

Strictly based on the latest CBSE syllabus dated 4th April 2017 for Academic year 2017-18



BOARD
EXAM
MARCH
2018

CBSE

CHAPTERWISE & TOPICWISE

UNSOLVED PAPERS

2009-2017

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- All sets of Delhi & Outside Delhi
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ENGLISH CORE

CLASS 12

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CBSE CLASS 12

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PREFACE

CBSE always believes in Global Trends of Educational Transformation. The CBSE curriculum gets its lead from National Curriculum Framework – 2005 and Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act – 2009. The aim of CBSE Curriculum is not just to let learners obtain basic knowledge but to make them life-long learners. CBSE always updates and reviews the syllabus to make it more relevant with educational transformation and in last few years the chapters and topics which CBSE has added are very interesting and increase practical knowledge.

Oswaal Question Banks are designed to nurture individuality and thus enhance one's innate potentials which helps in increasing the self-study mode for students. This book strengthens knowledge and attitude related to subject. It is designed in such a way that students can set their own goals and can improve their problem solving and thinking skills.

The journey of this book is never ending as this book is reviewed every year and new questions, previous year's examination questions, new HOTS or any change in syllabus is updated time to time. Also regular review and readers' feedback increases the efficiency of this book gradually.

Moreover every Question Bank strictly follows the latest syllabus and pattern, and contains more than sufficient questions and brief description of chapters, which help students in practicing and completing the syllabus. Questions incorporated in this Question Bank encompass all the 'Typologies' mentioned by CBSE namely Remembering, Understanding, Application, High Order Thinking Skills and Evaluation. Solutions for these have been checked twice and efforts have been made to align them closely to the Marking Scheme. Practically, this book provides students everything they need to learn and excel.

At last we would like to thank our authors, editors, reviewers and specially students who regularly send us suggestions which helps in continuous improvement of this book and makes this book stand in the category of "One of the Best". Wish you all Happy Learning.

–Publisher

Latest Syllabus for Academic Year 2017–18

One Paper

3 Hours

Marks : 100

Section 'A' : Reading Skills

30 Marks

Reading Unseen Passages and Note making

Two unseen passages with a variety of Very short answer/Short answer or MCQ type questions to test comprehension, interpretation and inference. Vocabulary such as word formation and inference of meaning will also be tested.

The total length of the two passages will be between 1100-1200 words. The passages will include two of the following :

- (a) **Factual passages** e.g. instructions, descriptions, reports.
- (b) **Descriptive passages** involving opinion e.g. argumentative, persuasive or interpretative text.
- (c) **Literary passages** e.g. extract from fiction, drama, poetry, essay or biography. A poem could be of 28-35 lines.
 - The passages can be literary, factual or discursive to test comprehension ability. The length of one passage should be between 600-700 words.
 - A third passage of 400-500 words for note-making and abstraction.

Section 'B' : Writing Skills

30 Marks

Writing Skills

- **Short Answer Questions**, e.g., advertisement and notices, designing or drafting posters, writing formal and informal invitations and replies.
- **Long Answer Questions** : Letters based on verbal / visual input.

Letter types include :

- Business or official letters (for making enquiries, registering complaints, asking for and giving information, placing orders and sending replies)
- Letters to the editor (giving suggestions or opinion on issue of public interest)
- Application for a job

Very Long Answer Questions : Two compositions based on visual and / or verbal input may be descriptive or argumentative in nature such as an article, a debate or a speech or a report.

Section 'C' : Literature Textbooks and Extended Reading Text

(Prescribed books Flamingo and Vistas)

30 + 10 = 40 Marks

- **Very Short Answer Questions** : Based on an extract from poetry to test comprehension and appreciation.
- **Short Answer Questions** : Based on prose / drama and poetry from both the texts.
- **Long Answer Question** : Based on texts to test global comprehension and extrapolation beyond the texts to bring out the key messages and values.

