

[This question paper contains 16 printed pages.]

Your Roll No.....

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Unique Paper Code : 52031901

Name of the Paper : English Language Through
Literature

Name of the Course : B.Com. Programme (LOCF)

Semester : III

Duration : 3 Hours Maximum Marks : 75

Instructions for Candidates

1. Write your Roll No. on the top immediately on receipt of this question paper.
2. The paper contains 3 unseen passages.
3. Students will attempt any **THREE** out of **SIX** questions in **Part A** and **THREE** out of **SIX** questions in **Part B**.
4. Both the parts, **A+B** have to be answered.

P.T.O.

Passage 1 (715 words):

There was a violent outbreak of influenza about this time. My father had passed away a year earlier; I was compelled to look for work to support the family. Otherwise, I too would have lived dreamily like other young people, wishing happiness to myself and to all other living beings. I received a telegram: 'Your wife is gravely ill. Come immediately.' I was twenty-two. I became aware of the intensity of her love just as she was ready to take leave of life. The newspapers had informed us about the ravages of the epidemic. I travelled to the riverbank in Dalmau and waited. The Ganga was swollen with dead bodies. At my in-laws' house, I learned that my wife had passed away. My cousin had come over from my ancestral village to help with my wife's illness, but he had taken ill himself and returned home. I left for our ancestral village the very next day. As I was walking towards my house, I saw my cousin's corpse being carried to the cremation site. My head grew dizzy; I sat down on the ground to take a hold of myself.

At home I found my cousin's wife lying ill on a pallet. 'How far has the funeral procession travelled?' she asked. I had nothing to say. They had four sons and a baby girl who was still nursing. The oldest child lived with me in Bengal and went to school there. My

uncle was the head of the family. He, too, contracted influenza. 'What madness brought you here?' he said to me.

Words cannot describe how pitiful the scene was, how helpless, how tender. But I had no tenderness left after the death of my wife and my cousin. I said in a dry voice, 'Get well and I will take the whole family to Bengal.'

This was my first opportunity to serve those who were ill. Since then there has been no dearth in my life of calls for such service. Sister-in-law passed away on the third day after my cousin's death. The nursing child was also sick. I slept that night holding her. She, too, passed away in the morning. I buried her in the riverbank. When Uncle died. One more corpse to cart to the Ganga. Sister-in-law's three sons contracted fever. Somehow I was able to nurse them back to health. This was the strangest time in my life. My family disappeared in the blink of an eye. All our share croppers and labourers died, the four who worked for my cousin as well as the two who worked for me. My cousin's eldest son was fifteen years old, my young daughter a year old. In whichever direction I turned, I saw darkness.

After I had attended to the affairs of my household, I went to my in laws'. In spite of the suffering, I was able to keep my mind steady. I would go sit on a mound by the Ganga and watch the file of corpses brought to the river. It is impossible to describe my feelings. The mound of sadhus in Dalmau is famous for its height. The Ganga made a sharp turn below it. The corpses were laid together. Sometimes I would think of the ascetic sadhus, sometimes of the ephemerality of the world.

One day Kulli appeared at the mound; he had asked people where he might find me. He looked sad at first, sensing my grief and bearing condolences, then his face broke into a smile. I saw that pure smile and realized he was a true friend. 'I am aware that you loved Manohara deeply,' he said. 'God brings us to our senses by depriving us of what we desire. You are wiser than me. You know such things already. Enjoyment is fine in itself, but the main thing is to come to a good end.'

I was staring at the brick floor of the sadhu's hut. 'Those who are dead have found peace already,' he said. 'Those who have beheld death seek peace as you do. This mound of sadhus is far from the town and, in feeling, far from the cremation grounds. It is as if an ascetic sadhu settled here after he died. His immortal presence makes it an abode of peace.'

Passage 2 (561 words):**HIGGINS**

[tempted, looking at her] It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—

LIZA

[protesting extremely] Ah--ah--ah--ah--ow--ow--oooo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands aforel come, I did.

PICKERING.

You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

MRS. PEARCE

[uneasy] Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.

HIGGINS

[becoming excited as the idea grows on him] What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to

find them to do. Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe.

LIZA

[strongly deprecating this view of her] Ah--ah--ah--ow--ow--oo!

HIGGINS

[carried away] Yes: in six months--in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue--I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! this moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Monkey Brand, if it won't come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

MRS. PEARCE

[protesting]. Yes; but—

HIGGINS

[storming on] Take all her clothes off and bum them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.%

LIZA.

You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are, I do.

HIGGINS.

We want none of your Lisson Grove prudery here, young woman. You've got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs. Pearce. If she gives you any trouble wallop her.

LIZA

[springing up and running between Pickering and Mrs. Pearce for protection] No! I'll call the police, I will.

MRS. PEARCE.

But I've no place to put her.

HIGGINS.

Put her in the dustbin.

LIZA

Ah--ah--ah--ow--ow--oo!

PICKERING.

Oh come, Higgins! be reasonable.

MRS. PEARCE

[resolutely] You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins: really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this.

[HIGGINS, thus scolded, subsides. The hurricane is succeeded by a zephyr of amiable surprise.]

HIGGINS

[with professional exquisiteness of modulation] I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

[LIZA, reassured, steals back to her chair.]

MRS. PEARCE

[to PICKERING] Well, did you ever hear anything like that, sir?

PICKERING

[laughing heartily] Never, Mrs. Pearce: never.

HIGGINS

[patiently] What's the matter?

MRS. PEARCE.

