ICSE Paper 2008

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) *Write a short story in which a little girl, her twin brother and the school bully are the main characters.*

(b) *"No other subject taught in school is as important as Moral Science". Express your views either for or against this statement.*

(c) *Elements of Western Culture have had a very influential role on cultures of the world. How are these elements different from those of Indian culture? What according to you, should we as Indians adopt from the West to make life more meaningful.*

(d) *A village fair is very different from a city one. It is usually held annually and is connected with a religious festival or harvest. The purpose of such fairs is usually trade and to exhibit and sell village handicrafts. Describe one such fair.*

(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 you may take suggestions from it; however, there must be a clear connection between the picture and your composition.*

Answer.

(a) Little Joanne and Joe are twins. They are ten years old. It is hard to tell them apart. Blessed with abundant good looks and bunches of curls on their adds, they had wonderful hearts which any parent would feel proud of. They are known for their kind words and good deeds. The smiles on their faces were million dollar ones. Joanne and Joe study in St. Jude's School. They are in class four.

Also known to everyone in the school is James—the school bully. He is known for his rudeness, disrespect, tormenting and teasing other students. He has a little band of supporters to boot. He is in class eight. Sly by nature, he always carries out his mischief behind the teachers backs. He always protest his innocence and tries to keep himself in everyone's good books. It so happened that Joanne and Joe were the perpetual target of James. They were subjected to all kinds of comments and ridicule. They bore it all patiently. Not once did they retort in anger to all his jibes. This, it seems, is what James could not comprehend and endure.

Christmas was around the corner. The teacher had asked the children how best they could spread the message of Christmas to others. Joanne and Joe soon get busy decorating a little tree in front of their class. They were putting up little coloured pieces of paper on the tree. From a distance, James was enjoying the twins with malicious intent. He and his supporters were all chuckles, while the duo were at work. The twins went about their task assiduously, smiling and humming carols. Mr. Dariels, the Head Master passed by and applauded their effort.

James, like a hawk, was waiting to swoop down and seize the opportunity to destroy the twins labour of love. His moment soon came. Joanne and Joe left the Christmas tree. James thought that it was a pretty ordinary effort on their part. Seemingly, plain bits of paper, strung up on the boughs. He and his gang crawled, unnoticed towards the tree. They begin to pull of the rolled up pieces of paper. However, before tearing them up, James decided to open the papers and see what was written. On one of those many bits of paper was written—"Happy Christmas James. We love you. Jesus loves you too. God Bless, Joanne and Joe."

James' heart melted. A stream of tears began to flow down his cheeks. He scampered off to search for the twins. He found them and apologized to them for all his earlier rude behaviour.

(b) There is no doubt about it that today we are living in a world of sin, corruption, evil and immorality. The atmosphere prevailing in many educational institutions is one of disrespect, scorn and intolerance. The reason ? Well, Lack of Moral Science.

Sadly, today many people heading educational institutions dont feel the need for Moral Science. They themselves are indecent, immoral and corrupt people. Therefore, when the head of the institution is evil, what can be expected from the students ? These people have forgotten that a student is sent to school for an all round development and that includes the spiritual aspect as well. "Know God—Peace. No God—Hell". Too much of stress is given to secular subjects which are soon forgotten when the child is promoted to the next class. However, the moral foundation laid in school, lasts a life time. One's character and personality are formed on the basis of this Moral Science taught in school.

Why is it that some rich and proud students scorn and ridicule others who are not so fortunate ? Why is it that students are intolerant of others beliefs and faiths ? Why is it that disrespect is becoming more and more rampant in school and college campuses ?

One only needs to pick up a newspaper to see the increasing phenomenon of vulgarity, violence and hate crimes which are happening in our country and all over the world, especially among school going children. Today, there is a gun culture prevalent in many institutions. The reason for all these happenings is because there is no Moral Science being taught in schools today.

