

# ICSE Class 10 English Language Question Paper Solution 2015

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### ENGLISH 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:

[25]

- (a) Write an original story that begins with the words: “He was the funniest boy I had ever met. He would make everyone laugh.....”
- (b) You had booked a ticket on an early morning train. However, you woke up late and missed it. You then decided to run to catch a bus to the next station where you hoped to catch up with the train. Narrate the entire event, how you felt, the effort you made and how you finally caught the train. What did you learn from this stressful experience?
- (c) *All Girls or all Boys Schools provide a better learning environment than co-educational schools.* Express your views either **for** or **against** the statement.
- (d) Describe in detail the view from your bedroom window. Does your room overlook a park? A busy street? What are the sights, sounds and smells that you would typically see, hear and experience at different times of the day? When do you most enjoy the view? Early in the morning, in the evening or late at night?
- (e) Study the picture given below. Write a short story or description or an account of what the picture suggests to you. Your composition may be about the subject of the picture or you may take suggestions from it; however, your composition must have a clear connection with the picture.



## Examiners' Comments

- (a) A number of candidates attempted this question but a good many of them failed to understand that when the opening sentence is given, they must use the entire sentence without making any alteration in the syntax or sequence of the sentence. A number of candidates did not understand that the short story should have been about a boy whom they knew who was prankster or one who was fun loving and comical. There was hardly any evidence of the boy's funny character and more often the story ended with the boy dying of some incurable illness. Many candidates merely described the boy with no reference to any funny episode. In a few cases the stories were not original and in some cases there was no link between the opening sentence and the rest of the story. Story building exercises can be begun as early as class VI and used as a block building exercise. This is not only an amusing activity but also one that initiates creativity and imagination.
- (b) This essay had points clearly identified in the question paper. It was merely a linear description of a chain of events. Words describing anxiety, nervousness, haste, relief and joy should form part of this exercise. However a number of candidates wasted words on preparations to catch the train, reasons for delay, causes for the journey and very little focus on the actual series of mishaps.
- (c) A number of candidates attempted this essay but a large number of them merely generalised the advantages of coeducational schools versus gender specific schools. The ability to write in a logical and clear manner with argument and inference using examples to support a point of view was singularly absent. Very few candidates had the ability to present the case in a cohesive manner. The aspect of a better learning environment was completely absent and in many cases the candidates wrote about education for girls or gender justice.

### Suggestions for teachers

- To help children write stories give them situations and ask them to draw conclusions first orally and then in writing.
- Explain to them the consequences of plagiarism. Story telling in the primary classes is a very important exercise and its importance cannot be over emphasised.
- Using debate as a classroom exercise will enhance logical reasoning. Ensure that every child should participate in these sessions.
- Picture writing and picture talk form an essential part of primary and pre-primary education. It is recommended that a junior school level only picture composition is to be given before other forms are taught.
- Students must be taught to read the question properly and understand what is being asked. All parts of the question must be addressed.
- The importance of correct listening and speaking can never be over emphasised unless the natural order of language learning is followed there will always be interferences from the mother tongue.
- Students must be given an opportunity to express themselves in all the five genres.
- Teaching Composition writing is a long and arduous process and there are no short cuts. Teachers should work in a coordinated and graded link to establish this.

Unless debates are taken seriously in schools and students encouraged to express their points of view, this skill will soon become a dying art. Adequate debating almost on a weekly basis is required to enable students to think and argue creatively and be bold enough to dissent popular opinion.

- (d) This is a descriptive essay and candidates are expected to describe a scene from a window through different parts of the day and in the closing lines to say which part of the day they liked best. A large number of candidates opted for this and many children living in rural, semi-rural, moffusil areas or children living in hill stations and sea side towns wrote feelingly on this topic. Some candidates did not address which part of the day they liked best. A number of candidates “lifted” from Bazaars of Hyderabad. The Last Leaf or The Open Window.
- (e) Although the picture was attractive and thought provoking a number of candidates merely described the elements of the picture. A good number rewrote the 2014 comprehension passage from the Life of Pi or The Tiger in the Tunnel. There were some instances of mistaking the Tiger for either a lion or panther. Candidates must be taught to look at the picture carefully before attempting to answer.

## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 1.

- a) The story must be **original**. It **must begin** with the given lines in their entirety. The story should deal with the boy’s comical nature, his ability to make others laugh and then how things change or do not change. The story should begin on a light hearted note- it may change later. The character development of the boy is important, if not original.
- b) A first person account – therefore it should be written from the experience of the child. The tension of waking late- the anxiety- putting things together-packing- running to the station- the shock and disappointment at seeing the train leaving the platform-the whole cycle of stress-catching the bus-running to the next station-running on the platform-success or disappointment –lesson learnt.
- c) An argumentative essay-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**.
- d) This is a descriptive essay-candidate must in vivid **sensory** detail the view from his /her any window. The description must include details of typical sights sounds and smells that he/she sees, hears and experiences. The description must differentiate between morning and evening/ night experiences and clearly state the time of Question 2 day preferred by the candidate. **[words like ‘park’ ‘busy street’ are merely pointers and need not be a part of the description- the candidate may describe ANY view.]**
- e) Accept a wide interpretation-an essay on Project tiger/wild life sanctuaries/tiger in a zoo etc. Any relevant ideas taken from the picture should be accepted. No penalty if tiger is called leopard/panther or lion...accept any member of cat family! Any other creature. A mere itemized description of the picture is to be penalized.

## Question 2

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

Select **one** of the following:

[10]

- (a) Break time (recess) at your school is only for a duration of fifteen minutes. Write a letter to your Principal requesting an extension in the break-time from fifteen minutes to half an hour. Give reasons for your request and explain in what way an extended break would make a difference to you as a student.
- (b) You are to be awarded a Special Prize at the Annual Prize Day ceremony of your school. Write a letter to a lady relative giving her the news. Be sure to include details of the prize that you are to receive and tell her why you have been chosen for this honour

### Examiners' Comments

#### FORMAL LETTER:

- a) Format: - The Format was largely incorrect. Most candidates have not mastered the correct format and have put wrong salutations or subscriptions. Many candidates spelt 'principal' incorrectly. This was unfortunate as the word was in the question paper.
- b) Content: - Candidates were unable to address two points separately and although they asked for the extension of the recess they did not say how it would benefit them.
- c) Expression: - Candidates must be taught to write in paragraphs using the same standards as for composition writing.

#### Suggestions for teachers

- Letter writing to be practiced from class V onwards.
- An oral discussion on the content of the letter before writing would help.
- Teach students to identify the points that have to be addressed in the question paper.

#### INFORMAL LETTER:

- a) Format: - Incorrect. Many did not understand the term "lady relative" and began the salutation as "dear lady relative".
- b) Content: - A majority of candidates failed to name the award and merely repeated the term "special prize". There was no attention paid to the different parts of the question.
- c) Expression: - Candidates did not address the points in separate paragraphs. No attention was paid to clarity of expression and good vocabulary.

## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 2.

#### **Formal Letter:**

From address (home/school)

Date

To address ONLY Principal, [spelling counts] + School address

Salutation [ Sir/ Madam/ Dear.../ Rev. Mother etc

Subscription. Yours faithfully

Name + surname/initial

#### **Informal letter:**

Address (Home/school)

Date

Salutation- Dear/My dear [-name]/female relative

Subscription- Yours lovingly, /Yours affectionately, /Your loving,/affectionate...

First name

**Ensure that the format is correct and that the following points of each letter are clearly brought out:**

#### **a) Formal Letter (format, content, expression)**

1. **Why?** [Reason for request eg. Not enough time to visit library/ school canteen/ play/ eat]

2. **How?** [it'll make a difference-eg. Students feel refreshed / ready for next half / less rushed]

#### **b) Informal Letter (format, content, expression)**

(i) **Name the prize** [eg. Attendance / Maths Prize/ Courage or Bravery Prize]

(ii) **Why is awarded?** [to reward regular attendance/ to honour the top scorer in maths / for having displayed courage / for doing an act of valour]

(iii) **What is the award?**- details of award- eg a trophy/ a book/ a cash prize/ cheque, etc.