Well, the matter is, sir, that you can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a pebble on the beach.

HIGGINS.

Why not?

MRS. PEARCE.

Why not! But you don't know anything about her. What about her parents? She may be married.

LIZA.

Garn!

HIGGINS.

There! As the girl very properly says, Gam! Married indeed! Don't you know that a woman of that class looks a worn out drudge of fifty a year after she's married.

P.T.O.

Passage 3 (755 words):

It was a young man dressed in conventional shirt and pants, and wearing a pair of canvas shoes. That was what lent the suggestion of slinking to his movements, because he went along noiselessly – that, and the mere suggestion of a stoop. He was very tall. There was a curious look of hunger and unrest about his eyes. But the thing that struck her immediately was the fact that he was black; the other particulars scarcely made any impression at all in comparison. In her country not every night a white woman could be nonchalantly approached by a black man. There was enough novelty in all this to intrigue her. She seemed to remember that any sort of adventure might be experienced in one of these tropical islands of the West Indies.

‘Could you give me a light, lady?’ the man said.

It is true she was smoking but she had only just lit this one from the stub of the cigarette she had thrown away. The fact was she had no matches. Would he believe her, she wondered? ‘I am sorry. I haven’t got a match.’

The young man looked into her face, seemed to hesitate an instant and said, his brow slightly wrinkled in perplexity: 'But you are smoking.'

There was no argument against that. Still, she was not particular about giving him a light from the cigarette she was smoking. It may be stupid, but there was a suggestion of intimacy about such an act, simple as it was, that, call it what you may, she could not accept just like that.

There was a moment's hesitation on her part now, during which time the man's steady gaze never left her face. There was pride and challenge in his look, curiously mingled with quiet amusement.

She held out her cigarette toward him between two fingers.

'Here,' she said, 'you can light from that.'

In the act of bending his head to accept the preferred light, he came quite close to her. He did not seem to understand that she meant him to take the lighted cigarette from her hand. He just bent over her hand to light his.

Presently he straightened up, inhaled a deep lungful of soothing smoke and exhaled again with satisfaction. She saw then that he was smoking the half of a cigarette, which had been clinched and saved for future consumption.

'Thank you,' said the man, politely; and was in the act of moving off when he noticed that instead of returning her cigarette to her lips she had casually, unthinkingly flicked it away. He observed this in the split part of a second that it took him to say those two words. It was almost a whole cigarette she had thrown away. She had been smoking it with evident enjoyment a moment before.

He stood there looking at her, with cold speculation. In a way it unnerved her. Not that she was frightened. He seemed quite decent in his own way, and harmless; but he made her feel uncomfortable. If he had said something rude she would have preferred it. It would have been no more than she would have expected of him. But instead, this quiet contemptuous look. Yes, that was it. The thing began to take on definition in her mind. How dare he; the insolence!

'Well, what are you waiting for?' she said, because she felt she had to break the tension somehow.

'I am sorry I made you waste a whole cigarette,' he said.

She laughed a little nervously. 'It's nothing' she said, feeling a fool.

'There's plenty more where that came from, eh?' he asked.

'I suppose so.'

This won't do, she thought, quickly. She had no intention of standing at a street corner jawing with- well, with a black man. There was something indecent about it. Why doesn't he move on? As though he had read her thoughts he said:

'This is the street, lady. It's public.'

Well, anyway, she didn't have to answer him. She could snub him quietly, the way she should have properly done from the start.

'It's a good thing you're a woman,' he said.

'And if I were a man?'

'As man to man, maybe I'd give you something to think about,' he said, still in that quiet, even voice.

In America they lynch them for less than this, she thought.

'This isn't America,' he said. 'I can see you are an American. In this country there are only men and women. You'll learn about it.'

Questions:

Part A :

Attempt any three questions in 200-250 words.

(3×10=30 marks)

1. How would you describe the tone of the narrator in Passage 1? Would you say he is thoughtful; grief stricken; indifferent; or content? Give a reasoned answer.
2. The narrator, while sitting next to the river bank in Passage 1, says: "Sometimes I would think of the ascetic sadhus, sometimes of the ephemerality of the world." Why does he think about *sadhus* (sages) and the ephemerality (short-lived nature) of the world? Give a reasoned answer.

3. From the line "I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe," in Passage 2, what can you infer about Higgins' attitude towards Liza? Is this the way one human being should speak about another?
4. Why does Mrs Pearce scold Higgins for his treatment of Liza in Passage 2?
5. What, in your assessment, makes the woman uncomfortable about the black man in Passage 3? Give a reasoned answer.

Part B :

Attempt any **three** questions in 300-350 words.

(3×15=45)

6. Imagine you are the narrator of Passage 1. Write a diary entry reflecting on the drastic changes that have happened in your life in recent times, and how you are coping with them.
7. Write a dramatic extract where the narrator of Passage 1 is being interviewed by a journalist who is writing about the devastation that occurred in India because of the Influenza epidemic. Use dialogues and descriptions of non-verbal cues/stage directions to draft the conversation.

8. "I shall make a duchess of this draggetailed guttersnipe." Imagine you are Higgins in Passage 2. Write a letter to a friend discussing your plans to transform Liza.
9. Imagine you are a student working on issues of race, class and gender. Prepare a research journal, using a formal register, delineating important aspects of some of the aforementioned issues that you see in Passage 3.
10. Continue the plot further, attempting to resolve the tensions that you see present between the two characters in Passage 3. Keep in mind the given characterization and the tensions already present between the two characters in the plot. You may use dialogue and stage directions to develop the plot further.