Moral Science helps a person to become a better human being. One becomes more understanding, patient, pious, decent and wise. One stays away from hurting other people's feelings and emotions. It teaches us to be more sensitive towards others. We learn to do things without any selfish motives. We learn to help others without seeking for any rewards in return. We derive pleasure in doing things for others as we feel that we are doing it for God. The end result is that the world can become a better and happier place to live in. Peace and contentment can be found. Discipline is easily maintained in schools and colleges. Respect and honour are given wherever it is deserved. Therefore, there can be doubt about the fact that Moral Science makes a man. No other subject taught in school is as important as Moral Science.

(c) Every country has a culture and traditions of their own which they feel proud of. The west has cultures which are very different from the East. With the advent of television and cable and with westerners travelling around the world, they have been influential in spreading their cultures, which has impacted the cultures of other civilizations; including our very own country India.

The first noticeable difference in cultures is lifestyle. While the west believe in total freedom, we in India, still, are very dependent on our elders and others. While living independently is the preferred mode in the west, in India, strong importance is given to living in joint families. Even habits, behaviour, food, dress, sense and etiquettes are all different.

People in western cultures do not show enough respect and honour to the old and aged. They do not perform their duties towards their parents, till the end. They take them and put them in an old persons home. In India, we keep our parents and love them till death snatches them away from us. Also, it has been observed that morals are not taken very seriously in western countries. They lead a very loose, vulgar and immoral lifestyle. We in India are taught at an early age to lead a highly moral life.

Again, in western culture, more stress is given to friend circles than to family life. There is very little family life in fact. Children leave their parents' home at a very early age. They start live in relationships. In India, marriage is considered a holy and blessed thing.

(e)

However, not all is wrong and undesirable about the west culture. We in India could do with a few meaningful things which can enhance the quality of life here. In western culture, a lot of values and importance is given to time. People respect time and hence are punctual. In India, it is just the opposite. Everything is done at one's convenience and own time. Time is of no consequence here. This is a very ugly habit. There is also a very strong sense of honesty and accountability which is found in the west. Corruption is very rare. In India, dishonesty and corruption are a way of life. People are not afraid to do wrong.

In the west there is transparency about everything. Here, everything is very secretive and murky. People must be punished for their wrong doings, as per the law. No one can use influence to help a wrongdoer in western countries. Sadly, these things have become a part of our culture now. People in western culture are more tolerant of other people's religions. In India narrow mindedness and fanaticism are growing by the day. Too much of mob violence is now taking place. All these things must be stopped immediately. We, in India, can certainly do with some elements of western culture.

(d) India is a land of many religions. Religions, mean celebrating festivals. So, fairs are held in every part of the country, throughout the year, to celebrate some festival or harvest. Every part of the country is different from the other and have their own culture and traditions. Usually fairs are held in the villages and they are so different from the ones held in the cities.

Every year in the month of October, when the moon is at its fullest best, a village fair is held at Pushkar in Rajasthan. Traders and tribesmen from different parts of Rajasthan gather in large numbers to sell their handicrafts. The main purpose however, is to sell their animals to people from different parts of the state and country. Camels are the most sold animal. They are beautifully decorated and tended.

The whole place takes on a different atmosphere. There is the sound of revelry, music, noise and laughter. Tradesmen cry out their trade cry. The women are dressed in their brightest colours and they look so gorgeous. The entire scene is so colourful and gay. Even the men are dressed in white with colourful turbans. The children are filled with mirth. The food stalls serve and sell ethnic, original, Rajasthani flavours. The aroma of animals and perfumes, mingle with each other. Brisk trading of animals is carried out.

Many visitors from other countries rush to this fair in large numbers. They enjoy being a part of and experiencing such a rich culture. They go for camel and horse rides. They love to see the vibrant life and colours all over the place. They purchase a lot of the handicrafts sold in the many stalls there. The prices of these handicrafts are very cheap and affordable. The craftsmen get happy to sell all their handmade village wares.

