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Government aided co education degree colleges
Accredited by NAAC

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Ref. No: **BC/N/872**

Dept. Ref. No: **2026/18**
Date: **09/Oct/2026**

General Notice

3rd Semester Multidisciplinary (MDC) students, please click on the attachment to see the syllabus of Compulsory English along with study resources and last year's question paper.

HOD
Department of English

Dr Kaustav Chakrabarti
Principal
Birpara College

University of North Bengal
Syllabus of ENGLISH at FYUGP
(as per the New Curriculum & Credit Framework 2022)

SEMESTER: II & III

PAPER CODE: ENGLAEC002

LEVEL: 100

Paper Description: COMPULSORY ENGLISH

Paper Title: Enhancing Reading and Writing Skills

Paper Type: Theory; Credits: 4

Full Marks: 80

(Marks in Semester End Theory/Written Examination: 60, Marks in Tutorials conducted by the Colleges: 20).

Duration of Examination: 1 Hour 30 Minutes.

Unit I

Two short questions to be answered from Four texts, Two questions to be set serially from each text: 2x10=20

William Wordsworth: "Daffodils"

Walt Whitman: "O Captain! My Captain!"

Maya Angelou: "And Still I Rise"

Rabindranath Tagore: "Where the mind is without fear"

Unit II

Two short questions to be answered from Four texts, Two questions to be set serially from each text: 2x10=20

Ernest Hemingway: “Old man at the Bridge”

M.K. Gandhi: “How A Client was Saved”

Dorothy Parker: “A Telephone Call”

O’Henry: “The Gift of the Magi”

Unit III

Writing skills: **Two questions must be answered from Four: 2x10=20**

Business Letters (Formal/Official Letters

CV

Paragraph Writing

Report Writing

Question pattern:

- **For 60 Marks**

Sl. No.	Questions to be answered	Out of	Marks of each question	Total Marks
1	2	8	10	2 × 10 = 20
2	2	8	10	2 × 10 = 20
3	2	4	20	2 × 10 = 20

For further Reading:

1. Robert W. Bly. *Webster's New World Letter Writing Handbook*. Wiley Publishing House, 2004.
2. Sanjay Kumar & Pushp Lata. *Communication Skills: A Workbook*. New Delhi: OUP, 2018.
3. *Interact: A Course in Communicative English*. Cambridge: University Press, 2024.
4. Edward L Smith and Stephen A. Bernhardt. *Writing At Work: Professional Writing Skills for People on the Job*. New York: McGraw Hill Professional, 1997.
5. Shirley Wilson Logan and Wayne H. Slater, eds. *Academic and Professional Writing in an Age of Accountability*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010.
6. Marcella Frank. *Writing as Thinking: A Guided Processed Approach*. London: Pearson College Division, 1989.
7. Liz Hamp-Lyons & B. Heasely. *Study Writing: A Course in written English for Academic & Professional Purposes*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
8. Daniel G. Riordan. *Technical Report Writing Today*. 10 th Edition. Boston: Wadsworth, 2014.

Study Resources for AEC-Compulsory English

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The Daffodils
William Wordsworth (1802)

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
  That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
  A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, *5*
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
  And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
  Along the margin of a bay: *10*
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
  Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay *15*
  In such a jocund company!
I gazed, and gazed, but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
  In vacant or in pensive mood, *20*
They flash upon that inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

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Notice No: BC/N/872

"Daffodils" by William Wordsworth

About the poem: The Romantic poet William Wordsworth wrote "Daffodils" in 1804, inspired by an event on 15 April 1802 when Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy came across a "long belt" of daffodils while walking in the Lake District in north England.

The title of the poem: The title of a poem is the name by which it is known. "Daffodils" was originally known by its first line, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud". That title was misleading, as it suggests that the poem was about Wordsworth's loneliness. But the poem is all about the beauty of the daffodils and how they brought happiness to the poet. So the poem is now known as "Daffodils".

Always remember to write the title of a poem within double quotation marks, like this—"Daffodils"

The theme of the poem: Wordsworth is often called a poet of nature. The Romantic Movement in English poetry that Wordsworth started with Samuel Taylor Coleridge is mainly characterized by the love and celebration of nature and beauty. This poem is a representative of Romanticism in English literature. The poem is all about the beauty of nature.

Line-by-line analysis of the poem:

"I wandered lonely as a cloud —

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

The poet was travelling aimlessly over the hills and valleys of the mountainous Lake District in England when he suddenly came across a large number of golden daffodils beside the lake and under the trees. The flowers were "fluttering and dancing" in the breeze.

The poet compares himself to a cloud, as he was wandering without aim, just like the clouds. He also uses expressions like "crowd" and "host" to mean that he saw a large area covered with many daffodils. In the last line, the poet personifies the flowers by saying that they were fluttering (like birds or butterflies) and dancing (like human beings).

