

# O.P.JINDAL SCHOOL , SAVITRI NAGAR

PRE – BOARD – II (2025-26)

## NOTE:

- Please check that this question paper contains **13** printed pages.
- Please check that this question paper contains **13** questions.
- Please write down the serial number of the question in the answer-book before attempting it.
- 15' minutes time has been allotted to read the question paper. The students will read the question paper only and will not write any answer on the answer-book during this period.

### XII ENGLISH CORE (301)

Time allowed: 3 Hrs.

( SET - A )

Maximum Marks: 80

## General Instructions:

*Read the following instructions very carefully and follow them strictly.*

- I. All questions are compulsory.
- II. This question paper contains three sections: **Section A: Reading Skills, Section B: Creative Writing Skills & 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 question/part, wherever necessary.
- V. Adhere to the prescribed word limit while answering the questions.

### SECTION A READING SKILLS (22 marks)

**Q. 1. Read the following passage carefully:**

12 Marks

(1) 'Brain rot' describes the cognitive decline attributed to excessive exposure to trivial and mindless social media content. The term has gained momentum as digital consumption increasingly dominates modern lifestyles, often leading to trends like 'digital detoxes,' where individuals consciously take breaks from screens to counteract feelings of burnout or mental stagnation. Linguists have observed that the term's casual tone and relatability make it particularly appealing to younger audiences, while its vivid and evocative imagery resonates deeply with broader societal fears about the erosion of intellectual engagement in a hyperconnected era.

(2) According to Oxford University Press (OUP), the term reflects growing concern over how technology is shaping human thought processes, behaviours, and habits. Its usage has surged in recent years, especially among younger demographics, as people seek to articulate the mental fatigue caused by binge-watching videos, doomscrolling, or consuming low-value online content. By 2024, 'brain rot' is commonly used to describe both the cause and effect of this phenomenon. It refers not only to the proliferation of low-quality content on social media and the internet but also to the negative cognitive and emotional impacts of engaging with such material. These include reduced attention spans, diminished critical thinking skills, and a pervasive sense of disconnection from meaningful interactions.

(3) This year's selection process for the Oxford Word of the Year was notably participatory, with the public invited to vote on a shortlist compiled by linguistic experts at OUP. Contenders included 'heat domes,' which refers to prolonged periods of extreme weather, and 'neurospicy,' a playful term celebrating neurodivergent individuals. However, 'brain rot' secured the majority of votes, reflecting widespread recognition of its cultural relevance. The term's victory underscores the increasing discourse around mental health, digital detoxes, and the prioritization of well-being in a world dominated by screens. Its recognition in 2024 signals a broader cultural shift towards addressing the cognitive and emotional effects of digital ecosystems, encouraging both individual reflection and collective dialogue on these pressing issues.

(4) The Oxford Word of the Year is selected based on its cultural significance, frequency of usage, and its ability to reflect global concerns. Previous winners include 'goblin mode' in 2022, capturing post-pandemic behavioural shifts and 'climate emergency' in 2019, reflecting environmental anxieties. This year's selection process drew over 400,000 votes globally, highlighting the participatory nature of the initiative and the public's engagement with the chosen term.

(5) By crowning 'brain rot' as the Word of the Year, OUP has spotlighted a concept that encapsulates the anxieties, aspirations, and evolving relationship between humans and technology. It serves as a reminder of the importance of mindful digital habits, balanced content consumption, and the necessity of addressing the cognitive toll of living in a hyperconnected age.

**From "The Hindu" with slight changes (445 words)**

**Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.**

i. According to paragraph 1, what does the term 'brain rot' describe, and why has it become relevant in today's digital age? 1 M

ii. How does the imagery of 'brain rot' reflect societal fears regarding modern lifestyles? 1 M

iii. **Complete the following sentence suitably:**

The phrase "negative cognitive and emotional impacts of engaging with such material" in paragraph 2 refers to \_\_\_\_\_. 1 M

A. The rise in online content consumption that promotes mental health awareness.

B. The deterioration of cognitive faculties due to exposure to trivial digital content.

iv. State one advantage of digital detoxing, as mentioned in paragraph 1, in combating the impacts of brain rot. 1 M

v. Why did the term 'brain rot' secure the Oxford Word of the Year title, according to para 3? 1 M