- **Long Answer Question** : Based on texts to test global comprehension along with analysis and extrapolation.
- **Long Answer Question** : Based on theme, plot and incidents from the prescribed novels.
- **Long Answer Question** : Based on understanding of appreciation, analysis and interpretation of the character sketch.

Prescribed Books

1. **Flamingo : English Reader** published by National Council of Education Research and Training, New Delhi
2. **Vistas : Supplementary Reader** published by National Council of Education Research and Training, New Delhi

Note : Long answer questions based on values can be given in the writing section or in the literature section.

Name of the Text Books	Name of the lessons deleted
Flamingo	1. Poets and Pancakes 2. The Interview 3. A Road Side Stand (Poetry)
Vistas	4. The Third Level 5. Journey to the End of the Earth

Extended Reading Text/ Novels (Either one)

- **The Invisible Man (unabridged edition)** — Herbert George Wells
- OR
- **Silas Marner (unabridged edition)** — George Eliot



Question Paper Design (2017-18)

Class XII

Time : 3 hr.

Marks : 100

Typology	Typology of questions/ Learning outcomes	MCQ 1 mark	Very short Answer Question 1 mark	Short Answer Question 3 marks	Short Answer Question 4 marks	Long Answer-1 80 -100 words 5 marks	Long Answer-2 120 - 150 words 6 marks	Very Long Answer 150 - 200 words (HOTS) 10 marks	Total marks	Over all %
Reading Skills	Conceptual understanding, decoding, analysing, inferring, interpreting, appreciating, literary conventions and vocabulary, summarising and using appropriate format/s	6	16	1	—	1	—	—	30	30
Writing Skills	Reasoning, appropriacy of style and tone, using appropriate format and fluency inference, analysis, evaluation, and creativity	—	—	—	1	—	1	2	30	30
Literature Text books and Extended Reading Text / Novel	Recalling, reasoning, appreciating literary conventions, inference, analysis, evaluation, creativity with fluency	—	4	4	—	—	4	—	40	40
TOTAL		6×1=6	20×1=20	5×3=15	1×4=4	1×5=5	5×6=30	2×10=20	100	100

**Examination
Paper**

**C.B.S.E.
2017
Class–XII
Delhi & Outside Delhi**

**English
Core**

Time : 3 Hours

Max. Marks : 100

General Instructions :

- (i) All questions are compulsory.
- (ii) You may attempt any section at a time.
- (iii) All questions of that particular section must be attempted in the correct order.

Delhi Set I

Code No. 1/1/1

SECTION - A (Reading)

(30 Marks)

1. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow :

