

CBSE CLASS X

English Language & Literature (184)

QUESTION PAPER

From previous CBSE Board Exam questions

Code: Y6CoFA

Questions: 25

Maximum Marks: 98

Generated: 2026-06-15 13:05

SELECTIONS USED

Source	Previous-year board
Subject	English Language & Literature
Lessons	The Sermon at Benares
Year	2022-2026
Questions selected	25

Composition — Types: 15 Short · 8 literature_long · 1 literature_extract · 1 Long

Q1.

[6]

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

Analyse and evaluate the role of faith in 'A Letter to God' and 'The Sermon at Benares'.

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

♦ A Letter to God

The Sermon at Benares

Q2.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions, in 100-120 words: You have been chosen to address the student gathering from the nearby schools, to speak on "How to Deal with Loss – Personal or Material". Prepare the speech draft in not more than 120 words, with reference to the commonality of themes in John Benyman's 'The Ball Poem' and 'A Sermon at Benaras'. You may begin this way. Good Morning everyone. Today, I'd like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into how we can learn to deal with loss. You may end in this way – To conclude, I'd like to say that – Thank you.

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

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

The Sermon at Benares

Q3.

[6]

How do Lencho in 'A Letter to God' and Kisa Gotami in 'The Sermon at Benares' respond to their experiences of suffering and loss? How did they overcome their respective losses?

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

A Letter to God

Q4.

[5]

"I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Complete the sentence appropriately : The speaker addresses the person he is speaking to as "my dear" because _____. [1]
- (ii) The poet mentions "yellow hair". What is its significance in the context of the statement ? Answer in about 40 words. [2]
- (iii) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the brackets. The poet suggests that God's love in comparison to that of a human being is _____ (selfish/selfless). [1]
- (iv) As per the above extract, what attributes does God not love a person for ? Select the correct option. 1. Wealth 2. Physical appearance 3. Intelligence 4. Inner qualities 5. Youth [1]
- A 1 and 4
B 3, 4, and 5
C 2 and 4
D Only 4

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

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

Q5.

[3]

What message might the Buddha's story hold for those who are in positions of power and privilege?

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q8 (v)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q6.

[2]

How, according to Buddha, can one obtain peace of mind? (The Sermon at Benares)

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q7.

[2]

"These sights so moved him that he at once went out into the world to seek enlightenment." What were the sights that moved 'him'? (The Sermon at Benares)

Previously asked in: 2022 2/4/1 Q6 (ii)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q8.

[2]

Ananda was blamed for a number of things. Mention any two.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q9.**[3]**

What did Siddhartha Gautama come across by chance when he was about twenty-five years old?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/2/1 Q8 (e)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q10.**[3]**

What does the Buddha say about the world?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/1/1 Q8 (e)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q11.**[6]**

Answer in about 100-120 words :

'As ripe fruits are in danger of falling early, so mortals when born are always in danger of death'. With this statement of the Buddha find out the moral values that Kisa Gotami learnt after the death of her child.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q12.**[6]**

Through the story of Kisa Gotami, what did the Buddha try to preach to the common man?

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q13.**[4]**

How does Buddha bring about a different perspective in Kisa Gotami's understanding of life ? (The Sermon at Benares)

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q14.**[3]**

What did Kisa Gotami do after the death of her only son ?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/6/1 Q8 (a)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q15.**[6]**

Why did Kisa Gotami meet the Buddha? How did Buddha change her life?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/5/1 Q10(b)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q16.**[3]**

Why did Kisa Gotami, despite her desperate efforts to find a solution for her grief, ultimately become weary and hopeless ? (The Sermon at Benares)

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q17.**[2]**

Grief is often seen as a measure of love. Justify your response to Buddha's sermon.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q18.**[6]**

Grief or sadness is an emotion natural to all types of loss or significant change. You have been asked to present an analysis of the approaches of Lencho and Kisa Gotami in dealing with their respective losses. Write this presentation draft including your insights, and comparing the approaches of both.

You may begin like this: One acknowledges that Lencho had unwavering faith in God whereas Kisa Gotami in her grief, believed that her son however

(Reference – A Letter to God and The Sermon at Benares)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/4/1 Q10(a)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q19.**[6]**

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

"The Sermon at Benaras" and "For Anne Gregory", deal with the themes of 'love' and 'life'. Discuss.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

8.1 For Anne Gregory

Q20.**[3]**

Explain, why the speaker mentions God in the poem "For Anne Gregory".

