

SSLC EXAMINATION, MARCH - 2026

ENGLISH

Second Language

Time : 2½ Hours

Total Score : 80

Instructions :

- The cool-off time of 15 minutes is to be used for reading the question paper.
- You are not supposed to write anything during the cool off time.
- Attempt the questions according to the instructions.

Score

Questions 1 - 5 : Read the excerpt from *A very Old Man with Enormous Wings* and answer the questions that follow.

5x1=5

His only supernatural virtue seemed to be patience. He was quite patient when the hens pecked at him, searching for the parasites in his wings. He was patient again when the cripples pulled out his feathers to touch their limbs with. He remained patient when even the most merciful threw stones at him. After all, they were only trying to get him to rise so that they could see him standing.

It so happened that during those days there arrived in the town a travelling show. The main attraction was a woman who had been changed into a spider by a burst of thunder and lightning. The admission fee to see her was less than the fee to see the angel. So, the people flocked to see her. They were also permitted to ask her all manner of questions about her absurd state.

1. Who pecked at the angel while searching for parasites in his wings ?
2. Why did the people prefer the spider-woman over the angel ?
 - (A) The spider-woman offered a clear, dramatic story that the people could understand.
 - (B) The admission fee to see her was less, making her more accessible to the crowd.
 - (C) The people felt a moral responsibility towards the angel.
 - (D) The spider-woman never interacted directly with the visitors.
3. What does the angel's patience in the face of mistreatment suggest ?
 - (A) He loved people ill-treating him.
 - (B) Society's respect for the supernatural.
 - (C) A quiet, enduring form of virtue unrecognized by most people.
 - (D) His desire to leave the town.

P.T.O.

4. Comment on the statement, "...even the most merciful threw stones at him."
5. Identify the **Noun Phrase** in the subject position and the **Verb Phrase** in the sentence given below.
The admission fee for the travelling show was less than the fee to see the angel.

Questions 6 - 9 : Read the lines from *Another Day in Paradise* and answer the questions that follow.

4x1=4

She calls out to the man on the street.
He can see she's been crying,
She's got blisters on the soles of her feet
She can't walk but she's trying
Oh, think twice, cause it's another day for
You and me in paradise.
Oh, think twice, it's just another day for you,
You and me in paradise.

6. Who does the woman call out to ?
7. What does the line "She can't walk but she's trying" suggest about the woman's character ?
(A) She is rather lazy and unsentimental.
(B) She doesn't want sympathy from others.
(C) She is resilient and persevering, in spite of her hardships.
(D) She is very strong and healthy.
8. Why does the lyricist repeat the expression 'think twice' in the song ?
9. Identify the refrain in the extract.
10. (A) Read these lines from the poem *Mirror*, and write an appreciation of the lines focusing on the theme and the poetic techniques.

1x5=5

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

OR

- (B) Write a **paragraph** comparing and contrasting the themes of the two poems:

<i>The Seedling</i> (Paul Laurence Dunbar)	<i>It Couldn't Be Done</i> (Edgar A. Guest)
<p>Little folks, be like the seedling, Always do the best you can; Every child must share life's labour Just as well as every man. And the sun and showers will help you Through the lonesome, struggling hours, Till you raise to light and beauty Virtue's fair, unfading flowers.</p>	<p>There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done, There are thousands to prophesy failure, There are thousands to point out to you one by one, The dangers that wait to assail you. But just buckle in with a bit of a grin, Just take off your coat and go to it Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.</p>

Questions 11 - 14 : Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

4x1=4

Life without Limbs, Life without Limits

Nicholas James Vujicic was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1982 with Tetra-Amelia syndrome, a rare disorder characterised by the absence of all four limbs. Facing immense physical challenges and bullying, Nick grappled with feelings of worthlessness and severe depression. He even contemplated suicide at the age of ten.

However, his parents' love ignited faith in him and gave him the desire to live. He realised that his story could inspire others. Displaying incredible perseverance and resilience, he learned to perform daily tasks independently. He graduated from university, thus proving that physical limitations do not define one's potential.

At the age of 17, Nick began motivational speaking, transforming his disability into a powerful platform to inspire others. He has since become a globally renowned inspirational speaker, travelling to over 60 countries and founding the NGO *Life without Limbs*. He emphasises that fear is the greatest disability, not physical impairment, and advocates that life's challenges can be transformed into strengths. He is the author of bestsellers such as *Life Without Limits* and has appeared in the film *Soul Surfer*.

In 2012, he married Kanae Miyahara, and together they have four children.

