ICSE Paper 2009

ENGLISH-I

Question 1.

(Do not spend more than 35 minutes on this question.) **[25]**

Write a composition (350-400 words) on any one of the following :

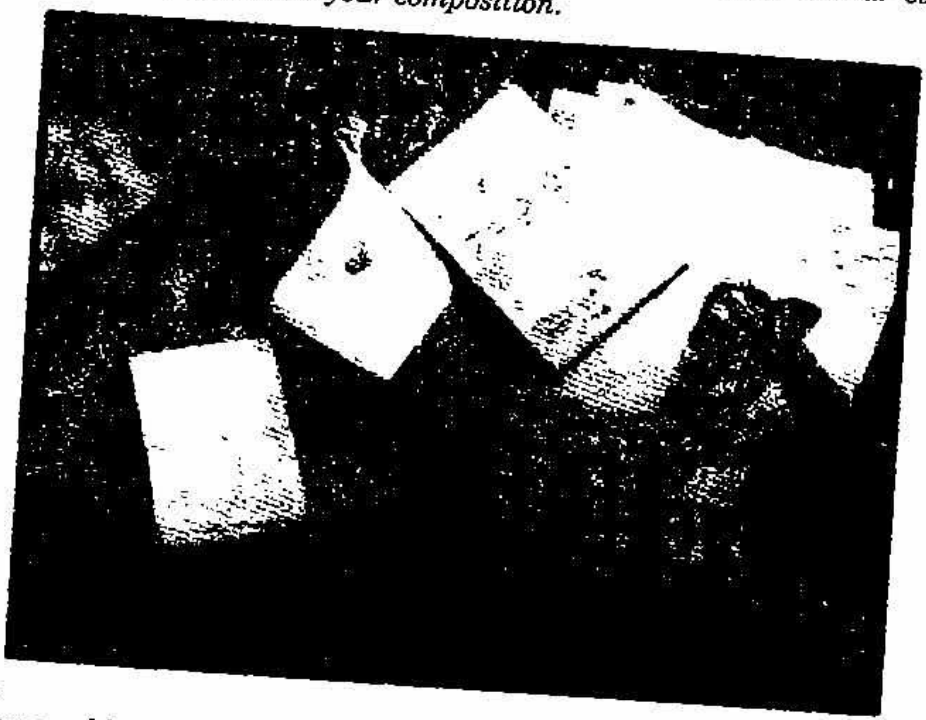
(a) *Recall a time in your life when you were certain about something but were later proved terribly wrong.*

(b) *Write a short story entitled 'Escaped'.*

(c) *"The use of mobile phones has lowered active social life and has become an addiction." Express your views either for or against this statement.*

(d) *The waiting room at a railway station presents a wonderful opportunity to observe human behaviour. Describe an experience when you were early for a train and had to spend some time in the waiting room with different kinds of people.*

(e) *Study the picture given below. Write a story or a description or an account of what it suggests to you. Your composition may be about the subject of the picture or may take suggestions from it; however, there must be a clear connection between the picture and your composition.*



Answer.

(a) I was working as a computer engineer in a reputed company. My MD had great faith on my efficiency. Our company was to get a contract that was to be worked out confidentially. As all my colleagues including me expected, I was chosen to work on it. Many other companies were also struggling to get the contract. I received many tempting offers and bribes at my door, to hand over the

important informations and papers. But I was determined to remain honest to the company, I already worked in.

I had to spent hours together on my computer, preparing the reports. After working hard for many days, I felt need of a web- designer, who could help me in my work. As I was not good at web- designing, I had to hire the one.

To my horror, I experienced a scary situation. For a moment I thought I had permanently lost all the articles, reports and informations on my website forever. The web designer I had been working with did some funky things during a hosting transfer, and the result was a perfect storm of negligence—the site was down, all my passworks were changed, and the designer I had paid to do this was not responding to me. For I was sitting on the realization that the all content on here might be lost .....

During this time I went through all of the emotions : anger, fear, sadness, despair, etc. I have spent hundreds of hours working on it. I simply could not believe that it was gone ! I was mistaken by my authorities. My MD thought that I was behaving under the influence of bribe. The result was, we had to lose the contract.

