

CBSE CLASS X

English Language & Literature (184)

ANSWER KEY

From previous CBSE Board Exam questions

Code: 8F98DO	Questions: 19	Maximum Marks: 89	Generated: 2026-06-15 13:05
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SELECTIONS USED

Source	Previous-year board
Subject	English Language & Literature
Lessons	The Necklace
Year	2022-2026
Questions selected	19

Composition — Types: 9 literature_long · 6 Short · 2 literature_extract · 2 Long

Q1.

[5]

Mme Loisel was a great success. She was the prettiest of all – elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy. All the men noticed her, asked her name and wanted to be presented. She danced with enthusiasm, intoxicated with pleasure, thinking of nothing but all this admiration, this victory so complete and sweet to her heart.

Read the given extract and answer any one of the following questions given below :

- (i) How is "success" perceived by Matilda ? [1]
- (ii) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket. 'All the men noticed her, asked her name and wanted to be presented' indicates that the men wanted to be formally _____ (introduced / withholden) to her. [2]
- (iii) Which of the following best describe Matilda's state of mind in the context ? [1]
- (A) overwhelmed
(B) anxious
(C) confused
(D) sad
- (iv) Explain the phrase "this victory so complete and sweet to her heart". [1]

Previously asked in: 2026 2/4/1 Q6 (b)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

- (i) Matilda perceives "success" as being admired and noticed by others, especially men. For her, success means being the prettiest, most elegant woman at the ball — it is about social recognition and external validation.
- (ii) 'All the men noticed her, asked her name and wanted to be presented' indicates that the men wanted to be formally **introduced** to her.
- (iii) (A) **overwhelmed**
- (iv) The phrase means that all the admiration and attention Matilda received at the ball felt like a complete triumph to her. She had always craved appreciation and social glory, and that evening fulfilled her deepest desire, making her feel joyful and victorious in her heart.

Source: *The Necklace*, Guy de Maupassant

Explanation

- (i) Focus on Matilda's character trait — her craving for admiration and social status. One line is enough for 1 mark.
- (ii) "Presented" in formal social contexts means "introduced." This is a vocabulary-in-context question; choose the word that fits the formal setting.
- (iii) The extract shows she is "intoxicated with pleasure, thinking of nothing but admiration" — she is overwhelmed (A), not anxious, confused, or sad.
- (iv) Examiners look for connection between "victory" and Matilda's lifelong longing for admiration — explain what the victory represents to her personally.

Q2.

[6]

Answer in about 100-120 words :

Contentment in one's life is very important to lead a peaceful life. We should be happy with what we have and should not crave for what we don't have. Matilda suffered in life because she was not content in her life. Her desires led to her disaster. What do you learn from her mistake in life ?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/4/1 Q11(a)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

The story of Matilda Loisel teaches us several important lessons about contentment and humility.

Matilda was never satisfied with what she had. Despite having a caring husband and a comfortable life, she always craved luxury and wealth. Her dissatisfaction led her to borrow a diamond necklace, which she lost, bringing ten years of poverty and hardship upon herself and her husband.

The greatest irony is that the necklace was fake and worth only five hundred francs, yet she spent thirty-six thousand francs and ten years of toil to replace it. This happened because she lacked the honesty and courage to confess the loss immediately.

We learn that:

- Contentment brings peace; greed brings suffering.
- Honesty saves us from greater trouble.
- We must value what we have rather than craving what we don't.
- Pride and vanity can ruin one's life completely.

Source: *The Necklace*, Guy de Maupassant, Chapter 7

Explanation

The examiner expects a **value-based answer** connected directly to the text. Start by briefly explaining Matilda's mistake, then draw **clear moral lessons** (at least 3–4 points). Mention the irony of the fake necklace — it is the clinching proof that her craving was pointless. Avoid writing a plot summary; focus on **what we learn**. Using a short list for lessons is acceptable and often scores well in CBSE board exams for this type of question.

Q3.

[3]

'The Necklace' is a lesson in discontentment and unreasonable materialism. In light of the preceding statement, discuss Matilda's greatest failing. (The Necklace)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q9 (ii)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Matilda's greatest failing was her chronic discontentment and unreasonable craving for luxury she could not afford. Born into a modest family, she "suffered incessantly, feeling herself born for all delicacies and luxuries," constantly torturing herself by comparing her simple life to imagined riches. This vanity drove her to borrow a diamond necklace to appear grand at the ball, and when she lost it, pride stopped her from confessing the truth to Mme Forestier. Had she been honest, she would have discovered the necklace was fake — worth only 500 francs — and spared her family ten years of grinding poverty.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

The examiner expects you to link Matilda's character flaw (discontentment/vanity) directly to the consequences shown in the story. Three key points earn the 3 marks: (1) her incessant longing for luxury, (2) her pride/vanity at the ball, and (3) the irony that honesty could have saved her. Always quote or paraphrase from the text to show evidence.