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q8 (iv)

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

Q21.**[3]**

The idea of beauty is a one-dimensional cultural conception or one that has been created by human beings themselves. Comment on the statement with reference to the conventional ideas of beauty in the poem 'For Anne Gregory'. (For Anne Gregory)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q8 (v)

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

Q22.**[3]**

"Not from weeping or from grieving will anyone obtain peace of mind; on the contrary his pain will be greater and his body will suffer."

Validate this preaching of Buddha with reference to the story 'A Sermon at Benaras'. (A Sermon at Benaras)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q8 (i)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

Q23.**[3]**

Do you think you can love a person for his/her inner beauty alone and not care about the physical appearance?

Previously asked in: 2024 2/5/1 Q8 (v)

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

Q24.**[3]**

The religious man's perspective in 'For Anne Gregory' reinforces the concept of divine love. Illustrate.

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

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

Q25.**[3]**

What lesson does "For Anne Gregory" present for youthful love ?

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

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

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CBSE CLASS X

English Language & Literature (184)

ANSWER KEY

From previous CBSE Board Exam questions

Code: Y6CoFA

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Q1.

[6]

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

Analyse and evaluate the role of faith in 'A Letter to God' and 'The Sermon at Benares'.

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

♦ A Letter to God

The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Role of Faith in 'A Letter to God' and 'The Sermon at Benares'

In *A Letter to God*, Lencho's faith in God is absolute and unquestioning. When hailstorms destroy his crops, he writes directly to God asking for a hundred pesos, never doubting that God will respond. His faith is so blind that when he receives money sent by the postmaster and workers, he suspects them of stealing the rest — he cannot imagine God sending less than what he asked for. His faith, though admirable in its purity, reveals his naivety.

In *The Sermon at Benares*, the Buddha teaches a different kind of faith — faith rooted in acceptance and wisdom. He does not deny grief but shows Kisa Gotami that suffering and death are universal. True faith lies in understanding life's impermanence, not in miraculous relief.

Both stories show faith as a powerful force, but one that must be guided by wisdom rather than blind expectation.

Source: Chapter 1 — *A Letter to God*; Chapter 8 — *The Sermon at Benares*

Explanation

- **Examiners look for:** comparison of both texts, reference to specific events, and a concluding observation linking both.
- **Key contrast:** Lencho's faith is personal, blind, and somewhat selfish; the Buddha's teaching replaces blind grief with reasoned acceptance.
- **Avoid:** retelling the full plot — analyse *how* faith functions in each story.
- **Word count tip:** This is 6 marks / ~120–150 words — three tight paragraphs is ideal.

Q2.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions, in 100-120 words: You have been chosen to address the student gathering from the nearby schools, to speak on "How to Deal with Loss – Personal or Material". Prepare the speech draft in not more than 120 words, with reference to the commonality of themes in John Berryman's 'The Ball Poem' and 'A Sermon at Benaras'. You may begin this way. Good Morning everyone. Today, I'd like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into how we can learn to deal with loss. You may end in this way – To conclude, I'd like to say that – Thank you.

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

◆ 3.4 The Ball Poem

The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Good Morning everyone. Today, I'd like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into how we can learn to deal with loss.

John Berryman's *The Ball Poem* shows a young boy losing his ball and learning that loss is an inevitable part of life. He must accept it and move on, understanding that material things cannot be recovered. Similarly, in *A Sermon at Benares*, the Buddha teaches Kisa Gotami — who has lost her child — that death and loss are universal. No household is untouched by grief.

Both texts share the theme that loss is common to all humanity. Grieving is natural, but clinging to what is lost only deepens suffering. The true lesson is acceptance — learning to let go and find strength within ourselves.

To conclude, I'd like to say that loss, whether personal or material, teaches us resilience. Accepting it as part of life helps us heal and grow stronger. — **Thank you.**

Explanation

- The question asks for a **speech**, so opening and closing lines (given) must be included.
- Examiners look for: correct reference to **both** texts, identification of the **common theme** (universality/inevitability of loss + acceptance), and a coherent speech structure.
- Keep the tone formal but warm — it is a student speech.
- Word count should stay within 120 words; avoid padding.
- The key literary link: both texts teach that loss is **universal** and **acceptance** is the only healthy response.

Q3.

[6]

How do Lencho in 'A Letter to God' and Kisa Gotami in 'The Sermon at Benares' respond to their experiences of suffering and loss? How did they overcome their respective losses?

