

CBSE CLASS X

English Language & Literature (184)

QUESTION PAPER

From previous CBSE Board Exam questions

Code: HC88F5

Questions: 38

Maximum Marks: 172

Generated: 2026-06-15 13:05

SELECTIONS USED

Source	Previous-year board
Subject	English Language & Literature
Lessons	Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom
Year	2022-2026
Questions selected	38

Composition — Types: 17 literature_extract · 12 Short · 9 literature_long

Q1.

[6]

Comment on the reactions and feelings of Lencho and Nelson Mandela when they faced challenges in their lives.
(A Letter to God and Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/3/1 Q10(a)

♦ A Letter to God

Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q2.

[3]

The transition from the apartheid system in South Africa to a new era of equality reflects broader historical trends in the struggle for human rights and social justice. Elaborate.
(Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/2/1 Q8 (i)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q3.

[6]

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

Examine the similarities and differences between the tiger in "A Tiger in the Zoo" and the dragon in "The Tale of Custard the Dragon".

Previously asked in: 2026 2/1/1 Q10(I)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

7.1 The Tale of Custard the Dragon

Q4.

[5]

He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.
He should be lurking in shadow,
Sliding through long grass
Near the water hole
Where plump deer pass.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

(i) 'Quiet rage' refers to the tigers [1]

- (a) helplessness
- (b) he has not been able to hunt
- (c) his prey has not come to the water hole
- (d) he is not free

(ii) He is lurking in shadows because [1]

(iii) Complete the sentence appropriately : It is clear that metaphor is the poetic device used for 'pads of velvet' because (clue-explain how metaphor applies here). [1]

(iv) Find a word from the extract which means - to walk with measured, stiff or haughty strides : [1]

- (a) steps
- (b) lurking
- (c) pads
- (d) stalk

(v) State whether the following statement is TRUE or FALSE : The tiger is stealthily waiting for the deer to come to the water hole. [1]

Previously asked in: 2023 2/4/1 Q7(B)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q5.

[5]

It is from these comrades in the struggle that I learned the true meaning of courage. Time and again, I have seen men and women risk and give up their lives for an idea. I have seen men and women stand up to attacks and torture without breaking, showing a strength and resilience that defies the imagination. I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

Read the given extract and answer the questions.

- (i) What effect does the experience as described in the lines below have on the speaker? Time and again, I have seen men and women risk their lives for an idea. [1]
- (ii) Select one inference about the idea of courage from the given context : I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. [1]
- (A) being fearless
(B) absence of fear
(C) feeding your fears
(D) ability to overcome fear
- (iii) Answer in about 40 words, with reference to the extract : According to the author, what does true courage entail? How does this perspective differ from a common misconception about courage? [2]
- (iv) Fill in the blank with the correct phrase from the bracket in the context of the given extract : Men stood up to torture showing strength and resilience that is _____ (impossible to understand / seeped in reality). [1]

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q6(a)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q6.

[5]

To the assembled guests and the watching world, I said : Today, all of us do, by our presence here confer glory and hope to newborn liberty. Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud. We who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil. We thank all our distinguished international guests for having come to take possession with the people of our country of what is after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity.

Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

- (i) A society that _____ was born out of human disaster. [1]
- (a) all humanity would be proud of
 - (b) was full of extraordinary human disaster
 - (c) was full of outlaws and fighters
 - (d) hosts nations on their soil
- (ii) The former outlaws were given the privilege of _____. [1]
- (a) getting citizenship of their country
 - (b) participating in a trade conclave
 - (c) finalizing the foreign policy
 - (d) hosting the nations of the world on their soil
- (iii) The speaker was overwhelmed with the sense of _____. [1]
- (a) gratitude
 - (b) achievement
 - (c) happiness
 - (d) charity
- (iv) State whether the following statement is True or False: The common victory was when South Africa did not become an independent nation. [1]
- (v) Select the word from the extract that means 'granting/bestowing'. [1]
- (a) conferring
 - (b) confident
 - (c) conference
 - (d) configuring

Previously asked in: 2023 2/5/1 Q6(A)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q7.

[5]

He hears the last voice at night.
The patrolling cars,
And stares with his brilliant eyes
At the brilliant stars.
He stalks in his vivid stripes
A few steps of his cage.

Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

(i) Whose is the last voice heard by the tiger? [1]

- (a) police jeep
- (b) patrolling cars
- (c) watchmen
- (d) roar of lion

(ii) Complete the sentence appropriately. It is clear that repetition is the poetic device used for 'his brilliant eyes / At the brilliant stars' because _____. (Clue: explain how repetition applies here) [1]

(iii) The main contrasting ideas in this extract are [1]

- (a) tiger and deer.
- (b) cruelty and sympathy.
- (c) confinement and freedom.
- (d) master and slave.

