

[This question paper contains 16 printed pages.]

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Name of the Paper : English Language Through Literature

Name of the Course : Common Programme Group  
(GE Language I)

Semester : I

Duration : 3 Hours Maximum Marks : 90

**Instructions for Candidates**

1. Write your Roll No. on the top immediately on receipt of this question paper.
2. This question paper contains 3 unseen passages and questions based on them.
3. The questions are in two parts, A and B, both of which are compulsory. Students will attempt any **THREE** questions from each part.
4. Answers for Part A are to be written in 250-300 words and for Part B in 350-500 words.

P.T.O.

## Passage 1

We are on the threshold of a new century, a new millennium. What will the legacy of this vanishing century be? How will it be remembered in the new millennium? Surely it will be judged, and judged severely, in both moral and metaphysical terms. These failures have cast a dark shadow over humanity: two World Wars, countless civil wars, the senseless chain of assassinations (Gandhi, the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Sadat, Rabin), bloodbaths in Cambodia and Algeria, India and Pakistan, Ireland and Rwanda, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Sarajevo and Kosovo; the inhumanity in the gulag and the tragedy of Hiroshima. And, on a different level, of course, Auschwitz and Treblinka. So much violence; so much indifference.

What is indifference? Etymologically, the word means "no difference." A strange and unnatural state in which the lines blur between light and darkness, dusk and dawn, crime and punishment, cruelty and compassion,

good and evil. What are its courses and inescapable consequences? Is it a philosophy? Is there a philosophy of indifference conceivable? Can one possibly view indifference as a virtue? Is it necessary at times to practice it simply to keep one's sanity, live normally, enjoy a fine meal and a glass of wine, as the world around us experiences harrowing upheavals?

Of course, indifference can be tempting - more than that, seductive. It is so much easier to look away from victims. It is so much easier to avoid such rude interruptions to our work, our dreams, our hopes. It is, after all, awkward, troublesome, to be involved in another person's pain and despair. Yet, for the person who is indifferent, his or her neighbors are of no consequence. And, therefore, their lives are meaningless. Their hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest. Indifference reduces the Other to an abstraction.

Over there, behind the black gates of Auschwitz, the most tragic of all prisoners were the "Muselmanner,"

as they were called. Wrapped in their tom blankets, they would sit or lie on the ground, staring vacantly into space, unaware of who or where they were - strangers to their surroundings. They no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing. Rooted in our tradition, some of us felt that to be abandoned by humanity then was not the ultimate. We felt that to be abandoned by God was worse than to be punished by Him. Better an unjust God than an indifferent one. For us to be ignored by God was a harsher punishment than to be a victim of His anger. Man can live far from God - not outside God. God is wherever we are. Even in suffering? Even in suffering.

In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman.

Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger and hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony. One does something

special for the sake of humanity because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You disarm it. Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor - never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees - not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own.

Indifference, then, is not only a sin, it is a punishment.

And this is one of the most important lessons of this outgoing century's wide-ranging experiments in good and evil.

(644 words)

## Passage 2

Rest brings strength,

Strength brings unity,

Unity wins freedom,

Freedom brings rest.

When we forget the few,

Then the many are not whole.

For there is a hole deep within,

Aching for intervening relief.

We feel the pain of our fellow,

For we too have felt pain.

Though each of its own cause,

It still aches the same.

We can salvage the remains,

Bring peace by breaking these chains,

Used by the evil to keep reins,

Attempting to rid liberty's good name.

To peace for one and all,

Unity, liberty, for eternity.

### Passage 3

[Scene: It is a big room, and rather untidy. The villagers stand talking.]

[Enter Amal and Gaffer.]

AMAL: (Panting.) How the flowers bloom on the bushes!

GAFFER: (At a loss.) I am old; my eyes are not so good. I do not see the flowers.

AMAL: (Eagerly.) They are like the flags of a King.

GAFFER: (Approving.) That's right. But where do you see them?

AMAL: (After a pause.) I don't see them now. I see nothing. (He begins to weep.)

GAFFER: (Puzzled.) What is it, my dear? What is the matter?

AMAL: (Between his sobs.) I want to see the King's flag. I have never seen a flag.

GAFFER: (Touched.) What does the flag look like?

AMAL: (Mournfully.) I don't know. (Gaffer gazes at him in amazement.)

GAFFER: (Kindly.) Poor little soul! Why do you want to see the flag?

AMAL: (After a pause.) I want to die. But I have heard that when one is dead, they put a flag on the body, I have never seen a flag.

GAFFER: (Soothingly.) You should not speak of dying. But don't cry. It is wrong to cry.

[Amal is quiet.]

[Amal falls asleep, his head in Gaffer's lap.]

[The Postman enters.]

