from close quarters. He turned round and found himself looking at a round-faced, meek-looking man who now broke into a smile.

'I don't suppose you recognize me.'

Bipin Babu felt ill at ease. It didn't seem that he had ever encountered this man before. The face seemed quite unfamiliar.

'Have we met before?' asked Bipin Babu.

The man looked greatly surprised. 'We met every day for a whole week. I arranged for a car to take you to the Hudroo falls. My name is Parimal Ghose.'

'Ranchi?'

Now Bipin Babu realized this man was making a mistake. Bipin Babu had never been to Ranchi. He smiled and said, 'Do you know who I am?'

The man raised his eyebrows, and said, 'Who doesn't know Bipin Chowdhury?'

Bipin Babu turned towards the bookshelves and said, 'You're making a mistake. I've never been to Ranchi.'

The man now laughed aloud.

What are you saying, Mr. Chowdhury? You had a fall in Hudroo and cut your right knee. I brought you iodine. I had fixed up a car for you to go to Netarhat the next day, but you couldn't because of the pain in the knee. Can't you recall anything? Someone else you know was also in Ranchi at that time. Mr. Dinesh Mukherjee. You stayed in a bungalow. You said you didn't like hotel food. I'll tell you more: you always carried a bag with your books in it on your sightseeing trips. Am I right or not?'



Bipin Babu spoke quietly, his eyes still on the books.

‘Which month in Nineteen fifty- eight are you talking about?’

The man said, ‘October.’

‘No, sir,’ said Bipin Babu. ‘I spent October Nineteen fifty- eight with a friend in Kanpur. You’re making a mistake. Good day.’

But the man didn’t go, nor did he stop talking.

‘Very strange. One evening I had tea with you on the veranda of your bungalow. You spoke about your family. You said you had no children, and that you had lost your wife a *decade* ago.

When Bipin Babu had paid for the books and was leaving the shop, the man was still looking at him in utter disbelief.

Bipin Babu’s car was safely parked in Bertram Street. He told the driver as he got into the car, ‘Just drive by the Ganga, will you, Sitaram.’ Driving up the Strand Road, Bipin Babu regretted having paid so much attention to the *intruder*. He had never been to Ranchi. He had an excellent memory.

Unless he was losing his mind!

- (a) Give the meaning of the following words as used in the passage:

One word answers or short phrases will be accepted.

- (i) persisted (line 9)
- (ii) decade (line 42)
- (iii) intruder (line 48)

- (b) Answer the following questions briefly in your own words.

- (i) How did Bipin Chowdhury find time to read five books a week?
- (ii) How did he get rid of visitors who stayed late?
- (iii) Which sentence tells you that Bipin Babu was uncomfortable?
- (iv) What strong argument did Bipin Babu give to prove that he was not in Ranchi at that time?
- (v) What does Bipin Babu regret?
- (vi) What are Bipin Babu’s feelings at the end of the passage?

- (c) (i) What memories of the trip does Parimal Ghose evoke to prove that Bipin Babu was indeed in Ranchi? Answer in not more than 60 words.
- (ii) Give a title to your summary in 3(c)(i). Give a reason to justify your choice of the title.

## Comments of Examiners

(a) Despite the words being fairly simple very few candidates got all correct. Even those who are able to draw meaning from the context made errors of tense and form of the word. Some gave the meaning in a long sentence and not in a word or phrase. Even the word 'decade' was explained as 'century' or a 'hundred' or 'about ten years' or 'ten' or so.

Many candidates also wrote 'one who intrudes' to explain 'intruder'.

(b) The candidates largely lifted the answer or arrived at the conclusion by guessing. In question number (iii) the candidates were required to quote the relevant line from the passage and most candidates were unable to do this. Question (vi) was an inference question and many candidates were unable to arrive at a deeper level of meaning at the conclusion.

(c) Précis writing has always been a difficulty for the average and less than average candidates. Many candidates did not draw the grid and overshot the word limit. Some candidates wrote the Précis using first and second person.

In the second part, some candidates wrote very long titles which were unrelated to the Précis but dealt with the entire excerpt.

### Suggestions for teachers

- Students must be given adequate drill work with emphasis on working out the vocabulary both orally and in writing.
- Encourage students to write in their own words when required, and quote verbatim when asked to do so. They must be taught to discern the difference between the two questions.
- Worksheets and word games must be used to increase vocabulary.
- Adequate practice required for Précis writing must be given.
- Circle time may be used for describing situations and giving captions or titles.
- Practice summary writing (independent of comprehension).

## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 3

(a)	(i) persisted - kept on, repeated, continued, (ii) decade - a period of ten years (iii) intruder - unexpected / unsolicited/ unwanted / uninvited guest / visitor/ encroacher / trespasser / interloper
(b)	(i) He lived alone + was not a good mixer + had few friends + didn't like spending time in idle chat.
	(ii) Would be told + under doctors' orders + to have dinner + 8.30 p.m.
	(iii) "Bipin Babu felt ill at ease".
	(iv) Bipin Babu says he spent October 1958 + with a friend in Kanpur.
	(v) Bipin Babu regrets having paid so much attention / to the intruder.
	(vi) Confused / Mystified / Worried / Self-doubt / Lack of confidence in himself/ afraid he was losing his mind

(c)	<p>(i) Points to look for: That Bipin Babu</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Had had a fall / cut his knee</li> <li>2. Was given iodine.</li> <li>3. Parimal Ghosh had arranged a car but Bipin Babu couldn't go.</li> <li>4. Dinesh Mukherjee was also in Ranchi.</li> <li>5. Bipin Babu had stayed in a bungalow.</li> <li>6. Didn't like hotel food</li> <li>7. Always carried a bag with books</li> <li>8. Talked about family (wife had died, no children)</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;">(Any six)</p>
	<p>(ii) Expression - Any suitable title dealing only with the précis. Reasonable justification.</p>

## Question 4

- (a) Fill in each of the numbered blanks with the correct form of the word given in brackets. Do not copy the passage, but write in correct serial order the word or phrase appropriate to the blank space.