Usually, in the evening, the village people put up a cultural programme. In this way, they also exhibit their culture, beliefs and customs. They show the world their rich cultural heritage. It is so nice to see people from western culture showing so much of interest in the simple lifestyle of these humble village people. After a week of hectic activity and a lot of fun, freak and feasting, the annual fair draws to a close, with a smile on many people's faces.

(e) Bordering India in the North East is a very poor country. Most of the people live in poverty. The leaders are corrupt and ruthless. The people are forced to live in abject conditions and to work for meagre incomes.

I once had the opportunity to visit this country. What I saw made my heart bleed. I saw nothing that my beautiful country has. But yes, there were thousands and thousands of poor people everywhere. The faces of the people showed sorrow, pain and hopelessness.

I decided to go to the country side. Everywhere there was greenery and serenity. Scores of poorly clad people worked in the fields. Hunger and starvation stared them in the eyes. Children were left to be by themselves. I decided to go and talk to one poor little girl. She had her baby brother on her back. I asked her

what her name was. She couldn't understand what I was saying. An elderly person came to my rescue. He started interpreting for me. He told me that the girl's name was Aung Bin. The little brother's name was Hu Jin. The man began to unfold the little girl's life story to me. She came from a very poor and large family. Her parents were too poor to send them to school. Her other siblings had gone out to do odd jobs. Her duty was to look after her little baby brother while her parents tilled the land. I looked at her poor clothing and felt heart broken. The weather was cold. There was a blank, lost and vacant look on the little fellow's face.

I looked at the girl closer and I could see beauty in her face. A soft, rosy blush and a smile beginning to break forth. The little boy on her back trying to hide his face at intervals. The man who had stopped to help me, went his way. I thanked him for his kindness. I stood there long trying to befriend the little girl. I offered her a few sweets which she shyly accepted. I thanked my lucky stars for the many blessings received in my life. I wondered what fault of these little children ? Why did they have to suffer for no wrong doing of their own ? The injustice of it all only baffled me further.

Question 2.

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

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

(a) *Write a letter to a friend who was absent from school on a day when a really comical incident took place. Describe the incident, say what was so funny about it and what you learnt from it.*

(b) *Traffic jams in your city / town are getting worse day after day. Write a letter to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) complaining about the problem and offering suggestions for improvement.*

Answer.

(a) 18, The Mall Road
Agra-Cantt-282001.

10th March, 2008

Dear Jason,

I am sure that you will be surprised to hear from me. I hope you are feeling much better now. I miss you a lot. I have written to tell you about something very funny that happened when you were not in school.

James, David and Paul were all absent from school for two days. They were seen in their uniforms, during school hours, hiding in the park near the school. In short, they were just playing truant. When they returned to school yesterday, they were all called to the Principal's office. Each one was asked to give an explanation for his absence in writing. Earlier, they had all told the class teacher something else. When the principal read their answers in front of the class teacher and other boys, it was proved that they were liars. Everyone started laughing at them. Even the Principal laughed. But he lovingly explained to them, never to prevaricate. The matter ended there but it was doubtlessly comical. The lesson to be learnt by all of us is never to lie to our teachers and elders.

I hope you will return to school soon. Please give my love and best wishes to your parents.

Yours loving friend,
Jerry

(b) 102 Rainbow Road
Goregaon
Mumbai

1st April, 2008

The Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic)
No. 1 Anne Besant Road
Vasai
Mumbai

Dear Sir,

I would like to draw your attention towards the increasing traffic jams in our city. This is causing havoc on the roads of Mumbai. The reasons for this unpleasant situation are the increasing number of vehicles on the road, reckless driving, and traffic policemen not doing their duty. People are unable to reach their work places in time.

I would strongly recommend strict action against the erring policemen and heavy fines for traffic offenders. I hope that you will take remedial measures as soon as possible.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,
(MR BRYAN ADAMS)

Question 3.

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

Sita went to her grandfather and sat down beside him.