Q4.

[3]

Refusing to accept our circumstances can result in an unhappy life. Discuss in brief with reference to the story 'The Necklace'.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/5/1 Q9 (ii)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Matilda Loisel's refusal to accept her modest circumstances was the root cause of her unhappiness and eventual ruin. Though married to a steady clerk, she constantly suffered "feeling herself born for all delicacies and luxuries," and was tortured by the sight of her shabby apartment and simple food. Her discontent led her to borrow a diamond necklace to appear wealthy at a party — and losing it forced the Loisels into ten years of grinding poverty to repay a debt of thirty-six thousand francs. Ironically, the necklace was fake and worth only five hundred francs. Had she accepted her life contentedly, this ruin could easily have been avoided.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to **link the theme** (discontent → ruin) directly to events in the story.
- Mention **specific details**: her suffering, the borrowed necklace, the 10-year debt, and the ironic revelation that it was fake. These details earn marks.
- Do not retell the whole plot — pick only the events that prove the theme.
- The question asks you to "discuss in brief," so one focused paragraph with a clear point-evidence-conclusion flow is ideal for 3 marks.

Q5.

[6]

Matilda was very proud of her beauty and charm and this led to her downfall. Elaborate.

Previously asked in: 2023 2/6/1 Q11(b)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Matilda Loisel's excessive pride in her beauty and her craving for admiration led directly to her downfall in Guy de Maupassant's *The Necklace*.

Matilda was born into a modest family but felt destined for luxury. She suffered constantly over her shabby apartment, simple food, and lack of fine clothes and jewels. When invited to the Minister's ball, she pressured her husband into spending four hundred francs on a dress, then borrowed a diamond necklace from Mme Forestier, refusing to attend without it — she could not bear to look "poverty-stricken" among rich women.

At the ball, she was intoxicated by admiration and the sense of victory her beauty brought her. Rushing away afterwards to hide her modest wrap, she lost the necklace. Too proud to confess the truth to Mme Forestier, she and her husband replaced it with a thirty-six-thousand-franc necklace, plunging into ten years of grinding poverty.

The bitter irony is that the original necklace was fake, worth only five hundred francs. Had Matilda not been ruled by vanity and pride, the entire disaster could have been avoided.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

- Examiners expect you to **trace the chain of cause and effect**: pride → demand for dress and jewels → loss at ball → refusal to confess → debt → ten years of hardship → ironic revelation.
- Include the **irony** (necklace was fake) — it is the thematic heart of the story and always fetches marks.
- Use **textual details** (four hundred francs, thirty-six thousand francs, ten years) to show close reading.
- Avoid padding; keep every sentence tied to the theme of "pride leading to downfall."

Q6.

[6]

Those who are satisfied with what they have are happy in life. Those who aspire more than what they can afford ruin their life. Matilda was one such person. If she were content with her life she would have led a happy life. Elaborate on the basis of the chapter 'The Necklace.'

Previously asked in: 2023 2/1/1 Q11(b)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Matilda Loisel is a classic example of how dissatisfaction and greed can ruin a person's life. Born into a modest family, she constantly craved luxury, elegance, and admiration — things beyond her means.

Her husband, a petty clerk, tried his best to keep her happy. He gave up his savings of four hundred francs so she could buy a dress for the Minister's ball. Yet she remained unhappy without jewellery. Borrowing a diamond necklace from Mme Forestier, she had her moment of glory at the ball — but lost the necklace on the way home.

Rather than confessing the truth to her friend, the Loisels borrowed thirty-six thousand francs to replace it. They spent ten years in poverty, toil, and hardship to repay the debt. Ironically, the necklace was fake and worth only five hundred francs.

Had Matilda been content with her simple life — her husband's love, their modest home — she would have avoided this catastrophe. Her restless desire for more than she could afford brought ruin upon herself and her devoted husband.