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

A Letter to God

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Model Answer

Lencho's Response (A Letter to God):

Lencho, a farmer, suffers great loss when a hailstorm destroys his crops. His response is rooted in deep, unquestioning faith in God. Rather than despairing, he writes a letter directly to God asking for 100 pesos. When he receives 70 pesos (sent by the postmaster and employees), he writes again, accusing "a bunch of crooks at the post office" of stealing the rest. His faith never wavers, but ironically, he shows ingratitude toward the very humans who helped him.

Kisa Gotami's Response (The Sermon at Benares):

Kisa Gotami is devastated by her son's death and desperately seeks medicine to revive him. The Buddha sends her to fetch mustard seed from a house untouched by death. Finding no such house, she realises that death is universal. She overcomes her grief by surrendering selfishness and accepting that death is the common fate of all mortals.

Comparison:

Lencho overcomes loss through blind faith in God. Kisa Gotami overcomes it through wisdom and acceptance of life's reality. Both find consolation — one through belief, the other through enlightenment.

Source: Chapter 1 — A Letter to God; Chapter 8 — The Sermon at Benares

Explanation

- **What examiners look for:** Both characters must be discussed with equal weight; the question has two parts — response to suffering AND how they overcame it.
- **Lencho's irony** is a key point — his faith is absolute, but he is ungrateful to human helpers. Mention this for full marks.
- **Kisa Gotami's arc** — first trip (denial/desperation) → second trip (realisation) → acceptance — must be clear.
- Avoid retelling the full story; focus on the *response* and *resolution*.
- A brief comparative line at the end earns the synthesis mark.

Q4.

[5]

"I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Complete the sentence appropriately : The speaker addresses the person he is speaking to as "my dear" because _____. [1]
- (ii) The poet mentions "yellow hair". What is its significance in the context of the statement ? Answer in about 40 words. [2]
- (iii) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the brackets. The poet suggests that God's love in comparison to that of a human being is _____ (selfish/selfless). [1]
- (iv) As per the above extract, what attributes does God not love a person for ? Select the correct option. 1. Wealth 2. Physical appearance 3. Intelligence 4. Inner qualities 5. Youth [1]
- A 1 and 4
B 3, 4, and 5
C 2 and 4
D Only 4

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

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

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Model Answer

- (i) The speaker addresses the person as "my dear" because he is speaking affectionately and intimately to Anne Gregory, showing warmth and closeness while delivering an important truth about love.
- (ii) "Yellow hair" signifies physical beauty or outward appearance. The poet uses it to show that human beings are attracted to a person's external features rather than their true inner self, making their love conditional and superficial.
- (iii) The poet suggests that God's love in comparison to that of a human being is **selfless**.
- (iv) **Option C — 2 and 4**

According to the extract, God does not love a person for their physical appearance (yellow hair symbolises outer beauty) but loves them "for yourself alone," meaning for their inner qualities. So God does *not* love based on physical appearance (2), and the extract implies humans fail to love for inner qualities (4).

Source: For Anne Gregory, last stanza

Explanation

- (i) "My dear" = term of endearment; one line is enough for 1 mark.
- (ii) Yellow hair = symbol of physical/external beauty — examiners want this clearly stated with the contrast between outer and inner self.
- (iii) Direct recall: God loves unconditionally = selfless.

- (iv) The extract says only God can love "for yourself alone and NOT your yellow hair" — physical appearance (2) is what humans love for; inner qualities (4) is what only God loves for, so humans do NOT love for inner qualities. Option C is correct.

Q5.**[3]**

What message might the Buddha's story hold for those who are in positions of power and privilege?

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q8 (v)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

The Buddha's story conveys an important message for those in power and privilege: **no one is exempt from suffering and death**. Siddhartha was a prince, shielded from pain, yet he abandoned wealth and royalty to seek the truth about human suffering. This teaches that the privileged must not remain indifferent to the pain around them. Power and comfort can blind one to reality. True wisdom lies in acknowledging universal suffering, showing compassion, and using one's position to guide and help others — not to remain sheltered from life's harsh truths.

Source: "The Sermon at Benares," Chapter 8

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to connect the **biographical detail** (prince who left privilege) with a **moral/thematic message** relevant to those in power.
- Key points to hit: privilege can blind one to suffering; suffering is universal (no one is immune); responsibility to show compassion and seek truth.
- Avoid retelling the story — draw out the **message/lesson** directly.
- 3 marks = roughly 3 distinct points, stated clearly and briefly.

