

# G.C.E.O/L Examination 2023 (2024)

## 46- Appreciation of English Literary Texts – II

### Poetry

1. With reference to the poem, **A Bird Came Down the Walk**, discuss the beauty and the unpleasant sights of the natural environment.

#### 1. A Bird Came Down the Walk

Answers should include:

- A brief introduction which includes the poet, question and the poem. The answer should also introduce that the readers see the pleasant and unpleasant sights through the eyes of the speaker who seems a “bird watcher”.
- Then the instances of both beauty and unpleasant images should be explored with examples from the poem.
- The bird’s action which adds calmness and colour to the environment can be explained as **pleasant images**.
  - the way the bird drinks dew from a convenient grass
  - how the grass is identified as “convenient” to indicate harmlessness.
  - The bird’s rapid glance
  - simile- ‘like frightened beads’
  - metaphor – ‘velvet head’
  - His graceful and delicate flight
- The bird’s action which adds **unpleasant sights** to the onlooker.

E.g.

- the way the bird bit an “Angle worm” in halves.
- the way it ate it raw.
- While referring to the pleasant and unpleasant sights, the ideal answers would also refer to how the effects of such sights are enhanced by using different images/touching the senses of the reader.
- In conclusion, an ideal answer would wrap up saying the natural sights and actions in nature are filled with such things: i.e. the weaker and the powerless become subject to the powerful and the stronger species. This is the way of the natural law and order. (the order and pattern in nature)

2. Explore the literary devices used in **War is Kind** to confirm that it represents terror and conflicts.

## 2. War is Kind

Answers should include:

- An introduction which should include the poet, question and the poem.
- Then literary devices should be identified: Simple identification may not be adequate to collect good marks: students are expected to explore how they reflect terror and conflicts.
- Apostrophe: direct address to the maiden by the speaker: this grabs the attention, and the readers feel that the speaker is addressing him/her. This allows the reader to emphasize the scene more clearly and closely, thereby comprehending the depth of the poem.
- Oxymoron- War is kind; this is a type of paradox where two contrary things are presented. Wars are not kind as they shed blood, take lives and destroy both living and nonliving things. By using an oxymoron, the poet again grabs the attention and highlights the absence of kindness in war contexts. This can be identified as a very symbolic title.
- Paradoxes – ‘excellence in killing’ / ‘virtue of slaughter’
- When the soldiers are killed the affected people represent different age groups in society highlighting a cross-section of war victims; direct as well as indirect victims (passive victims)
- The use of auditory and visual symbols to touch the different senses of the reader.  
E.g. booming drums

Likewise, ideal answers should come up with different literary techniques and explore their effects, without simply citing the quotations from the poem.

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3. 'Big Match, 1983 is a subtle depiction of violence and corruption in an evil society.' Discuss with reference to the poem

### 3. Big Match, 1983

Answers should include:

- An introduction which should include the poet, question and the poem. In this context, the answers may also include a brief note on the setting of the poem, 1983 in Sri Lanka, as the question refers to an evil society.
- Students are expected to refer to and explain 4 or 5 instances from the poem where the evil nature of humans is depicted.
- **Examples:**
  - (i) The carelessness or indifferent nature of people towards tragedy and death which is shown through the instance when "a child lies dead, and two policemen look the other way." Students may refer to other examples too to prove people's indifference to tragedy. Politically driven corruptions which are represented through the indifference of the policemen suggests the corruption of the administration/ How law and order is not well-exercised in society.
  - (ii) How racism is harboured in people's minds, and how racial prejudice ruins people are pictured vividly using symbols. E.g. racial pot boils over
  - (iii) As an extension to the previous point, how these racially driven conflicts were consistent in this society is also highlighted. This is evident when the poet refers to different eras of the past such as "forty-eight" "fifty-six" etc. The repetition of racial violence vouches for the evil nature of society, on the one hand. On the other hand, it also signifies the stupidity and ignorance linked to evil nature.
  - (iv) The evil nature is again confirmed when the authorities' involvement in the treachery is subtly pointed out: Or the authorities' ignorance to brutality is presented.
  - (v) The telephone conversation suggests the need for harmony among the people in society. The poem however ends with a note of optimism: hope to experience peace and harmony in society.