'When you are hungry, tell me,' she said, 'and I will make the bread.'

'Is your grandmother asleep?'

'Yes. But she will wake soon. The pain is deep.'

The old man stared across the river, at the dark green of the forest, at the leaden sky, and said, 'If she is not better by morning, I will take her to the hospital in Shahganj. They will know how to make her well. You may be on your own for two or three days. You have been on your own before.'

Sita nodded *gravely*—she had been alone before; but not in the middle of the rains with the river so high. But she knew that someone must stay behind. She wanted Grandmother to get well and she knew that only Grandfather could take the small boat across the river when the current was so strong.

Sita was not afraid of being left alone but she did not like the look of the river. That evening it began to rain again. Big pellets of rain were scarring the surface of the river. But it was warm rain and Sita could move about in it. She was not afraid of getting wet, she rather liked it. In the previous month, when the monsoon shower had arrived, washing the dusty leaves of the tree and bringing up the good smell of the earth, she had exulted in it, had run about shouting for joy. She was used to it now, even a little tired of the rain, but she did not mind getting wet. It was *steamy* indoors and her thin dress would soon dry in the heat from the kitchen fire.

She walked about barefooted, barelegged. She was very sure on her feet. Her toes had grown accustomed to gripping all kinds of rocks, slippery or sharp, and though thin, she was surprisingly strong.

Black hair, streaming across her face. Black eyes. Slim brown arms. A scar on her thigh: when she was small, visiting her mother's village, a hyena had entered the house where she was sleeping, fastened on to her leg and tried to drag her away but her screams had roused the villagers and the hyena had run off.

She moved about in the pouring rain, chasing the hens into a shelter behind the hut. A harmless brown snake, flooded out of its hole, was moving across the open ground. Sita took a stick, picked the snake up with it, and dropped it behind a cluster of rocks. She had no quarrel with snakes. They kept down the rats and the frogs. She wondered how the rats had first come to the island—probably in someone's boat or in a sack of grain.

She disliked the huge black scorpions who left their waterlogged dwellings and tried to take shelter in the hut. It was so easy to step on one and the sting could be very painful. She had been bitten by a scorpion the previous monsoon and for a day and a night she had known fever and great pain. Sita had never killed living creatures but now, whenever she found a scorpion, she crushed it with a rock! When, finally, she went indoors, she was hungry. She ate some *parched* gram and warmed up some goat's milk.

Grandmother woke once and asked for water and Grandfather held the brass tumbler to her lips.

The roof was leaking and a small puddle formed on the floor. Grandfather kept the kerosene lamps alight. They did not need the light but somehow it made them feel safer.

It rained all night.

(a) *Three words from the passage are given below. Give the meaning of each word as used in the passage. One word answers or short phrases will be accepted.*

(i) gravely (line 9)

(ii) steamy (line 20)

(iii) parched (line 40) **[3]**

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

(i) Why was Sita willing to stay alone ? **[3]**

(ii) What had made Sita like the first monsoon shower ? **[2]**

(iii) Why did Sita have a scar on her thigh ? **[2]**

(iv) Which word in the passage tells us that Sita did not need to fear the snake ? **[1]**

(v) Why did she think snakes were useful ? **[1]**

(vi) What did Sita do with the snake ? **[1]**

(vii) The passage tells us that Sita never killed living creatures. Why did she crush scorpions with a rock ? **[1]**

(viii) Why did they keep the lamps alight ? **[1]**

(c) *What kind of a girl was Sita? Describe her in 60 words.* **[8]**

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

Answer.

(a) (i) gravely—seriously

(ii) steamy—hot, suffocating

(iii) parched—dried.

(b) (i) Sita was willing to stay alone because she knew that someone had to stay behind at home. Besides, she wanted her grandmother to get well and she

also knew that only grandfather could take the small boat across the river when the current was so strong.

(ii) Sita liked the first monsoon shower because the rain was warm and she could move about in it. She was not afraid of getting wet.