A. It resonates with societal concerns about digital habits and mental health.

B. It highlights post-pandemic behavioural changes.

C. It reflects the mental impacts of global warming.

D. It promotes linguistic appeal to neurodivergent communities.

vi. **Provide textual evidence from paragraph 2 to support this statement:**

The overuse of digital platforms leads to diminished critical thinking skills. 1 M

vii. Based on paragraphs 3–4, how does the participatory selection of the Word of the Year engage the public? 2 M

viii. **Complete the analogy with one word from paragraph 2: 1 M**

Worry : concern :: dissemination : \_\_\_\_\_

A. fatigue

B. disengage

C. consume

D. proliferation

ix. Explain why the phrase "addressing the cognitive toll of living in a hyperconnected age" in paragraph 5 highlights a significant societal concern. 1 M

A. It emphasizes the need for cultural recognition of mental fatigue caused by digital use.

B. It argues that cognitive decline is a natural outcome of the internet age.

C. It promotes an optimistic view of overcoming technology-induced mental stress.

D. It minimizes the significance of critical thinking in modern life.

x. As per para 3 what does the selection of the term 'brain rot' prove ? 2 M

**Q. 2. Read the following carefully.**

**10 M**

(1) Access to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) has become increasingly skewed against economically disadvantaged groups due to rising fees, dropout rates, and fluctuating placement opportunities. The following analysis highlights these challenges through data trends and their implications.

(2) **Fee Hike:** The cost of an IIT education has surged over the past decade. In 2016, tuition fees stood at ₹90,000 per annum, while by 2023, they had risen to ₹2,00,000 per annum. Accommodation, books, and other costs further burden families. Despite scholarships for economically weaker sections (EWS), many students struggle to afford the total cost of education, leading to financial exclusion.

(3) **Dropout Rates:** Between 2018 and 2022, IITs saw over 2,500 students drop out, averaging 500 per year. By 2023, dropout rates reached approximately 700 annually. Reasons include academic pressure, financial strain, and mental health challenges, with students from EWS backgrounds disproportionately affected.

(4) **Placement Trends:** Campus placement trends indicate a reduction in the average salaries offered. In 2016, the average salary was ₹15 LPA (lakh per annum), but by 2023, it had decreased to ₹12 LPA. The number of students securing exceptionally high packages (above ₹1 crore annually) also saw a decline, reflecting global economic uncertainties and changes in industry demands.

(5) **Enrolment and Representation:** The representation of marginalized groups, including those from rural areas, has not improved significantly. While IITs have initiatives to enhance inclusivity, many students face systemic hurdles, including a lack of preparation due to limited resources in underprivileged schools.

#### Data Overview

| Parameter                        | 2016   | 2020     | 2023     | Impact                                         |
|----------------------------------|--------|----------|----------|------------------------------------------------|
| Annual Tuition Fee (₹)           | 90,000 | 1,50,000 | 2,00,000 | Barriers to entry for EWS students.            |
| Average Placement Salary (₹)     | 15 LPA | 14 LPA   | 12 LPA   | Reduced financial return on education.         |
| Dropouts (per year)              | 400    | 500      | 700      | Rising mental health and financial challenges. |
| Students in EWS Category (%)     | 12     | 16       | 18       | Slight growth but below potential.             |
| Students Withdrawing (per 1,000) | 20     | 30       | 50       | Increasing disengagement from education.       |

(6) **Conclusion:** The IIT ecosystem, while celebrated for academic excellence, faces significant challenges in ensuring inclusivity and equity. Addressing fee hikes, providing robust mental health support, and aligning placement opportunities with students' aspirations are critical to bridging these gaps. Without these efforts, the promise of equal opportunity risks becoming unattainable for many. (370 words)

**Answer the following questions, based on the passage above.**

i. In the paragraph, the researcher examines the challenges faced by students in IITs to highlight \_\_\_\_\_.

1 M

- A. The exclusivity of IIT education
- B. The financial and systemic barriers to inclusivity
- C. The global recognition of IITs
- D. The academic rigor of IITs

ii. What would the following be classified as?

1 M

*To analyse the correlation between financial constraints and dropout rates among EWS students in IITs.*

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| A. Primary purpose  | B. Secondary objective |
| C. Research outcome | D. Method of analysis  |

iii. Give two reasons why economically weaker section (EWS) students face barriers to education in IITs.

2 M

iv. Classify the following sentences as 'economic factor' or 'systemic factor':

1 M

**Sentence 1:** Rising tuition fees limit access for EWS students.

**Sentence 2:** Limited preparation resources in underprivileged schools hinder inclusivity.

v. Based on the data provided, what trend is evident in the average placement salaries between 2016 and 2023?

