ICSE 2025 EXAMINATION

SPECIMEN QUESTION PAPER

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

(ENGLISH PAPER – 1)

Maximum Marks: 80

Time allowed: Two hours

Answers to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.

*You will **not** be allowed to write during the first **15** minutes.*

This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.

The time given at the head of this Paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.

*Attempt **all five** questions.*

The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [ ].

*You are advised to spend not more than **30** minutes in answering **Question 1** and **20** minutes in answering **Question 2.***

Instruction for the Supervising Examiner

Kindly read aloud the Instructions given above to all the candidates present in the Examination Hall.

Question 1

(Do not spend more than 30 minutes on this question.)

Write a composition (300 - 350 words) on any one of the following: [20]

(i) Write an original short story in which a woman, her strange neighbour and a police officer form the main characters.

(ii) Your teacher has asked you to form a group and work on a particular project. Write an account of how you worked together and what each of you learned from the experience.

(iii) *'Peer pressure is a force for good.'*
Express your views either for or against this statement.

(iv) Describe the locality in which you live. Give details of the things you see and hear as you walk around your locality. What do you especially like about the place?

(v) Study the picture given below. Write a story or a description or an account of what it suggests to you. Your composition may be about the subject of the picture or you may take suggestions from it; however, there must be a clear connection between the picture and your composition.



Question 2 [10]

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

Select ***any one*** of the following:

(i) Your uncle was unable to attend your birthday celebrations but has sent you one thousand rupees as a gift. Write a letter thanking him, tell him how you will spend the money, and why you have made that particular choice.

(ii) The garbage bins in your locality have not been cleared regularly resulting in the overflow of garbage in the area. Write a letter to the Municipal Commissioner of your city / town, complaining about the problem. Offer suggestions for the removal of the garbage and cleaning up of the place.

Question 3

(i) Your school is hosting an Art and Craft exhibition. Write a notice informing the pupils at your school about the event. [5]

(ii) Write an e-mail to a local artist inviting him / her to inaugurate the exhibition and be the Chief Guest on the occasion. [5]

Question 4

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

One day I found the pond occupied by several buffaloes. Their keeper, a boy a little older than me, was swimming about in the middle. Instead of climbing out on the bank, he would pull himself up on the back of one of his buffaloes, stretch his naked brown body out on the animal's glistening ***hide***, and start singing to himself.

When he saw me staring at him from across the pond, he smiled, showing gleaming white teeth in a dark face. He invited me to join him in a swim. I told him I couldn't swim, and he offered to teach me.

His name was Ramu, and he promised to give me swimming lessons every afternoon, and so it was during the afternoons – especially summer afternoons 10

when everyone was asleep – that we usually met. Before long I was able to swim across the pond to sit with Ramu astride a ***contented*** buffalo.

Sometimes I would slip into the water. Emerging in shades of green and khaki, I would sneak into the house through the bathroom and bathe under the tap before getting into my clothes.

One afternoon Ramu and I found a small tortoise in the mud, sitting over a hole in which it had laid several eggs. I presented the tortoise to Grandfather. He had a weakness for tortoises, and was pleased with this addition to his menagerie, giving it a large tub of water all to itself, with an island of rocks in the middle. If one of the dogs bothered it too much, it would draw its head and legs into its shell and defy all its attempts at rough play.

Ramu came from a family of bonded labourers and had received no schooling. But he was well-versed in folklore and knew a great deal about birds and animals.

'Many birds are sacred,' said Ramu, as we watched a blue jay swoop down from a peepul tree and carry off a grasshopper.

Both Ramu and Grandfather were of the opinion that we should be more gentle with birds and animals and should not kill so many of them.

'It is also important that we respect them,' said Grandfather. 'We must acknowledge their rights. Birds and animals are finding it more difficult to survive, because we are trying to destroy both them and their forests.'

Ramu and I spent long summer afternoons at the pond. I still remember him with affection, though we never saw each other again after I left Dehra.

— Rusty, the Boy from the Hills, Ruskin Bond

(i) For each word given below choose the correct meaning (as used in the passage) from the options provided: [2]

1. hide (line 4)

   (a) blanket

   (b) fur

   (c) undisclosed

   (d) skin

2. contented (line 12)

   (a) cheerful

   (b) lazy

   (c) satisfied

   (d) container

(ii) Which word in the passage is the opposite of 'easy'? [1]

(a) sneak

(b) difficult

(c) labourer

(d) survive

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

(a) What did Ramu like to do once he had climbed on the back of a buffalo? [2]

(b) What offer did Ramu make to the narrator? [2]

(c) Why do you think the narrator would bathe before entering the house? [2]

(d) Who was the large tub of water for? [1]

(e) How would the tortoise protect itself from the dogs? [2]

(iv) Despite the lack of schooling what did Ramu know? How, according to Ramu and Grandfather, should we treat birds and animals? Answer in not more than fifty words. [8]

Question 5

(i) 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. [4]

Example:

(0) The sun _____ (shine) bright outside.

