

**St. Paul's School**  
**Class XII - Half Yearly Examination (2024-2025)**  
**English Core (301)**

**Time: 3 hrs**

**M.M.: 80**

**General Instructions:**

- i. *This question paper has 13 questions. All questions are compulsory.*
- ii. *This question paper contains **three** sections Section A: **Reading Skills**, Section B: **Creative Writing Skills** and Section C: **Literature**.*
- iii. *Attempt all questions based on specific instructions for each part. Write the correct question number and part thereof in your answer sheet.*
- iv. *Separate instructions are given with each section and question, wherever necessary.*
- v. *Do not exceed the prescribed word limit while answering the questions.*

**SECTION A – (Reading Skills)**

**1 Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.**

**12**

1. Aita Prasad Gurung dangled off a cliff in Nepal, carefully manipulating a long pole with a blade at its end to cut away chunks of honeycomb after Himalayan bees fled the fumes from a fire set to drive them from their homes.
2. The 40-year-old wore a white hat with a net swathing his face to protect against stings as he hung 50 m off the precipice on a handmade ladder, braided from bamboo strands, to reach the bee colonies. "It is fraught with danger of falling," said Aita, whose community has traditionally harvested honey from hives perched hundreds of feet off the ground. "One must extract honey and stay safe at the same time."
3. Now the generations-old craft is increasingly under threat as some experts say rising temperatures brought by climate change disrupt the growth of bees, the availability of their food and even pollination of plants. "There were about 35 hives last year," said another member of the community, Chitra Bahadur Gurung, 49, adding, "We barely have 15 now."
4. For generations, the Gurung community in Taap and other villages in the nearby districts of Lamjung and Kaski, have scoured the steep cliffs for honey.
5. The honeycomb extract, also known as 'mad honey', for some intoxicating qualities that can cause hallucinations, sells for 2,000 Nepali rupees (\$1.5) a litre, but the villagers rule out overharvesting as a reason for falling collections. With less honey available to collect every year, income from the pursuit has declined over the past decade, said 41-year-old Hem Raj Gurung. "We harvested about 600 kg of honey 10 years back, which fell to about 180 kg last year and is just about 100 kg this year," he said.

6. Some experts blame climate change, driven by a global rise in temperatures, as a major factor in the decline, but other contributors are deforestation, diversion of water from streams and rivers for hydroelectric dams and pesticides.
7. Temperatures in the Himalayas range higher than an average global increase of 1.2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, UN data and independent research show. Global studies show that a temperature rise of even one degree affects the growth of bees, the availability of their food and cross-pollination of plants.
8. "Too much or too little rain, intense or erratic rain, and long dry spells or high fluctuations in temperature, put stress on honeybees to maintain colony strength and honey stocks," he said. Lifecycle changes in plants also cause early or late flowering and fluctuations in secretion of nectar and honeydew, he said, adding, "The most visible indicator of the change is the erratic weather."

**Courtesy Indian Express**

Based on your reading of the passage answer the following questions.

- a. The tone adopted by the writer in Paragraph 1 of the passage is \_\_\_\_\_. 1
  - i. argumentative
  - ii. descriptive
  - iii. analytical
  - iv. defensive
- b. In 40 words, mention any two challenges Aita Prasad Gurung faced while collecting honey from the Himalayas. 2
- c. Explain in 40 words the reason behind the author's speculation that overharvesting could be a reason behind the decrease in the amount of honey collected in Nepal. 2
- d. State a way that the local governance bodies in Nepal can adopt to prevent the current decline in the amount of honey collected. 1
- e. In 40 words explain why the author refers to the honey collection in Nepal as a "generations-old craft". 2
- f. The author cites the UN data and independent research to show that 1
  - i. climate change is the sole reason for the disappearance of honeycombs in Nepal.
  - ii. to emphasise the increase in global temperature.
  - iii. life in the Himalayas range has been severely impacted by climate change.
  - iv. The write-up has been sponsored by U.N.
- g. "Dangling off a cliff" refers to 1
  - i. climbing a cliff.
  - ii. spiralling around a cliff.
  - iii. gliding off a cliff.
  - iv. Hanging off a cliff.
- h. State whether **True** or **False**. 1

Change in the lifecycle of plants gravely impacts the growth of bees across the world.

i. Read the five headlines (a)-(e) given below:

1

- A. Fewer Hives Threaten Tradition
- B. International Honey Trade
- C. Disrupted Livelihoods of Nepal's Honey Collectors
- D. Effect of Climate Change on the Growth of Bees
- E. Climate Change and Boost in Honey Trade

Identify the option that displays the headline/s that **DOES/DO NOT** correspond with the occurrences in the passage.