12

1. We sit in the last row, bumped about but free of stars. The bus rolls out of the dull crossroads of the city, and we are soon in open countryside with fields of sunflowers as far as the eye can see, their heads all facing us. Where there is no water, the land reverts to desert. While still on level ground we see in the distance the tall range of the Mount Bogda, abrupt like a shining prism laid horizontally on the desert surface. It is over 5,000 metres high, and the peaks and under permanent snow in powerful contrast to the flat desert all around. Heaven Lake lies part of the way this range, about 2,000 metres above sea level, at the foot of one of the higher snow-peaks.
2. As the bus climbs, the sky brilliant before, grows overcast. I have brought nothing warm to wear. It is all down at the hotel in Urumqi. Rain begins to fall. The man behind me is eating overpoweringly smelly goat's cheese. The bus window leaks inhospitably but reveals a beautiful view. We have passed quickly from desert through arable land to pasture and the ground is now green with grass, the slopes dark with pine. A few cattle drink at a clear stream flowing past moss-covered stones; it is a constable landscape. The stream changes into a white torrent, and as we climb higher I wish more and more that I had brought with me something warmer than the pair of shorts that have served me so well in the desert. The stream (which, we are told, rises in Heaven Lake) disappears, and we continue our slow ascent. About noon, we arrive at Heaven Lake, and look for a place to stay at the foot, which is the resort area. We get a room in a small cottage, and I am happy to note that there are thick quilts on the beds.
3. Standing outside the cottage we survey our surroundings. Heaven Lake is long, sardine-shaped and fed by snow melt from a stream at its head. The lake is an intense blue, surrounded on all sides by green mountain walls, dotted with distant sheep. At the head of the lake, beyond the delta of the inflowing stream, is a massive snow-capped peak which dominates the vista; it is part of a series of peaks that culminate, a little out of view, in Mount Bogda itself.
4. For those who live in the resort there is a small-hall by the shore. We eat here sometimes, and sometimes buy food from the vendors outside, who sell kabab and naan until the last buses leave. The kababs, cooked on skewers over charcoal braziers, are particularly good; highly spiced and well-done. Horse's milk is available too from the local Kazakh herdsmen, but I decline this. I am so affected by the cold that Mr. Cao, the relaxed young man who runs the mess, lends me a spare pair of trousers, several sizes too large but more than comfortable. Once I am warm again, I feel a pre-dinner spurt of energy-dinner will be long in coming—and I ask him whether the lake is good for swimming in.
5. "Swimming?" Mr. Cao says, "You aren't thinking of swimming, are you?"
6. "I thought I might. I confess. What's the water like?"
7. He doesn't answer me immediately, turning instead to examine some receipts with exaggerated interest, Mr. Cao, with great off-handedness, addresses the air. "People are often drowned here", he says. After a pause, he continues. "When was the last one?" This question is directed at the cook, who is preparing a tray of mantou (squat white steamed bread rolls), and who now appears, wiping his doughy hand across his forehead. "Was it the Beijing athlete?" asks Mr. Cao.

On the basis of your understanding of the above passage, complete the statements given below with the help of options that follow : (1×4=4)

- (a) **One benefit of sitting in the last row of the bus was that :**
- (i) The narrator enjoyed bumps (ii) No one stared at him
(iii) He could see the sunflowers (iv) He avoided the dullness of the city
- (b) **The narrator was travelling to :**
- (i) Mound Bogda (ii) Heaven Lake
(iii) A 2000 metre high snow peak (iv) Urumqi
- (c) **On reaching the destination the narrator felt relieved because :**
- (i) He had got away from the desert
(ii) A difficult journey had come to an end
(iii) He could watch the snow peak.
(iv) There were thick quilts on the bed
- (d) **Mount Bogda is compared to :**
- (i) A horizontal desert surface (ii) A shining prism
(iii) A Constable landscape (iv) The overcast sky

Answer the following questions briefly : (1×6=6)

- (e) Which two things in the bus made the narrator feel uncomfortable ?
(f) What made the scene look like a Constable landscape ?
(g) What did he regret as the bus climbed higher ?
(h) Why did the narrator like to buy food from outside ?
(i) What is ironic about the pair of trousers lent by Mr. Cao ?
(j) Why did Mr. Cao not like the narrator to swim in the lake ?
(k) Find words from the passage which mean the same as the following : (1 × 2 = 2)
- (i) Sellers (para 4) (ii) Increased (para 7)

