

# SSLC EXAMINATION, MARCH – 2021

## ENGLISH

### Part I

Time: 2<sup>1/2</sup> Hours

Total Score: 80

Questions 1-5: Read the following excerpt from 'The Snake and the Mirror' and answer the questions that follow.

It was a hot summer night about ten o'clock. I had my meal at the restaurant and returned to my room. I heard a noise from above as I opened the door. The sound was a familiar one. One could say that rats and I shared the room. I took out my box of matches and lighted the kerosene lamp on the table.

The house was not electrified; it was a small rented room. I had just set-up medical practice and my earnings were meagre. I had about sixty rupees in my suitcase. Along with some shirts and dhotis, I also possessed one solitary black coat which I was then wearing.

1. What is the time referred to in the passage? " 1
2. 'The sound was a familiar one'. What makes the homeopath say so? 2
3. Identify the sentence that tells you the homeopath is not an experienced doctor. 1
4. What were the possessions of the homeopath? 1
5. Pick out the word that means 'not having enough of something' from the passage. 1

#### **Solution:**

1. The time referred to in the passage is ten o'clock at night.
2. The homeopath says the sound was familiar because he was accustomed to the sound of rats as they shared the room with him.
3. The sentence that tells us the homeopath is not an experienced doctor is "I had just set-up medical practice and my earnings were meagre."
4. The possessions of the homeopath were sixty rupees, some shirts, dhotis, and a solitary black coat.
5. The word that means 'not having enough of something' from the passage is "meagre."

Questions 6-9: Read the lines from 'The Ballad of Father Gilligan' and answer the questions that follow.

Upon the time of sparrow chirp  
 When the moths came once more,  
 The old priest Peter Gilligan  
 Stood upright on the floor.  
 'Mavrone, mavrone! The man has died  
 While I slept in the chair.'  
 He roused his horse out of its sleep

And rode with little care.

6. Pick out the two references in the first stanza that tell you the time is early morning. 2

7. Identify an instance of alliteration in the first stanza. 1

8. How did Peter Gilligan express his sadness in not performing his duty? 1

9. What did Peter Gilligan do once he realised his mistake? 1

**Solution:**

6. The two references that tell the time is early morning are "Upon the time of sparrow chirp" and "When the moths came once more."

7. An instance of alliteration in the first stanza is "Peter Gilligan."

8. Peter Gilligan expressed his sadness by exclaiming "Mavrone, mavrone!" and lamenting that the man had died while he slept.

9. Once Peter Gilligan realised his mistake, he quickly roused his horse and rode with little care to reach the man's house.

Question 10: Read the lines from the poem 'Lines Written in Early Spring' and prepare a note of appreciation focusing on its theme, imagery and poetic devices.

6

I heard a thousand blended notes,  
 While in a grove I sate reclined,  
 In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.  
 To her fair works did Nature link  
 The human soul that through me ran;  
 And much it grieved my heart to think  
 What man has made of man.

**Solution:**

The poem Lines Written in Early Spring by William Wordsworth reflects on the contrast between the beauty of nature and the sorrow caused by human actions. The poet, while sitting in a grove, listens to the harmonious sounds of nature, which evoke both joy and sadness. The theme of the poem revolves around the purity of nature and the poet's grief over humanity's cruelty and destruction.

The imagery in the poem is vivid, with phrases like "a thousand blended notes" and "fair works" of nature painting a serene picture of the natural world. The contrast between nature's harmony and human suffering deepens the emotional impact of the poem.

Poetic devices such as alliteration ("pleasant thoughts bring sad thoughts") and personification ("Nature link the human soul") enhance the lyrical quality of the poem. The repetition in "What man has made of man" emphasizes the poet's deep sorrow. Overall, the poem beautifully conveys a sense of nostalgia, admiration for nature, and disappointment in humanity.

Question 11: Read the lines from the poem 'The Ballad of Father Gilligan' and prepare a 6 note of appreciation focusing on its theme, imagery and other poetic devices.

The old priest Peter Gilligan  
 Was weary night and day  
 For half his flock were in their beds  
 Or under green sods lay.  
 Once, while he nodded in a chair  
 At the moth-hour of the eve  
 Another poor man sent for him  
 And he began to grieve.

**Solution:**

The poem The Ballad of Father Gilligan by W.B. Yeats explores themes of duty, exhaustion, and divine grace. Father Gilligan, a weary priest, grieves as he struggles to serve his dying parishioners, but ultimately experiences God's mercy.