Source: *The Necklace*, Guy de Maupassant — Chapter 7

Explanation

- The examiner wants you to **link the theme** (contentment vs. greed) directly to events in the story — don't just retell the plot.
- Cover **three key points**: Matilda's character/dissatisfaction → the crisis (lost necklace, borrowed money) → the ironic revelation at the end.
- End with a **thematic conclusion** tying back to the question's statement about contentment.
- Six marks = about 120–150 words; use tight paragraphs, not bullet points, for a literature question.

Q7.

[3]

Why does Mme Loisel hastily depart from the ball when her husband places a modest wrap on her shoulders?
(The Necklace)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/2/1 Q9 (ii)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Mme Loisel hastily departs from the ball because her husband places a **modest wrap** around her shoulders, whose poverty and shabbiness **clashed sharply with the elegance of her ball costume**. She feared being noticed by the other wealthy women, who were wrapping themselves in **rich furs**. Her deep sense of pride and obsession with social appearance made her unwilling to be seen in such a humble covering, which would instantly reveal her lower social status and destroy the glamorous impression she had created that evening.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to quote/paraphrase the key phrase "**poverty clashed with the elegance of the ball costume**" — this is directly from the text and earns a mark.
- Link her action to her **character trait** (vanity, pride, obsession with status) for the third mark.
- Avoid retelling the whole story; focus only on *this specific moment* and *why* she rushes away.

Q8.

[3]

How does Matilda face 'the horrible life of necessity'? (The Necklace)

Previously asked in: 2026 2/2/1 Q9 (ii)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

After losing the borrowed necklace, Matilda faces poverty bravely and heroically. She and her husband send away their maid, leave their lodgings, and move into a cheap attic. Matilda does all household work herself — washing dishes, scrubbing floors, carrying water, and shopping at the grocer's and butcher's, haggling over every sou. Her husband works late into the night copying manuscripts. They endure this hard life for **ten years**, finally repaying the debt of thirty-six thousand francs. Matilda, once a delicate and vain woman, becomes strong, rough, and aged — but she faces her misfortune completely and heroically.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

The examiner looks for: (1) specific details of the hardships Matilda endures, (2) the word "**heroically**" (used in the text itself — quoting it shows close reading), and (3) the time span of ten years. Avoid vague statements like "she worked hard"; name the actual tasks from the passage. Three marks = three clear points, so structure around: domestic labour, husband's contribution, and the outcome/transformation.

Q9.

[6]

Analyze, how the theme of appearance versus reality is developed in 'The Necklace' through Matilda's life choices and their consequences.

Previously asked in: 2026 2/3/1 Q11(b)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

The theme of **appearance versus reality** runs throughout 'The Necklace' as Matilda's obsession with outward show leads to hidden ruin.

Appearance of desire vs. reality of life: Matilda is born into a clerk's family but feels destined for luxury. She suffers over her modest apartment and pot-pie dinner while dreaming of elegant dinners and shining silver — she values appearances above her actual life.

Borrowed glamour: To appear wealthy at the ball, she borrows a diamond necklace. On the night, she is "the prettiest of all" — a complete success. But this glittering appearance rests on something borrowed and false.

The true cost of appearance: Losing the necklace forces the Loisels into ten years of grinding poverty to repay thirty-six thousand francs for a replacement. Matilda, once pretty and vain, becomes a coarse, hard woman with rough hands.

The final irony: The devastating revelation that the original necklace was *fake*, worth only five hundred francs, exposes the story's central truth — the appearance she sacrificed everything for was never real to begin with.

Thus, Matilda's ruin stems entirely from prizing appearance over reality.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

Examiners look for: identification of the theme, at least **3–4 textual examples** tracing how it develops, and a concluding irony (the fake necklace). The fake necklace revelation is the **climax** of the theme — always include it. Use phrases like "irony," "obsession with appearances," and "reality" to signal literary awareness. Avoid retelling the plot without linking each point to the theme.

Q10.

[6]

In 'The Necklace', Madam Loisel spends years repaying a debt for a necklace that was never valuable. How does this irony expose the illusion of wealth and the consequences of chasing appearances?

Previously asked in: 2026 2/5/1 Q11(A)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Guy de Maupassant's 'The Necklace' uses devastating irony to expose the hollowness of craving wealth and status.

Mme Loisel is born into a clerk's family but constantly suffers, feeling she deserves "all delicacies and luxuries." Her obsession with appearances drives every decision — she demands 400 francs for a dress, borrows a diamond necklace to look wealthy, and feels triumphant at the ball where "all the men noticed her."

The central irony is crushing: the Loiseles borrow 36,000 francs, toil for **ten years** in poverty — she washing floors, he doing night copying — to replace a necklace "not worth over five hundred francs." The very object meant to project wealth destroys their actual lives.