11. What rare disorder was Nick Vujicic born with?
12. Name the NGO founded by Nick Vujicic.
13. What gave him the desire and self-belief to live?
 - (A) Public recognition
 - (B) Academic success
 - (C) His parents' unconditional love and faith
 - (D) Medical advancements

14. The life story of Nick Vujicic teaches us that :
- Fear can be a greater limitation than physical disability.
 - Life's challenges can be transformed into strengths.
 - Success is dependent on physical perfection.
 - Love and resilience help us overcome adversity.

Select the **correct** option :

- (i) and (ii) are correct
- (i), (ii) and (iv) are correct
- (i) and (iii) are correct
- (i) and (iv) are correct

Questions 15 - 18 : Answer either (A) or (B).

15. (A) In *Shakuntalam*, Kalidasa uses the setting of the hermitage to present an ideal world where humans live in harmony with animals and plants. Prepare a **review** of Act 1 of the play focusing on its theme, plot, characterisation, and contemporary relevance. 1x7=7
- (Hints: King Dushyanta pursues a deer into a hermitage - two hermits warn him - observe the peaceful and simple life in the hermitage - sees Shakuntala and her friends - nature is a part of life understands the need for harmony with nature)*
- OR**
- (B) The lives of Srikanth Bolla and Arunachalam Muruganantham clearly exemplify the fact that hope, perseverance, resilience, and the refusal to give up help us overcome adversities and attain success. Based on your reading of *Breaking Barriers*, *I Will Fly*, and *A Phoenix Rises* prepare a **write-up** on the topic 'A Never-say-die Attitude Wins Life's Battles.'
- (Hints: Srikanth Bolla - born blind - becomes an outstanding student - his fight for admission - becomes the first international student at MIT- Arunachalam Muruganantham - a school dropout - finds his wife use old rags instead of sanitary napkins - determines to make affordable sanitary napkins - succeeds)*
16. (A) The 'Student' in *Beloved Boles* is a self-effacing character who is willing to make amends for his misjudgement. Write a **character sketch** of the student. 1x6=6
- OR**
- (B) Luigi Pirandello's *War* shows that every fallen soldier leaves behind grieving families who suffer pain forever. Prepare a short **narrative** of the events that unfold in the story.
17. (A) The 30th International Film Festival of Kerala, 2025, was inaugurated on 12 December at Thiruvananthapuram, turning the state capital into a hub of world cinema. Prepare a **news report** of the event. 1x6=6
- (Hints : 30th IFFK - Minister of Cultural Affairs inaugurates - presents Spirit of Cinema Award to Canadian filmmaker Kelly Fyffe - Marshall - eight - day festival - runs from 12 - 19 December across multiple venues - features 206 films from 82 countries - categories include International Competition, Indian Cinema Now, World Cinema - delegates get access to forums, master classes, panel discussions and cultural events)*

OR

Score

- (B) The memoir *In the Attic* highlights the humanity and compassion of Wilm Hosenfeld, who helps Wladyslaw Szpilman survive one of the darkest periods of his life. Based on your reading of the text, write a **paragraph** on the topic 'Humanity is still Alive.'
18. (A) Elisenda lets out a sigh of relief when the old man with enormous wings flies away. Later, she jots down her feelings in her diary. Write the likely **diary entry**. 1x4=4
- OR**
- (B) Hauchecome decides to write an email to the Mayor of Goderville pleading his innocence and requesting justice. Draft the likely **email**.

Questions 19 - 21 : Answer all the questions.

19. Write a **profile** of W.B. Yeats using the details given below. 1x6=6
- Birth : 13 June, 1865, Sandymount, Dublin, Ireland
 - Education : Attended high school in Dublin and the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin
 - Famous Works : *The Wanderings of Oisín, The Countess Cathleen, Easter 1916, The Second Coming*
 - Awards : Nobel Prize for Literature (1923)
 - Themes : Irish Nationalism and the relationship between imagination and history
 - Inspiration : William Blake, Irish folklore and legend
 - Movement : Irish Literary Renaissance
 - Death : 28 January, 1939, France
 - Legacy : One of the greatest English poets of the 20th century, and a key figure in the Irish Literary Renaissance.
20. The English Club of your school wishes to conduct a seminar to raise awareness of racism and discrimination. The celebrated writer Fatou Diome has consented to speak at the seminar. Draft an **event invitation** to the students, the public, and nearby schools. Include details such as the date, time, venue and other details of the event and relevant details of the Chief Guest. 1x4=4
21. Read the passage below and frame **three Wh-questions** and **one Yes/No question** based on it. 1x4=4
- That evening, on his way back from the workshop, Bablu decided to surprise Gowri with a gift. He went to a small store. The storekeeper quickly wrapped the napkin pack in an old newspaper. Bablu was startled at the exorbitant price but dutifully paid him forty rupees. He unwrapped the packet and examined the pad. It seemed to be just plain cotton wrapped in a gauze sheet.