1 M

- A. A consistent increase in salaries offered
- B. A decline in average salaries and high-package opportunities
- C. Salaries remaining stable despite economic uncertainties
- D. A shift in industry demands favouring IIT graduates

vi. Why is an addressing dropout rate crucial for the IIT ecosystem?

1 M

vii. Suggest two strategies IITs can adopt to improve inclusivity and reduce barriers for EWS students.

2 M

viii. What is the ultimate goal for IITs based on the challenges discussed?

1 M

- A. To increase annual fees to enhance infrastructure
- B. To focus solely on attracting top industry placements
- C. To ensure equitable opportunities for all students
- D. To prioritize international collaborations

**SECTION B CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS (18 marks)**

**Q. 3. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words.**

**1x4=4**

**A.** Your school is organizing an inter-class art competition on the theme—"Nature's Wonders." As the head of the Art Society, write a notice to inform all students about the competition and invite registrations from classes VII-X. Include other necessary details. Put your notice in a box.

**OR**

**B.** Your school is planning a health awareness campaign titled "Healthy Living for Teens." As Sandeep, the Health Club Secretary, write a notice to inform all students from classes IX-XII about the campaign and specify how many students can participate from each class. Include other necessary details. Put your notice in a box.

**Q. 4. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in about 50 words.**

**1x4=4**

**A.** Draft an invitation in not more than 50 words as Roopak Kautarapu, Secretary of your school's Theatre Group, inviting everyone to a play titled "*Voices of Change*", to be performed in your school auditorium on the occasion of World Theatre Day. Include essential details like the date, time, and purpose of the event.

**OR**

**B.** An invitation has been sent by Ms, Reshma Beeram, CEO of your startup 'Brainwave', inviting you to a team-building retreat. As Pooja Nagvanshi, Marketing Executive, draft a reply in not more than 50 words, confirming your participation.

**Q. 5. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120-150 words.**

**1x5=5**

**A.** The importance of environmental conservation is becoming increasingly critical. Write a letter to the editor of a national newspaper discussing the need for schools to incorporate environmental education into their curricula. Suggest practical ways to engage students and raise awareness about environmental issues. You are Anjali Bhukya, an environmental activist from Pune.

**OR**

**B.** You are Rohan Mehra from Mumbai. You have seen an advertisement for a summer internship program at a leading tech company. Write a formal application for the internship along with your resume.

### Join our Innovative Team!

A leading tech company in Mumbai is seeking enthusiastic interns for our summer program.

**Position:** Summer Intern

**Eligibility:** Students pursuing degrees in Computer Science, Engineering, or related fields.

**Requirements:** Strong analytical skills, teamwork, and a passion for technology.

**Application Deadline:** May 15, 2024

**Send your application to:** HR Manager, Tech Innovations Pvt. Ltd., 45-A Tech Park, Mumbai-400001

**Q. 6. Attempt any one of the two, (A) or (B), in 120 150 words.**

**1x5=5**

**A.** The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming various sectors globally. Write an article exploring the implications of AI on employment and how it can reshape job markets in the future. You are Shaini from Class XII-D.

- What sectors are most affected by AI?
- How can workers adapt to changes brought about by AI?
- What opportunities does AI present for future employment?

**OR**

**B.** You are Dev / Aruchitha, a dedicated volunteer at a local shelter for abandoned animals. Write a heartfelt report on the recent adoption fair organized by your shelter, detailing the success stories of adopted pets and the community's response. **Use the format: Who - What - When - Where - Why - How.**

### SECTION C LITERATURE (40 marks)

**7. Read the following extracts and answer the questions for any one of the given two-A or B**

**1x6=6**

**A.** ....standing a few yards  
away, I looked again at her wan, pale  
as a late winter's moon and felt that old  
familiar ache, my childhood's fear,  
but all I said was, see you soon, Amma,  
all I did was smile and smile and smile.....**(Poem – My Mother at Sixty-six)**

**i.** What does the comparison of the mother to a "late winter's moon" signify in the context of the poem?

ii. How does the phrase "that old familiar ache, my childhood's fear" connect the speaker's present feelings to their past?

iii. Complete the following suitably:

The repetition of "smile" in the line "all I did was smile and smile and smile" symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_.

iv. Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank:

The speaker's interaction with their mother reflects a sense of \_\_\_\_\_ (detachment/connection) despite underlying emotions.

v. Read the assertion and reason below with reference to the given extract:

**Assertion:** *The speaker's smile is a facade that hides deeper emotions.*

**Reason:** *Smiling is often a natural response to happiness and joy.*

Choose the correct option regarding their relationship:

- A. Both the assertion and the reason are true, and the reason is the correct explanation of the assertion.
  - B. Both the assertion and the reason are true, but the reason is not the correct explanation of the assertion.
  - C. The assertion is true, but the reason is false.
  - D. The assertion is false, but the reason is true.
- VI. In one sentence, describe how this extract reflects themes of loss and nostalgia.

vi. Discuss in one sentence how the speaker's reaction to his mother in this excerpt reflects a universal theme about human relationships.