The overall picture is of a landscape which includes the valleys and hills, the lake (which is called "bay" later in the poem), the trees, the flowers beneath them and the breezy atmosphere.

"Continuous as the stars that shine

And twinkle on the Milky Way,

They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay:

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."

Wordsworth compares the flowers to the stars. The daffodils stretch in a continuous line just like the stars in a galaxy like the Milky Way. Moreover, the daffodils were shining (as they were golden in colour) and twinkling (as they were fluttering in the breeze) just like the stars. This comparison with the stars may also mean that the flowers are heavenly as the stars.

The flowers were visible as far as the poet could see along the shore-line of a bay (lake). That is why he uses the phrase "never-ending line". The words "continuous" and "never-ending" may also suggest that the flowers left an everlasting impact on him.

Wordsworth exaggerates the number of flowers by saying “Ten thousand saw I at a glance”. That indicates that the poet has never seen so many daffodils at once. So he is just overjoyed. This type of exaggeration is called hyperbole (exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally).

The poet also says that the daffodils were tossing their heads as if they were dancing in happiness. Actually the poet was amazed at the beauty of the flowers. So, he found everything around him joyful. All these references of dancing and tossing heads are parts of his personification of the flowers.

“The waves beside them danced, but they

Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

A Poet could not but be gay,

In such a jocund company:

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought

What wealth the show to me had brought:”

The waves in the bay or lake were dancing and looking gleeful at the atmosphere. But the flowers outshone the lively waves in their happiness. Having such cheerful companion like the daffodils, a poet like Wordsworth cannot help being happy. So he was gazing constantly at the flowers and enjoying their beauty.

So Wordsworth gazed at the flowers for a long time, forgetting his surroundings. At that time, he did not think much about the “wealth” that the flowers had brought to him. The poet realized that later, may be, after a few days. This “wealth” is the happiness and the pleasant memory that he enjoyed for a long time since the day.

"For oft, when on my couch

I lie In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude;

And then my heart with pleasure fills,

And dances with the daffodils."

In this stanza, the poet continues his reasoning for saying that the flowers had brought him "wealth". He clarifies why the sight of the flowers was so important in his life. Whenever he lies on his bed in a vacant or thoughtful mood, the daffodils flash upon his "inward eye", i.e., his imagination. The daffodils have become an everlasting memory for the poet, whenever he is lonely. So, he calls the memory "a bliss of solitude", a blessing of staying alone.

And whenever he sees the flowers in his imagination, his heart fills with pleasure and his mind dances with the dancing daffodils. This shows the poet's intense feelings. The poet has been able to depict the landscape and express his mind so vividly in so simple language and form, that really draws one's attention. And that is why this poem is one of the most popular subjective poems in the history of English literature.

“O Captain! my Captain!”

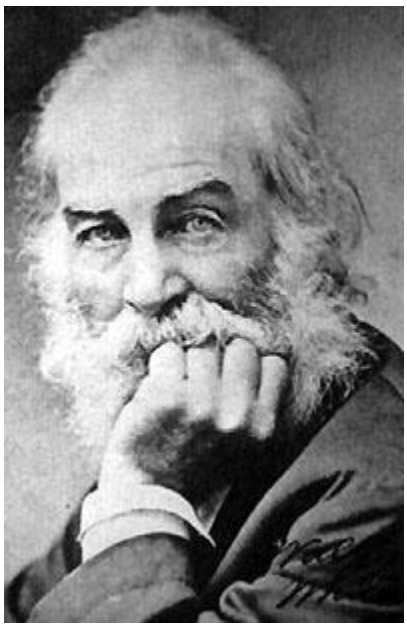
(this poem was read in remembrance of Abraham Lincoln’s death)

-Walt Whitman, 1865

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.



"O Captain! My Captain!" by Walt Whitman

About the poem: "O Captain! My Captain!" is an elegy on the death of the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, who led the country during the American Civil War from 1860 to 1865. The poem was published in November 1865, about seven months after Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

An elegy is a an elaborately formal lyric poem lamenting the death of a friend or public figure.

The American Civil War was fought between the northern states (also called the "Union"), led by Lincoln, and the southern states (also called the "Confederacy"), formed by states that had separated from the Union. A major cause of the war was Lincoln's attempt to abolish slavery and treat black Americans as equals of white Americans. The northern states won the war.

To assassinate means to murder someone famous or important.

Line-by-line analysis of the poem:

Lines 1-4

"O Captain! my Captain, our fearful trip is done,

The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;"

The speaker is a crewman, or a sailor, on a ship. He tells his Captain that their difficult trip is over and it has been a success. They are nearing the port, where a crowd waits to celebrate their return.

The opening lines introduce the following metaphorical comparisons in the poem:

The Captain is Abraham Lincoln.

The ship is America.

The “fearful trip” is the Civil War, which the northern states won .

