ICSE 2025 EXAMINATION

SPECIMEN QUESTION PAPER

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

(ENGLISH PAPER – 2)

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.

The paper has ***four*** *Sections.*

Section A is compulsory – All questions in Section A must be answered.

You must attempt one question from each of the Sections B, C and D and one other question from any Section of your choice.

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

Instruction for the Supervising Examiner

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

SECTION A

*(Attempt **all** questions from this Section.)*

Question 1

Choose the correct answers to the questions from the given options. [16]

(Do not copy the question, write the correct answers only.)

(i) Where was Caesar put to death?

(a) On a street in Rome

(b) On the battleground of Philippi

(c) At the foot of Pompey's statue

(d) In Brutus' orchard **[Recall]**

(ii) Who asks permission to speak at Caesar's funeral?

(a) Brutus

(b) Antony

(c) Cassius

(d) Octavius **[Recall]**

(iii) "Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!

Over thy wounds now do I prophesy…"

These lines tell us that Antony is _____.

(a) enraged

(b) sorrowful

(c) anxious

(d) frustrated **[Analysis]**

(iv) When Antony says, 'This is a slight unmeritable man, / Meet to be sent on errands' he refers to _____.

(a) Lepidus

(b) Octavius

(c) Pindarus

(d) Lucilius **[Recall]**

(v) What strategy does Cassius suggest that the conspirators follow?

(a) march towards Philippi

(b) remain where they are

(c) raise an army of foot soldiers

(d) set fire to the surrounding villages

[Understanding]

(vi) When Cassius says, 'My life is run his compass', he means that _____.

(a) it is the day on which Brutus was born

(b) his life had come full circle

(c) his life could be measured with a compass

(d) his life could be compared to a race

[Understanding]

(vii) Which of the given options contains the figure of speech that appears in the following line from Leigh Hunt's poem 'The Glove and the Lions': *'Ramped and roared the lions':*

(a) 'Your eyes are like the diamond bright,'

(b) 'Suddenly the black night showed its teeth in a flash of lightning.'

(c) 'Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold?'

(d) 'Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun.'

[Application]

(viii) Which of the following is NOT an effect of Bhishma Lochan Sharma's powerful singing in Sukumar Ray's poem 'The Power of Music'?

(a) The sky weeps tears

(b) The trees shake and crash

(c) The people retire amazed

(d) The turtles whine and stare **[Understanding]**

(ix) Which of the following words does H. W. Longfellow use to describe the movement of the phantoms in his poem, 'Haunted Houses'?

(a) slide

(b) glide

(c) noiseless

(d) invisible **[Recall]**

(x) The theme of Maya Angelou's poem 'When Great Trees Fall' is _____.

(a) the impact of the death of a loved one on those left behind

(b) the effect of felling trees on the environment

(c) how the death of trees affects humanity

(d) the impact of natural calamities on a forest **[Analysis]**

(xi) The poem, 'A Considerable Speck', captures _____.

(a) the journey of a mite across a sheet of paper

(b) The poet's determination to kill the mite

(c) The poet's encounter with a gigantic fly

(d) The mite's attempt to escape from the fly **[Understanding]**

(xii) In Stephen Leacock's 'With the Photographer', while waiting for the photographer, the narrator spent time _____.

(a) examining the studio

(b) talking on his phone

(c) writing in his diary

(d) reading magazines **[Recall]**

(xiii) In Ama Ata Aidoo's short story, 'The Girl Who Can', Nana expressed her disapproval of Adjoa's legs because_____.

(a) they were slender

(b) they were muscular

(c) they were bent

(d) they were short **[Understanding]**

(xiv) Choose the option that lists the sequence of events from Alphonse Daudet's short story 'The Last Lesson' in the correct order.

1. But, when he arrived at school, Franz was dismayed to find his classmates already seated quietly and solemnly in their places … and shocked when M. Hamel simply urged him to take his place.
2. Franz hurried to school that morning he was very late and dreaded being scolded by M. Hamel, the teacher.
3. After he had settled at his desk, he noticed something really odd: the back benches of the classroom were occupied by adults from the village!
4. He hoped to slip into the classroom unnoticed, under cover of the bustle and noise of a typical school day morning.