- i. A and D
- ii. C and D
- iii. B and E
- iv. A and C

2. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow.

10

1. Corporate India is increasingly offering new-age benefits to employees as they realise that it takes much more than just a fat pay cheque to attract and retain talent. Support for self-development, flexible work arrangements and health insurance for the sibling are some of the benefits on the table.
2. As much as 76% of employees who responded to the 2024 Global Benefits Attitudes Survey conducted by risk advisory and broking firm WTW said the benefit package is an important reason to continue with their current employer. Two-thirds indicated that they could leave their current job for better benefits without a change in the salary package.
3. Recently, consumer goods manufacturer P&G introduced an annual fixed cash allowance for employees to use towards personal development and family members, childcare and pet care, elderly care and adoption expenses, among others. Rolled out under the company's 'Inclusive Care Program', this initiative helps employees choose what they need most, said Srinivas PM, P&G India's chief HR officer.
4. In a bid to ensure health gaps do not go unaddressed - as stress compounds the effects of a largely sedentary lifestyle of the modern workforce - e-commerce company Flipkart last August introduced free voluntary health check-ups for its employees, including those of online travel agency Cleartrip that it owns. Camps were held in 33 cities as part of this and thousands have availed of the benefit, said Aakriti Chandra, senior director of rewards, performance and corporate functions at the firm owned by Walmart.
5. Elements of care and wellness in employee engagement and retention were not fully recognised in the past, Shweta Mohanty, head of HR at SAP India, told ET. "Prospective candidates now inquire about facilities, benefits, and insurance coverage, emphasising the importance of these aspects," she added.

Courtesy Economic Times

Based on your reading of the passage answer the following questions.

- a. Which among the following is an example of a flexible work arrangement? **1**
- Office Working Hours: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - A minimum of 7 hours of measurable work to be done in a day in office between fixed working hours.
  - Minimum 35 hours a week to be devoted to work, and days to complete work in a week depends on the employee's convenience.
  - Work from home but with a minimum of 11 hours in a day devoted to work between 8:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
- b. According to responses to the survey by WTW, corporate employers must provide benefit packages to **1**
- keep up with the changing stock trends.
  - avoid providing a better salary package.
  - retain their talented employees.
  - retain their demanding employees.
- c. State an inference about P&G based on their decision to offer employees an annual fixed cash allowance to help them choose what they need most. **1**
- d. State why corporates are offering the modern workforce free voluntary health check-ups. Provide any one reason. **1**
- e. Complete the following sentence appropriately. **1**  
Thousands of employees have availed the benefit of health camps in 33 cities organised by Flipkart which shows that employees at the firm are \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. State one way in which the policies related to employee engagement and retention in India have changed. **1**
- g. As a prospective candidate at a well-renowned corporate firm, state any two additional benefits you would enquire about before joining the firm. **2**
- h. State any two reasons due to which the title – “Corporate India is More Than Employers Seeking Profit” is suitable for this passage. **2**

### SECTION B – (Creative Writing Skills)

(Note: All details presented in the questions are imaginary and created for assessment purpose.)

3. Attempt ANY ONE of the two, in about 50 words:
- a. As Deepak Garg, Senior Coordinator of the Pre-Medical Club of Pinegrove School, District Solan, HP, draft a notice for the school noticeboard informing students of Class IX and X about a visit to Shri Balmukand Apex Hospital, Solan, on 14 September for participation in *Sanrakshan* – A First-Aid Workshop, being organised to impart knowledge about First Aid, on World First Aid Day. Also, inform the students that this workshop will be supervised by Dr. M. Srinivas, Director of AIIMS. Also, invent the other necessary details. **4**

OR

- b. As the Secretary of the RWA of Okhla Village, draft a notice informing residents about the RWA's participation in the *Clean Yamuna Campaign*, organised by **4**

MCD South-East Delhi. For the campaign, volunteering residents must report every fourth Sunday from October - December at the Kalindi Kunj Ghat at 7:00 a.m. Also, invite residents to submit their names for the campaign to the Vice-President of RWA. Only two names from a family will be accepted for participation in the Campaign. Also, invent the other necessary details.