The speaker refers to the Captain as “my” Captain, indicating a more personal relationship than that between a superior and subordinate.

Lines 5-8

“But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.”

The speaker reveals their success came at a high cost. The Captain is dead. The speaker is dejected.

The repetition of the word “heart” in the fifth line works to establish the speaker’s grief over the Captain’s death.

Figuratively, it could represent the United States of America’s initial reaction to Lincoln’s death.

Lines 9-12

“O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;

Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;”

The speaker implores his Captain to get up because everything—the bells, the music, the flowers, the wreaths and the flag—is for him. The gathered crowd is there to celebrate the Captain, and they cannot wait to see him. The speaker shows signs of denial by asking someone he knows is dead to "rise up". He cannot fully accept the reality that the Captain is dead.

Metaphorically, the US celebrated President Lincoln after the Union's victory in the Civil War. The feeling was short-lived, as the celebratory feeling will be in these lines.

Lines 13-16

"Here Captain! dear father!

The arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck,

You've fallen cold and dead."

The crewman now refers to his Captain as "dear father," showing he viewed him as much more than a commanding officer. His denial continues as he says the Captain's death must be a dream.

As a metaphor, Lincoln is being called a "father" because he was more than a leader and Americans looked to him as a father-figure.

Lines 17-20

"My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,

The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;"

The speaker is not talking to his Captain now. He is beginning to accept that the Captain is dead. The ship reaches port safely. He reaffirms that they have completed their objective.

Likewise, individual Americans would eventually accept that Lincoln was dead. The fact remains that the Civil War was successfully fought.

Line 21-24

"Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead."

The crowd will celebrate the ship's triumphant return. The speaker, however, will mournfully walk the deck where his Captain died.

Similarly, the nation in general will rejoice over their victorious military campaign. Some, however, like Whitman himself, will be in mourning over Lincoln's death. This tragedy will overshadow the greater victory.

The last use of "my" Captain shows the speaker forgoing the celebration to continue mourning. He is not ready to live on his own, even though soon, he will have to.

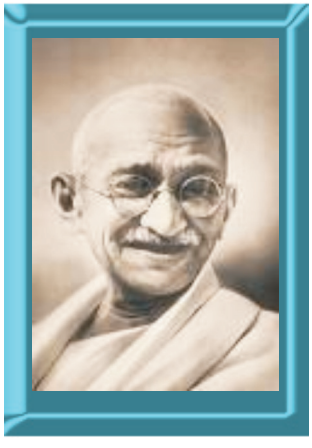
P9RTHG

7

HOW A CLIENT WAS SAVED

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) was an Indian nationalist leader. He was born in Porbandar in the present state of Gujarat on October 2, 1869, and educated in law at University College, London. In 1891, after having been admitted to the British bar, Gandhi returned to India and attempted to establish a law practice in Bombay (now Mumbai), with little success. Two years later an Indian firm with interests in South Africa retained him as legal adviser in its office in Durban. Arriving in Durban, Gandhi found himself treated as a member of an inferior race. He was appalled at the widespread denial of civil liberties and political rights to Indian immigrants to South Africa. He led the struggle against the British which won India freedom in 1947.



The passage here is from Gandhi's autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth.*

The passage emphasizes the importance of honesty in our lives. Honesty is not just the best policy but the best virtue and the most valued principle.

The reader, by now, will be quite familiar with Parsi Rustomji's name. He was one who became at once my client and co-worker, or perhaps it would be truer to say that he first became co-worker and then client. I won his confidence to such an extent that he sought and followed my advice also in private domestic matters.

Even when he was ill he would seek my aid, and though there was much difference between our ways of living, he did not hesitate to accept my quack treatment.

This friend once got into a very bad scrape. Though he kept me informed of most of his affairs, he had studiously kept back one thing that he was a large importer of goods from Bombay and Calcutta, and not infrequently he resorted to smuggling. But as he was on the best terms with the customs officials, no one was inclined to suspect him. In charging duty they used to take his invoices on trust. Some might even have connived at the smuggling.

But to use the telling simile of the Gujarati poet, Akho, theft like quicksilver won't be

suppressed, and Parsi Rustomji's proved no exception. The good friend ran posthaste to me, the tears rolling down his cheeks as he said. 'Bhai. I have deceived you. My guilt has been discovered today. I have smuggled and I am doomed. I must go to jail and be ruined. You alone may be able to save me from this predicament. I have kept back nothing else from you, but I thought I ought not to bother you with such tricks of the trade, and so I never told you about this smuggling. But now, how much I repent it!'

I calmed him and said, 'To save or not to save you is in His hands. As to me you know my way. I can but try to save you by means of confession.'

The good Parsi felt deeply mortified. 'But is not my confession before you enough?' he said. 'You have wronged not me but the government. How will the confession made before me avail you!' I replied gently.