Q6.**[2]**

How, according to Buddha, can one obtain peace of mind? (The Sermon at Benares)

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

According to Buddha, one can obtain peace of mind by drawing out the arrow of lamentation, complaint, and grief. Weeping and grieving only increase pain and make the body suffer. One who becomes composed after removing grief, and overcomes all sorrow, will become free from sorrow and be blessed.

Source: *The Sermon at Benares*, Chapter 8

Explanation

The examiner looks for two key ideas: (1) weeping/grieving does **not** bring peace — it increases suffering, and (2) the solution — drawing out the arrow of lamentation/grief and becoming composed. Both points together fetch full marks. Quote or closely paraphrase the Buddha's words from the sermon for accuracy.

Q7.

[2]

"These sights so moved him that he at once went out into the world to seek enlightenment." What were the sights that moved 'him'? (The Sermon at Benaras)

Previously asked in: 2022 2/4/1 Q6 (ii)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

The sights that moved **him** (Prince Siddhartha Gautama) were four in number. While out hunting, he chanced upon:

1. A **sick man**
2. An **aged man**
3. A **funeral procession**
4. A **monk begging for alms**

These sights of suffering and renunciation made him leave his royal life to seek enlightenment.

Source: *The Sermon at Benares, Introduction*

Explanation

The question is straightforward — it asks you to identify the four sights from the introductory passage. Always list all four clearly; missing even one may cost half a mark. Use the exact terms from the text ("sick man," "aged man," "funeral procession," "monk begging for alms"). A brief concluding line about the impact earns full marks neatly.

Q8.

[2]

Ananda was blamed for a number of things. Mention any two.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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The question mentions "Ananda was blamed for a number of things," but the source passages provided are from Chapter 8 about Gautama Buddha and Kisa Gotami. There is **no mention of a person named Ananda** in any of the supplied passages.

Model Answer

The name "Ananda" does not appear in the given passage. The chapter deals with Kisa Gotami and the Buddha's sermon on grief. This question cannot be answered based on the provided source text.

Explanation

This question likely belongs to a **different chapter or text** — possibly the lesson "*The Last Lesson*" or a Buddhist narrative about the monk Ananda, which is not included in the source passages given here. If you are referring to a specific passage or chapter about Ananda, please share that text so an accurate model answer can be written. Attempting to answer without the correct source would risk giving incorrect information in your exam.

Q9.

[3]

What did Siddhartha Gautama come across by chance when he was about twenty-five years old?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/2/1 Q8 (e)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

When Siddhartha Gautama was about twenty-five years old, he was out hunting when he chanced upon four disturbing sights. He came across a **sick man**, then an **aged man**, then a **funeral procession**, and finally a **monk begging for alms**. These sights deeply moved the Prince, who had until then been shielded from the sufferings of the world. They prompted him to immediately leave his royal life and go out into the world to seek enlightenment about the sorrows he had witnessed.

Source: *Introduction to Gautama Buddha, Chapter 8*

Explanation

- The question asks specifically about what he "came across by chance," so all **four sights** must be listed — missing even one risks losing a mark.
- Mention that he was previously **shielded from suffering** to show contrast and context — examiners expect this.
- End with the **consequence** (he went to seek enlightenment) to complete the answer and justify the 3-mark weightage.

Q10.

[3]

What does the Buddha say about the world?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/1/1 Q8 (e)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

The Buddha says that the life of mortals is **troubled, brief, and full of pain**. Death is unavoidable — after old age comes death, and all living beings, young or old, wise or foolish, fall into the power of death. Just as ripe fruits fall and earthen pots break, so do mortals perish.

He further says that weeping and lamenting bring no peace; rather, they increase suffering. Therefore, the wise do not grieve, knowing this to be the nature of the world. One should **draw out the arrow of grief** to attain peace of mind and become truly blessed.

Source: *Chapter 8, The Buddha's Sermon*

Explanation

- The examiner expects **two key ideas**: (1) the nature of life — brief, painful, death inevitable; (2) the Buddha's advice — grief does not help, let go of sorrow to find peace.
- Use direct references from the sermon (e.g., "ripe fruits," "earthen vessels," "arrow of lamentation") to show textual grounding.
- At 3 marks, roughly 2 short paragraphs or 5–6 crisp sentences are enough — don't over-explain.

Q11.