Questions 22 - 26 : Read the news headlines given below and answer the questions that follow. Score
5x1=5

Never say die! Jawan turns Army Officer on 7th attempt

Heart disease - leading cause of sudden death of under 45

From Coast to Hills - India is running out of clean air

UNICEF report underscores Kerala's achievements in Child Welfare and Public Education

Kerala to develop a State-owned AI Engine for Schools

Delhi smog tightens grip : Air Quality Index stays 'very poor'

22. Identify the headline that points to Kerala's excellent achievements in public education.
23. Which serious health issue is identified as the main reason for sudden deaths among people under the age of 45 ?
24. What does Kerala plan to develop for its schools ?
- (A) A state-sponsored welfare scheme
(B) A scholarship for deprived children
(C) A state-owned AI engine
(D) A physical fitness programme
25. The headline 'Never say die! Jawan turns Army Officer on 7th attempt' highlights :
- (i) A military reform policy
(ii) The power of determination and perseverance
(iii) Trying seven times is the minimum requirement to achieve goals.
(iv) The spirit of not giving up in the face of failures.
- Select the **correct** option :
- (A) (i) and (ii) are correct (B) (ii) and (iv) are correct
(C) (i), (ii) and (iv) are correct (D) (ii) is correct

26. What common problem is highlighted by the two headlines : 'From Coast to Hills - India is running out of clean air' and 'Delhi smog tightens grip : Air Quality Index stays 'very poor' ?
- (A) Seasonal weather changes in India
 (B) Growth of cities and population
 (C) Air pollution affecting the well-being of the people
 (D) Increase in the number of tourists

27. Edit the passage. The errors are highlighted in bold type.

6x $\frac{1}{2}$ =3

The Wild Swans at Coole is a beautiful poem **wrote(a)** by W.B. Yeats. It **portray(b)** the grief and disappointment of a person **which(c)** has grown old. The mysterious and beautiful swans make him **realised(d)** his own ageing and mortality. Neither the swans nor their vitality **make(e)** him happy as he realises he has nothing but the end of life to **looked(f)** forward to.

28. Complete the paragraph using the appropriate forms of the idioms/phrasal verbs given in brackets.

4x1=4

Teresa (a) a request to the student to write a letter to Boles for her. He thought it over. Then he (b) to write it and asked her to (c). In the course of writing, when Teresa, who was five feet tall, described herself as a sorrowful little dove, he (d) laughing, offending her.

(make up one's mind, fire away, put forward, burst out, put down)

29. Complete the following passage choosing the right words from those given in brackets.

6x $\frac{1}{2}$ =3

One day, Anita and Rohan went for a drive to the beach side cottage where their (a) was staying. (b) drive to the beach was very refreshing. (c), at the beach, they watched the (d) go down the horizon. In the evening, they visited the city hospital, where Rohan had an appointment with the (e) for his heart issues. Anita made use of the opportunity to consult a (f) to treat her sensitive skin.

(cardiologist, son, there, dermatologist, their, sun)

30. Complete the conversation between Salim Ali and Baron Omar Rolf after their encounter with the tusker.

5x1=5

Salim Ali : Omar, that was quite a run! You ran with the agility of a cat, _____ (a) _____ ?

Omar Rolf : Yes, I did _____ (b) _____ ?

Salim Ali : It was a huge tusker coming down the same narrow trail.

Omar Rolf : A tusker! Thank God, I escaped it. Would you mind _____ (c) _____ ?

Salim Ali : Not very close. In fact, the poor elephant didn't even notice our presence.

Omar Rolf : Maybe. I would rather you _____ (d) _____ ?

Salim Ali : Sure, I will warn you. The jungle likes to surprise us with such perils when we least expect it.

Omar Rolf : It does. If our birdwatching continues like this, _____ (e) _____ ?

Salim Ali : Indeed, it will be quite thrilling.

Omar Rolf : Thrilling? Adventurous, rather.

31. Report the following dialogue.

2x1=2

Hauchecome : Why did you call me to your office ?

The Mayor : You were seen picking up the lost pocket book this morning. Malandain saw you.

(a)

(b)

32. Complete the passage given below choosing appropriate words/ expressions from those given in the brackets.

6x1/2=3

Only when _____ (a) _____ soldiers had taken a closer look at me _____ (b) _____ reviewed the situation did they really believe I wasn't German. Then they decided to take me _____ (c) _____ their headquarters _____ (d) _____ I could wash and have a meal. After two weeks, I walked _____ (e) _____ the streets of Warsaw without fear, for the first time _____ (f) _____ almost six years.

(through, to, and, so that, a, in, the)