'Of course I will do just as you advise, but will you not consult with my old counsel Mr____? He is a friend too,' said Parsi Rustomji.

Inquiry revealed that the smuggling had been going on for a long time, but the actual offence detected involved a trifling sum. We went to his counsel. He perused the papers, and said, 'The case will be tried by a jury, and a Natal jury will be the last to acquit an Indian. But I will not give up hope.'

I did not know this counsel intimately. Parsi Rustomji intercepted: 'I thank you, but I should like to be guided by Mr Gandhi's advice in this case. He knows me intimately. Of course you will advise him whenever necessary.'

Having thus shelved the counsel's question, we went to Parsi Rustomji's shop.

And now explaining my view I said to him, 'I don't think this case should be taken to court at all. It rests with the Customs Officer to prosecute you or to let you go, and he in turn will have to be guided by the Attorney General. I am prepared to meet both. I propose that you should offer to pay the penalty they fix, and the odds are that they will be agreeable. But if they are not, you must be prepared to go to jail. I am of opinion that the shame lies not so much in going to jail as in committing the offence. The deed of shame has already been done. Imprisonment you should regard as a penance. The real penance lies in resolving never to smuggle again.'

I cannot say that Parsi Rustomji took all this quite well. He was a brave man, but his courage failed him for the moment. His name and fame were at stake, and where would he be if the edifice he had reared with such care and labour should go to pieces?

'Well, I have told you,' he said, 'that I am entirely in your hands. You may do just as you like.' I brought to bear on this case all my powers of persuasion. I met the Customs Officer and fearlessly apprised him of the whole affair. I also promised to place all the books at his disposal and told him how penitent Parsi Rustomji was feeling.

The Customs Officer said, 'I like the Old Parsi. I am sorry he has made a fool of himself. You know where my duty lies. I must be guided by the Attorney General and so I would advise you to use all your persuasion with him.'

'I shall be thankful,' said I, 'if you do not insist on dragging him into court.'

Having got him to promise this, I entered into correspondence with the Attorney-General and also met him. I am glad to say that he appreciated my complete frankness and was convinced that I had kept back nothing.

I now forget whether it was in connection with this or with some other case that my persistence and frankness extorted from him the remark: 'I see you will never take a no for an answer.'

The case against Parsi Rustomji was settled by a compromise. He was to pay a penalty equal to twice the amount he had confessed to having smuggled. Rustomji reduced to writing the facts of the whole case, got the paper framed and hung it up in his office to serve as a perpetual reminder to his heirs and fellow merchants.

These friends of Rustomji warned me not to be taken in by this transitory contrition. When I told Rustomji about this warning he said: 'What would be my fate if I deceived you?'

Glossary

client ˈklaɪ.ᵊnt	person who gets help or advice from a lawyer.
quack kwæk	person who pretends to have knowledge (esp. of medicine) which he does not possess.
scrape skreɪp	difficult situation; trouble.
studiously ˈstjuː.dɪ.ə.slɪ	deliberately; with great care.
resort rɪˈzɔːt	make use of.
smuggle ˈsmʌgˌl	get goods secretly into (or out of) a country without paying customs duties.
customs ˈkʌs.təmz	taxes due to the government on goods imported into a country.
duty ˈdjuːti	payment demanded by the government on certain goods exported or imported.
invoice ˈɪn.vɔɪs	list of goods sold with the prices charged.
telling (adj) ˈtelɪŋ	very effective; impressive.
quicksilver ˈkwɪkˌsɪlvəʳ	mercury.
posthaste ˌpəʊstˈheɪst	in great haste.

doomed du:md	certain to be ruined.
predicament prɪˈdɪkəmənt	difficult or unpleasant situation.
confession kənˈfeʃən	acknowledgement or admission that one has done something wrong.
mortify ˈmɔ:tɪfaɪ	wound the feelings of; hurt; humiliate.
wrong (v) rɒŋ	do injustice to.
avail (v) əˈveɪl	of use or profit (to someone).
counsel ˈkauntsᵊl	advocate or barrister giving advice in a law case.
offence əˈfens	breaking of a rule.
involve ɪnˈvɒlv	be related to or concerned with.
trifling ˈtraɪ.fl̩.ɪŋ/□/	unimportant.
peruse pəˈru:z	read carefully.
jury ˈdʒʊə.rɪ	body of persons appointed in a court of law to hear the evidence / case.
acquit əˈkwɪt	give a legal decision that somebody is not guilty of an offence.
intimate (adj.): ˈɪn.tɪ.mət	close and familiar.
intercept ˌɪntəˈsept	to step in the middle; to prevent from going on further.
shelve ʃelv	postpone.
prosecute ˈprɒs.ɪkju:t	start legal proceedings against.
odds ɒdz	the chances in favour of or against something happening.
penance ˈpen.ənts	punishment of sin willingly accepted; a proof of repentance
edifice ˈed.ɪ.fɪs	something built up (reputation and business).
rear rɪəʳ	set up.
persuasion pəˈsweɪʒən	power or act of convincing somebody (about something).
apprise əˈpraɪz	inform.
penitent ˈpen.ɪ.tənt	repentant; sorry for having committed a sin.
drag dræg	pull along.
extort ɪkˈstɔ:t	obtain by force.

compromise ˈkɒm.prə.maɪz settlement of a dispute.

perpetual pəˈpetʃuəl never ending; permanent.

heir eəʳ person with a legal right to receive property.

contrition kənˈtrɪʃ.ᵊn repentance.