Amid my deepest moments of hopelessness, I decided to purposefully snap myself out of it. I tried my hardest not to dwell within the emotions. I noticed I had a lot of anger towards the designer, and I was thinking he maliciously did this to me. I also noticed that I felt like a victim of a crime, and felt very sad that all my hard work was taken away from me so needlessly. Observing these feelings, I started to realize that the emotions, even though they are very strong, were completely self-perpetuated. This ultimately gave me sense of relief.

Once I felt relieved, I came to the understanding that no matter what had happened I was going to be able to deal with it. I acted with the mindset and decided to call both hosting companies and explain my situation in great detail. Second, I called another web guy I work with and decided that I would do whatever it takes to motivate him to help me. I was on the right path, I could feel it.

(b) Once upon a time, a prince made friends with a merchant's son and the son of a man of learning. Every day they would spend their time playing games or relaxing. The prince refused to learn the art of archery, riding or hunting. At last the king got tired of him and told him that he could not be a good king, as he showed no interest in royal pursuits. The prince, unhappily went and told his friends about what his father had said.

His two friends were also not happy with their fathers. Thereupon the prince said, "Let us go somewhere and earn some money." The other friends agreed to him and they together decided to go to the climbing mountain where they might find precious gems. They all liked the idea and set out for the climbing mountain.

As luck would have it, each of them found a priceless gem. Now they were faced with another problem—the problem of guarding the jewels. The son of the man of learning said, "We should swallow the gems and carry them back in our stomachs." The others agreed and along with their food, they swallowed the gems.

Meanwhile a man, hiding behind the bushes, heard their talk and saw them swallowing the gems. He thought of travelling with them and when they went off to sleep, he would cut their stomach open and take all the gems. With this plan in his mind, he approached them and made friends with them.

All the four happened to cross a village in the middle of the forest. Now the village chief had a strange bird that began to sing. The chief could understand everything the bird sang. This time too, he understood that the bird was singing about the travellers with precious gems.

The chief ordered the villagers to catch the travellers and bring before him. He searched them carefully but found nothing. They were freed. The bird sang the same song again. So the same process was repeated thrice. Finally the chief said, "If the bird says that repeatedly, the gems are surely with you, probably in your stomach. Tomorrow morning, I will act open your stomach for the gems."

Now the fourth traveller, the one who had originally planned to steal the gems thought, "The chief will also act my stomach in hope of finding a gem. So my death is certain. Therefore, it is best to offer my own stomach first to cut, saving the other three.

Next morning, the thief begged the chief to cut his stomach first. The chief agreed but he found no gem in the stomach. Now the chief was full of repentance. The three friends who narrowly escaped death were freed. They quickly crossed the forest till they reached a safer spot.

(c) The scientific technology has proved the biggest boon for the mankind. In the modern age phones play a great role for the development of culture and industry and thus the mobile phones are becoming indespensable for a common man. It is now the goddess of life. Advertisers say that the world is in our palm. Even a rickshaw-polar can be seen fixing time with his customers on the mobile phone. Gone are those days when it used to be the man's status symbol. With the mobile phone in the common hands the world has become much short and can be closed in a handset. It has become imperative to provide services on mobiles.

In this age anybody asks whether mobile phone is necessary for a boy or girl and if one says no, he may be considered as an uncivilized person. Most of us will hate this kind of advice, but the sweetness will be realized later.

Every object has its use and misuse. It is like liberty, which is properly, enjoyed by wisemen but fools misuse it. The end result is highly harmful. The misuse of mobile phone is generally seen among school students. According to my opinion mobile phones are not at all necessary for school students. Moreover guardians should not allow their children to take mobiles to their institutions, at least up to plus two levels. They are the most misusers. It should be strictly controlled. If it is not done properly and timely it will lead to great disaster.

Many of the people use mobile phones for SMS. It is a mechanical system. It has greatly affected our letter writing skill and our culture. They are taught to write letters only for composition. They have forgotten the importance of post office and even a post card. We should bear in mind that the postcard is the cheapest means of communication. SMS will not give any feelings of mental satisfaction as letters do. When we write 'Dear friend' it strengthens co-operation and intimate friendship. But SMS or a computer cannot compete with letters. Moreover the language used in SMS is incomplete and we lose the beauty of good language. We have lost the art of writing.