The illusion collapses completely when Mme Forestier reveals the necklace was fake. A moment of vanity costs Matilda her youth, beauty, and happiness. The story warns that chasing appearances brings ruin, and that honesty could have saved everything.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

Examiners look for: (1) identification of the central irony (fake necklace vs. real sacrifice), (2) textual evidence of Matilda's vanity, (3) the consequences — ten years of hardship — and (4) the thematic conclusion about illusion vs. reality. Avoid retelling the whole plot; instead link events to the theme. The phrase "not worth over five hundred francs" is the key quote — use it directly for full marks.

Q11.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions, in 100-120 words: A character arc is the transformation or development of a character throughout a story and refers to the changes a character undergoes as a result of their experiences, challenges, and interactions with other characters. In the light of the above information, trace the character arc of Matilda in Guy De Maupassant's 'The Necklace', in about 120 words.

Previously asked in: 2024 2/2/1 Q11(b)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Character Arc of Matilda in 'The Necklace'

Matilda begins as a discontented, unhappy woman who, despite being a petty clerk's wife, constantly craves luxury, jewels, and elegant dinners. Her vanity and dissatisfaction define her early character.

When invited to the Minister's ball, her greed and insecurity drive her to borrow a diamond necklace. At the ball, she transforms into a confident, radiant woman — her happiest moment.

The loss of the necklace marks a turning point. Initially helpless and devastated, Matilda gradually transforms into a hardworking, resilient woman. For ten years she does manual labour — washing, cooking, haggling — shedding all traces of vanity.

By the story's end, though worn and aged, she confesses the truth with "proud and simple joy," showing moral courage. Ironically, the necklace she sacrificed everything for was fake — her transformation came at an unnecessary price.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

Examiners look for a **clear arc with at least three stages**: beginning (discontented/vain), middle (crisis and hardship), end (transformed/honest). Use **textual evidence** at each stage (e.g., "petty clerk's wife craving luxury," "hard woman of the poor household," "proud and simple joy"). The ironic twist (fake necklace) should appear as it completes the arc thematically. Avoid retelling the plot — link events to character *change*. Word count here is approximately 130 words, fitting the 120–150 word requirement for 6 marks.

Q12.

[3]

What is the twist at the end of the story 'The Necklace'? (The Necklace)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q9 (iii)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

The twist at the end of *The Necklace* is a shocking revelation. After Matilda and her husband spend ten gruelling years repaying a debt of thirty-six thousand francs to replace the lost diamond necklace, she meets Mme Forestier and proudly tells her the truth. Mme Forestier is stunned and replies that the original necklace was **fake** — made of false diamonds worth no more than five hundred francs. The Loisels had sacrificed ten years of their lives in poverty for something that was almost worthless.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to clearly state **what the twist is** (the necklace was fake/false) and **why it is ironic** (ten years of hardship for a near-worthless item).
- Mention the key figures: **36,000 francs** paid vs. **500 francs** actual worth — this contrast shows the scale of the irony.
- Use the word "irony" or describe the cruel irony; it strengthens your answer for 3 marks.
- Do **not** retell the whole story — focus only on the ending twist.

Q13.

[5]

"He was silent, stupefied, in dismay, at the sight of his wife weeping. He stammered, "What is the matter? What is the matter?" By a violent effort, she had controlled her vexation and responded in a calm voice, wiping her moist cheeks, "Nothing. Only I have no dress and consequently I cannot go to this affair. Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better fitted out than I." He was grieved, but answered, "Let us see, Matilda. How much would a suitable costume cost, something that would serve for their occasions, something very simple?" She reflected for some seconds thinking of a sum that could ask for without bringing with it an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk."

Read the given extract and answer the questions.

I What can we infer about Matilda's emotions and financial situation based on her husband's reaction and her response to not having a dress for the affair? [2]

II Which of the following is NOT a reason for Matilda's distress in the extract? [1]

A She has no suitable dress for the affair.

B She is upset about her husband's reaction.

C She is worried about the cost of a suitable costume.

D The card did not bear her name.

III What did Matilda suggest that her husband do with the card? [1]

IV In the given extract what does the term 'economic clerk' imply? [1]

Previously asked in: 2025 2/4/1 Q6.B

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

I. Matilda was deeply upset and frustrated at not having a suitable dress. Though she controlled her emotions and appeared calm, her "moist cheeks" reveal genuine distress. Her careful calculation of an amount to ask for — one that wouldn't shock her husband — shows the couple's poor financial condition and her constant struggle to balance her desires with their limited means.