4. Attempt **ANY ONE** of the two, in about 50 words:
- a. You are Sangeeta Sharma, Senior Director of Iconic Packages, a travel agency with head office in Malleshwaram, Bengaluru. As a part of your company's initiative to promote your new branch in Delhi, you are organising a bicycle tour of Lutyens's Delhi. Draft an invitation, mentioning all the relevant details, to be sent to all the members of the Delhi office located at C-35, Rajiv Chowk Road, Connaught Place, encouraging active participation in the tour. Request them to be punctual. **4**
- OR**
- b. You are Professor Kumud Sharma, Vice-President of Sahitya Akademi, Vishwa Vidyalaya, New Delhi. You have been invited as a keynote speaker in a programme organised to celebrate Hindi Diwas by Birla School, Ambikapur, Chhattisgarh. Draft a formal letter of acceptance, informing them about the topic of your speech and its duration. Also, mention other relevant details. **4**
5. Attempt **ANY ONE** of the two in 120-150 words.
- a. You are Parul/Pratik Nanda, a resident of B-31, Skyline Apartments Abhyankar Nagar, Nagpur. You saw the advertisement given below in the newspaper and wished to apply for the same. Draft a cover letter along with your bio-data, expressing your interest in the advertised post. **5**

Sales Managers required for a Toyota Spare Parts Distributor based & operating in Mumbai – Must have Min 5 Yrs Exp and Good Computer Knowledge – Good Prospects & Permanent Job. Send detailed Resume to the Personnel Manager at 901/9th Floor Synergy Business Park, behind Pravasi Indl. Estate, Goregaon, Mumbai - 400063.

**OR**

- b. You are Elsa Thomas, Head Counsellor with the Ernakulam Counselling Ministry, Kerela. In the last few years, due to the emphasis on qualifying entrance exams such as IIT-JEE, NEET, CUET etc., there has been an increase in the number of students dropping out of regular schools in Class XI for dummy schools. **5**

Write a letter to the editor of a national daily expressing your concern about the increasing popularity of dummy schools and the decreasing demand for formal education offered by regular schools. Also, mention ways to resolve this issue. Use the given cues, along with your ideas, to compose this letter.

**Reasons -**

For the popularity of dummy schools:

- Focused preparation for entrance exam.
- Students are offered the flexibility to study at their own pace.

For the decreasing demand of regular schools:

- Outdated curriculum.
- Lack of access to well-trained subject teachers.
- Increasing emphasis on clearing entrance exams.

**Solutions -**

- Inclusion of the syllabus for Entrance Exams in CBSE, ICSE and State Board Curriculum.
- Flexible study schedule and flexible annual calendar by schools.
- Offering resources required to prepare for entrance exams.
- Re-emphasis on the holistic development of a child as the goal of education.

Attempt **ANY ONE** of the two in 120-150 words.

- a. You are Suresh/Sulekha, a class XII student. After reading recent news reports on the accidents caused by minors you have decided to submit an article for your school magazine on the *Dangers of Minors Driving on Roads*. Use the following cues along with your ideas to draft the article: 5

**Reasons:**

- The allure of freedom and independence associated with driving wheels is strong.
- Minors lack driving experience.
- Underdeveloped decision-making skills.
- Teens are prone to distractions.

**Consequences:**

- Dangers associated with underage driving are real and fatal.
- Underage drivers are a threat to pedestrian safety.
- Face potential legal consequences.

**Solutions:**

- Parents, guardians, and communities to work together to educate young drivers.
- Road safety a collective effort.

OR

- b. Bhopal International School, Madhya Pradesh, recently organised a robotics exhibition, inviting schools from all over India to demonstrate the evolving usage of Robots in everyday human life. As Shruti/Saksham Payal, Junior Editor of the school magazine, draft a report on the exhibition including all the relevant details. Support your ideas with the cues given below. 5

Program Schedule:

- Inauguration by Mr. Peter Mohnen, CEO KUKA Robot
- Keynote speech by Ms. Payal Manan Rajpal, CEO Robotex India
- Demonstration of Projects, Panel Discussions and Interactive Sessions
- Robotics Competitions
- Award Ceremony
- Closing Remarks by Principal

**SECTION C – (Literature)**

6. Attempt *ANY ONE* of the two extracts (A) and (B) given below: 1x6

- (A) Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

“The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,  
Or if ever aside a moment, then out of sorts  
At having the landscape marred with the artless paint  
Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong  
Offered for sale wild berries in wooden quarts,  
Or crook-necked golden squash with silver warts,  
Or beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene,  
You have the money, but if you want to be mean,  
Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along.”  
(A Roadside Stand)

- a. The phrase “polished traffic” refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. State an inference about the behaviour of the “polished traffic” that you draw from their concerns about the area around the roadside stand.
- c. The phrase “out of sorts” means \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. State a reason due to which Robert Frost lists out the products being sold at the roadside stand.
- e. As the owner of the Roadside Stand, choose a question from the options listed below that you long for the city folk to pose, if they stop near your roadside stand.
  - i. Does this way lead to Ohio?
  - ii. Can I borrow these wooden quarts to fix my car?
  - iii. Was this road sign always this artless?
  - iv. What is the price of these wild berries?
- f. State whether True or False.