### Question 3

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

Lying in bed, Swami realized with a shudder that it was Monday morning. It looked as though only a moment ago it had been the last period on Friday; already Monday was here. He hoped that an earthquake would reduce the school building to dust, but that good building --- Albert Mission School – had withstood similar prayers for over a hundred years now. At nine o'clock Swaminathan wailed, "I have a headache." His mother said, "Why don't you go to school in a bullock cart?"

"So that I may be completely dead at the other end? Have you any idea what it means to be *jolted* in a cart?"

"Have you any important lessons today?" 10

"Important! Bah! That geography teacher has been teaching the same lesson for over a year now. And we have arithmetic, which means for a whole period we are going to be beaten by the teacher..... Important lessons!"

And Mother generously suggested that Swami might stay at home.

At 9:30, when he ought to have been lining up in the school prayer hall, Swami was lying on the bench in Mother's room. Father asked him, "Have you no school today?" 15

"Headache," Swami replied.

"Nonsense! Dress up and go."

"Headache." 20

"Loaf about less on Sundays and you will be without a headache on Monday."

Swami knew how *stubborn* his father could be and changed his tactics. "I can't go so late to class."

"I agree, but you'll have to; it is your own fault. You should have asked me before deciding to stay away." 25

"What will the teacher think if I go so late?"

"Tell him you had a headache and so are late."

"He will beat me if I say so."

"Will he? Let us see. What is his name?"

“Mr. Samuel.” 30

“Does he beat the boys?”

“He is very violent, especially with boys who come late. Some days ago a boy was made to stay on his knees for a whole period in a corner of the class because he came late, and that after getting six cuts from the cane and having his ears twisted. I wouldn’t like to go late to Mr. Samuel’s class.” 35

“If he is so violent, why not tell your headmaster about it?”

“They say that even the headmaster is afraid of him. He is such a violent man.”

And then Swami gave a lurid account of Samuel’s violence; how when he started caning he would not stop till he saw blood on the boy’s hand, which he made the boy press to his forehead like a vermillion marking. Swami hoped that his father would be made to see that he couldn’t go to his class late. But Father’s behaviour took an unexpected turn. He became excited. “What do these people mean by beating our children? They must be driven out of service. I will see...” 40

The result was he proposed to send Swami late to his class as a kind of challenge. He was also going to send a letter with Swami to the headmaster. No amount of protest from Swami was of any *avail*: Swami had to go to school. 45

By the time he was ready Father had composed a long letter to the headmaster, put in an envelope and sealed it. 50

“What have you written, Father?” Swaminathan asked apprehensively.

“Nothing for you. Give it to your headmaster and go to your class.”

Swami’s father did not know the truth, that actually Mr. Samuel was a very kind and gentle man.

(a) Give the meaning of each of the following words as used in the passage.

One word answers or short phrases will be accepted.

(i) jolted (*line 8*)

(ii) stubborn (*line 21*)

(iii) avail (*line 45*)

[3]

- (b) Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:
- (i) What did Swami wish for on a Monday morning? Why was his wish unlikely to be answered? [2]
  - (ii) Which sentence tells us that Swami’s father was completely unsympathetic to his son’s headache? [2]
  - (iii) In what way was Swami’s Mother’s response different from his father’s? [2]
  - (iv) Why did Swami give a colourful account of Mr. Samuel to his father? [2]
  - (v) In what way did Father’s behaviour take an unexpected turn? [2]
  - (vi) What was Swami finally ordered to do by his father? [2]
- (c) (i) In not more than 60 words describe how Swami tries to prove that Mr. Samuel is a violent man. [8]
- (ii) Give a title to your summary in 3(c). Give a reason to justify your choice. [2]

#### Examiners’ Comments

- (a) Very few candidates wrote all three words correctly, some candidates wrote more than one answer with at least one alternative used wrongly and some used the words in sentences of their own without bringing out their meaning. The meaning of all these words could have been gleaned from the context but the candidates were unable to do this correctly.
- (b) Many candidates merely copied large sections of the passage and seemed unable to answer specifically. Candidates seemed to have trouble with “Why” questions. 1, 2 & 5.
- (c) Several candidates merely rewrote the paragraph and no attention was paid to the word limit, neither a grid used clearly. A reflection of the fact that there is no practice given to this question in the classroom. The title for the précis is very often based on the entire passage with no reference to the 60 word summary. In many cases candidates have justified their choice of title by simply writing “... because I think this is the most suitable title!”