(iv) The image of the tiger stalking in his vivid stripes creates an image of [1]

- (a) cowardice.
- (b) frustration.
- (c) lethargy.
- (d) purposefulness.

(v) State whether the following statement is True or False: The poem uses staring at the sky to symbolize the freedom the tiger yearns for. [1]

Previously asked in: 2023 2/2/1 Q7(B)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q8.

[5]

We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination.
Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another.
The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement.
Let freedom reign. God bless Africa!

Read the following extract and answer the questions:

- (i) State any one inference about Nelson Mandela from the given context. [1]
- (ii) State True or False: [Statement about whether Mandela intends to mean the well-being and welfare of only black people in South Africa.] Justify your answer in about 40 words with reference to the extract. [1]
- (iii) Which phrase would correctly replace the underlined portion of the given sentence from the extract? The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement. [2]
- (iv) Mandela intends to mean the well-being and welfare of only black people in South Africa. State True or False and justify your answer. [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/5/1 Q6(a)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q9.

[3]

In what ways does the contrast between the tiger's natural habitat and its confinement in a concrete cell enhance the poem's exploration of captivity and its consequences for wild animals?
(A Tiger in the Zoo)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/3/1 Q8 (ii)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q10.

[5]

"I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die".

Read the given extract and answer the questions:

- (i) What is the main ideal Mandela is talking about? [1]
(A) economic prosperity
(B) representative and free society
(C) absolute power
(D) finishing racism
- (ii) How does the statement reflect Mandela's commitment to justice? (Answer in about 40 words) [2]
- (iii) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket: Nelson's vision was not simply to reverse the oppression but to end it completely as he wishes to _____ (fight / appease) all forms of domination in which all persons live with equal opportunities. [1]
- (iv) The phrase "prepared to die" shows Mandela's: [1]
(A) anxiety
(B) desperation
(C) passion
(D) uprightness

Previously asked in: 2026 2/5/1 Q6(B)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q11.

[5]

We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination. Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement.

Read the given extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the two given:

- I What is the tone Nelson Mandela is UNLIKELY to have used in his speech? [1]
A inspirational
B assertive
C conflicted
D direct
- II According to Mandela, emancipation is not merely political. Elaborate. [2]
- III Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket: Mandela's speech swings between references to the past and a _____ (bleak/promising) future. [1]
- IV With reference to the extract explain the sentence, "The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement." [1]

Previously asked in: 2026 2/1/1 Q6(A)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q12.**[6]**

Answer any one of the following two questions in 100–120 words:

Explore the contrasting images of the tiger in 'A Tiger in the Zoo' and the tiger in 'How to Tell Wild Animals'.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/2/1 Q10 (b)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

Q13.**[6]**

In the chapter 'A Baker from Goa' the narrator talks about his childhood in Goa and his fond memories. In about 120 words write a presentation draft comparing the childhood of the narrator in 'A Baker from Goa' to that of Nelson Mandela. You may begin this way: Childhood memories remind us of the days gone by.....

Reference: A Baker from Goa and Nelson Mandela: Long Walk

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q10(i)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q14.**[3]**

Mandela in his speech says, "The policy of apartheid created a deep and lasting wound in my country and my people." Explain the significance of the word "wound" as used by Mandela.

(Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/1/1 Q8 (i)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q15.**[5]**

He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Explain the contrast created by the words, 'stalks' and 'few steps of his cage'. [1]
- (ii) Which of the following best describes the tiger's feelings in the context? [1]
 - (A) anger
 - (B) conflicted
 - (C) pessimism
 - (D) apprehension
- (iii) Comment in about 40 words on the poet's use of imagery in the above extract. [2]
- (iv) Which word in the stanza means the same as 'clear and bright'? [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/3/1 Q7(a)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q16.

[5]

Tenth May dawned bright and clear. For the past few days, I had been pleasantly besieged by dignitaries and world leaders who were coming to pay their respects before the inauguration. The inauguration would be the largest gathering ever of international leaders on South African soil. The ceremonies took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheatre formed by the Union buildings in Pretoria. For decades this had been the seat of white supremacy, and now it was the site of rainbow gathering of different colours and nations for the installation of South Africa's first democratic non-racial government.

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) What do you infer from the following statement? "The inauguration would be the largest gathering ever of international leaders on South African Soil." [1]
- (ii) Explain in about 40 words the effective shift from white supremacy to a rainbow gathering. [2]
- (iii) Which phrase would correctly substitute 'pleasantly besieged' in the given sentence from that extract? [1]
- (iv) State true or false with reference to the given extract. In the past the 'amphitheatre' had been a seat for theatrical performances. [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/3/1 Q6(a)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q17.

[5]

He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.

He should be lurking in shadow,
Sliding through long grass
Near the water pole
Where plump deer pass.

He should be snarling around houses
At the jungle's edge,
Baring his white fangs, his claws,
Terrorising the village!