2. **Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow :** 10

- Thackeray reached Kittur along with a small British army force and a few of his officers. He thought that the very presence of the British on the outskirts of Kittur would terrorise the rulers and people of Kittur, and that they would lay down their arms. He was quite confident that he would be able to crush the revolt in no time. He ordered that tents be erected on the eastern side for the fighting forces, and a little away on the western slopes tents be put up for the family members of the officers who had accompanied them. During the afternoon and evening of 20th October, the British soldiers were busy making arrangements for these camps.
- On the 21st morning, Thackeray sent his political assistant to Kittur fort to obtain a written assurance from all the important officers of Kittur rendering them answerable for the security of the treasury of Kittur. They, accordingly, met Sardar Gurusiddappa and other officers of Kittur and asked them to comply with the orders of Thackeray. They did not know that the people were in a defiant mood. The commanders of Kittur dismissed the agent's & orders as no documents could be signed without sanction from Rani Chennamma.
- Thackeray was enraged and sent for the commander of the Horse Artillery, which was about 100 strong and ordered him to rush his artillery into the Fort and capture the commanders of the Desai's army. When the Horse Artillery stormed into the fort, Sardar Gurusiddappa, who had kept his men on full alert, promptly commanded his men to repel and chase them away. The Kittur forces made a bold front and overpowered the British soldiers.
- In the meanwhile, the Desai's guards had shut the gates of the fort and the British Horse Artillery men, being completely overrun and routed, had to get out through the escape window. Rani's soldiers chased them out of the fort, killing a few of them until they retreated to their camps on the outskirts.
- A few of the British had found refuge in some private residences, while some were hiding in their tents. The Kittur soldiers captured about forty persons and brought them to the palace. These included twelve children and a few women from the British officer's camp. When they were brought in the presences of the Rani, she ordered the soldiers to be imprisoned. For the women and children she had only gentleness, and admonished her soldiers for taking them into custody. At her orders, these women and children were taken inside the palace and given food and shelter. Rani came down from her throne, patted the children lovingly and told them that no harm would come to them.
- She, then, sent word through a messenger to Thackeray that the British women and children were safe and could be taken back any time. Seeing this noble gesture of the Rani, he was moved. He wanted to meet this gracious lady and talk to her. He even thought of trying to persuade her to enter into an agreement with the British to stop all hostilities in lieu of an *inam* (prize) of eleven villages. His offer was dismissed with a gesture of contempt. She had no wish to meet Thackeray. That night she called Sardar Gurusiddappa and other leading Sardars, and after discussing all the issues came to the conclusion that there was no point in meeting Thackeray who had come with an army to threaten Kittur into submission to British sovereignty.

On the basis of your understanding of the above passage, complete the statements given below with the help of the options that follow : (1×2 = 2)

(a) Thackeray was a/an :

- (i) British tourist (ii) Army officer
(iii) Advisor to the Rani of Kittur (iv) Treasury officer

(b) British women and children came to Kittur to :

- (i) Visit Kittur (ii) Enjoy life in tents
(iii) Stay in the palace (iv) Give company to the army officers

Answer the following questions briefly :

(1×6 = 6)

- (c) Why did Thackeray come to Kittur ?
(d) Why did Kittur officials refuse to give the desired assurance to Thackeray ?
(e) What happened to the Horse Artillery ?
(f) How do we know that the Rani was a noble queen ?
(g) How in your opinion would the British women have felt after meeting the Rani ?
(h) Why did the Rani refuse to meet Thackeray ?

(i) Find words from the passage which mean the same as the following :

(1×2 = 2)

- (i) Entered forcibly (para 3)
(ii) Aggressive/refusing to obey (para 2)

3. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow :

The most alarming of man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers and sea with lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrevocable; the chain of evil it initiates is for the most part irreversible. In this contamination of the environment, chemicals are the sinister partners of radiation in changing the very nature of the world; radiation released through nuclear explosions into the air, comes to the earth in rain, lodges into the soil, enters the grass or corn, or wheat grown there and reaches the bones of a human being, there to remain until his death. Similarly, chemicals sprayed on crops lie long in soil, entering living organisms, passing from one to another in a chain of poisoning and death. Or they pass by underground streams until they emerge and combine into new forms that kill vegetation, sicken cattle, and harm those who drink from once pure wells.

It took hundreds of millions of years to produce the life that now inhabits the earth and reached a state of adjustment and balance with its surroundings. The environment contained elements that are hostile as well as supporting. Even within the light of the sun, there were short-wave radiations with power to injure. Given time, life has adjusted and a balance reached. For time is the essential ingredient, but in the modern world there is no time.