Don't be under the impression that I am against using mobile phones. We should enjoy modern facilities and we should learn the use of them. At the same time we should not look down upon old things because old is gold. New items

originate from old ones. A few years ago when a student passed SSC examination with first class, he got a watch or a pen as gift. Today, parents offer them the latest mobile phone. Gradually we are becoming slaves to mobile phones.

When we are driving and using the mobile phones, there is every likelihood of ghastly accident. Using the device in the examination hall, banks, post office, and other secret agencies can bring disastrous havoc to the nation. So we must realize that all should make its judicious use.

(d) Describe an experience when you were early for a train and had to spend some time in the waiting room with different kinds of people.

March 24th 2008, evening.

It has been an evening of interesting and surprising experience.

I was sitting in a waiting room of Bangalore city Railway Station. I was going home for Saraswati Puja and Vijaya Dashmi. The Chennai Mail starts only at 22 : 45 and it was just 21 : 00 hours. So I had a couple of hours to kill. I had to come early as my uncle left for Delhi by Rajdhani which left at 20 : 30. I intended to spend an hour at the internet centre there but the centre guy told that he would shut at 21 : 00 but take the full fare for an hour's browsing from me even though only half an hour was left.

So I decided to try out the waiting room. I had seen the waiting room from outside whenever I came to catch my train to Chennai which invariably starts from platform 1. It looked OK so I decided to give it a try.

The waiting room was large with sufficient number of chairs all in good condition. The room was reasonably clean and well ventilated. It didnot stink as I had expected. I looked out for a chair under a fan and luckily found one. I settled down, took out my recently bought ipod shuffle and started listening to my assortment of music from Ravi Shanker to Farida Khanum.

I looked around and realized how true it is that a railway station or train travel provides you a microcosm of India that very few other places can provide you with. I saw a Rajasthani lady feeding her child in her lap and smoking a beedi. A tamil mama and mami involved in discussion (I bet it was about some action of a neighbour or a relative. Some young adolescents (must be on a college trip) were busy cracking jokes at each other. Some guys were lying and sleeping on the floor oblivious to the noise and activity around them. At a distant I saw a well dressed man arguing with a porter for not able to handle his suitcase properly. As a result the suitcase was dropped down from his head breaking into two. At the same time a policeman came on a beat and settled their matter. The poor porter was apologizing again and again. Some workers who were taking break in a corner, too looked at them with keen interest.

Just then an announcement was made that the Chennai Mail was to arrive on platform No. 8 due to some reasons. I got impatient as I was waiting on platform 1. Hurriedly and worriedly I fixed a porter to carry my luggage as it was too much. After the regular haggling we reached the consensus and he efficiently did his job to take the luggage right till inside of the train. When I paid him the amount he said to me in English, "Thank you madam .... have a nice journey." and darted away to catch his next customer.

I was left behind surprised at my amazing experience .....

(e) All of us know that examination is a troublesome fear before all and none goes untouched from it. Since birth to death a man has to undergo different types

of examinations in life. They enable us to encounter the hardest things in life and pave a way for our smooth life. But for the students it is all the more troublesome. Parents, teachers, students, friends and relatives, etc. come under its purview and they burn midnight oil to obtain ranking position. Extra coaching is arranged and the students and the parents are troubled with on-coming examinations. In a way examinations inspire, motivate and fix-up a goal before us in order to assess our progress.

But at the same time, the students of today are under much pressure and strain due to competitive environment. Consequently they hardly get adequate time for food, rest, recreation, sleep hobbies and other out door games. The fear of tough competition, entrance examination, voluminous syllabus and extra coaching go on stressing their mind, body and soul. This stress is often visible, either in shape of anger, irritation, insomnia, violent behaviour or in the shape of irresponsibility towards their study on the part of the students.

Many students complain that they experience blackouts even if they are preparing for a simple class test. A study says more than 40% of both boys and girls experience high level of stress and anxiety before taking an exam. Around 10% of boys and girls also take to smoking as they feel it would help them relax. However, the most important aspect as the survey points out is that a students' desires and aspirations must be encouraged and not sidelines in the pursuits of marks. The need is to look at the symptoms of stress rather than adding to the pressure.