The poem's imagery vividly depicts the priest's fatigue and the setting, such as "under green sods lay" symbolizing death and "moth-hour of the eve" evoking the quiet stillness of dusk. The alliteration in "Peter Gilligan" and "moth-hour" enhances the poem's musical quality.

The mood shifts from sorrow to hope, showing how faith provides comfort. The poem follows a simple ballad structure with a steady rhyme scheme, making it engaging and memorable. Through symbolism and poetic devices, Yeats beautifully conveys the priest's struggle and divine intervention.

Questions 12-17: Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

A lovely little girl was holding two apples with both hands. Her mom came in and softly asked her little daughter with a smile, "My sweetie, could you give your mom one of your apples?"

The girl looked up at her mom for some seconds, then she suddenly took a quick bite on one apple, and then quickly on the other. The smile on mom's face froze. She tried hard not to reveal her disappointment.

Then the little girl handed one of her bitten apples to her mom. She said, "Mummy, here you are. Take this apple. This is the sweeter one."

No matter who you are, how experienced you are, and how knowledgeable you think you are, always delay judgement. Give others the privilege to explain themselves. What you see may not be the reality. 1

12. What did the mother ask the little girl for? 1
13. What did the girl do after hearing the mother's question? 1
14. Pick out the sentence that tells you the mother was upset. 1
15. The passage says that we should not \_\_\_\_\_. 1
16. The little girl bit both the apples to \_\_\_\_\_. 1
17. Which apple did the girl handover to her mother? 1

**Solution:**

12. The mother asked the little girl for one of her apples.
13. After hearing the mother's question, the girl took a quick bite from both apples.
14. The sentence that tells us the mother was upset is "The smile on mom's face froze. She tried hard not to reveal her disappointment."

15. The passage says that we should not judge others too quickly.
16. The little girl bit both the apples to find out which one was sweeter.
17. The girl handed over the sweeter apple to her mother.

Questions 18-22: Answer in about 120 words.

18. The fight between the cobra and the mongoose in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree' is an exciting one. Narrate the fight scene in your own words. (Hints :- Cobra glides out of the clump - mongoose emerges from the bushes - mongoose is a clever fighter - cobra is skilful - mongoose bites the snake - mongoose wins - drags the cobra to the bushes) 7

19. For compassionate souls helping others is a means to find happiness. Prepare a write-up based on the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' justifying this statement. (Hints :- Narrator is a young doctor - a sergeant informs him about a suicide case - tries hard to bring the man back to life - the man comes back to life - tells his story - narrator gives seven pounds and ten shillings) 7

20. Satyajit Ray and his team needed a tiger for the film 'Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne'. But shooting the scene with the tiger turned out to be a very difficult task. Prepare a description in your own words detailing the difficulties they faced in shooting the scene at Notun Gram. (Hints :- Brings a tiger from the circus company - a lorry arrives with two tigers - the animal trainer Mr. Thorat tries to control the tiger - shooting completed - poor results - second attempt-shoots the scene) 7

21. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer is a master storyteller. The story 'The Snake and the Mirror' is an excellent example of his writing style blended with humour. Narrate in your words the incidents in the story highlighting the elements of humour. (Hints :- The homeopath shares the room with rats - earthshaking decisions - wishes to marry a fat woman - snake admires its own beauty - thief leaves the vest) 7

22. Mr. John in the story, 'The Best Investment I Ever Made', met with unexpected twists and turns in his life. Narrate in your own words the events that happened in the life of Mr. John. (Hints :- An advocate's clerk-falls victim to the habits of loose society-steals money - terrified of the prosecution - attempts suicide - Cronin helps - works as a social worker) 7

**Solution:**

18. The fight between the cobra and the mongoose in Adventures in a Banyan Tree is intense and thrilling. The cobra glides out of the clump of cactus, and the mongoose cautiously emerges from the bushes. The mongoose is a clever and swift fighter, while the cobra is skilful and well-prepared. The cobra raises its hood and strikes, but the mongoose dodges quickly. The mongoose's sharp reflexes help it avoid the deadly fangs of the cobra. After a fierce struggle, the mongoose makes a

calculated move and bites the cobra behind its hood. With a final attack, the mongoose kills the cobra and drags it into the bushes, emerging victorious in this dramatic battle of survival.

19. *The Best Investment I Ever Made* highlights how helping others brings true happiness. The narrator, a young doctor, is approached by a sergeant about a suicide case. A man had tried to end his life by jumping from a window. The narrator works tirelessly to save him and succeeds in bringing him back to life. The man, deeply ashamed, shares his story of financial struggles and bad influences. Seeing his despair, the narrator gives him seven pounds and ten shillings to restart his life. Years later, the narrator meets him again as a respected social worker, proving that small acts of kindness can change lives and bring immense joy to the giver.