The rapidity of change and the speed with which new situations are created follow the heedless pace of man rather than the deliberate pace of nature. Radiation is no longer the bombardment of cosmic rays; it is now the unnatural creation of man's tampering with the atom. The chemicals to which life is asked to make adjustments are no longer merely calcium and silica and copper and all the rest of the minerals washed out of the rocks and carried in the rivers to the sea; they are the synthetic creations of man's inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories, and having no counterparts in nature.

(a) On the basis of your understanding of the above passage, make notes on it using headings and sub-headings. Use recognisable abbreviations (wherever necessary—minimum four) and a format you consider suitable. Also supply a title to it. 5

(b) Write a summary of the passage in about 80 words. 3

SECTION - B (Advanced Writing Skills)

(30 Marks)

4. You are Vikram/Sonia, an Hon's graduate in history with specialization in Medieval India. You are well acquainted with the places of historical interest in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. You are looking for the job of a tourist guide. Write an advertisement in about 50 words for the situations wanted column of a local newspaper. Your contact no. is 999751234. 4

OR

While walking in a park in your neighbourhood you found a small plastic bag containing some documents and some cash. Write a notice in about 50 words to be put on the park notice board asking the owner to identify and collect it from you. You are Amar/Amrita 9399123456.

5. In our society we do not give to our women the respect and status that they deserve. Women are stared at, stalked and even molested. We need to change the male mindset about women. Write a letter in 120-150 words to the editor of a national newspaper giving your views on the problem. You are Omar/Amna, A-114, Mall Road, Delhi. 6

OR

You want to spend a week-long holiday at Shimla in the month of October. You have decided to stay at Hotel Snowview. Write a letter in 120-150 words to the manager to book a room. Mention the dates, facilities in the room, food, sight-seeing facilities etc. you will need. You are Amar/Amrita, M-114, Lake Road, Karnal.

6. Our performance in Rio Olympics has told us that we do not pay enough attention to athletics and outdoor games. It is time we revised our attitude, Sports should be an important part of school's daily routine. Write an article in 150-200 words in "Importance of Outdoor Games". You are Sreeja/Thomas. **10**

OR

Cultural Society Sunshine Public School, Nellore organised an adult literacy camp in its neighbourhood. Write a report in 150-200 words on the camp for your school newsletter. You are P.V. Sunitha, Secretary. Use the following clues :

No. of volunteers—hours spent in teaching—location of the class—chairs, blackboards—no. of people attending the camp—benefit.

7. Your PGT English Mr. Geetha is a short story writer also. 'Sky is not Far' is a collection of her latest short stories. This book has won a national award. Write a speech in 150-200 words you will deliver in her honour in the morning assembly. **10**

OR

"Private cars should be banned in the congested commercial areas of the cities." Write a debate in 150-200 words either for or against the motion.

SECTION - C
(Literature : Textbooks and Extended Reading Text)

8. **Reading the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :** **(1×4=4)**

*Far far from gusty waves these children's faces
Like rootless weeds, the hair torn round their pallor.
The tall girl with her weighed-down head.*

- (a) Who are these children ?
(b) Which figure of speech has been used in the first two lines ?
(c) Why is the tall girl's head weighed down ?
(d) What does the word, 'pallor' mean ?

OR

*Aunt Jennifer's tigers across a screen
Bright topaz denizens of a world of green
They do not fear the men beneath the tree;
They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.*

- (a) Why are the tigers called Aunt Jennifer's tigers ?
(b) How are they described here ?
(c) How are they different from Aunt Jennifer ?
(d) What does the word, 'chivalric' mean ?

9. **Answer any four of the following questions in 30-40 words each :** **(3×4=12)**

- (a) Why did Franz not want to go to school that day ?
(b) What was Sophie's ambition in life ? How did she hope to achieve that ?
(c) What kind of pain does Kamala Das feel in 'My Mother at Sixty-six' ?
(d) How can 'mighty dead' be things of beauty ?
(e) Why was the Maharaja once in danger of losing his kingdom ?
(f) What was the basic plot of each story told by Jack ?