#### Suggestions for teachers

- The use of class and school libraries must be encouraged with children being taught to infer word meanings from the context. Students must be told that the meaning can easily be deduced from the passage.
- Students must be taught the use of dictionary as an important tool in language learning, it can be used in games to encourage students to get used to it.
- Drill work in précis writing is essential. Unless adequate practice is given from class 8 upwards students will not be able to draw sequential order from multiple stimulus that one’s senses are bombarded with.
- Assign summary writing tasks based on passages from the literature texts and call out the answers in class.
- After an exercise on summary writing is done, discuss possible titles for it and encourage them to explain why a title may or may not be suitable.



## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 3.

a)

- (i) **Jolted**: shaken up badly, jerked, rattled, jarred, jounced, bounced, lurched, [*tossed/ bumped/ thrown/ knocked* + **about**. **DO NOT** accept **these words** without 'about']
- (ii) **Stubborn**: obstinate, unbending, unyielding, adamant, rigid, inflexible, obdurate, mulish, pig-headed
- (iii) **Avail**: use, purpose, benefit, advantage

b)

- (i) That an earthquake would reduce the school building to dust + that the building had withstood similar prayers for over a hundred years now
- (ii) His father said; "Loaf about less on Sundays and you will be without a headache on Mondays" [Must quote exactly. **NO MARKS** for paraphrasing. Marks deducted if only a part of the sentence is quoted.] No marks for more than one sentence.
- (iii) Mother let him rest at home/ believed him/ was kind/ generous/ sympathetic +Father was not (**contrast** between mother's response and father's must be evident.)
- (iv) Swami did not want to go to school. + He hoped that his father would believe/ feel sorry for him/ be frightened for him.
- (v) Father became excited/angry (with Samuel) + He wrote a letter.
- (vi) Give a letter to Headmaster + go to class

c)

- (i) Swami tries to prove that Samuel was a violent man by saying:

1. that he often **beat** the boys ( especially late-comers)
2. a boy had been made **to kneel** for a whole period
3. gave him **six cuts**
4. **twisted** his ears
5. Even **Headmaster was afraid** of him
6. would not stop caning until the boy began **to bleed**
7. would make the boy **press** bloodied hand to forehead like a vermillion mark.

[Accept **ANY SIX** of the points listed above]

- (ii) Accept any **apt** title - suited to the summary **NOT** to the whole passage. [Title **MUST NOT** refer to Headmaster/ Swami's father/ Swami's friends]

Reason must justify choice of title [not to lift reason from the question].

#### 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:**

(0) One morning I (0) ... (see) the python curled up on the dressing table.

Answer: saw.

It was (1)... (gaze) at its own reflection in the mirror. I (2) ... (go) for grandfather but by the time we (3) ... (return) to the room, the python (4) ... (move) on. He was seen in the garden and once the cook saw him (5) ... (crawl) up the ladder to the roof. Then we (6) ... (find) him on the dressing table again (7) ... (admire) himself in the mirror. "He's trying to look better for Aunt Mabel" I said. I (8) ... (regret) this remark immediately because grandmother overheard and held up my pocket money for the rest of the week!

- (b) Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word:
- (i) He found the key just \_\_\_\_\_ the front door.
  - (ii) I could not accompany my cousin \_\_\_\_\_ the trip because I had fever.
  - (iii) The noise prevented us \_\_\_\_\_ sleeping.
  - (iv) The young man put the flute \_\_\_\_\_ his lips and began to play.
  - (v) Ashok leaned \_\_\_\_\_ the wall tiredly.
  - (vi) The paper dart went gliding \_\_\_\_\_ the air.
  - (vii) The cyclist rode quickly \_\_\_\_\_ the path.
  - (viii) The young child carried the heavy bucket \_\_\_\_\_ the stairs. [4]
- (c) Join the following sentences to make one complete sentence **without using** *and*, *but* or *so*.
- (i) He has learnt to cycle. He has yet to learn to swim.
  - (ii) The child helped her mother to make breakfast. She washed the tomatoes.
  - (iii) They bought a new car. They can travel long distances.
  - (iv) Sunita opened her purse. She found the money missing. [4]