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) State any one point of contrast between the tiger in the zoo and in its natural habitat. [1]
- (ii) When the speaker suggests that the tiger should be "Snarling around houses at the jungle's edge"? What does he insinuate about the tiger's natural behaviour and habitat? [1]
- (iii) The poet's skillful use of imagery effectively depicts the confinement and frustration of the tiger. Elaborate in about 40 words. [2]
- (iv) Which phrase would correctly substitute 'quiet rage' in the given sentence from the extract? The few steps of his cage on pads of velvet quiet in his 'quiet rage.' [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q7(A)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q18.

[5]

On the day of the inauguration, I was overwhelmed with a sense of history. In the first decade of the 20th century a few years after the bitter Anglo-Boer war and before my own birth, the white skinned people of South Africa patched up their differences and created a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned people of their own land. The structure they created formed the basis of one of the harshest, most inhuman societies the world has ever known. Now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, and my own eighth decade as a man, that system has been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognised the rights and freedoms of all peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin.

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Explain the feelings of the narrator when he said; "I was overwhelmed with a sense of history." [1]
- (ii) The system of racial domination has been replaced by a system that: [1]
- (A) confirms the education of the Blacks.
 - (B) recognises the rights and freedoms of all people.
 - (C) recollects the bitter experiences.
 - (D) focuses on the personality development.
- (iii) Comment on the kind of society apartheid had created? [2]
- (iv) Which phrase would correctly substitute 'patched up' in the given sentence from the extract: "...the white skinned people of South Africa patched up their differences..." [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q6(A)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q19.

[6]

Answer in about 100-120 words : What distinguishes the portrayal of the tiger in the poem 'A Tiger in the Zoo' from the depiction of the tiger in the poem 'How to tell Wild Animals' ?

Previously asked in: 2025 2/5/1 Q10(b)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q20.

[5]

He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage
On pads of velvet quiet
In his quiet rage.
He should be lurking in shadow
Sliding through long grass
Near the water hole
Where plump deer pass

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option :

(i) 'He' is in a rage because he is [1]

- (a) hungry
- (b) tied
- (c) thirsty
- (d) in a cage

(ii) He is lurking in the shadow because _____. [1]

(iii) The above lines express the tiger's _____. [1]

- (a) resignation
- (b) fear
- (c) anger
- (d) acceptance

(iv) Complete the sentence appropriately : It is clear that metaphor is the poetic device used for 'pads of velvet' – because _____. (Clue : explain how metaphor is applied here.) [1]

(v) The contrast in the above extract is between life in the forest and life in the [1]

- (a) circus
- (b) national park
- (c) cave
- (d) zoo

Previously asked in: 2023 2/6/1 Q7(b)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q21.

[5]

But he's locked in a concrete cell,
His strength behind bars,
Stalking the length of his cage,
Ignoring visitors.

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Why is the tiger stalking the length of his cage? [1]
- (ii) What is the significance of the use of the word 'concrete' to describe the concrete cell where the tiger is kept and how does it contrast with the tiger's presence in its natural habitat? Answer in about 40 words. [2]
- (iii) Complete the sentence with the appropriate option: The lines from the poem tell us that the tiger is _____ . [1]
- (A) enjoying his time in the cell
(B) being indifferent to visitors because it is a daily routine for him
(C) not as strong as his counterpart in the jungle
(D) wanting to be free from the cage
- (iv) Identify the type of literary device used in the line: "His strength behind bars" [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/4/1 Q7(a)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q22.

[5]

He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.
He should be lurking in shadow,
Sliding through long grass

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Identify and name any one figure of speech in the above extract. [2]
- (ii) Fill in the blank with one word. The tiger's stalking on 'pads of velvet' suggests a movement that is _____. [1]
- (iii) Based on the given lines from the poem, which words would best describe the feelings of the tiger ? [1]
- A Calm and content
B Both subdued and angry
C Both frustrated and happy
D Both angry and famished
- (iv) Select the option that applies the same rhyme scheme as the first four lines of the given extract. [1]
- A The people along the sand All turn and look one way They turn their back on the land They look at the sea all day
B Along the sand, the people All turn and look one way They turn back on the sand They look at the sea all day
C The people along the sand Look one way and all turn Their backs on the land They look at the sea all day
D The people along the sand They turn their back on the land They look one way At the sea all day.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/1/1 Q7(b)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q23.

[5]

Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud. We, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil. We thank all of our distinguished international guests for having come to take possession with the people of our country of what is, after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity.