20. Satyajit Ray faced several challenges while shooting a tiger scene for *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*. A circus company provided a tiger, and two tigers arrived in a lorry at Notun Gram. The animal trainer, Mr. Thorat, struggled to control the tiger, which was restless inside its cage. When the tiger was released, it did not behave as expected, making filming difficult. After much effort, the scene was shot, but the results were poor. Disappointed, Ray and his team made a second attempt. This time, the scene was filmed successfully, capturing the thrilling presence of the tiger. The entire experience proved to be a challenging yet rewarding one for the filmmakers.

21. *The Snake and the Mirror* by Vaikom Muhammad Basheer is full of humour. The homeopath, a young doctor, lives in a small rented room shared with rats. He often makes earthshaking decisions, like improving his looks and planning to marry a fat woman who wouldn't run away if he made a mistake. One night, a snake falls onto his shoulder, making him freeze with fear. Ironically, the snake seems more interested in admiring itself in the mirror than attacking him. When the snake slithers away, the doctor runs out. Later, he finds that a thief has stolen everything from his room—except his vest! The humorous narration and irony make the story highly entertaining.

22. Mr. John's life in *The Best Investment I Ever Made* was full of struggles and unexpected changes. He started as an advocate's clerk but soon fell into bad company. His association with loose society led him to gambling and theft. Desperate and terrified of prosecution, he attempted suicide by jumping out of a window. Fortunately, Dr. Cronin saved his life. Instead of punishing him, Cronin helped him restart his life by giving him financial support. Deeply moved by this kindness, Mr. John transformed himself. He worked hard, reformed his ways, and eventually became a dedicated social worker, helping troubled youth avoid the mistakes he once made.

Questions 23-27: Answer in about 80 words.

23. Prepare a profile of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer using the hints given.

6

Born: 21 January 1908, Thalayolaparambu

Known as: Beypore Sultan

Spouse: Fabi Basheer

Notable works: 'Balyakalaskhi', 'Shabdangal', 'Pathummayude Aadu'

Awards: Padma Shri, Vallathol Award, Muttathu Varkey Award

Death: 1994

24. Mr. John in the story, 'The Best Investment I Ever Made', writes a letter to Cronin thanking him for his help. Write the likely letter. 6

25. The shooting at Notun Gram where Mr. Thorat arrived with two tigers in a lorry turns out to be an interesting incident for the onlookers. Imagine that you are a news reporter who happened to be at the shooting location. Prepare the likely news report. 6

26. Mr. John in the story, 'The Best Investment I Ever Made', decides to dedicate the rest of his life for people in need. Attempt a character sketch of Mr. John. 6

27. The story 'The Adventures in a Banyan Tree' describes a boy's close-knit relationship with nature. Based on the story, prepare a write-up on the topic 'Life in harmony with nature'. 6

### Solution:

#### 23. Profile of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer

Vaikom Muhammad Basheer was born on 21 January 1908 in Thalayolaparambu, Kerala. He was popularly known as Beypore Sultan. A celebrated Malayalam writer, he is best known for his simple yet powerful storytelling. His notable works include Balyakalaskhi, Shabdangal, and Pathummayude Aadu. He received several prestigious awards, including the Padma Shri, Vallathol Award, and Muttathu Varkey Award. Basheer's writing reflects social issues, humour, and deep human emotions. He passed away in 1994, leaving behind a rich literary legacy.

#### 24. Letter from Mr. John to Dr. Cronin

Dear Dr. Cronin,

I hope this letter finds you well. Words cannot express my gratitude for your kindness years ago when you saved my life. Your compassion and generosity gave me a second chance, and I have dedicated my life to helping others in need. Without your support, I would have been lost. Today, I work as a social worker, guiding troubled youth, just as you guided me. Thank you for believing in me when I had lost hope.

With heartfelt gratitude,

John

#### 25. News Report on the Shooting at Notun Gram

Tiger Shooting Creates Buzz at Notun Gram!

Notun Gram witnessed an unusual spectacle as renowned filmmaker Satyajit Ray and his team arrived to shoot a scene for Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne. The highlight of the day was the arrival of two tigers in a lorry, accompanied by trainer Mr. Thorat. The onlookers watched in awe as the restless tiger was released for filming. However, controlling the animal proved challenging, making the shoot both thrilling and risky. Despite initial difficulties, the team managed to complete the scene successfully, leaving the crowd amazed by the rare experience.