4. 'The Earthen Goblet conveys how human beings use their power over nature, through the construction of a goblet.' Discuss with reference to the poem.

#### 4. The Earthen Goblet

Answers should include:

- An introduction which should include the poet, question, and the poem.
- The answers may refer to the fact that the Earthen Goblet is a utensil made of natural soil for human beings' purposes and usage. Also, the earth's voice and feelings are presented in the eyes of a narrator and through the goblet's response to the narrator's question. The potter represents the human beings who manipulate the earth, using their power over natural substances.
- Students are expected to refer to and explain 4 or 5 instances from the poem where people's power over nature is depicted.
- **Examples:**
  - (i) People's act of dislocating the natural soil from its natural environment is a good example of human beings' power over natural substances. Earth is removed from its natural environment, not for its own sake but for people's satisfaction. The creative power and vitality of the earth are taken away by humans. The consequence of this removal/uprooting ends in "death" of the soil, as indicated through the following lines.

"The potter has drawn out the living breath of me  
And given me a form which is death of me, "
  - (ii) The soil's freedom is snatched by the people, represented through the potter. The poet's use of the word "captive" to refer to the earth which is on the "wheel" picturesquely suggests how the earth has lost its liberty and independence.
  - (iii) How the earth is deprived of its basic human needs such as love and company, as represented through the "fragrant" "flower" also confirms people's power over the natural substances.
  - (iv) The physical trauma and mental agony the earth experienced during the process of making a goblet also symbolically highlights the potter's power and manipulation to fulfil the potter's whims and fancies. That is, the earth is "being twirled" and is "burned so warm" as described by the poet.

5. 'Through humour, poetry offers its readers lessons for their lives.' Discuss with reference to **Upside-Down**.

### 5. Upside -Down

Answers should include:

- An introduction which should include the poet, question, and the poem.
- The poem presents humour, about a person who misunderstood everything and behaved in a silly manner which amused everybody and evoked laughter. The students must show how it uses humour and gives some lessons to people by referring to a few instances.
- **Major lessons** may be worded as:
  - The importance of being cautious when breaking norms/conventional behaviours/ethics
  - The importance of responding to questions directly and clearly.
  - The importance of 'limits' when dealing with jokes
  - The importance of orderliness
- **Humour** used to present such lessons:

E.g.

  - "The eccentric nature" (absurdity) of the person creates humour throughout the poem.
  - Doing the opposites:
  - Turning "left" when he is expected to turn "right"
  - Boating is changed to floating.
  - Reading from the left to right is reversed making different meanings or creating nonsensical words.
  - Depicting as a circus person etc.

## Drama

6. 'Twilight of a Crane is a drama about love and compassion.' Justify this comment with close reference to the play.

### 6. Twilight of a Crane

Answers should include:

- An introduction which should include the playwright, the question, and the play. This may include the fact that a crane is associated with human behaviour.
- Students may talk about love and compassion indicated through different angles. Love refers to intense feelings of deep affection and great interest and pleasure in something. Compassion refers to sadness for/understanding of the suffering of others.

**\*Do not penalize candidates for not identifying the difference between love and confession**

- **Examples:**

- Concern and compassion towards the unknown creatures in trouble.  
E.g. Yohyo's act of saving the crane
- Love and compassion as a form of gratitude.  
E.g. Tsu becoming the wife
- Out of compassion love has emerged. /Love towards the husband.  
E.g. Several instances of each other's concern towards the family  
E.g. "cold soup is no good for my sweetheart."
- Love towards the children.
- Love in the form of craziness to material gains/money

E.g. Unzu and Sodo's greediness for material gains: how this adds to change the mind of Yohyo too

- Students may refer to the symbols used in highlighting love and compassion in different formats.

7. 'The Bear depicts the impermanency of human thoughts and behaviours.' Justify this statement with close reference to the play.

### 7. The Bear

Answers should include:

- An introduction which should include the playwright, the question, and the play.
- The impermanency of human thought and behavior can be presented through the two main characters.
- Students may refer to 4/5 instances of human actions and emotions.

- **Examples:**

- Emotions of sadness and changes in physical actions

- E.g. Popova's sadness over death may disappear/may be reduced.  
Smirnov becomes increasingly gentle

- Human temper- may change- disappear/may be controlled and suppressed.