(a) 1, 3, 2, 4

(b) 2, 4, 1, 3

(c) 3, 1, 4, 2

(d) 4, 2, 3, 1 **[Understanding]**

(xv) Select the option that shows the correct relationship between statements (1) and (2) from William Sleator's short story, 'The Elevator'.

Statement 1: Terrified of the fat lady in the elevator, Martin ran down the dark stairs, fell and broke his leg.

Statement 2: Angry and disappointed that his son had behaved like a fool and a coward, Martin's father did not talk to him on the way to the hospital.

(a) (1) is true and (2) is false.

(b) (2) is true and (1) is false.

(c) (1) is the cause for (2).

(d) (1) and (2) are independent of each other. **[Analysis]**

(xvi) Ray Bradbury's short story 'The Pedestrian', can be best described as

_____

(a) utopian

(b) dystopian

(c) humorous

(d) a fairy tale **[Evaluative]**

SECTION B

*(Answer **one or more** questions from this Section.)*

DRAMA

(Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare)

Question 2

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Caesar: *Are we all ready? What is now amiss,*
That Caesar and his Senate must redress?

Metellus: *Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar,*
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat
A humble heart, ---- [He kneels]

(i) Where are the speakers? [3]
What does 'puissant' mean?
Explain: *'Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat a humble heart'.* **[Recall & Understanding]**

(ii) At the beginning of the scene, Caesar says, *'The Ides of March are come.'* [3]
Why do you think Caesar said this?
What does the Soothsayer say in response? **[Recall & Understanding]**

(iii) What specific duties do the conspirators allot to Trebonius and Casca? [3]
Why does Cassius become nervous when Popilius Lena speaks to him as they enter? **[Recall & Understanding]**

(iv) What does Artemidorus want of Caesar? [3]
How does Caesar respond to his plea? **[Recall]**

(v) Shortly after this exchange, Caesar is stabbed to death by the conspirators. Whom do you sympathise with — Julius Caesar or the conspirators? Give reasons for your choice. [4] **[Evaluative & Analysis]**

Question 3

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Brutus: *I did send to you*
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me;
For I can raise no money by vile means:
By heaven, I had rather coin my heart,
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash
By any indirection.

(i) To whom are these words addressed? [3]
Why is Brutus angry with this person?
[Recall & Understanding]

(ii) How does this person feel when he hears these words? [3]
What does he say to defend himself?
[Analysis & Recall]

(iii) Why did Brutus need 'certain sums of gold'? [3]
Why was he unable to raise these sums of money?
[Understanding]

(iv) Earlier in this scene, Brutus refers to Lucius Pella. [3]
What had he been accused of?
Who had supported him and how?
[Recall]

(v) Mention any two aspects of Brutus' character that are revealed in the above extract. [4]
What do you understand about the relationship between Brutus and the person he addresses?
[Analysis]

SECTION C

*(Answer **one or more** questions from this Section.)*

PROSE - SHORT STORIES

(Treasure Chest – A Collection of ICSE Short Stories and Poems)

Question 4

Read the following extract from Stephen Leacock's short story, 'With the Photographer' and answer the questions that follow:

"The photographer beckoned me in. I thought he seemed quieter and graver than before. I think, too, there was a certain pride in his manner.

He unfolded the proof of a large photograph, and we both looked at it in silence.

'Is it me?' I asked.

'Yes,' he said quietly, 'it is you,' and we went on looking at it."

(i) Where was the narrator? [3]

Why had he gone there? **[Recall & Understanding]**

Why do you think that there was a certain pride in the photographer's manner?

(ii) What does the word 'proof' mean in this context? [3]

Why did the narrator ask, "Is it me?"? **[Understanding]**

(iii) Which of the narrator's facial features had the photographer altered? [3]

[Recall]

(iv) What was the only part of the narrator's face that seemed original in the photograph? [3]

[Recall]

How did the photographer plan to 'fix' this?

(v) At the end of the story the narrator flies into a rage. [4]

What makes him angry? **[Understanding & Analysis]**

How would you justify the narrator's angry outburst?