#### 26. Character Sketch of Mr. John

Mr. John, from *The Best Investment I Ever Made*, is a man who transforms his life from despair to hope. Initially, he falls into bad company, leading to theft and attempted suicide. However, Dr. Cronin's kindness changes his fate. John repays this act by dedicating his life to social work. He becomes compassionate, responsible, and committed to helping troubled youth. His story highlights redemption and the power of kindness in changing lives.

### 27. **Life in Harmony with Nature**

The story *Adventures in a Banyan Tree* beautifully illustrates the joy of living close to nature. The boy in the story finds comfort and adventure in the banyan tree, observing wildlife and forming a bond with a squirrel. His experiences highlight the importance of respecting and coexisting with nature. The story reminds us that nature is not just a backdrop but an essential part of life, offering peace, beauty, and valuable lessons on survival and harmony.

Questions 28-36: Answer in about 60 words.

28. Even Mr. Thorat, the animal trainer, was surprised by the sudden emergence of the tiger from the cage in the lorry. Imagine you happened to meet Mr. Thorat and talked about the incident. Prepare the likely conversation between Mr. Thorat and you. (At least five exchanges)

29. The Literary Club of your school has decided to conduct an Online Literary Fest. A well-known writer M.T. Vasudevan Nair has consented to inaugurate the fest. As the convener of the club you are asked to prepare a notice for the function. Draft the likely notice.

30. Returning home after escaping from the snake, the homeopath was shocked to see almost everything he had was stolen. He was upset and jotted down his thoughts in his diary. Write the likely diary entry.

31. Martha, in the story 'The Scholarship Jacket' happened to hear the conversation between Mr. Schmidt, her History teacher and Mr. Boone, her Math teacher. Write a paragraph on the topic of their discussion and the arguments they put forward to justify their points.

32. After reaching home Ali informed his sister Zahra that he had lost her shoes. Zahra was disappointed. Write the likely conversation between Ali and Zahra.

33. The boy in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree' was excited to see the fight between the mongoose and the cobra. He wrote his thoughts in his diary. Write the likely diary entry.

34. The story 'Vanka' narrates the torturing experiences faced by a boy named Vanka at Alyakhin's house. Write a brief paragraph describing Vanka's experiences at Alyakhin's house.

35. Imagine that you happened to meet the Grandfather in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'. Prepare a set of five questions you would like to ask him.

36. In her speech on the topic 'The Danger of a Single Story' Adichie explains how the single story about something is often incomplete. Write a paragraph on how Adichie shows us an example for this in the case of Fide's family.

### **Solution:**

28. Conversation between Mr. Thorat and Me

Me: Mr. Thorat, I heard about the tiger suddenly jumping out of the cage. What happened exactly?

Mr. Thorat: It was quite unexpected! The moment we unlocked the cage, the tiger sprang out with great force.

Me: That must have been frightening! How did you react?

Mr. Thorat: I was surprised but stayed calm. We had to ensure the tiger didn't run away.

Me: Was the film crew scared?

Mr. Thorat: Yes, they were! But they kept their distance and waited for me to control the tiger.

Me: It must have been a tough shoot. How did you manage to complete it?

Mr. Thorat: With patience and skill! Eventually, we got the tiger to move as needed, and the scene was shot successfully.

### 29. Notice for Online Literary Fest

ABC SCHOOL, LITERARY CLUB

NOTICE

Online Literary Fest 2024

We are delighted to announce that our school's Literary Club is organizing an Online Literary Fest on 15th March 2024. Renowned writer M.T. Vasudevan Nair will inaugurate the event. Join us for exciting discussions, storytelling, and literary competitions.

Date: 15th March 2024

Platform: Google Meet

Time: 10:00 AM

All students are invited to participate. For details, contact the undersigned.

Convener, Literary Club

### 30. Diary Entry of the Homeopath

11th July

What a terrible night! First, I was nearly killed by a snake, and now I've lost all my belongings. That thief took everything—except my vest! How ironic! I should be grateful that I escaped alive, but this experience has left me shaken. Maybe it's time to find a safer place to stay. What an unforgettable night!

### 31. Discussion Between Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Boone

Martha overhears Mr. Schmidt arguing with Mr. Boone about the scholarship jacket. Mr. Schmidt insists that Martha deserves the jacket as she has the highest grades. However, Mr. Boone argues that another student, Joann, should receive it because her father is on the school board. Mr. Schmidt stands firm, believing that academic excellence should be rewarded fairly, while Mr. Boone seems influenced by external pressure.

### 32. Conversation Between Ali and Zahra

Ali: Zahra, I have bad news. I lost your shoes while running after the cyclists.