- E.g. Both Smirnov's anger and Popova's about the money issue

- Attitudes and ideologies

- E.g. The attitude about each other's infidelity  
Popova's attitude towards Smirnov as a bear  
Smirnov's attitudes toward women as common crocodiles

- Attraction and fascination towards something or someone

- E.g. Smirnov is not interested in the duel anymore as he cannot resist falling in love with her.

- They kiss each other passionately symbolizing their attraction towards each other despite their initial dislike and distraction.

## Prose

8. 'Human actions and behaviour in the face of fear cannot be predicted.' Examine the statement with reference to the extract from *Wave*.

8. *Wave*

- An introduction which should include the question, text, and the context (*Tsunami*) which proves that the speaker as well as the other characters are in a state of fear.
  - By referring to 4-5 incidents, students are required to refer to the uninformed actions/intuitive actions of the speaker and the other characters.
  - **Examples:**
    - Grabbing the children and running out of the room
    - Not calling the parents in the next room

"I didn't shout to warn them. I didn't bang on their door and call them out."

  - Children running barefoot without feeling any pain: they were insensible of their feet being hurt.
- "They were barefoot, but they didn't slow down because stones or thorns were hurting them."
- Children's silence about the sudden gush of water
- "They didn't say a word."
- The speaker's indifference to/ about who the driver is.
- "didn't know who he was."
- Beulah's inability to get into the jeep because of the panic.
- "The jeep jerked forward, and she lost her grip"
- The speaker's spontaneous yelling at the driver after noticing the accident.
  - Driver's disregard/zero attention to the speaker's requests and yelling
  - Anton jumped out of the jeep, instinctively, without thinking of the risks.
  - Steve's emotions and fear as expressed through his "sudden look of terror, eyes wide open, mouth agape".
  - The narrator's and Anton's actions can be juxtaposed. Though both of them act instinctively, they react differently
- Better answers may include an examination/evaluation of such spontaneous actions too by the speaker.

9. 'Punishment may make children stubborn and determined.' Examine this statement with reference to **The Lumber Room**.

### 9. The Lumber Room

Answers should include:

- An introduction which should include the writer, the question, and the text.
- Students are then expected to address the question by introducing the question.
- The students should refer to the initial behaviour of the boy and the punishment given to him.
- Then the students should talk about the consequences/aftermath of the punishments, indicating the boy's 'stubborn' and 'determined' response/s to the punishment.

Some students who would comment on the following may deserve additional rewards.

- A comment on the nature of 'obedience'/'lack of responses. Most children may obey the adults but more intelligent/inquisitive children may question
- The limited adult view of the world.
- The child's more expansive and imaginative outlook.
- A criticism of the Victorian society/ Victorian attitudes toward children.
- The aunt as an agent of Victorian society deserves the reader's sympathy.

*Extra details*

\*Those who do not make references to Victorian society should not be penalized

(\*Disagreement **if any** should be supported through a sound argument with contextual examples)

10. 'The Lahore Attack confirms the power of company and concern for one's country.'  
Examine this statement with reference to the prose.

### 10. The Lahore Attack

- An introduction to the question, the speaker and the text is required. Further, the context should refer to the speech as well.
- Students are then expected to address the question by identifying a few instances related to the question.
- **Examples:**
- The need for human company is revealed through:
  - The enjoyment the team feels during their tour abroad.
  - The speaker's concern for the other members while the attack goes on.
  - Their camaraderie and morale after the attack as they act together as a team.
  - The lonely soldier's interest and need to engage in a conversation with the cricketer despite the soldier's assumed busy career.
- The concern for one's own country is represented through:
  - The cricket team's commitment to the team, and teamwork despite the dangers they encounter.
  - The team behaves as 'unofficial ambassadors' in front of the media after the attack.
  - The soldier's sacrifice and devotion to his service.
- Students are expected to support the above points by referring to the text.

11. 'The Nightingale and the Rose questions the act of sacrifice in relation to material gains.'  
Examine this statement with reference to the short story.