II. D — The card did not bear her name.

(She was distressed about having no dress, the cost of a costume, and giving away the card — not because her name was missing.)

III. Matilda suggested that her husband give the card to some colleague whose wife was "better fitted out" than she was, implying she felt it was useless to her without a proper dress.

IV. The term 'economical clerk' implies that Matilda's husband was a frugal, careful man of very modest means who avoided unnecessary spending. She feared that asking for too large a sum would immediately alarm him and result in a flat refusal.

Source: *The Necklace*, Guy de Maupassant

Explanation

- **Sub-question I (2 marks):** Cover two aspects — Matilda's *emotions* (vexation, grief, sense of inadequacy) and their *financial situation* (she must strategically frame her request). Award yourself 1 mark each.
- **Sub-question II (1 mark):** Option D is clearly not in the extract. Don't overthink MCQs — scan the passage for each option.
- **Sub-question III (1 mark):** Direct retrieval — quote or closely paraphrase the text.

- **Sub-question IV (1 mark):** 'Economical clerk' = a husband who is thrifty by necessity, not choice. The examiner wants you to infer *why* Matilda was calculating her request carefully.

Q14.**[2]**

How did the necklace change the life of Loisel?

Previously asked in: 2022 2/3/1 Q6 (vi)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Losing the borrowed necklace ruined the Loisels completely. To replace it, they borrowed thirty-six thousand francs and spent **ten years** repaying the debt. They gave up their maid, moved to an attic, and worked tirelessly. Matilda did rough household chores while her husband worked day and night, aging them both beyond their years.

Explanation

Examiners expect you to cover **two aspects**: (1) the immediate consequence — borrowing a huge sum to replace the necklace, and (2) the long-term consequence — ten years of poverty, hard labour, and loss of youth/beauty. Since it is 2 marks, one point each is sufficient. Avoid retelling the whole story; focus on the *change* in their life. The irony (the original necklace was fake, worth only 500 francs) is not required here unless the question asks for it.

Q15.

[4]

Matilda realised that one little act of negligence can lead to total ruin. What do you learn from this and how would you move on in life? (The Necklace)

Previously asked in: 2022 2/1/1 Q7 (i)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

From Matilda's story, I learn that a single act of carelessness — losing the borrowed necklace — can destroy years of happiness and comfort. Her ten years of poverty, hard labour, and sacrifice resulted from one moment of negligence and, more importantly, her refusal to confess the truth to Mme Forestier. Had she been honest immediately, she would have learned the necklace was fake, worth only 500 francs.

In life, I would:

- **Be honest** in difficult situations rather than hide the truth.
- **Avoid vanity and discontentment**, accepting what I have.
- **Face problems directly** — seeking help or confessing early prevents greater loss.
- **Understand** that pride and dishonesty carry a far heavier cost than the mistake itself.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

This is a value-based question, so examiners look for: (1) a clear lesson drawn directly from Matilda's experience, (2) personal reflection on how YOU would act, and (3) reference to key story events (losing the necklace, hiding the truth, ten years of ruin, the twist ending). Avoid retelling the full story — just use events as evidence. Four crisp points with brief justification fit the 4-mark length perfectly.

Q16.

[4]

As a reader do you sympathise with Matilda ? Give reasons from the text to support your answer. (The Necklace)

Previously asked in: 2022 2/2/1 Q7 (ii)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Yes, I sympathise with Matilda to some extent, though her own vanity caused her ruin.

Matilda deserves sympathy because she suffered genuine poverty through no fault of her birth — she was "born as if through an error of destiny" into a clerk's family. Her husband was kind and sacrificed his savings willingly for her happiness.

However, she also brings sympathy through her suffering after losing the necklace. She worked heroically for ten years — washing dishes, carrying water, haggling at markets — to repay the debt. This shows courage and endurance.

Yet, had she been honest with Mme Forestier at the start, she would have discovered the necklace was false and worth only five hundred francs, sparing ten years of hardship. Her pride, not fate alone, caused her downfall.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

Examiners expect a **balanced answer** — both sympathy and its limits. Quote or closely reference the text: "born as if through an error of destiny," her ten years of hard labour, and the twist (necklace was fake). Avoid just retelling the story; give reasons. 4 marks = ~4 distinct points, each supported by textual evidence.

Q17.

[6]

Matilda's over-ambitiousness was the cause of her destruction. Justify.