Zahra: What? Ali, how could you be so careless?

Ali: I'm really sorry! I searched everywhere but couldn't find them.

Zahra: Now what will I wear to school?

Ali: Don't worry, I'll find a way to get you another pair. Please forgive me!

Zahra: I hope so, Ali. This is really upsetting.

### 33. Diary Entry of the Boy

Today was the most thrilling day of my life! I saw an intense fight between a cobra and a mongoose. The cobra was swift, but the mongoose was even smarter. It dodged every strike and finally killed the snake! Watching this from my banyan tree was an unforgettable experience. Nature is truly fascinating!

### 34. Vanka's Experiences at Alyakhin's House

Vanka lived a miserable life at Alyakhin's house. He was treated cruelly, forced to work long hours, and often beaten for no reason. He had to endure hunger, cold, and sleepless nights. His only hope was to escape and return to his grandfather. Despite his suffering, he clung to the dream of a better life.

### 35. Questions for Grandfather

(i) What inspired you to build the platform on the banyan tree?

(ii) Did you ever see another fight like the one between the mongoose and the cobra?

(iii) What made you encourage my love for nature?

(iv) Have you ever had any dangerous encounters with wild animals?

(v) What is the most valuable lesson nature has taught you?

(vi) Fide's Family and the Danger of a Single Story

36. Chimamanda Adichie explains how her perception of Fide's family was shaped by a single story. She was told that they were poor, which made her believe they had nothing. However, when she visited their home, she was surprised to see Fide's mother create beautiful baskets. This made her realize that a single story can be misleading and incomplete, shaping unfair stereotypes.

Questions 37-42: The table given below shows the details of a few Nobel Prize winners. Study the table and answer the questions that follow.

Name	Literary Area	Year	Country
Dorris Lessing	Novel	2007	The UK
Mario Vargas Llosa	Novel and Drama	2010	Peru
Bob Dylan	Song writer	2016	The USA

Louise Gluck	Poetry	2020	The USA
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37. Identify from the above table the songwriter who won the Nobel Prize for literature. 1
38. Dorris Lessing was given the Nobel Prize in the year \_\_\_\_\_. 1
39. Which writer in the above list has two literary areas to his credit? 1
40. Who, according to the list above, is the latest winner of the Nobel Prize? 1
41. The country with two Nobel laureates in the list is \_\_\_\_\_. 1
42. Who is the only poet in the list? 1

**Solution:**

37. The songwriter who won the Nobel Prize for literature is Bob Dylan.
38. Doris Lessing was given the Nobel Prize in the year 2007.
39. The writer in the above list who has two literary areas to his credit is Mario Vargas Llosa.
40. According to the list above, the latest winner of the Nobel Prize is Louise Glück.
41. The country with two Nobel laureates in the list is the USA.
42. The only poet in the list is Louise Glück.

43. Complete the conversation suitably.

Friend: You look really sad, .....(a)..... ?

Martha: Yeah, I never thought I should pay for the scholarship jacket.

Friend: .....(b)..... ?

Martha: I won't get the scholarship jacket this year.

Friend: .....(c)..... ?

Martha: They can take such decisions as they please.

Friend: .....(d).....?

Martha: No, I can't pay the amount they demanded.

Friend: Then you can approach Grandfather. If you ask him .....(e).....

Martha: I don't think so.

Friend: Then you'd better .....(f).....

Martha: Yeah, I'm thinking of complaining to the higher authorities.

**Solution:**

(a) don't you

(b) What happened

(c) How can they do this

(d) Can't you pay the amount

(e) he might help you

(f) talk to the principal

44. Fill in the blanks using the right phrases from the ones given in the box.

put up with, go on, turn down, go for, turn up
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A lot of people \_\_ (a) \_\_ to watch the shooting of the film. The film crew \_\_ (b) \_\_

requesting the people to clear the field. But all the requests were \_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_ by the big crowd that assembled there. But when the tiger emerged from the cage and \_\_\_\_ (d) \_\_\_\_ the crowd, they ran for their lives.

**Solution:**

- (a) turned up
- (b) went on
- (c) turned down
- (d) went for

45. There are a few errors in the passage given below. They are underlined. Edit them.

In the case of very famous stars, this job is done **over (a)** their stand-ins. A stand-in is usually a person **that (b)** is **physical (c)** similar to the real star. The stars **themselves (d)** arrive only when the lights are ready and it is time to **taking (e)** a shot.

**Solution:**

- (a) by (instead of over)
- (b) who (instead of that)
- (c) physically (instead of physical)
- (d) themselves (instead of themselves)
- (e) take (instead of taking)