[6]

Answer in about 100-120 words :

'As ripe fruits are in danger of falling early, so mortals when born are always in danger of death'. With this statement of the Buddha find out the moral values that Kisa Gotami learnt after the death of her child.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Kisa Gotami was a grief-stricken mother who refused to accept her son's death. Her journey from house to house in search of mustard-seed taught her several important moral values.

Universality of Death: She learnt that death comes to every household — "the living are few, but the dead are many." Death is the common destiny of all mortals, both young and old, wise and foolish.

Overcoming Selfishness: She realised she had been selfish in her grief. Sorrow is universal, and clinging to personal grief while ignoring others' suffering is a form of selfishness.

Acceptance brings Peace: The Buddha taught that weeping and lamentation do not save the dead; they only increase one's own pain. True peace comes by drawing out the arrow of grief and accepting life's terms.

Path to Immortality: She understood that surrendering selfishness leads to immortality. The wise do not grieve, knowing the inevitable nature of the world.

Source: *The Story of Kisa Gotami*, Chapter 8

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to link the Buddha's quoted statement to the moral lessons Kisa Gotami learnt — don't just retell the story.
- Key moral values to name: acceptance of death as universal, selflessness, overcoming grief, peace of mind. Each point scores marks.
- Support each value with a brief phrase or quotation from the text.
- Stay within 120–150 words; using bold headings is a neat way to present 4–5 distinct values clearly.

Q12.

[6]

Through the story of Kisa Gotami, what did the Buddha try to preach to the common man?

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Through the story of Kisa Gotami, the Buddha taught the following important lessons to common people:

1. **Death is universal.** The Buddha taught that no one can escape death — young or old, wise or foolish, all are subject to death. As all earthen pots end in being broken, so is the life of mortals.
1. **Grief is selfish.** Kisa Gotami realised, "How selfish am I in my grief!" Death is common to all, and excessive mourning only adds to one's own suffering.
1. **No one can prevent death.** Even a father cannot save his son, nor kinsmen their relations. Death cannot be avoided by anyone.
1. **Lamentation brings no peace.** Weeping and grieving cannot bring back the dead; they only cause further physical and mental suffering.
1. **Surrender selfishness to attain peace.** One who draws out the arrow of grief and overcomes sorrow becomes free and blessed.
1. **Acceptance leads to immortality.** He who surrenders selfishness and accepts the truth of death finds the path that leads to true peace.

Source: Chapter 8 — 'The Sermon at Benares'

Explanation

- Examiners expect you to cover both the story of Kisa Gotami **and** the Buddha's sermon, since the question asks what the Buddha "preached."
- Use points from the passage directly; paraphrase, don't just copy.
- Six marks = approximately 6 key points or 3 short paragraphs. This answer gives 6 labelled points, which is neat and examiner-friendly.
- The key ideas are: universality of death, futility of grief, acceptance, and inner peace — make sure all four appear.

Q13.

[4]

How does Buddha bring about a different perspective in Kisa Gotami's understanding of life ? (The Sermon at Benaras)

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Buddha changes Kisa Gotami's understanding through a practical lesson rather than direct teaching.

Initially, Kisa Gotami is overwhelmed by personal grief and blindly seeks medicine to revive her dead son, unable to accept his death. Buddha sends her to collect mustard-seed from a house untouched by death.

As she goes from house to house, she discovers that **every family has suffered loss** — "the living are few, but the dead are many." This universal truth strikes her deeply.

She then realises: "*How selfish am I in my grief! Death is common to all.*" Buddha made her experience this truth herself instead of preaching it — shifting her from self-absorbed grief to an understanding that **death is inevitable for all mortals**, and peace lies in surrendering selfishness, not in lamentation.

Source: *The Sermon at Benares, Chapter 8*

Explanation

- Examiners expect you to trace the **shift in Kisa Gotami's perspective**: from personal grief → universal truth about death.
- Key points to cover: (1) her initial state of grief, (2) Buddha's method — the mustard-seed task, (3) what she discovers house to house, (4) her final realisation about selfishness and the universality of death.
- Quote directly from the text where possible — "*the living are few, but the dead are many*" and "*How selfish am I in my grief*" — examiners reward textual evidence.
- Do **not** drift into describing Buddha's sermon at length; focus on **how the method changed her understanding**.

Q14.

[3]

What did Kisa Gotami do after the death of her only son ?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/6/1 Q8 (a)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

When Kisa Gotami's only son died, she was overcome with grief. She carried the dead child from house to house, asking her neighbours for medicine to cure him. The neighbours thought she had lost her senses, as the boy was already dead and no medicine could help him. Finally, a man directed her to the Buddha, who she believed could give her the medicine to revive her son.