Previously asked in: 2023 2/5/1 Q11(b)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Matilda Loisel was a woman of excessive ambition and vanity, which ultimately destroyed her life.

Discontent and greed: Matilda was never satisfied with her modest life. She constantly craved luxury, jewels, and elegant dinners, though she was married to a petty clerk. This dissatisfaction was the root of her ruin.

Over-ambition at the ball: Unsatisfied with her dress, she borrowed a diamond necklace from Mme Forestier, driven by her desire to appear wealthy and impress others. Her obsession with status led to recklessness.

Loss of the necklace: In her hurry to hide her modest wrap from rich women, she carelessly lost the necklace — a direct consequence of her pride and vanity.

Ten years of suffering: To replace a necklace worth only 500 francs, the Loisels spent 36,000 francs borrowed from usurers, enduring ten years of grinding poverty.

Dishonesty worsened the ruin: Had she confessed to Mme Forestier, she would have discovered the necklace was fake. Her pride prevented this, multiplying her misery needlessly.

Thus, Matilda's ambition, vanity, and inability to accept her circumstances were entirely responsible for her destruction.

Source: *The Necklace*, Guy de Maupassant — Chapter 7

Explanation

Examiners look for: (1) identification of Matilda's character flaw — vanity/over-ambition, (2) how each key event links back to that flaw, (3) the ironic twist (fake necklace) as the climax of her self-destruction. Use textual evidence (36,000 francs, ten years, 500 francs). Avoid retelling the whole plot — keep it analytical. Six well-linked points or three tight paragraphs work best for 6 marks.

Q18.

[6]

Matilda's character embodies the journey of change or progression throughout the story, encapsulating the transformations she endured as a consequence of her experiences, trials, and engagements with other characters. In the light of the above information, trace the transformation seen in Matilda's character in the story. (The Necklace)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/1/1 Q11(b)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Matilda's Transformation in "The Necklace"

Phase 1 — Dissatisfied and Vain: At the outset, Matilda is a pretty but discontented woman who "suffered incessantly," feeling she deserved wealth and luxury. She resents her modest life, craves jewels and elegant dinners, and is never grateful for what she has.

Phase 2 — Momentary Glory: At the Minister's ball, she is radiant — "the prettiest of all, elegant, gracious, smiling." Her vanity peaks as she basks in admiration, but her carelessness leads to the loss of the borrowed necklace.

Phase 3 — Hardship and Heroism: To repay the debt of thirty-six thousand francs, Matilda sheds all pride. She does coarse household labour, haggles at markets, and works for ten years — becoming "a strong, hard woman," practical and resilient.

Phase 4 — Acceptance and Dignity: Finally, having paid every franc, she approaches Mme Forestier honestly and reveals the truth with "proud and simple joy" — showing hard-won courage and integrity she had never possessed before.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

Examiners look for a **traced progression** (not just description), so organise your answer in clear phases: before → ball → aftermath → conclusion. Use **textual evidence** (quoted words or specific events) for each phase. The irony of the necklace being fake is the climax — always mention Matilda's reaction to it as proof of her changed character (pride in honesty, not shame). Avoid retelling the plot without linking events to character change.

Q19.

[6]

Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words:

Evaluate how "The Necklace" critiques the obsession with appearances and social status.

Previously asked in: 2026 2/1/1 Q11(II)

♦ The Necklace

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Model Answer

Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace" sharply critiques the obsession with appearances and social status through the tragic fate of Matilda Loisel.

Matilda, born into a clerk's family, suffers "incessantly" because she believes she deserves luxury and elegance. She is never satisfied — she resents her modest apartment, plain food, and simple dress. This dissatisfaction drives her to borrow a diamond necklace merely to *appear* wealthy at the Minister's ball.

Her desire to avoid looking "poverty-stricken" among rich women leads to the loss of the necklace and ultimately ten years of grinding poverty. Ironically, the necklace was fake, worth only five hundred francs — a powerful symbol showing that appearances are often false and worthless.

The story teaches that vanity and the hunger for social status bring ruin, while honesty and contentment could have easily saved the Loiseles from their misery.

Source: *The Necklace*, Chapter 7

Explanation

Examiners look for: (1) a clear critical stance on the theme, (2) textual evidence from the story (Matilda's dissatisfaction, the ball, the ten years of poverty, the twist ending), and (3) a brief conclusion connecting the theme to the story's irony. Avoid retelling the plot — evaluate and analyse. The fake necklace is the most important symbol to mention; always include the twist in a question about this theme.

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