- (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) Arun gave Ramesh some excellent advice.  
(Begin: Ramesh was.....)
- (ii) As soon as Sania sat down to study, the lights went off.  
(Begin: No sooner .....
- (iii) Has Alia written to you?  
(Begin: Have you .....
- (iv) As soon as the function got over. The crowd dispersed.  
(Begin: Hardly had .....
- (v) The monsoon is the best season in our country.  
(Rewrite using 'good')
- (vi) Harish was so tired that he could not keep his eyes open.  
(Begin: Harish was too .....
- (vii) Father said to Sunil, "I can help you with your homework."  
(Begin: Father told Sunil.....)
- (viii) Naresh goes to a school which has over a thousand students.  
(Begin: There.....)

[8]

#### Examiners' Comments

- a) Candidates made several errors of tense, constant use of present continuous tense. A number of candidates made spelling mistakes.
- b) The correct use of prepositions is an indicator of correct listening in early years. Most candidates seemed to be guessing and sub-sections (i), (iv) and (viii) is where many made mistakes.
- c) Candidates were unable to use gerund and infinitive correctly. Very often candidates are unable to adhere to the meaning of the given sentence.
- d) Sub-question (ii), (v) and (viii) were areas where the candidates committed errors.

#### Suggestions for teachers

- Drill work is of paramount importance in the teaching of grammar.
- Regular classes in conversational English would train the "ear" to listen to what sounds correct.
- Grammar must be taught structure wise and adequate practice and reinforcement to be given before moving on to the next structure.
- Worksheets and grammar games must be used to make learning enjoyable.
- Grammar has a concentric syllabus and students must move over the same structure from easy beginnings to more complex forms.

## MARKING SCHEME

### Question 4

(a)

1. gazing
2. went
3. returned
4. had moved
5. crawl/ crawling
6. found
7. admiring
8. regretted

(b)

- (i) near/ by/ beside/outside/ behind      (ii) on      (iii) from      (iv) to  
(v) against      (vi) through      (vii) down/along/ across      (viii) up/ down

(c)

1. Although he has learnt to cycle/cycling, he has not yet learned to swim/swimming. [Though he.../In spite of his having learnt.../ Despite having learnt...]
2. The child helped her mother to make breakfast by washing the tomatoes.
3. Since they have bought a new car, they can travel long distances. [ 'as' / 'because' / Now that they have bought ...]
4. Sunita opened her purse to find the money missing/When Sunita opened her purse, she found the money missing/ On opening her purse, Sunita found her money missing [Do not accept - 'missing money' / As soon as.... / No sooner than..... / Hardly....when]]

(d)

1. Ramesh was given some excellent advice by Arun.
2. No sooner did/had Sania sit/sat down to study, than the lights went off.
3. Have you heard from Alia? / Have you had/ received a letter from Alia?
4. Hardly had the function got over when the crowd dispersed.
5. No other season in our country is as (so) good as the monsoon.
6. Harish was too tired to keep his eyes open.
7. Father told Sunil that he could help him with his home work.
8. There are more than/ over a thousand students in Naresh's school/ the school that Naresh goes to/ attends.

***For Questions 4C and 4D meaning of the sentence must not change.***

### **Topics found confusing / difficult:**

- Candidates were unable to deal with short story. The qualification of what is humorous varied from the vague to the eccentric.
- The candidates wasted too many words on the reasons for missing the train rather than on the series of mishaps which should have followed missing the train.
- The format of the letter continues to be unclear to the candidates and many children would otherwise have done well failed to score in question 2.
- Poor reading is reflected in question 3 where candidates are unable to comprehend unseen passages without a teacher's explanation.
- Grammar, which should have been a high scoring area works the other way around and candidates lose marks because of it.

### **Suggestions for Students:**

- Learn to write in your own words and for this listen to well Spoken English when you can. The television is full of good educative and enjoyable programmes.
- Speak in English, avoid the temptation of thinking in your mother tongue and then translating into English.
- Practise the format of letter, underline the part of the question that you are supposed to address.
- Read for pleasure.
- Be a part of classroom debates and discussions.