Stress is a reaction to change; it can be either positive or negative and it affects both the body and the mind. The body does not distinguish between negative and positive stress: both excitement and anxiety strain the body's resources and depress the immune system, resulting in loss of spontaneity, happiness, or enthusiasm or excessive sleep and low blood pressure.

To develop a stress strategy relaxation exercises should be a regular part of your day. An exercise routine helps reduce anxiety, and it also helps you endure the stress you cannot avoid. Besides this the school syllabus should be based on practical experiences. It should create a student's interest and inspire him to study more and more. Rather than, finding reasons to escape it. The fear of not performing well goes on piercing their minds.

Thus examinations do not measure the reality but these are the motivating factors to assess the ability of a student. We should take them pleasurably rather than considering them as a necessary evil.

Question 2.

(Do not spend more than 20 minutes on this question.)

Select one of the following : **[10]**

(a) *You have recently read a book which has greatly impressed you. Write a letter to your cousin telling him/her why you were impressed. Advise him/her to read the book.*

(b) *You are the President of the school Nature Club. Write a letter to a well-known Social Worker or Environmentalist inviting him/her to be the Chief Guest at the Annual Function of the Club. Give some details about your Club and the Annual Function.*

swer.

105, Vasant Vihar
Kamla Nagar, Agra

9th, March, 2009

Dear Shwet,
I hope this letter will find you in the best of spirits. My final exams were over by 27th Feb. It was difficult for me to pass my time just after my exams. You know very well that I am fond of reading books. On advise of my mother, I read Bhagwat Gita. I have, accordingly read many books in different languages, but this book has influenced me most. Other religious books like Ramayan are equally great, but the Bhagwat Gita is a sermon to the human soul about its destiny. In this book Lord Krishna has given the sermon to Arjuna. He says '....as the human soul is immortal. Doing one's duty brings glory to the human soul. We should follow the course of righteousness. We should give up all evil thoughts and revert to the Yogic life. He brings to light the qualities and characteristics of good and evil persons.' Moreover, this book is not meant for any particular religion, but it is written for all the human beings, as each one has to reach one destination—the doorway to God.
Thus the sermon of the Bhagwat Gita has changed the course of my own life. I would like that you, too, should read this precious book. I beat, you will feel drastic change in your life after reading the immortal spiritual sermon of Lord Krishna.
I shall now ask my pen to take hault.
Hoping to hear from you soon. Convey my regards to all at home.
Yours loving friend,
Muskan.

(b) School Nature Club
425, Church Road,
Agra

9th March, 2009

The Director,
Social Welfare Association
Nehru Nagar
Kanpur
Sir,
Subject : Invitation for Annual Function.
Since its inception from 2000, the School Nature Club is the leading institution in participating different activities of national interest and other events for the benefits of nature. Very often it organizes camps on conservation of nature, National Service Scheme and new inventions going in the field of science, engineering and medicine. Only last month its 'Water Harvesting Plant' was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of India. The club aims at to :

1. Organize ad channelise youth energy in character building activities.
2. Develop consciousness among youth about flora and fauna.
3. Organize activities for preserving our forest wealth.
4. Provide facilities for developing rural areas at grass root level.

5. Enable the youth to develop awareness of environment, culture and ownself.

In accordance of developing research attitude among the talented youths, the club is going to celebrate its 9th Annual Function in Shivaji Statium, Kanpur. Being related to this field the club has requested you to be the Chief guest on 4th Ultimo at 10.00 a.m. Please enlighten and encourage the modern youths on this occasion. I hope you will accede to our request and confirm your presence.

Yours faithfully

Rajan

Question 3.