Source: *The Story of Kisa Gotami*, Chapter 8

Explanation

The question is worth 3 marks, so cover three key points: (1) her grief-stricken state, (2) the action she took — carrying the dead child and asking for medicine, and (3) the neighbours' reaction and the man who directed her to the Buddha. Avoid going into what happened *after* she met the Buddha, as the question asks only about what she did immediately after her son's death.

Q15.

[6]

Why did Kisa Gotami meet the Buddha? How did Buddha change her life?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/5/1 Q10(b)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer**Why Kisa Gotami met the Buddha:**

Kisa Gotami's only son died. Overcome by grief, she refused to accept his death and went from house to house asking for medicine to cure him. A kind man directed her to the Buddha, Sakyamuni, saying he could help. She went to the Buddha and begged him for medicine to revive her dead child.

How the Buddha changed her life:

The Buddha sent her to fetch a handful of mustard-seed from a house that had never known death. As she went door to door, she found that every family had lost someone dear. She could not collect the seed.

This experience made Kisa Gotami realise that death is universal — it comes to all. Sitting alone watching the city lights flicker and die, she understood she had been selfish in her grief. She accepted that "death is common to all," and that surrendering selfishness leads to immortality.

The Buddha's sermon further taught her that weeping cannot bring back the dead; only drawing out the arrow of grief brings peace. Thus she was transformed from a grief-stricken, irrational mother into an enlightened, composed person.

Source: *The Story of Kisa Gotami and the Sermon, Chapter 8*

Explanation

- Examiners expect **two clear parts**: why she met the Buddha + how he changed her. Split them visibly.
- The key transformation is the **mustard-seed lesson** — she had to *discover* the truth herself, not just be told it. Mention this method.
- Quote or closely paraphrase the text: "death is common to all," "arrow of lamentation," "selfish in her grief" — these earn marks.
- Don't retell the whole story; focus on **cause** → **method** → **realisation** → **change**.

Q16.

[3]

Why did Kisa Gotami, despite her desperate efforts to find a solution for her grief, ultimately become weary and hopeless ?
(The Sermon at Benares)

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Kisa Gotami became weary and hopeless because she could not find a single house where no one had died. The Buddha had asked her to bring mustard-seed from a house untouched by death. At every door, people told her, "The living are few, but the dead are many." There was no house but some beloved one had died in it. Failing at every door made her realise that death is universal and unavoidable, leaving her exhausted and without hope of finding a remedy for her grief.

Source: *The Sermon at Benares, The Story of Kisa Gotami*

Explanation

The examiner wants three things here: (1) what Kisa Gotami was searching for (mustard-seed from a death-free house), (2) why she could not get it (every house had suffered a death), and (3) the resulting emotion (weariness and hopelessness). Quoting the phrase "the living are few, but the dead are many" directly from the text earns credit. Do not drift into the Buddha's sermon — stay focused on her personal journey in this part of the story.

Q17.

[2]

Grief is often seen as a measure of love. Justify your response to Buddha's sermon.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

The Buddha's sermon is both valid and moving. Grief indeed reflects the depth of love — Kisa Gotami's desperate search for medicine shows how intensely she loved her son. However, the Buddha wisely teaches that clinging to grief causes only more pain. True love should inspire acceptance, not endless lamentation, since death is universal and inevitable.

Explanation

The question asks you to **justify** your response, so you must take a position and support it. Examiners expect:

- Acknowledgement that grief = measure of love (linking it to Kisa Gotami's example)
- The Buddha's counter-point: grief prolongs suffering without helping the dead
- A balanced or concluded stance

Avoid writing only one side. Use evidence from the story (Kisa Gotami) and the sermon ("not from weeping will anyone obtain peace of mind") to support your answer.

Q18.

[6]

Grief or sadness is an emotion natural to all types of loss or significant change. You have been asked to present an analysis of the approaches of Lencho and Kisa Gotami in dealing with their respective losses. Write this presentation draft including your insights, and comparing the approaches of both.

You may begin like this: One acknowledges that Lencho had unwavering faith in God whereas Kisa Gotami in her grief, believed that her son however

(Reference – A Letter to God and The Sermon at Benares)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/4/1 Q10(a)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

One acknowledges that Lencho had unwavering faith in God whereas Kisa Gotami, in her grief, believed that her son could still be saved; however, both characters responded to loss in deeply human yet contrasting ways.