Answer: *shone*

It was hot in the railway compartment and the fan _____ (1) (not work). The elderly lady _____ (2) (use) up all her water because she had cheerfully shared it with her fellow passengers. She knew that the train _____ (3) (halt) at the station for only three minutes. Calling a shoeshine boy she said, 'Will you help me? I _____ (4) (need) a bottle of cold water and here is the money,' and she put a twenty rupee note in his hand. The boy snatched the money and _____ (5) (disappear) into the crowd on the platform. A fellow passenger _____ (6) (cannot believe) what he had witnessed. 'What _____ (7) (you do)?' He said, 'You _____ (8) (never see) your money again.' Just then the whistle was heard and the train began to move. At that moment the child appeared at the window with the water. 'Your water,' he gasped, out of breath. 'And the change.'

(ii) Fill in the blanks with appropriate words. [4]

(a) We can cut _____ this field instead of taking the main road.

(b) Passengers are advised _____ standing on the footboard of a moving bus.

(c) They have been working on the project _____ years now.

(d) Ever _____ the accident, he has been afraid of boarding buses.

(e) It is a hard climb _____ the hill.

(f) She turned _____ the offer because she did not like the terms and conditions.

(g) I will need to speak _____ my parents before I sign up for the school trip.

(h) The sports teacher was taken _____ when he heard how enthusiastic the team was.

(iii) Join the following sentences to make one complete sentence **without using** ***and, but*** or ***so***. Choose the correct option. [4]

1. Stay still. We cannot take your photograph otherwise.
   (a) Stay still, else we cannot take your photograph otherwise.
   (b) Stay still because we can take your photograph otherwise.
   (c) Unless you stay still we cannot take your photograph.
   (d) If you stay still we cannot take your photograph.
2. Roy's mother rang up the school office. She wanted to enquire about the swimming classes at the summer camp.
   (a) Roy's mother rang up the school office as she want to enquire about the swimming classes at the summer camp.
   (b) Roy's mother rang up the school office to enquire about the swimming classes at the summer camp.
   (c) Roy's mother has rung up the school office to enquire about the swimming classes at the summer camp.
   (d) Roy's mother rang up the school office wanting enquiry about the swimming classes at the summer camp.
3. I left my keys somewhere. Do you know where they are?
   (a) Do you know where I had left my keys?
   (b) Do you know where my keys were left behind?
   (c) Do you know where I left my keys?
   (d) Do you know where I would have left my keys?
4. The captain should not be blamed for the team's defeat. The players should not be blamed for the team's defeat.
   (a) The captain should neither be blamed nor the players should be blamed for the team's defeat.
   (b) Neither the captain nor the players should be blamed for the team's defeat.
   (c) The captain should not be blamed for the team's defeat as the players should not be blamed for the team's defeat.
   (d) The captain should not be blamed for the team's defeat but the players too should not be blamed for the team's defeat.

(iv) Choose the correct option to rewrite the following according to the instructions given after each sentence. [8]

1. The audience broke into loud applause as soon as he finished speaking.
   (Begin with: No sooner...)
   (a) No sooner he finished speaking that the audience broke into loud applause.
   (b) No sooner had he finish speaking when the audience broke into loud applause.
   (c) No sooner did he finish speaking than the audience broke into loud applause.
   (d) No sooner the audience broke into loud applause than he finished speaking.

2. The news surprised everyone in my family.
   (Begin with: The news took ...)
   (a) The news took everyone in my family by surprise.
   (b) The news took everyone in my family with surprise.
   (c) The news took with surprise everyone in my family.
   (d) The news took everyone in my family for a surprise.

3. Yesterday was so much fun.
   (End with a question tag)
   (a) Yesterday was so much fun, would you say?
   (b) Was yesterday much fun?
   (c) Yesterday was so much fun, isn't it?
   (d) Yesterday was so much fun, wasn't it?

4. I wouldn't eat that food if I was not really hungry.
   (Use: 'unless')
   (a) Unless I eat that food I will remain really hungry.
   (b) I wouldn't be really hungry unless I ate that food.
   (c) I wouldn't eat that food unless I was not really hungry.
   (d) I wouldn't eat that food unless I was really hungry.

5. It is so hot and humid that I cannot sleep.

(Use: too)

(a) It is hot and humid too sleep.

(b) It is too hot and humid to sleep.

(c) It is hot and humid too, so I cannot sleep.

(d) It is too hot and humid such that I cannot sleep.

6. I prefer going out with friends to staying alone at home.

(Begin with: I would rather...)

(a) I would rather go out with friends than stay alone at home.

(b) I would rather prefer going out with friends than staying alone at home.

(c) I would rather prefer to go out with friends than stay alone at home.