OR

B. Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing

A flowery band to bind us to the earth,

Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth

Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,

Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways

Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,

Some shape of beauty moves away the pall

From our dark spirits (**Poem – A Thing of Beauty**)

i. Why does the poet emphasize "wreathing a flowery band to bind us to the earth"?

ii. Identify the literary device in "Some shape of beauty moves away the pall."

- A. Simile      B. Metaphor      C. Alliteration      D. Symbolism

iii. Complete the following suitably. The phrase “inhuman dearth of noble natures” highlights the \_\_\_\_\_.

iv. Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank. The poet conveys that beauty provides hope in a world that is \_\_\_\_\_ (perfect/filled with hardships).

v. Read the assertion and reason below with reference to the given extract.

**Assertion:** *The poet believes that beauty has the power to heal emotional despair.*

**Reason:** *This is because beauty makes us forget the hardships of life by removing them permanently. Choose the correct option:*

- A. Both the assertion and the reason are true, and the reason is the correct explanation of the assertion.
- B. Both the assertion and the reason are true, but the reason is not the correct explanation of the assertion.
- C. The assertion is true, but the reason is false.
- D. The assertion is false, but the reason is true.

vi. How does the poet suggest beauty combats despondence in human life?

**Q. 8. Read the following extracts and answer the questions for any one of the given two.**

**4x1=4**

**A.** Please think it over. Your ancestors were married to the sword. If you like, marry the gun. A Tiger King is more than enough for this state. It doesn't need a Tiger Queen as well!" (*The Tiger King*)

i. Why did the Dewan make a humorous suggestion about the Maharaja marrying the gun or sword?

ii. What does the Dewan imply by saying, "A Tiger King is more than enough for this state"?

iii. Identify the literary device used in the line, "Your ancestors were married to the sword."

- A. Hyperbole      B. Personification      C. Metaphor      D. Simile

iv. What tone does the Dewan adopt while speaking to the Maharaja in this excerpt? Support your answer with evidence.

**OR**

**B.** MR LAMB: You could lock yourself up in a room and never leave it. There was a man who did that. He was afraid, you see. Of everything. Everything in this world. A bus might run him over, or a man might breathe deadly germs onto him, or a donkey might kick him to death, or lightning might strike him down, or he might love a girl and the girl would leave him, and he might slip on a banana skin and fall and people who saw him would laugh their heads off. So he went into this room, and locked the door, and got into his bed, and stayed there. (*On the Face of It*)

i. Complete the following suitably. Mr. Lamb's anecdote about the man who locked himself in a room reflects the impact of fear on human behaviour, emphasizing how it can lead \_\_\_\_\_.

ii. How does Mr. Lamb use humour in his description of the man's fears to convey a deeper message about life and courage?

iii. Select the correct option to interpret the deeper meaning of Mr. Lamb's story:

- A. Life's dangers can be entirely avoided through careful planning.
- B. Avoiding life's risks makes a person safer and happier.
- C. Fear-driven isolation deprives individuals of life's richness and experiences.
- D. Staying in one place is a practical way to escape harm.

iv. What can be inferred about Mr. Lamb's philosophy of life based on his story of the man locking himself up in fear?

**Q. 9. Read the following extracts and answer the questions for any one of the given two, A or B.**

**1x6=6**

**A.** In structures of mud, with roofs of tin and tarpaulin, devoid of sewage, drainage or running water, live 10,000 ragpickers. 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 an 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 ask them why they left their beautiful land of green fields and rivers (*Lost Spring – Stories of Stolen Childhood*)

i. What does the phrase "without an identity, without permits but with ration cards" convey about the lives of the ragpickers?

ii. Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank:

The contrast between the "beautiful land of green fields and rivers" and their current living conditions highlights the ragpickers' \_\_\_\_\_ (resilience/ helplessness).

iii. Fill in the blank suitably:

The ragpickers prioritize food over identity because, for them, survival hinges on \_\_\_\_\_ rather than societal recognition.

iv. What does the mention of "ration cards" symbolize in the context of the ragpickers' lives?

v. Select the textual option that is closest to indicating a sense of practicality in their decisions:

- A. "We would rather live here than in the fields that gave us no grain."
- B. "If at the end of the day we can feed our families and go to bed without an aching stomach..."
- C. "They have lived here for more than thirty years without an identity."
- D. "In structures of mud, with roofs of tin and tarpaulin, devoid of sewage, drainage or running water..."

vi. What does the women's choice to leave "their beautiful land of green fields and rivers" and live in harsh urban conditions reflect?