### 11. The Nightingale and the Rose

- An introduction to the question, the author and the text is required.
- Students are expected to explore the sacrifice made by the nightingale in comparison to the material gains as represented through the whims and fancies of the girl, the student.
- **Examples:**
  - The professor's daughter's desire for a rose and her material gain in relation to the emotional feeling of attraction.  
"She promised she'd dance with me if I brought her a red rose"  
"Ah, on what little things does happiness depend! I have read all that the wise men have written, and all the secrets of philosophy are mine, yet for want of a red rose my life is made wretched."
  - The student's desire for physical togetherness and dance over the emotional feelings of love.  
"I'll get to hold her in my arms, and she'll lean her head on my shoulder..."
  - The nightingale's power of sacrifice in relation to its wings: it lets its wings go away to express its love and compassion to the student.
  - Finally, the fate of the red rose which was created out of genuine love by the nightingale who wished for a genuine love relationship between the student and the professor's daughter crushed under a cartwheel reflects the futility of sacrifice in this context.
  - The entire short story is an ironic comment on the materialistic society.

## Fiction

12. 'The Prince and the Pauper, above all, represents human beings' cruelty and corruption.' Do you agree with this comment?

### 12. The Prince and the Pauper

- An introduction to the question, the author and the text is required.
- In this context, students are expected to mention their stance on the question: they may mention it in different ways
- E.g. Some students may say that they agree/disagree with the statement. Some other students may say it in a different way by referring to the given statement. Some others would say that not only people's cruelty and corruption, but the novel also depicts other key concerns such as justice in society, human affection, feudal class system in England during the era.
- Any of their positions should be accepted. However, the students are required to support their stance with reference to the text.

### Cruelty and corruption

Corruption is prevalent in all the strata in society/ both macro and micro level i.e. corruption at the domestic level, social level and state level

#### Domestic level

E.g.

- Cruelty – Grandma/Father's treatment to family members including the wife
- Hugh Hendon's cruelty toward his brother. / the fake letter
- Even Tom pretends as if he does not know his mother

#### Social Level

E.g.

- How priests are corrupted
- Hugo and the gang of thieves

#### State Level

E.g.

- Corruption- social inequality/ King Henry VIII - cruel punishments-citizens, nobles
- Prison officers/ ministers/administrators punish people unlawfully.
- Law and order/judiciary
- Lord Hertford and other officials

13. 'Bringing Tony Home is only a story about childhood experiences.' Do you agree with this comment?

### 13. Bringing Tony Home

- An introduction to the question, the author and the text is required.
- In this context, students are expected to mention their stance on the question; they may mention it in different ways (i.e. they may either directly mention that they agree/ disagree with the statement or explicitly indicate their view/perspective)
- Some students may consider this as a simple story of children. If this is supported adequately, they should be awarded marks.

E.g.

- A story of his childhood/ his friendship with Tony
- His adventurous journey back home with Tony.
- His mischievous childhood with Sirisena and the gang

- Some students may say that the story is about other concerns.

E.g.

- It is a deep psychological analysis of how childhood trauma lasts forever.
- It is a story due to loss, pain or deprivation.
- It is a deep analysis of the bond of human-animal relationship.
- It is a story about sacrifice, courage, devotion and perseverance.
- It is a great story of the development of character as it shows how a simple playboy becomes a very strong person capable of emotional tolerance. This is possible as the story is a semi-autobiographical novella.
- It is a critique of the society: giving a socio-cultural-economic and historical setting of colonial Sri Lanka/ Economic status of society and how it affects human relationships/ human-animal relationships
- It is an exploration about the significance and impact of one's past i.e. past cannot be recreated as it remains as a nostalgic memory.
- It is a masterpiece of literary techniques i.e. cinematic techniques/ flashback/ flashforward etc.

14. 'The Vendor of Sweets, above all, reflects disagreement between a father and a young son.'  
Do you agree with this comment?

#### 14. The Vendor of Sweets

- An introduction to the question, the author and the text is required.
- In this context, students are expected to mention their stance on the question: they may mention it in different ways i.e. they may either directly mention that they agree or disagree with the statement or explicitly indicate their view/perspective.

- Examples:

- About the old father and the adult son

Conflict due to

- Different interests and tastes (attire/food habits/medicine/religion)
- Different ideologies and practices (education/career/role of women)
- Jagan and Mali are extremists in their views, actions and behaviour.
- Relationships (marriage/living together)
- About conquering interests and the effect created over these differences i.e. tension, disappointment, anger, hurt etc.