10. **Answer the following question in 120-150 words :** **6**

Garbage to them is gold. How do ragpickers of Seemapuri survive ?

OR

The peddler thinks that the whole world is a rat-trap. This view of life is true only of himself and of no one else in the story. Comment.

11. **Answer the following question in 120-150 words :** **6**

Untouchability is not only a crime, it is inhuman too. Why and how did Bama decide to fight against it ?

OR

Good human values are far above any other value system. How did Dr. Sadao succeed as a doctor as well as a patriot ?

12. **Answer the following question in 120-150 words :** **6**

Describe Marvel as an opportunist.

OR

George Eliot has portrayed Godfrey as a normally weak character. Comment.

13. **Attempt the following question in 120-150 words :** **6**

How does Dr. Cuss's encounter with Griffin end in a disaster ?

OR

What kind of life did Silas lead at Lantern Yard ?

Delhi Set II

Code No. 1/1/2

Note : Except these, all other questions are from Set I.

SECTION - B (Advanced Writing Skills)

4. After the rains, cases of dengue, Chikunguniya etc. are on the rise in your city. As Principal, Sunshine Public School Manu Vihar, you have decided to allow your students to wear full sleeve shirts and trousers in the school for a period of one month. Write the notice in about 50 words. 4

OR

You are Health Secretary, Students Council Citizens Public School, Ram Bagh, Varanasi. The council has decided to start from the second of October, a week-long cleanliness drive around the school. Draft a notice in about 50 words asking the Class XI students to enroll for the drive.

5. Last month you purchased a TV set from Ram Electronics, Pushp Vihar, Ambala. It is not working properly (imagine a few defects). Write a letter of complaint in 120-150 words to the Manager asking for repair or replacement. You are Amar/Amrita, M-114 Model Town, Ambala. 6

OR

You are living in a village along a national highway. The state roadways bus does not stop near your village. Write a letter in 120-150 words to the General Manager, State Roadways requesting a bus stop for your village. Give all the reasons why you need a bus stop there. You are Omar/Amna, Gopalpur, Distt. Ramnagar.

7. Sakshi Malik won a bronze medal in Rio Olympics. Every Indian felt proud of her. You, Head Girl of your school want to deliver a speech in order to express your feelings. Write the speech in 150-200 words. Apart from your own ideas use the following clues :
Wrestling mostly a male sport—Sakshi born in conservative surroundings — most unfavourable gender ratio for females—parental encouragement—one can't forget the look of determination on her face in the last three minutes of the bout.

OR

"Our large population is not a cause of poverty but an asset, a resource
Write a debate in 150-200 words either for or against the motion.

SECTION - C (Literature : Textbooks and Extended Reading Text)

9. Note : Except these, all other questions are from Set I. 3 × 4 = 12
Answer any four of the following questions in 30-40 words :
(a) Why was Franz not scolded for reaching the school late that day ?
(b) Sophie was dreaming of so many things in her life. What were they ?
(c) Why are the youngsters described as springing ? (My mother at sixty-six)
(d) In the hot season, how do man and beast get comfort ? (A Thing of Beauty)
(e) How did the Maharaja deal with a high ranking British officer who wanted to shoot a tiger ?
(f) Having got rid of his stink, what problem did Roger Skunk face ?

Delhi Set III

Code No. 1/1/3

Note : Except these, all other questions are from Set I & II.

SECTION - B (Advanced Writing Skills)

4. RJ public school is located in a Central Government employees residential colony. Cultural Society of the school has decided to organize a fancy dress show on 25th of January in which each participant will wear the dress particular to his/her region. The aim is to show the cultural diversity of India. As Secretary write a notice in about 50 words inviting the names of those who want to participate. 4

OR

An NGO has approached your school to offer book grants to the students. As Head Girl of Sunshine Public School, Aram Bagh, write a notice in about 50 words asking students who are in need to put their requests into the box kept outside the Principal's office.