**Example:**

Answer: (0) started

My mother (0) \_\_\_\_\_ (start) school when she (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (be) six and (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (stop) the same term. She was unusual in the village as she had a father and brother who (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (encourage) her to go to school. She was the only girl in a class of boys and claims she was brighter than the boys. But every day she (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (will) leave behind her girl cousins (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (play) at home and she (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (envy) them. There (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (seem) to be no point in (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to school just to end up doing housework.

- (b) Fill in each blank with an appropriate word:
- (i) She shouted angrily \_\_\_\_\_ the disobedient boy.
  - (ii) I asked them to provide us \_\_\_\_\_ a guide.
  - (iii) The tree grew at a dangerous slant and had to be cut \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (iv) My daughter believes \_\_\_\_\_ fairies.
  - (v) He drew a beautiful diagram \_\_\_\_\_ the board.
  - (vi) She battled her way \_\_\_\_\_ the crowd.
  - (vii) We were asked to gather \_\_\_\_\_ the teacher.
  - (viii) They had to climb \_\_\_\_\_ the steep pathway to reach the top.
- (c) Join the following sentences to make one complete sentence **without using and, but or so**:
- (i) This is the hospital. I was born here.
  - (ii) The children have been sick for a week. They were unable to go to school.



- (iii) Mrs. Kumar has been a teacher for thirty years. She will now retire.
- (iv) We have had no respect for nature. Now we are suffering from the effects of global warming.
- (d) Re-write the following sentences according to the instructions given after each. Make other changes that may be necessary, but do not change the meaning of each sentence.
- (i) Not many people read for pleasure these days.  
(Begin: Few.....)
- (ii) Since her childhood Meera has been good in Mathematics.  
(End: .....childhood.)
- (iii) “We have had no rain since January”, Ramu said.  
(Begin: Ramu said that they.....)
- (iv) It is dangerous as well as illegal to drive a motorcycle without a helmet.  
(Begin: It is not.....)
- (v) He had plenty of wealth but he was not happy.  
(Begin: In spite.....)
- (vi) He was so tired that he could not stand.  
(Use: too)
- (vii) Every one of them was an experienced mountaineer.  
(Begin: There was no.....)
- (viii) I have never seen a film as bad as this.  
(Begin: This is.....)

## Comments of Examiners

- (a) This part was answered correctly by most candidates and this enabled them to score well.
- (b) Though most candidates fared well not many got full marks. Those who answered incorrectly did so because they lacked the confidence.
- (c) Most candidates lost marks because of the weak knowledge of the present perfect tense (c, iv). Many candidates do not know the forms of 'be'.
- (d) Most candidates answered incorrectly as they failed to recognize GRM rules- correct grammar, adherence to rubric and unchanged meaning. Every sentence when rewritten must comply with all three.

## Suggestions for teachers

- Grammar is caught not taught and therefore listening to correctly spoken English in the early years is of paramount importance. There can be no substitute for this.
- Since grammar has a spiralling syllabus it must move in all its aspects from simple to complex forms.
- Continual and continuous practice is imperative to learning structure.
- Encourage the use of grammar games and other creative ways of teaching grammar.
- Every language lesson either overtly or subliminally reinforces grammar learning. Be aware of this and use it to their advantage.

## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 4

(a)	1.was    2. stopped    3. encouraged    4. would    5. playing    6.envied 7. seemed    8. going
(b)	Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word:
	(i) at    (ii) with    (iii) down    (iv) in    (v) on    (vi) through/ into    (vii) around    (viii) up
(c)	(i) This is the hospital where (in which) I was born/ I was born in this hospital. (ii) As the children, <b>had</b> been sick for a week they were unable to go to school. (Also accept 'because'/ for/ since...) (iii) Mrs. Kumar who has been a teacher (for more than) thirty years will now retire. (iv) Having had no respect for nature we are now suffering from the effects of global warming. (Accept variations with 'as'/ because/ for / since....)

- (d) (i) Few people read for pleasure these days.  
(ii) Meera has been good in (at) Mathematics **since** her childhood.  
(iii) Ramu said that they **had had** no rain since January.  
(iv) It is not only dangerous but also illegal to drive a motor cycle without a helmet/ It is neither safe nor legal to drive a ....  
(v) In spite of being wealthy/ having plenty of wealth he was not happy.  
(vi) He was too tired to stand.  
(vii) There was no one who was an inexperienced (not an experienced) mountaineer among them.  
(viii) This is the worst film I have (ever) seen.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

Topics found  
difficult/  
confusing by  
candidates

argumentative essay continues to be difficult for most candidates and those with advanced writing skills seem to do it well.

Suggestions  
for  
candidates

- Do not write overlong essays.
- Continually practice transformation of sentences.
- Read question paper thoroughly.
- Use English as often as you can. Do not translate into English from your home language because when you do this, you will make errors in idiomatic expression and in the use of prepositions and tenses.
- Build a class library /notice board.
- Participate in class level debates and discussions to develop speaking skills. and the confidence among students to express themselves.
- Play language games and word games to develop vocabulary.