(iii) Sita had a scar on her thigh as she been bitten by a hyena when she was small. The hyena had entered their house and tried to drag her out.

(iv) The word is 'harmless'.

(v) Sita thought snakes were useful for killing rats and frogs.

(vi) Sita took the snake and dropped it behind a cluster of rocks.

(vii) Sita crushed scorpions with a rock because she disliked them. Previously, she had been bitten by a scorpion and she got fever and was in great pain.

(viii) They kept the lamps alight to feel safer.

(c) Sita was a very caring, loving and good little girl. She was very understanding and responsible too. She was not afraid of being alone. She was playful in nature. She loved the raiv. She was a pretty little girl. She did not like killing living creatures.

(d) Title of summary "Sita's Love."

It is clear that Sita did not just love her grand parents, but living creatures and nature too.

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) was.

There (0) ..... (be) some confusion in the doorway. A man (1) ..... (get) into the compartment (2) ..... (stammer) an apology. Then the door (3) ..... (bang) and the world was (4) ..... (shut) out again. I (5) ..... (return) to my berth. The guard (6) ..... (blow) his whistle and we (7) ..... (move) off. Once again I (8) ..... (has) a game to play.

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

(i) The elderly man prepared himself for a life ..... retirement.

(ii) Do you take his word ..... mine ?

(iii) Rohini is very concerned ..... her father's health.

(iv) Altaf had many books and papers scattered all ..... the room.

(v) The Phoenix is a legendary bird that rises ..... its ashes.

(vi) The police pulled the briefcase from ..... the table.

(vii) The mob rushed onto the pavement, everyone seemed angry ..... everyone else.

(viii) The old woman looked ..... the cupboard, searching for the photograph.

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

(i) The heart attack was mild. Mr. Bose stayed in bed for three weeks.

(ii) The men went out to see if anyone was missing. The women stayed behind to care for the injured.

(iii) Her mother warned her not to talk to strangers. She told her not to accept gifts from people she did not know.

(iv) Everyone was drenched wet by now. The rain had come down harder.

(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) "Have you walked alone, this long distance today ?" he asked Sumita.
(Begin: He asked Sumita if.....)

(ii) The detective interrogated the suspect closely for over three hours.
(Begin: The suspect.....)

(iii) I suddenly realized that the room was too small for the three of us to share.
(Begin: I suddenly realized that the room was so.....)

(iv) Inspite of all her efforts, Susan did not succeed.
(Begin : Despite.....)

(v) As soon as the bell rang, the children rushed out of class.
(Begin: No sooner.....)

(vi) Sachin stood first in class and he also excelled at debate.
(Begin: Not only.....)

(vii) She was the only person capable of being House Captain.
(Use: capability)

(viii) Rohan was the tallest boy in the basketball team.
(Rewrite using: taller)

Answer.

(a)

(0) was	(i) getting	(ii) stammered
(iii) banged	(iv) shut	(v) returned
(vi) blew	(vii) moved	(viii) had

(b)

(i) of	(ii) for	(iii) about
(iv) over	(v) from	(vi) under
(vii) with	(viii) into	

(c) (i) As the heart attack was mild, Mr. Bose stayed in bed for three weeks.

(ii) While the men went out to see if anyone was missing, the women stayed behind to care for the injured.

(iii) Besides warning her not to talk to strangers, her mother also told her not to accept gifts from people she did not know.

(iv) As the rain had come down harder, everyone was drenched wet by now.

(d) (i) He asked Sunita if she had walked alone, that long distance that day.

(ii) The suspect was interrogated closely for over three hours by the detective.

(iii) I suddenly realized that the room was so small that three of us could not share it.

(iv) Despite her efforts, Susan did not succeed.

(v) No sooner did the bell ring than the children rushed out of the class.

(vi) Not only did Sachin stand first in class, but he also excelled at debate.

(vii) She was the only person who had the capability of being house captain.

(viii) No other boy in the basketball team was taller than Rohan.

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