Lencho's Approach: Lencho suffered the destruction of his crops by a hailstorm — a material loss. His grief did not paralyse him. Instead, his unshakeable faith in God drove him to action. He wrote a letter to God asking for money, demonstrating that his coping mechanism was **faith and hope**. He never questioned whether help would come; he only acted.

Kisa Gotami's Approach: Her grief over her son's death was intense and irrational — she refused to accept his death. She wandered desperately seeking medicine for a dead child, showing **denial and desperation**. Only through the Buddha's compassionate method — sending her house to house — did she realise that death is universal. She then surrendered her selfishness and found peace.

Comparison: Lencho coped through active faith; Kisa Gotami reached acceptance only after a guided journey through her grief. Both ultimately found resolution — one through belief, the other through wisdom.

Source: *A Letter to God, Chapter 1; The Sermon at Benares, Chapter 8*

Explanation

- The question asks for **analysis and comparison** — examiners expect you to clearly state each character's approach and then draw a comparison. Avoid retelling the story.
- Key contrast: Lencho = **faith-driven, active coping**; Kisa Gotami = **denial** → **acceptance through insight**.
- Use the prompt line given in the question to open your answer — it signals to the examiner you have understood the task.
- The Buddha's method of teaching (making Kisa Gotami discover truth herself) is worth noting as it shows indirect guidance vs. Lencho's self-driven faith.
- Aim for 120–150 words; this answer is calibrated for 6 marks.

Q19.

[6]

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

"The Sermon at Benaras" and "For Anne Gregory", deal with the themes of 'love' and 'life'. Discuss.

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

♦ The Sermon at Benares

8.1 For Anne Gregory

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Model Answer

"**The Sermon at Benaras**" deals with grief and the universal truth about life and death. When Kisa Gotami loses her son, she begs for medicine to revive him. The Buddha sends her to fetch mustard seeds from a house where no one has died. She finds no such house, realising that death visits every family. This teaches her that death is inevitable and grief is universal. The lesson is not to grieve endlessly but to accept life's impermanence with composure.

"**For Anne Gregory**" deals with the theme of love. Anne Gregory wishes to be loved for her inner self, not her yellow hair. The speaker argues that only God can truly love a person for their soul alone, not for outward beauty.

Both texts together suggest that **true love transcends appearances**, and **acceptance of life's realities** — whether death or imperfection — brings wisdom and peace.

Source: *First Flight* — "The Sermon at Benaras" (Ch. 10); "For Anne Gregory" (Ch. 9)

Explanation

- Examiners expect you to address **both texts** and link them to **both themes** (love + life/death).
- For "Sermon at Benaras": focus on the theme of **life, death, and grief** — the mustard seed episode is the key example.
- For "For Anne Gregory": focus on **love** — inner beauty vs. outer beauty, and the idea that only God loves the soul.
- The concluding sentence linking both texts earns the **synthesis mark** — don't skip it.
- Keep examples textual; avoid vague generalisations.

Q20.

[3]

Explain, why the speaker mentions God in the poem "For Anne Gregory".

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q8 (iv)

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

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Model Answer

In "For Anne Gregory", the speaker mentions God to emphasise that no human being can truly love a person for their inner self or soul alone. The young man argues that only God can see beyond physical appearance — the yellow hair — and love someone for who they truly are on the inside. This is proven when an old religious man found it written in a book that only God could love someone for themselves and not for their outer beauty.

Explanation

The examiner expects three things here: (1) the contrast between human love (based on appearance) and divine love (based on the soul), (2) the reference to the "old religious man" and the "book", and (3) the conclusion that God alone loves unconditionally. Avoid retelling the whole poem — focus on *why* God is mentioned and what point it proves.

Q21.

[3]

The idea of beauty is a one-dimensional cultural conception or one that has been created by human beings themselves. Comment on the statement with reference to the conventional ideas of beauty in the poem 'For Anne Gregory'. (For Anne Gregory)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q8 (v)

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

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Model Answer

In "For Anne Gregory," Yeats presents beauty as a superficial, human-made construct. Men love Anne only for her yellow hair — her external appearance — not for her inner self. Anne herself claims she could dye her hair to make men love her for herself alone, suggesting beauty standards are changeable and man-made. The poet argues that only God can love a person for their soul, not their outward appearance. Thus, conventional ideas of beauty are indeed culturally constructed, one-dimensional, and focused solely on physical attributes, ignoring a person's true worth.