Thinking about the Text

1. Why had Rustomji's smuggling offences not been discovered earlier?
2. What did Rustomji consider to be the greatest cause for shame to him?
3. What did Gandhiji consider to be a greater cause for shame?
4. Which words that Rustomji used to describe his offence show us that he did not consider it to be a moral offence? (See paragraph 3)
5. Who, according to Gandhiji, was the one who would finally decide whether Rustomji was to be saved or not?
6. Gandhiji and the other counsel differed in the way in which they thought the case ought to be handled. How did (a) Gandhiji and (b) the other counsel hope to settle the case?
7. Gandhiji spoke of two penances.

   a. What were they?

   b. Which of them did Rustomji not have to do?
8. Why did Gandhiji have to go to the Attorney General as well as to the Customs Officer?
9. Which two qualities of Gandhiji's helped him to persuade the Attorney General not to drag Rustomji into court?
10. What did Rustomji (a) lose (b) partly save by the settlement of the case?

Language work

a) Rewrite the sentences, replacing the word (or words) in italics with a word chosen from the list below, taking care to use the correct form. Insert articles wherever necessary. The first one is done for you.

exception	smuggle	compromise	prosecute
reveal	client	intimate	

1. Rustomji was accused of importing goods *secretly and illegally*.

   Rustomji was accused of smuggling.
2. Gandhi knew Rustomji not only as a *person who gets help from a lawyer* but also as a co-worker.

3. Official inquiries *showed* that the actual offence detected involved a very small sum.
4. Gandhi did not know the other counsel *closely*.
5. Gandhi succeeded in settling Rustomji's case by a *mutual agreement involving some concession on either side.*
6. The law does not recognize any case as *something different or demanding special treatment.*
7. Gandhi succeeded in making the Customs Officer promise not to *start legal proceedings against Rustomji.*

b) (i) Rewrite the sentences, using verb-forms of the words in italics. The first one is done for you.

1. Rustomji made a *resolution* never to smuggle again.

   Rustomji resolved never to smuggle again.
2. Gandhi began *correspondence* with the Attorney General.
3. Rustomji had so much confidence in Gandhi that he had no *hesitation* in accepting his quack treatment.
4. As Rustomji was on very good terms with the customs officials, no one had any *suspicions* about him.
5. Is not my *confession* before you enough? (Begin: 'Is it not enough. . .')
6. Rustomji told his counsel that he would like to take Gandhi's *guidance*.

(ii) **Use the following words, both as noun and verb:**

Wrong

Rest

Shame

Promise

Compromise

Fate

Light

Hand

Pay

End

(iii) Some words are used with one spelling as nouns and another spelling as verbs such as 'advice' and 'advise' 'practice' and 'practise'. Find five more examples of such words. You need not confine yourself to the lesson. What are such words called?

(iv) **Match the following:**

A	B
tricks of the trade	feel a wish to.
on trust	without proof; without checking.
put off	take no notice of (something that is wrong), suggesting consent or approval is given.
be inclined to	ways of attracting customers, gaining advantage over merchants in the business, etc
insist on	take advice (from).
to connive at	postpone.
to rest with	be left in the hands of or charge of.
at stake	win or lose, depending upon the result of something.
at one's disposal	direct, apply, or use (something) upon.
to bring to bear upon	to be used as one wishes.
consult with	ask something with determination.
enter into correspondence with	begin exchanging letters with.
transitory contrition	write down.
reduce to writing	sorrow (for wrongdoing) that does not last long.

c) Fill in the blanks in the passage with appropriate phrases chosen from the list below, taking care to use the correct form:

bring to bear	confide in	on good terms with	bring to bear	on trust
inclined to	at stake	at once	deal with	resort to
connive at				

Rustomji …….. smuggling quite often. But for a long time this fact did not come to light because nobody was..... suspect the good Parsi. He was …….. the customs officers and they took his invoices. …….. Some of them might even have……..the smuggling.

At last when the crime was discovered, Rustomji's reputation was…….. He ……..went to Gandhi and …….. him, begging him to save his name. Gandhi decided to …….. the whole matter in a straight forward manner. He asked Rustomji to confess to the crime and resolve never to repeat it. He then met the Attorney General and …….. the full details of the case. He …….. on it all his force of persuasion to have the case settled by means of a compromise.