POSTMAN: Well, my friend, what about your house?

GAFFER: All gone to pieces.

POSTMAN: And the boy?

GAFFER: He is still crying.

POSTMAN: Poor child, he was in love with the house.

You should have brought him here last night. That would have distracted his mind.

GAFFER: I have brought him now. When the doors of the house were tom down, I carried him out in my arms. But his eyes were all wet with tears.

POSTMAN: It was not wise to weep over one's own house.

GAFFER: Wise or unwise, he is a child; he does not understand these things.

POSTMAN: Well, do not weep. If one does not weep in this world, there is nothing to weep for in the next. (Enter the Poet, who looks about the room.) It seems that our house will be rebuilt.

POET: When will the boy recover?

GAFFER: I do not know. He has cried his eyes out, but still the tears flow from them.

POET: (After a pause.) Has he not eaten anything all day?

GAFFER: No.

POET: (Impatiently.) Why do you not feed him?

GAFFER: If he does not eat, he will die. When he has wept, he will take food of his own accord. But if I feed him while he is crying, he will die.

POSTMAN: (Smiling.) Your love for the child is too great.

GAFFER: When I see his tears, I can hardly breathe. How can I endure them? (Enter the Dairyman, Sweetseller, and Fisherman.)

DAIRYMAN: Well, Mr. Postman, how is your health?

POSTMAN: Thank God, I am well.

DAIRYMAN: You always seem happy.

POSTMAN: It is a satisfaction to know that one has always done one's duty.

DAIRYMAN: (Smiling.) You know very well what you have to do.

(Enter the Priest.)

PRIEST: You are always busy.

POSTMAN: What is your opinion?

PRIEST: Why should a priest be busy? The Lord is sufficient for his needs. (Enter the Doctor.)

POSTMAN: Well, how are you, Doctor?

DOCTOR: I am very well. (Pause.) How is the child? (Gaffer does not answer.) What is the matter?

POSTMAN: (Leaning on the Doctor's shoulder.) The poor child's house has been tom down.

DOCTOR: (Impatiently.) And why has the child not eaten anything all day?

GAFFER: If I feed him while he is crying, he will die.

DOCTOR: (Smiling.) But, my dear sir, it is not right for a child to fast in this way. (To Amal.) Come along, my dear. Here are some sweetmeats. (Amal sits up.)

AMAL: I don't want them.

DOCTOR: (Laughing.) Why, what is the matter?

AMAL: I don't want them.

(633 words)

## PART A

*Answer any three of the following : (10×3=30)*

Questions 1 and 2 are based on Passage 1.

Questions 3 and 4 are based on Passage 2.

Question 5 is based on Passage 3.

1. In Passage 1, how does the author define indifference, and what implications does it have on human perception and action? What examples does the author provide to illustrate the consequences of indifference in society?
2. In Passage 1, explain why the author talks about various events and tragedies. What kind of emotional response is evoked by the use of personal and historical examples?
3. In Passage 2, what is the central message of the poem? What does the author suggest about the relationship between rest, strength and freedom?

4. In Passage 2, what literary devices does the author employ to convey their ideas effectively? Discuss the significance of the repeated use of certain words or phrases throughout the poem.
5. In the given excerpt from Rabindranath Tagore's play 'The Post Office,' a poignant scene unfolds in which Amal, a young boy, is distraught over the loss of his house and his deep longing to see the King's flag. Discuss his desire and how the other characters, such as Gaffer, the Postman, and the Doctor, respond to Amal's grief and why they offer him sweetmeats.

### PART B

*Answer any three of the following: (20×3=60)*

Questions 6 and 7 are based on Passage 1.

Question 8 is based on Passage 2.

Questions 9 and 10 are based on Passage 3.

- ~~6.~~ Imagine two characters, A and B, are discussing the concept of indifference as portrayed in passage 1.

Write a dialogue of at least 10 exchanges between them where they explore their contrasting perspectives on the implications of indifference in the context of historical events and its impact on society.

7. From Passage 2, create a set of concise and organized notes summarizing the key points made by the author in the passage about the consequences and nature of indifference. Include the author's definition of indifference, examples illustrating its impact, and the author's viewpoint on its role in shaping human behavior.
8. Paraphrase the poem given in Passage 2.
9. Imagine you are the Postman in Passage 3, and you are deeply moved by the situation faced by Amal and Gaffer after their house was destroyed. Write a letter to a close friend, expressing your thoughts and emotions about the incident and the impact it has had on the community. Describe the efforts being made to help Amal recover and rebuild the community.

10. Imagine you are Amal in Passage 3, the child in the excerpt. Write a diary entry describing the events and conversation that took place in the room today. Include your feelings, thoughts, and reactions to the people and their discussions.