The phrase “this crossly” within brackets indicates that it is not a part of the main narrative of the poem.

OR

(B) Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

“What I want should not be  
confused  
with total inactivity.  
Life is what it is about;  
I want no truck with death.  
If we were not so single-minded  
about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing,  
perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness  
of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves with  
death.”

(*Keeping Quiet*)

- a. The poet’s tone in the line – “What I want should not be confused with total inactivity.” – is
    - i. explanatory
    - ii. interrogative
    - iii. pessimistic
    - iv. exclamatory
  - b. Choose an option that depicts the message Neruda conveys through the line - “Life is what it is about”.
    - i. Losing one’s individuality in the hustle and bustle of daily life.
    - ii. After relaxing in the evening, revising the portion taught in school.
    - iii. Fighting with your neighbours.
    - iv. Traveling in a car for 500 meters.
  - c. Complete the statement with an appropriate answer.  
The phrase “no truck” in the line “I want no truck with death” means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Complete the statement with an appropriate answer.  
According to Pablo Neruda, humans have never understood themselves because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. Identify a phrase from the extract that suggests the following:  
Focussed on achieving something
  - f. State a reason due to which the poet uses the word “huge” with “silence”.
8. Attempt **ANY ONE** of the two extracts (A) and (B) given below: **1x4**

(A) Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

“To visit Antarctica now is to be a part of that history; to get a grasp of where we’ve come from and where we could possibly be heading. It’s to understand the significance of Cordilleran folds and pre-Cambrian granite shields; ozone and carbon; evolution and extinction. When you think about all that can happen in a million years, it can get pretty mind-boggling.”

(*Journey to the End of the Earth*)



- a. State a way in which the Antarctic landscape reflects the changes that have happened in a million years on Earth.
- b. In the following questions, a statement of assertion (A) is followed by a statement of reason (R). Select the option that is suitable to both as in the choices given below:

**Assertion (A):** Antarctica is to be visited to understand the significance of the Cordilleran folds.

**Reason (R):** Currently, Cordilleran folds are found nowhere in the world except in Antarctica.

- i. Both (A) and (R) are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
- ii. Both (A) and (R) are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- iii. (A) is true but (R) is false.
- iv. Both (A) and (R) are false.
- c. Choose an appropriate option to answer the question given below.  
In the sentence – “To visit Antarctica now is to be a part of that history”, Tishani Doshi uses “that” before “history” to highlight the history of Antarctica in the context of
- i. the freezing point of water.
- ii. the evolution of life on Earth.
- iii. the context of deforestation.
- iv. the context of meteor showers.
- d. The phrase “evolution and extinction” is an example of
- i. paradox.
- ii. antithesis.
- iii. irony.
- iv. onomatopoeia.

OR

- (B) Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

“He was taking out the packing now, and the blood began to flow more quickly. He peered into the wound with the bright surgeon’s light fastened on his forehead. “The bullet is still there,” he said with cool interest. “Now I wonder how deep this rock wound is. If it is not too deep it may be that I can get the bullet. But the bleeding is not superficial. He has lost much blood.”

At this moment Hana choked. He looked up and saw her face the colour of sulphur.

“Don’t faint,” he said sharply. He did not put down his exploring instrument.”  
(*The Enemy*)

- a. The phrase “cool interest” indicates that the doctor is
- i. composed while operating on his patient’s wound.
- ii. deeply affected by the wound of his patient.
- iii. eager to operate on the wound of his patient.
- iv. in a dilemma about operating on the patient.
- b. Complete the statement with an appropriate answer.  
Hana’s face was the colour of sulphur because \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. Provide a statement from the extract which shows that saving the American soldier was not going to be easy for Dr. Sadao.
- d. Dr. Sadao’s instruction to Hana shows that

- i. he does not care about his wife.
- ii. he loves the enemy more than his wife.
- iii. he understands that it is a critical operation.
- iv. he does not like the sulphur colour.

9. Attempt **ANY ONE** of the two extracts (A) and (B) given below:

1x6

(A) Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

“They have lived here for more than thirty years without an identity, without permits but with ration cards that get their names on voters lists and enable them to buy grain. Food is more important for survival than identity. If at the end of the day we can feed our families and go to bed without an aching stomach, we would rather live here than in the fields that gave us no grain, say a group of women in tattered saris when I asked them why they left their beautiful land of green fields and rivers. Wherever they find food, they pitch their tents.”