Writing Work

What do you learn from this lesson? Sum up your thoughts in 250 words.

Discussion

Honesty may not be the best policy but it is definitely the best principle. Discuss with your group mates.

Suggested Reading

My Experiments with Truth by M. K.Gandhi.

Letters From a Father to a Daughter by J. L. Nehru.

Tongue Twister

She sells sea shells by the sea shore.
The shells she sells are surely seashells.
So if she sells shells on the seashore,
I'm sure she sells seashore shells.

"How a Client was Saved" by M.K. Gandhi

The piece is an extract from Gandhi's autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth.

Note: Unlike a poem, or an essay, or a short story, or an extract, Gandhi's autobiography is a book-length work and therefore its title should be underlined in hand-written answers, e.g., The Story of My Experiments with Truth. The extract from the autobiography that is on your syllabus will be within double quotation marks, e.g., "How a Client Was Saved".

About the extract, "How a Client Was Saved": This is the story of how Gandhiji once saved a businessman in South Africa from going to jail by using the power of truth. The businessman, Parsi Rustomji, had been caught for smuggling and Gandhiji advised him to confess to the authorities instead of trying to fight against the allegations. Gandhiji told Rustomji to offer to pay a penalty but to also be prepared to go to jail if his offer got rejected. According to Gandhiji, the real shame did not lay in going to jail, but in committing the crime. And since Rustomji had already committed the crime, there was no point in him being ashamed of going to jail. Thanks to Gandhiji the case was settled out of court and Rustomji only had to pay a fine and did not have to go to jail. In return, Rustomji promised never to commit a crime again.

Detailed summary

What had happened? Parsi Rustomji, a businessman, was Gandhiji's friend and co-worker during the time when Gandhiji was working as a lawyer in

South Africa. Rustomji was a large importer of goods to South Africa from Bombay and Calcutta. He sought and followed Gandhiji's advice in all his official and domestic matters. Even when he was ill, he did not hesitate to accept Gandhiji's quack treatment. But he kept one thing hidden from Gandhiji – that he sometimes resorted to smuggling. As Rustomji was on the best terms with the customs officials, no one suspected him.

However, to use the telling phrase of the Gujarati poet named Akho, "theft, like quick-silver, won't be suppressed" and Rustomji was caught. One day, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he confessed to Gandhiji that he had deceived him, and that his guilt had been discovered. He pleaded to Gandhiji to save him from punishment.

What was Gandhiji's advice? Gandhiji advised Rustomji to go and confess to the authorities. Rustomji was shocked and asked why it was not enough that he had personally confessed before Gandhiji himself. But Gandhiji said that, since Rustomji's crime was against the government, there was no point in offering a personal apology to Gandhiji: an official confession was necessary, whatever be the punishment that follows.

However, Gandhiji also agreed to take up the case. It became clear that although Rustomji had been smuggling in goods for a long time, the offence for which he was caught was over a small sum of money. Gandhiji and Rustomji went to meet Rustomji's counsel (that is, the lawyer who usually represented Rustomji). The counsel carefully looked through the documents related to the case and said that the jury in Natal (a province in South Africa), which was going to try the case, would not in all probability acquit an Indian

like Rustomji if he confessed to the crime. However, Parsi Rustomji decided to be guided by Gandhiji's advice in the case. Gandhiji told Rustomji to accept his guilt and offer to pay the penalty. However, if the authorities did not accept it, then Rustomji must be prepared to go to jail. Rustomji wanted to avoid the shame of going to jail. However, according to Gandhiji, there was more shame in committing the offence than in going to jail. Gandhiji told Rustomji that the real penance lay in resolving never to smuggle again.

After listening to Gandhiji's wise words, Rustomji's courage failed him for a moment, because his name and fame were at stake. However, Rustomji finally resolved to go by Gandhiji's words, and said, "I am entirely in your hands. You may do just as you like."

How did Gandhiji save his client? Gandhiji approached the Customs Officer and pleaded with him not to take the matter to court. After getting the officer's promise, Gandhiji met the Attorney-General, who was the one to take up the case on behalf of the government. The Attorney-General appreciated Gandhiji's complete frankness and was convinced. Hence the case against Rustomji was settled out of court. Rustomji had to pay a penalty equal to twice the value of the goods he had smuggled.

Rustomji wrote the facts of the case on a paper, got it framed and hung it up in his office to serve as a perpetual reminder to his heirs and fellow merchants not to commit crimes. Rustomji's friends told Gandhiji that they did not think Rustomji would keep his promise for long. But Rustomji told Gandhiji, "What would have been my fate if I lie to you." Gandhiji thus realized that Rustomji was truly repentant and would not commit a crime again.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

BY

O. HENRY

Elegant Ebooks

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Short Story: “The Gift of the Magi”
Author: O. Henry (William Sidney Porter), 1862–1910
First published: 1905

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ONE dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took

from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there

was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

“Jim, darling,” she cried, “don’t look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn’t have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It’ll grow out again—you won’t mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say ‘Merry Christmas!’ Jim, and let’s be happy. You don’t know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I’ve got for you.”