(d) I would rather go out with friends to staying alone at home.

7. "Why were you absent yesterday?" the teacher asked me.

(Begin with: The teacher asked me why ...)

(a) The teacher asked me why was I absent yesterday.

(b) The teacher asked me why I had been absent yesterday.

(c) The teacher asked me why I had been absent the day before.

(d) The teacher asked me why was I absent the day before.

8. Very few dancers are as graceful as she is.

(Begin with: She is...)

(a) She is one of the most graceful dancers.

(b) She is the most graceful dancer.

(c) She is more graceful than all the other dancers.

(d) She is more graceful than a few other dancers.

ICSE 2025 SPECIMEN

DRAFT MARKING SCHEME – ENGLISH LANGUAGE (ENGLISH PAPER 1)

COMPOSITION

Answer 1		[20]
(i)	The story must be original and must have <u>at least three characters</u> – the woman, her neighbour and the policeman. The 'strangeness' of the neighbour must be qualified, the encounter described and the action that arises out of the encounter.	
(ii)	This is a first-person account and must be narrated from within the plausible experience of a Class X candidate. There must be a clear description of the work entailed, the way in which the students learned to work together, the take-away or lesson learned.	
(iii)	Views either for or against are to be accepted. The candidate should take a clear stand and give valid reasons for whatever stand he/she takes. There should be a cohesive well-constructed logical argument and ideas based on logical reasoning and personal experience.	
(iv)	Words of sight and sound must form the main body of this composition. Describe clearly the sights and sounds. Explain what about the locality appeals to you.	
(v)	A wide interpretation will be accepted. Any relevant ideas taken from the picture should be accepted. However, a ***mere itemization / listing / description*** of the picture is to be avoided.	
Answer 2		[10]
(i)	Friendly/Informal letter Format, Content, Expression are important. **Content** Thank your uncle - you could use words like 'grateful', 'thoughtful' Describe how/on what you will spend the money – at least two things Explain why you chose the two – how they will be useful, for example	
(ii)	Formal letter Format, Content, Expression are important. **Content** Give details of problems caused e.g. spread of germs, stench Offer suggestions for removal/cleaning e.g. regular inspections, garbage removal vans, closed vats etc.	

Answer 3		[10]
(i)	Creative Title – e.g. Colour Palette, Mix and Mould Event: Inter School Art and Craft Competition Date: Accept single date for example ten days or fortnight away from the date of writing Time: e.g. 10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m. Venue: smaller place to larger e.g. Carnation Hall, St. Helen's School Participate: All pupils who wish to register should give their names to the Vice Principal/etc on or before…	
(ii)	E-mail – id Subject Salutation Opening sentence Closing sentence Subscription Expression – All details of the notice are to be included in the e-mail.	
Answer 4		
(i)	1. (d) skin 2. (c) satisfied	[2]
(ii)	(b) difficult	[1]
(iii)	(a) he liked to stretch his naked brown body out on the animal's glistening hide/back, and start singing to himself (b) he offered to teach the narrator to swim/ give him swimming lessons every afternoon (c) any 2 reasons e.g to avoid being scolded for swimming/in the village pond/they swam when everyone was asleep – maybe the grownups would have been angry/they emerged in shades of green and khaki, so would have to sneak into the house through the bathroom and bathe under the tap to get clean first (d) the tortoise/presented by the narrator to his grandfather (e) it would draw its head and legs into its shell and defy all the dog's/dogs' attempts at rough play.	[2] [2] [2] [1] [2]
(iv)	Points: 1. Ramu was well-versed in folklore 2. he knew a great deal about birds and animals	[8]

	3. many birds were sacred 4. we should be more gentle with birds and animals 5. we should not kill so many of them 6. we should respect them 7. we should acknowledge their rights 8. we should not destroy their forests *(Any six)*	
Answer 5		
(i)	[0. shone] 1. was not working 2. had used 3. halted/would halt 4. need 5. disappeared 6. could not believe 7. are you doing 8. will never see	[4]
(ii)	a. across b. against c. for d. since e. up f. down g. to h. aback	[4]
(iii)	1. (c) Unless you stay still we cannot take your photograph. 2. (b) Roy's mother rang up the school office to enquire about the swimming classes at the summer camp. 3. (c) Do you know where I left my keys? 4. (b) Neither the captain nor the players should be blamed for the team's defeat.	[4]

(iv)	1. (c) No sooner did he finish speaking than the audience broke into loud applause. 2. (a) The news took everyone in my family by surprise. 3. (d) Yesterday was so much fun, wasn't it? 4. (d) I wouldn't eat that food unless I was really hungry. 5. (b) It is too hot and humid to sleep. 6. (a) I would rather go out with friends than stay alone at home. 7. (c) The teacher asked me why I had been absent the day before. 8. (a) She is one of the most graceful dancers.	[8]

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