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

(i) Which of the following options justifies the statement made by Mandela, "We, who were outlaws ..." ? [1]

- (A) The international leaders who came to attend the ceremony
- (B) Due to Apartheid, many countries broke diplomatic relations with South Africa
- (C) The Commonwealth countries and their people
- (D) The people who fought in the Anglo-Boer War

(ii) Complete the sentence appropriately: Mandela thanked all the distinguished international guests because _____. [1]

(iii) In the above lines, Mandela mentions 'extraordinary human disaster'. What is the significance of this phrase in his speech? [2]

(iv) The tone of Mandela in the above excerpt is: 1. unifying 2. determined 3. aggressive 4. pessimistic 5. hopeless
Select the correct option: [1]

- (A) 1, 2 and 4
- (B) 2 and 4
- (C) 1 and 2
- (D) 4 and 5

Previously asked in: 2026 2/2/1 Q6(a)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q24.

[5]

But he's locked in a concrete cell,
His strength behind bars,
Stalking the length of his cage,
Ignoring visitors.

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

(i) Complete the sentence suitably : The tiger ignores the visitors because _____. [1]

(ii) The above lines juxtapose the tiger's natural instincts with its caged existence. Justify. [2]

(iii) What mood is created by the poet in the above lines ? [1]

- (A) sympathetic and thoughtful
- (B) angry and violent
- (C) cheerful and happy
- (D) exciting and fun

(iv) Fill in the blank with the correct option from the brackets. The length of his cage highlights the _____ (vast space/limited space/free space) in which the tiger is confined. [1]

Previously asked in: 2026 2/3/1 Q7(a)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q25.**[6]**

Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words :

Evaluate the similarities and differences between the tiger in "A Tiger in the Zoo" and the dragon in "The Tale of Custard the Dragon".

Previously asked in: 2026 2/4/1 Q10 (b)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q26.**[3]**

Is it ethical to enclose wild animals within cages ? Discuss with reference to the poem, 'A Tiger in the Zoo'.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/5/1 Q8 (iii)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q27.**[3]**

In what way did Nelson Mandela's yearning for freedom alter the course of his life ? (Nelson Mandela : Long Walk to Freedom)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/5/1 Q8 (ii)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q28.**[3]**

Why does Mandela mention that he was prevented from fulfilling his obligations as a son, a brother, a father, and a husband ? (Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom)

Previously asked in: 2026 2/3/1 Q8 (i)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q29.**[3]**

What is the vision of freedom that comes through the speech of Nelson Mandela ?

Previously asked in: 2026 2/4/1 Q8 (v)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q30.**[3]**

Nelson Mandela in his inauguration speech says, "We, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil."

What is the significance of this statement with reference to the political system that prevailed before this? (Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/4/1 Q8 (i)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q31.

[5]

He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage
He should be lurking in shadow
Sliding through long grass
Near the water hole
Where plump deer pass.

Attempt any one of the given two extracts:

(i) Complete the sentence appropriately. The vivid stripes refer to the _____. [1]

(ii) Which word from the extract is the opposite of 'loud'? [1]

(iii) The use of the phrase 'pads of velvet' means [1]

- (a) neck
- (b) tail
- (c) skin
- (d) paws

(iv) State whether the following statement is True or False: The confinement of the cramped space of the cage has restricted the tiger's steps. [1]

(v) The tiger was lurking in shadow _____. [1]

- (a) to catch its prey
- (b) as the cage was dark
- (c) as the velvet was quiet
- (d) as he was in a rage

Previously asked in: 2023 2/1/1 Q7(b)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q32.

[2]

Give instances from the poem to justify [the world the poet envisions].

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

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q33.

[2]

[The narrator compared humans unfavourably to animals. / Humans can learn from animals. Justify.] (A Tiger in the Zoo / related text)

Previously asked in: 2022 2/1/1 Q6 (iii)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q34.

[3]

State any three disadvantages that the tiger faces inside a cage.

Previously asked in: 2023 2/5/1 Q8 (d)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q35.**[6]**

Mandela said, 'No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love.' Discuss.

Previously asked in: 2023 2/2/1 Q10(b)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q36.**[6]**

Answer in about 100-120 words :

'No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion'. Do you agree? Elaborate on the basis of the chapter "Nelson Mandela - Long walk to freedom".

Previously asked in: 2023 2/4/1 Q10(b)

♦ Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

Q37.**[2]**

Walt Whitman speaks of the human race with a tinge of sarcasm. Which are the two reasons that you agree with ? (Animals)

Previously asked in: 2022 2/2/1 Q6 (iv)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

Q38.**[6]**

Answer any one of the following two questions, in 100-120 words: A desire is more personal whereas a vision has broader connotations. You have been asked to present an analysis of Valli's desire and Mandela's vision and how they are respectively fulfilled. Write this presentation draft including your insights, in about 120 words, comparing the approaches of both Valli and Mandela. You may begin like this: One acknowledges that both, Valli and Mandela _____ however, (Reference – Nelson Mandela – A Long Walk to Freedom & Madam Rides a Bus)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/2/1 Q10(a)

♦ Madam Rides the Bus

Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom

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