“You’ve cut off your hair?” asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

“Cut it off and sold it,” said Della. “Don’t you like me just as well, anyhow? I’m me without my hair, ain’t I?”

Jim looked about the room curiously.

“You say your hair is gone?” he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

“You needn’t look for it,” said Della. “It’s sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It’s Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered,” she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, “but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?”

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was

not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

“Don’t make any mistake, Dell,” he said, “about me. I don’t think there’s anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you’ll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first.”

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: “My hair grows so fast, Jim!”

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, “Oh, oh!”

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

"The Gift of the Magi" by O'Henry

Summary: This short story is about how a poor young married couple, Della and Jim (whose full name is Mr. James Dillingham Young), sacrifice their most prized possessions (something that belongs to them) to buy Christmas gifts for each other one day before Christmas.

Della had long beautiful hair, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee. Jim had a gold watch, which had been handed down to him from his grandfather and father. Della cut off her hair and sold it for twenty dollars and with that money she bought a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design. It was perfect for Jim's gold watch. However, unknown to her, Jim had sold off his watch to buy a set of combs, side and back, for Della's hair. The comb set was what Della had always longed for. Thus, Della and Jim sacrificed their greatest possessions for each other but ended up buying things they could not use right away. However, their sacrifices showed how deeply they loved each other.

Questions and answers

1. Who were the Magi?

Ans: In the Bible, the Magi are the three wise men -- Gasper, Melchoir, and Balthazar --who travelled from the East to Jerusalem to see the infant Jesus born in a stable. They were guided by a star and they carried precious gifts for Jesus.

2. Why was Della worried?

Ans: Initially Della was worried about arranging the required money to buy a nice gift for Jim at Christmas since she had only one dollar and eighty-seven cents. Hence, she sold her beautiful hair and brought a gift for Jim. Now her new look troubled her as she looked more like a naughty schoolboy. Della was really worried thinking that Jim might not like her appearance.

3. What did Della do after reaching home?

Ans: On reaching home Della got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the damaged hair. After forty minutes of hard work, she looked wonderfully like a truant (naughty) schoolboy with tiny, close-lying curls on her head. At 7 o'clock, she made coffee and got the frying pan ready to cook the chops.

4. What was Jim's reaction when he returned home?

Ans: For a moment, Jim was shocked to find Della without her long beautiful hair. His eyes were fixed upon Della but she could not understand the expression of his eyes; rather it terrified her. It was not anger, surprise, disapproval, horror, nor any of the sentiments that Della had been prepared for Jim simply stared at her fixedly with a peculiar expression on his face.

5. Bring out the connection made by the narrator (storyteller, or the one who tells the story) between Della and the Queen of Sheba.

Ans: Queen of Sheba is a character from the Bible. She was a rich and powerful queen who came to king Solomon with a wealth of spices, gold, and jewels to test for herself whether king Solomon was truly wise. In the story "The Gift of the Magi" the author O'Henry draws a connection between Della and the Queen of Sheba to reflect on Della's beautiful hair. Della had a prized possession: her long beautiful hair, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee. In a light-hearted comparison, the storyteller says that if the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, she would have been jealous of Della's locks of hair if Della out them out of the window to dry. Her wealth would have seemed valueless in comparison to Della's beautiful hair.

6. Bring out the connection made by the narrator between Jim and King Solomon.

Ans: King Solomon is a character from the Bible. He was a rich and powerful king of Israel and the son of David. His name is synonymous with wisdom. In the story "The Gift of the Magi" the author O'Henry draws the relation between Jim and King Solomon to glorify the ancestral gold watch of Jim. Jim, a key character of the story, possessed a precious gold watch, which was a family heirloom (something inherited from the earlier generation), and he took a lot of pride in it. According to the storyteller, even king Solomon would have been

envious of the watch. In a light-hearted comparison, the narrator says that if king Solomon had been the janitor in the building and had all his treasures piled up in the basement, he would have still enviously plucked at his beard to find Jim pulling out his gold watch every time he passed by.

7. Show how the twist in the tale makes the story of Jim and Della a moral lesson.

Ans: In the story, "The Gift of the Magi", Jim and Della had to sell off their precious possessions to buy gifts for each other on Christmas. In order to buy a fine, rare, and sterling gift for Jim, Della sold her long and beautiful hair—beautiful enough to make the Queen of Sheba jealous. With the money she got for her hair, she bought a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, for Jim's gold watch. On the other hand, Jim sold his precious gold watch, a family heirloom that even King Solomon might have been envious of, to buy an expensive tortoiseshell comb for Della's beautiful hair.