*(The Lost Spring)*

- a. The ragpickers have been living there for at least \_\_\_\_\_ decades.
  - i. three
  - ii. four
  - iii. two
  - iv. five
- b. Why do these people have ration cards?
- c. What do infer about the lifestyle of “they” from the phrase “pitch their tents”?
- d. In spite of the hardships, they are not willing to go back to their homeland because \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. The women had a/an \_\_\_\_\_ approach towards life.
  - i. idealistic
  - ii. passive
  - iii. indifferent
  - iv. practical
- f. What does the phrase “go to bed without an aching stomach” indicates?

OR

(B) Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

“Then I started down a third time. I sucked for air and got water. The yellowish light was going out.

Then all effort ceased. I relaxed. Even my legs felt limp; and a blackness swept over my brain. It wiped out fear; it wiped out terror. There was no more panic. It was quiet and peaceful. Nothing to be afraid of. This is nice... to be drowsy... to go to sleep... no need to jump... too tired to jump... it’s nice to be carried gently... to float along in space... tender arms around me... tender arms like Mother’s... now I must go to sleep...

I crossed to oblivion, and the curtain of life fell.”

*(Deep Water)*

- a. The “going out” of “yellowish light” indicates that the author is
  - i. closing his eyes to improve his vision in water.
  - ii. losing consciousness.
  - iii. becoming distracted.
  - iv. dreaming.

- b. Provide a phrase from the extract which shows that William Douglas was physically exhausted.
- c. Complete the statement with an appropriate answer.

The phrase "tender arms like Mother's" indicates that the author longed for \_\_\_\_\_.

- d. "There was no more panic" indicates that
  - i. the author loved to swim in the water.
  - ii. the author had overcome his fear of water.
  - iii. the author had accepted that he couldn't be saved.
  - iv. The author's plan to save himself was successful.
- e. The use of ellipses in the above extract indicates \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. State whether TRUE or FALSE.  
The phrase "curtain of life" is a metaphor, indicating that Douglas was about to die.

10. Answer **ANY FIVE** of the following six questions in 40-50 words each: 2x5

- a. State two ways in which the villagers of Alsace and Lorraine could have ensured that M. Hamel's message "Viva La France" was an active part of their lives. (*The Last Lesson*)
- b. State two reasons due to which Mukesh's grandmother believed that bangle-making was Mukesh's "destiny". (*The Lost Spring*)
- c. State a way in which *Keeping Quiet* can help Class XII students prepare for Board exams.
- d. State two reasons due to which William Douglas decided to visit several lakes in America, after completing his swimming lessons. (*Deep Water*)
- e. Provide an instance from the poem *My Mother at Sixty-Six* to show that Kamala Das's behaviour is contrasting with her thoughts.
- f. How does the concept of a 'bower quiet', align with Keat's idea that a thing of beauty becomes a timeless source of solace and inspiration? (*A Thing of Beauty*)

11. Answer **ANY TWO** of the following three questions in 40-50 words each: 2x2

- a. State any two decisions taken by Charley on discovering the third level that must have caused Louisa to worry about his mental health. (*The Third Level*)
- b. How does the incident with the wooden tiger and its consequences, contribute to the overarching theme of fate and retribution, in *The Tiger King*?
- c. With reference to *The Enemy*, describe any two ways in which Sadao's father influenced Sadao's life.

12. Answer **ANY ONE** of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words: 1x5

- a. State two ways in which Edla Willmansson of *The Rattrap* would react if she had the opportunity to interact with Saheb and Mukesh from *The Lost Spring*, instead of Anees Jung.

**OR**

- b. Chitraksh/Chitrakshi, Cultural Head of Prestige School, Gurgaon, after reading *A Thing of Beauty* has decided to draft a letter to their school Principal to organise a two-day trip to Nainital for Class XII students. In your letter, provide any two arguments stated by John Keats in his poem *A Thing of Beauty* to assert the relevance of school trips to hill stations for Class XII students.

13. Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words: 1x5

- a. Yuvraj/Yukta, Sunrise School's Student Representative in a YMCA Zonal Competition, has been asked to deliver a speech on – *Mistakes Modern Administrators Must Avoid*. From *The Tiger King*, mention any two instances highlighting any two mistakes made by the Tiger King that modern-day administrators should avoid.

OR

- b. On returning home, Tishani Doshi writes her thoughts in her diary reflecting on how her decision to enrol for the Students on Ice programme has been the most important decision of her life that has completely transformed her. Imagine yourself to be Tishani and express these thoughts mentioning any three epiphanies that were an important part of this transformative journey.

You may begin like this:

I can't thank my stars enough for having cashed in on the opportunity of.....