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow :

At school everybody seemed to be overwhelmed by the thought of the examinations. It was weeks since anybody had seen a smile on Shankar's face. Somu had become brisk and businesslike. The Pea took time to grasp jokes and seldom made any either. And as for Rajam, he came to school at the stroke of the first bell, took down everything the teacher said, and left at the stroke of the last bell, hardly uttering a dozen words to anybody. Mani was beginning to look worried and took every opportunity to take Shankar aside and have his doubts (that arose from time to time as he **plodded** through his texts) cleared. He dogged the steps of the school clerk. There was a general belief in the school that the clerk was omniscient and knew all the question papers of all the classes. One day Mani went to the clerk's house and laid a neat bundle containing fresh brinjals at his feet. The clerk was pleased and took Mani in and seated him on a stool.

The clerk looked extremely **amiable** and Mani felt that he could ask anything at that moment and get it. The clerk was murmuring something about his cat, a lank ill-fed thing, that was nestling close to him. Most of what he was saying did not enter Mani's head. He was waiting feverishly to open the topic of question papers. The clerk had meanwhile passed from cats to eye-flies; but it made little difference to Mani, who was waiting for the other to pause for breath to launch his attack. 'You must never let these eye-flies buzz near your eyes. All cases of eyesore can be traced to it. When you get eyesore the only thing you can do is to take a slice of raw onion ....'

Mani realized that the other would not stop, and butted in, 'There is only a week more for the examinations, sir .....'

The clerk was slightly puzzled : 'Yes. Indeed, a week more .... You must take care to choose only the juicy variety, the large juicy variety, not the small onion.....'

'Sir,' Mani interrupted, ignoring the juicy variety, 'I am much worried about my examination.' He tried to look pathetic.

'I am glad. If you read well, you will pass,' said the Oracle.

'You see, sir, I am so worried, I don't sleep at nights, thinking of the examination ..... If you could possibly tell me something important .... I have such a lot to study ..... I don't want to study unnecessary things that may not be necessary for the examination. He meandered thus. The clerk understood what he was driving at, but said, 'Just read all your portions and you will pass.' Mani realized that diplomacy was not his line. He asked bluntly, 'Please tell me, sir, what questions are we getting for our examination?'

The clerk denied having any knowledge of the question papers. Mani flattered him by asking, if he did not know the questions, who else would. By just a little more of the same judicious flattery the clerk was moved to give what Mani believed to be 'valuable hints'. In spite of the fact that he did not know what the First Form texts were the clerk ventured to advise, 'You must pay particular attention to Geography. Maybe you will have to practice map-drawing a lot. And in Arithmetic make it a point to solve at least five problems every day, and you will be able to tackle Arithmetic as easily as you swallow plantains.'

'And what about English ?'

'Oh, don't worry about that. Have you read all your lessons ?'

'Yes, sir,' Mani replied without **conviction**.

'It is all right then. You must read all the important lessons again, and if you have time, yet again, and that will be ample.'

These answers satisfied Mani greatly. On his way home, he smiled to himself and said that the four *annas* he had invested on brinjals was not after all a waste.

(a) *Give the meanings of the following words as used in the passage. One word answers or short phrases will be accepted.* **[3]**

(i) plodded (line 8)

(ii) amiable (line 14)

(iii) conviction (line 47)

(b) *Answer the following questions briefly in your own words.*

(i) What effect did the coming examinations have on : Shankar, Somu, The Pea and Rajam ? **[4]**

(ii) Which word in the passage describes the clerk as all knowing ? **[1]**

(iii) Why did Mani give the clerk fresh brinjals ? **[2]**

(iv) What did the clerk believe was the reason for eyesore ? What was the remedy ? **[2]**

(v) Why did Mani try to look pathetic ? **[1]**

(vi) Why did Mani ask the question bluntly ? **[2]**

(c) *What did Mani really want to know ? What valuable hints was he given ? Write your answer in not more than 60 words.* **[8]**

(d) *Give a title to your summary in 3 (c). State a reason to justify your choice.* **[2]**

Answer.

(a) (i) Plodded—Worked laboriously

(ii) Amiable—friendly

(iii) Conviction—proving guilty.

(b) (i) Everybody was agitated by the thought of the examinations. Nobody had seen a smile on Shankar's face since weeks. Somu had become more active and practical. The pea seldom cracked jokes and Rajan would enter the school at the stroke of first bell and leave the school at the stroke of the last bell hardly uttering a word to anybody.

(ii) 'Omniscient' is the word that describes the clerk as all knowing.