The ironic "twist in the tale" is that both Della and Jim traded off the very treasures each possessed and for which the gifts were meant. Their deep love for each other ended in a situation that Jim beautifully expressed when he said: "Let's put our Christmas presents away and keep them for a while. They are too nice to use just at present."

This twist in the tale makes the story of Jim and Della a moral lesson that selflessness and a desire to add to the happiness of others are the essence of gift-giving on Christmas.

8. Examine the significance and appropriateness of the title of the story.

Ans: The author O'Henry has appropriately chosen the title "The Gift of the Magi" for the story of Della and Jim. The Magi were the three wise men - Gasper, Melchoir, and Balthazar – in the Bible who travelled from the East to Jerusalem to see the infant Jesus born in a stable. They were guided by a star and they carried precious gifts for Jesus. The Magi invented the tradition of giving gifts on Christmas. Being wise, their gifts were also undoubtedly wise.

O'Henry's story centres around a young couple Della and Jim who are poor but hardworking and their existence is full of struggle but they manage to experience joy through the power of their love for each other. They planned to make Christmas eve a special one with a wonderful gift for each other. Jim and Della had to sell off their precious possessions to buy the gifts. In order to have a fine, rare, and sterling gift for Jim, her long and beautiful hair—beautiful enough to make the Queen of Sheba jealous. With the money she got for her hair, she bought a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, for Jim's gold watch. On the other hand, Jim sold his precious gold watch, a family heirloom that even King Solomon might have been envious of, to buy an expensive tortoiseshell comb for Della's beautiful hair.

But the gifts of Della and Jim are unique and wise in the sense that they reveal the true essence of gift-giving on Christmas: selflessness, a desire to add to the happiness of the one who receives the gift, and the spirit of sacrifice. Through the storyteller calls the couple “the foolish children”, he points out clearly that they value the human relationship and their mutual love and generosity make them the “Magi”. Thus the title is appropriate.

9. Describe what Della does from the moment she decides to earn money for Jim’s gift till the moment she earns it.

Ans: Della is very upset when it is the day before Christmas because she has only $1.87 (one dollar and 87 cents) to get her beloved Jim a Christmas gift. She decides the only way to get more money is to sell the most important thing to her, her very long hair. She goes to Mrs. Saffronie’s hair shop and is offered $20 (20 dollars) for her hair. She sells her hair to Mrs. Saffronie and goes to get Jim a platinum chain for his most important possession, his gold watch. Jim currently kept the watch on a leather strap, and Della knew he would be ecstatic to open his gift. However, she also starts to get very nervous that Jim will no longer think she is pretty with her new, short hair.

10. Why was Della sobbing and sniffling?

Ans: Della was sobbing and sniffling because she sold her beautiful hair and brought a gift for Jim. Now her new look troubled her as she looked more like a truant schoolboy. She was afraid Jim might be critical of her appearance.

'समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी'

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

AEC 3rd Semester Examination, 2025

AEC - ENGLAEC002-COMPULSORY ENGLISH

ENHANCING READING AND WRITING SKILLS

Time Allotted: 2 Hours 30 Minutes | Full Marks: 60

The figures in the margin indicate full marks.

1. Answer any ***two*** questions from the following: 10×2 = 20

(a) Critically analyse Wordsworth's depiction of nature in "Daffodils".
(b) Critically appreciate the poem, "Daffodils".
(c) Evaluate "O Captain! My Captain!" as a historical poem.
(d) Discuss the literal and figurative journey in Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!".
(e) Critically appreciate "Still I Rise".
(f) Discuss the speaker's attitude towards her oppressors in the poem, "Still I Rise".
(g) Discuss Tagore's vision of his country and countrymen in his "Where the Mind is Without Fear".
(h) Bring out the significance of the title of the poem, "Where the Mind is Without Fear".

2. Analyse any ***two*** questions from the following: 10×2 = 20

(a) Discuss the meaning and significance of the old man's statement, "I am without politics".
(b) Analyse the central idea of the story, "Old Man at the Bridge".
(c) Discuss the significance of the title, "How a Client was Saved".
(d) Who is the 'Client' in the story, "How a Client was Saved"? Write in detail how the 'Client' is saved.
(e) How does 'the telephone' represent both the promise of connection and the reality of isolation, emotional distance, and uncertainty?
(f) Discuss the narrative technique of the story, "A Telephone Call".
(g) Discuss the use of irony in O' Henry's short story, "The Gift of the Magi".
(h) Analyse the character of Jim in "The Gift of the Magi".

3. Answer any ***two*** questions from the following: 10×2 = 20

(a) Write a report on the celebration of Independence Day in your college.
(b) Write a paragraph on "Youth and Social Media".
(c) Write a CV to apply for the post of a Manager in a private company.
(d) Write a formal letter to your Principal asking for leave.

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