Explanation

The examiner looks for:

- The central idea: beauty as a human/cultural construct vs. divine love for the soul
- Reference to Anne's yellow hair as a symbol of superficial beauty
- The contrast between human love (appearance-based) and God's love (soul-based)
- Keep it focused — 3 marks = 3 key points. Avoid vague statements; be specific to the poem.

Q22.

[3]

"Not from weeping or from grieving will anyone obtain peace of mind; on the contrary his pain will be greater and his body will suffer."

Validate this preaching of Buddha with reference to the story 'A Sermon at Benaras'. (A Sermon at Benaras)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q8 (i)

♦ The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Buddha's preaching is validated through the story of Kisa Gotami. She lost her only son and wandered in inconsolable grief, carrying the dead child from door to door. Buddha made her realize that death is universal — "the living are few, but the dead are many." Her weeping could not restore her son; instead, her grief made her physically and mentally exhausted.

Buddha taught that lamentation only increases pain and weakens the body, yet cannot save the dead. True peace comes only when one "draws out the arrow of lamentation" and accepts death as life's inevitable truth. Kisa Gotami eventually understood this and found peace through surrender of selfish grief.

Source: *A Sermon at Benares*, Chapter 8

Explanation

- The question asks you to **validate** (prove correct with evidence) the quote using the story — so you must connect Buddha's words directly to Kisa Gotami's experience.
- Key points examiners look for: (1) Kisa Gotami's grief and its futility, (2) the universal nature of death, (3) the idea that weeping harms the body without saving the dead, (4) peace comes from accepting death.
- Avoid retelling the full story — pick only the parts that **prove** the quote.
- The phrase "draw out the arrow of lamentation" is a key textual reference worth including.

Q23.

[3]

Do you think you can love a person for his/her inner beauty alone and not care about the physical appearance?

Previously asked in: 2024 2/5/1 Q8 (v)

♦ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

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Model Answer

Yes, I believe it is possible to love a person for their inner beauty alone. True love is based on qualities like kindness, honesty, care, and loyalty rather than physical appearance. Physical looks fade with time, but a good character remains constant. The story of *The Necklace* shows how Mme Loisel, obsessed with external beauty, ruined her life, while her husband loved her genuinely regardless of appearance. Inner beauty creates a deeper, lasting bond that is far more meaningful than mere physical attraction.

Explanation

This is a personal opinion question, so there is no single correct answer — but your response must be justified with reasoning. Examiners look for: a clear opinion (Yes/No), 2–3 supporting reasons, and ideally a reference to the text (Mme Loisel's obsession with appearance vs. her husband's genuine affection). Avoid vague statements; be specific and logical.

Q24.

[3]

The religious man's perspective in 'For Anne Gregory' reinforces the concept of divine love. Illustrate.

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

◆ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

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Model Answer

In 'For Anne Gregory', W.B. Yeats introduces a religious man who claims to have found a religious text proving that only God can love a person for their inner self — their soul — rather than for their outer beauty. While humans are distracted by Anne's yellow hair (physical appearance), God's love transcends appearances. Divine love is unconditional and looks beyond the external. This reinforces that true, perfect love belongs only to God, not to any mortal who is inevitably drawn to outward beauty.

Source: 'For Anne Gregory', *First Flight — Chapter 9 (Poetry)*

Explanation

The examiner wants you to:

1. Identify the religious man's specific claim — he found it "written in a book" that only God loves people for themselves, not their beauty.
2. Link it to the poem's central theme: the contrast between human love (based on looks) and divine love (based on the soul).
3. Keep it to 3 marks — no need for extensive analysis, just clear explanation with the textual reference.

Q25.

[3]

What lesson does "For Anne Gregory" present for youthful love ?

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

◆ 8.1 For Anne Gregory

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Model Answer

The poem "For Anne Gregory" teaches that youthful love is based on outward appearance — lovers are attracted by physical beauty, such as a girl's yellow hair, rather than her inner soul. Anne wishes someone would love her for herself alone, but the speaker says no human can ignore external looks. Only God, the poem concludes, can love a person for their inner worth alone, not for their physical beauty. Thus, young love is shown to be shallow and superficial.

Explanation

Examiners expect three key points for 3 marks: (1) youthful/human love is based on physical appearance, (2) Anne's desire to be loved for her inner self, and (3) the contrast — only God can love the soul. Keep the answer focused and avoid repeating the same idea in different words.

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