- A. Acceptance
- B. Aspiration
- C. Sacrifice
- D. Defiance

OR

**B.** Here I sit, she said to herself, wishing Danny would come, wishing he would come and sensing the time passing. I feel the pangs of doubt stirring inside me. I watch for him but still there is no sign of him. I remember Geoff saying he would never come, and how none of them believed me when I told them. I wonder what will I do, what can I tell them now if he doesn't come? But we know how it was, Danny and me — that's the main thing. How can you help what people choose to believe? But all the same, it makes me despondent, this knowing I'll never be able to show them they're wrong to doubt me. (*Going Places*)

i. What does the speaker's repeated use of the word "wishing" signify about her state of mind?

ii. **Select the correct option from those given in brackets to fill in the blank.**

The use of phrases like "*pangs of doubt stirring inside me*" suggests Sophie is experiencing \_\_\_\_\_. (Optimism / inner conflict)

iii. **Complete the following suitably.**

The line "I wonder what will I do, what can I tell them now if he doesn't come?" reveals Sophie's fear of \_\_\_\_\_.

iv. What does the speaker's reference to Geoff's disbelief reflect about the broader theme of the story?

v. Select the textual option that best conveys Sophie's growing despondency.

- A. *I watch for him but still there is no sign of him.*
- B. *I remember Geoff saying he would never come.*
- C. *But we know how it was, Danny...*
- D. *I wonder what will I do...*

vi. What does the following line from the extract convey about Sophie's personality?

"But we know how it was, Danny..."

**Q. 10. Answer any five of the following six questions in 40-50 words each: 5x2=10**

- i. What does M. Hamel's focus on the beauty of the French language reveal about his values as a teacher? (*The Last Lesson*)
- ii. Gandhi made it clear that money and finance were secondary aspects of the Champaran struggle. Comment on the aspect that you think was most important for Gandhi. (*Indigo*)
- iii. How can the poet's message of "keeping quiet" contribute to personal growth? (*Keeping Quiet*)
- iv. How does Aunt Jennifer express her bitterness and anger against male dominance?
- v. How does the speaker's reaction to completing a swim across the pool reflect his mental transformation? (*Deep Water*)
- vi." I call them interstices. Explain the concept of 'interstices' in our lives as given by Umberto Eco? (*The Interview*)

**Q. 11. Answer any two of the following three questions in 40-50 words each: 2x2=4**

- i. How does Tishani Doshi use phytoplankton as a metaphor for broader environmental responsibility? (*Journey to the End of the Earth*)
- ii. What did the psychiatrist friend think about Charley's stamp collection? Why did Charlie not agree with him? (*The Third Level*)
- iii. How did Zitkala -Sa try to prevent the shingling of her hair? (*Memories of Childhood*)

**Q. 12. Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words. 1x5=5**

**A.** Your teacher remarked that "The Rattrap" is both entertaining and philosophical. You, having read the story, understand this statement as it reflects the blend of an engaging narrative with a deeper message about life and human nature. However, your classmates are struggling to grasp the essence of this idea. Write a detailed explanation for your classmates, elaborating on how the story balances entertainment with its philosophical undertones.

**OR**

**B.** Compare and contrast the characters of Sophie from 'Going Places' and Subbu from 'Poets and Pancakes' in terms of their aspirations, constraints, and pursuit of dreams.

**Q. 13. Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 120-150 words. 1x5=5**

**A.** "We must rise above narrow prejudices of race and nationality to help those in need."

This is a key lesson you learned from the story *The Enemy*. The actions of Dr. Sadao left a deep impression on you, and you feel inspired to reflect on his choices.

Write a diary entry expressing your thoughts and feelings about Dr. Sadao's actions in 120-150 words.

You may begin like this:

*25 January, 2025. 9:00pm*

*Saturday*

*Dear Diary,*

*I have always believed that humanity is the greatest virtue we possess, yet it often seems to be the one we lack the most.....*

**OR**

**B.** "The tiger population vanished from the forests of Pratibandapuram." The Tiger King highlights man's destructive dominance over nature. As a member of your school's Eco Club, write an article for the school magazine on the importance of "Living in Harmony with Nature."