(iii) Mani gave the clerk fresh brinjals because he thought that the clerk knew all the question papers of all the classes and he wanted to know them.

(iv) According to the clerk the eyesore could be traced when the flies buzzed near ones eyes. The remedy was to put few drops of a raw juicy onion in the diseased eye.

(v) Mani tried to look pathetic so that the clerk would feel pity on him and give him some 'valuable hints'.

(vi) Because the clerk was beating around the bushes but not trying to listen to what Mani wanted to know.

(c) Mani wanted to know the important question he was to get for his examinations. He was advised to pay particular attention to Geography. To practise map-drawing a lot. To practise atleast five problems of Arithmetic everyday. He was also advised to read all important lessons of English again and again. And that much was ample for his examinations.

(d) Title 'Valuable Hints'. This title suits the best because the clerk gave Mani only the general points, that anybody and everybody could provide him with. Yet he was greatly satisfied and smiling.

Question 4.

(a) *In the following passage, fill in each of the numbered blanks with the correct form of the word given in brackets. Do not copy the passage, but write in correct serial order the word or phrase appropriate to the blank space.* **[4]**

Example : (0) spoke.

As she (0) ..... (speak) I (1) .....(rise) and (2) ..... (go) to the centre blackboard. I (3) .....(find) the chalk (4) ..... (write) in block letters the title of the book. Then I (5) .....(put) the chalk down and went to (6) .....(sit), beside her, to (7) ..... (hold) her hand.

The day had barely (8) .....(begin).

(b) *Fill in the blanks with appropriate words :* **[4]**

(i) I prevailed ..... him to join the gymnasium.

(ii) The curious child eagerly begged ..... an answer to the riddle.

(iii) He was bent ..... coming first in the examinations.

(iv) The theory exam was followed ..... a group discussion.

(v) I ran ..... my teacher at the show last night.

(vi) She is extremely anxious ..... an interview next week.

(vii) What a contrast ..... the two siblings !

(viii)The brothers fought ..... their father's property.

(c) *Join the following sentences to make one complete sentence without using and, but or so :* **[4]**

(i) Swarna asked me a question. I was unable to answer it.

(ii) You helped Tania. She will always be grateful.

(iii) I heard you won a prize. I am extremely delighted.

(iv) There was heavy traffic. We reached the stadium on time.

(d) *Re-write the following sentences according to the instructions given after each. Make other changes that may be necessary, but do not change the meaning of each sentence.* **[8]**

(i) Study hard now or you will regret it.
(Begin : Unless .....)

(ii) The boy asked, 'Why are you lying on the road in this manner ?'
(Begin : The boy asked why he .....)

(iii) Megha is too tall to crawl under the table.
(Begin : Megha is so .....)

(iv) He arrived in school on time even though he stopped for a bite on the way.
(Use 'inspite of' instead of even though)

(v) She opened the kitchen door and a cockroach ran out.
(End with 'cockroach')

(vi) Arjun was a better speaker than his brother.
(Begin : His brother .....)

(vii) Asha missed her examination because of her illness.
(Begin : Her illness .....)

(viii) As soon as the curtain came down the applause rang out.
(Begin : No sooner .....)

Answer.

(a)

1. Rose	2. went	3. found	4. to write
5. put	6. sit	7. hold	8. begun

(b)

(i) on	(ii) for	(iii) for	(iv) by
(v) towards	(vi) for	(vii) between	(viii) for

(c) (i) I was unable to answer the question asked by Swarna.
(ii) Tania will always be grateful for your help.
(iii) I am extremely delighted to hear that you won a prize.
(iv) Though there was heavy traffic, yet we reached the statium on time.

(d) (i) Unless you study hard now, you will regret.
(ii) The boy asked why he was lying on the road in that manner.
(iii) Megha is so tall that she cannot crawl under the table.
(iv) Inspite of being stopped for a bite on the way, he arrived in school on time.
(v) As she opened the kitchen door, she saw a running cockroach.
(vi) His brother is not as good speaker as Arjun.
(vii) Her illness was the reason for Asha's missing her examination.
(viii) No sooner the curtain came down than the applause rang out.

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