Question 5

Read the following extract from Ray Bradbury's short story, 'The Pedestrian' and answer the questions that follow:

"He would stand upon the corner of an intersection and peer down long moonlit avenues of sidewalk in four directions, deciding which way to go, but it really made no difference;"

(i) What was Leonard Mead's occupation? What did he love to do? When is the story set? [3] **[Recall, Understanding & Recall]**

(ii) To what does Mead compare his walk through the empty streets? Mention TWO reasons he gives for making this comparison? [3] **[Recall & Understanding]**

(iii) Why had Mead decided to change his footwear from hard-heeled shoes to sneakers? [3] **[Understanding]**

(iv) What happened quite suddenly as he was making his way home? What was Mead's immediate reaction? [3] **[Recall]**

(v) Why was Mead taken away by the police car? Would you call this a horror story or a piece of science fiction? Give reasons for your answer. [3] **[Understanding & Analysis]**

SECTION D

*(Answer **one or more** questions from this Section.)*

POETRY

(Treasure Chest – A Collection of ICSE Short Stories and Poems)

Question 6

Read the following extract from H.W. Longfellow's poem, 'Haunted Houses' and answer the questions that follow:

The stranger at my fireside cannot see
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;
He but perceives what is; while unto me
All that has been is visible and clear.

(i) What makes the poet-narrator different from the stranger at his fireside? [3] **[Understanding]**

(ii) What, according to the poet, turns a house into a 'haunted' house? [3]

[Understanding]

(iii) Where is one likely to meet the 'phantoms' in a haunted house? [3]

[Recall]

(iv) What are the poet-narrator's views on owning property? [3]

[Recall & Understanding]

(v) How do the poet's views of ghosts differ from the traditional perception of ghosts? How would you describe the **mood** that the poem evokes? Give ONE reason for your answer. [4]

[Understanding & Analysis]

Question 7

Read the following extract from Maya Angelou's poem, 'When Great Trees Fall' and answer the questions that follow:

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

(i) What effect does the falling of a 'great tree' have on the creatures of the forest? [3]

[Recall & Understanding]

(ii) How does the death of a great soul affect the lives of those left behind in the immediate aftermath of their passing? [3]

[Understanding]

(iii) What long-term effect does the death of a 'great soul' have? [3]

[Understanding]

(iv) What **feeling** is being expressed by the following lines / phrases? [3]

(a) small things recoil into silence

(b) kind words/ unsaid,

(c) Be and be/ better. For they existed

[Analysis]

(v) What is a 'Great tree' a metaphor for? [4]

What is the central message of Angelou's poem, 'When Great Trees Fall'?

[Application & Analysis]

ICSE 2025 SPECIMEN

DRAFT MARKING SCHEME – LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (ENGLISH PAPER 2)

Question 1		[16]
(i)	(c) At the foot of Pompey's statue	
(ii)	(b) Antony	
(iii)	(a) enraged	
(iv)	(a) Lepidus	
(v)	(b) remain where they are	
(vi)	(b) his life had come full circle	
(vii)	(c) 'Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold?'	
(viii)	(d) The turtles whine and stare	
(ix)	(b) glide	
(x)	(a) the impact of the death of a loved one on those left behind	
(xi)	(a) the journey of a mite across a sheet of paper	
(xii)	(d) reading magazines	
(xiii)	(a) they were slender	
(xiv)	(b) 2, 4, 1, 3	
(xv)	(c) (1) is the cause for (2).	
(xvi)	(b) dystopian	
Question 2		
(i)	The Capitol/ Senate/ Rome puissant- powerful Metellus Cimber begs the mighty Caesar most humbly to listen to his plea.	[3]
(ii)	Caesar had earlier been warned by the Soothsayer to beware the ides of March. + So, Caesar reminds the Soothsayer that it had already arrived and yet nothing had happened to him. The Soothsayer tells Caesar that though it had come, it had not yet gone.	[3]
(iii)	Trebonius: to take Antony out of the way/ ensure that he would not be near Caesar when the conspirators attacked Caesar. Casca: to be the first to attack Caesar. Popilius Lena speaks to Cassius as they enter the Senate House and addresses him directly, wishing him success in his enterprise that day. This makes Cassius nervous as he thinks that their plot has been discovered.	[3]

(iv)	Artemidorus pleads that Caesar read the scroll that he had just given to him because it concerns him very closely. Caesar responds by saying that whatever concerned him personally would be dealt with last.	[3]
(v)	Personal response: Accept either Julius Caesar or Conspirators Accept any three plausible reasons.	[4]
Question 3		
(i)	Cassius Brutus is angry because he had requested Cassius to send him money, but Cassius had refused to do so.	[3]
(ii)	Hurt / sad / grieved / betrayed. Cassius' defence: he had not refused money— the person who had given Brutus the message had made a mistake / miscommunicated the information sent.	[3]
(iii)	to pay his legions. He could not raise money by vile means— could not force poor unwilling peasants to part with their money by dishonest methods– he would rather turn his heart into gold and his drops of blood into silver coins/ drachmas than do such a thing.	[3]
(iv)	Brutus had accused Lucius Pella of taking bribes from the Sardians — had humiliated and disgraced him. Cassius had written to Brutus pleading on behalf of Lucius Pella/ to excuse him his offences because he knew the man well.	[3]
(v)	Brutus – self-righteous/ highly moral and idealistic / takes the high moral ground + unconscious hypocrisy /double standards — Willing to ask for and use money raised through malpractice by Cassius but will not do it himself The relationship is breaking down/ strained/ differences in personality are clearly evident/ they quarrel / they are incompatible.	[4]
Question 4		
(i)	Photography studio To get his picture taken The photographer took pride in his work – did not like the narrator's looks yet made sure that his photograph had turned out well	[3]

(ii)	A trial/ sample impression of a print before final printing The narrator could not recognise himself in the photograph because everything had been altered/ It did not look like him/ bore no resemblance to the narrator's face.	[3]
(iii)	Eyes – eyebrows– forehead – hairline –mouth	[3]
(iv)	his ears Through a process called the Sulphide – he could remove the ears entirely and replace them.	[3]
(v)	The narrator was furious because the photograph had no original facial features/ did not look like his face. Justified — his patience had been pushed to the extreme — felt offended/ humiliated at the needless intervention — attempt at body shaming — hurt his sense of self-worth/ self-image.	[4]
Question 5		
(i)	Writer Loved to go out on long walks – in the evening – in the silence – walk on the concrete sidewalk / on grassy patches. A.D. 2053	[3]
(ii)	Compares his walks through the empty streets — to the shadow of a hawk in mid country. The roads were as deserted — as the centre of a plain in the Arizona desert — with no house in a thousand miles. He was as alone in the city — as a hawk in mid country with no habitation or people.	[3]
(iii)	His hard-heeled shoes attracted unwanted attention + he wanted to move quietly and unobserved + dogs on the streets/ dogs barked + people in houses/ lights came on.	[3]
(iv)	A lone car turned the corner + He was caught in its headlights. He stood motionless / spellbound / fascinated + moved towards it.	[3]
(v)	For walking without a purpose Personal Response question Accept EITHER Horror story/ Science fiction. Accept any TWO plausible reasons	[4]

Question 6		
(i)	He can see + hear what the stranger cannot see or hear + stranger perceives 'what is' (the present) while the narrator perceives all that 'has been' (the past)	[3]
(ii)	Houses where people have lived + died + are revisited by the spirits of those who have passed on a haunted house.	[3]
(iii)	In the doorways + stairs + passageway + halls	[3]
(iv)	The living cannot claim ownership of houses/ lands that they occupy + previous owners and occupants from long ago, now dead, + reach out from the graves to stake a claim.	[3]
(iv)	Traditional – frightening/ vengeful/ malevolent Poet's – comfortable /secure/ benign Mood – comfort + security Accept any ONE plausible reason.	[4]
Question 7		
(i)	lions hunker down + elephants lumber + small things recoil into silence	[3]
(ii)	It is difficult to breathe because the air becomes rarefied and sterile/ one is choked with emotion + we see with hurtful clarity + remember unfulfilled promises with regret.	[3]
(iii)	Disoriented + struggle to manage on our own/ cope with the loss/ emotional void + maddened/ unhinged/ 'reduced to the unutterable ignorance of dark, cold caves'.	[3]
(iv)	(a) small things recoil into silence – shock/ numbness/ stunned (b) kind words/ unsaid — remorse/ regret (c) Be and be/ better. For they existed — optimism / hope / joyful acceptance	[3]
(v)	Tree = a great soul The loss of a loved one is traumatic yet inevitable. The memory and influence of the great soul lingers and will continue to shape and affect our lives positively. It brings hope and healing to be better versions of ourselves.	[4]