5. You are principal, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Ramnagar. The number of students in the computer class is increasing. Next year starting in April 2017, you will need 25 more computers in your lab. Write a letter in 120-150 words to the Commissioner, K.V. Sangathan for funds. 6

OR

You are Ashish/Nimmi Dhar B-94 Ford Road, Jammu. You have read the advertisement given below. You are qualified for the job. Write an application in **120-150** words along with a resume.

India Chemical Industries, Delhi

Requires : Accounts Officers

Qualification : B Com.

Experience : Minimum 4 years

Job requirement : Maintaining books of accounts, preparation of Balance Sheet etc.

Salary : Best in the industry

Apply to : Managing Director, ICI,

B-12 Barakhamba Road,

New Delhi

SECTION - C**(Literature : Textbooks and Extended Reading Text)****(40 Marks)**9. **Note : Except these, all other questions are from Set I & II.****3 × 4 = 12****Answer any four of the following questions in 30-40 words each :**

- What did Franz wonder about when he entered the class that day ?
- What shocking experience did Douglas have at the YMCA pool ?
- Why does Kamala Das compare her mother to 'a pale winter's moon' ?
- What rich bounty has the heaven given us ?(A Thing of Beauty)
- Why did the Maharaja have to pay a bill of three lakh rupees to the British jewellers ?
- What problem did Roger skunk face when he went to play with his friends. How did he solve it ?

12. **Answer the following question in 120-150 words :****6**

Mrs. Hall is greedy but efficient in her business.

Attempt a character sketch of Mrs. Hall.

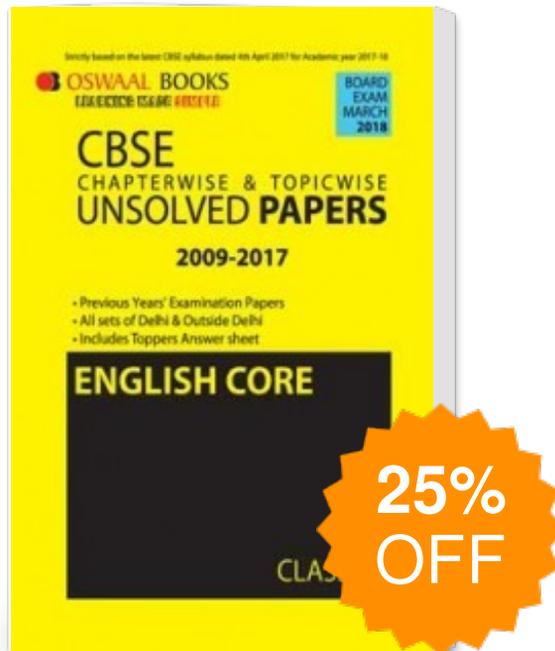
OR

Nancy Lammeter is a typical country girl. Comment.

Outside Delhi Set I**Code No. 1/1****SECTION - A (Reading)**1. **Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow :****12**

- We sit in the last row, bumped about but free of stares. The bus rolls out of the dull crossroads by the city, and we are soon in open countryside with fields of sunflowers as far as the eye can see, their heads all facing us. Where there is no water, the land reverts to desert. While still on level ground we see in the distance the tall range of the Mount Bogda, abrupt like a shining prism laid horizontally on the desert's surface. It is over 5,000 metres high, and the peaks are under permanent snow, in powerful contrast to the flat desert all around. Heaven Lake lies part of the way this range, about 2,000 metres above sea level, at the foot of one of the higher snow-peaks.
- As the bus climbs, the sky brilliant before, grows overcast. I have brought nothing warm to wear; it is all down at the hotel in Urumqi. Rain begins to fall. The man behind me is eating overpoweringly smelly goat's cheese. The bus window leaks inhospitably but reveals a beautiful view. We have passed quickly from desert through arable land to pasture and the ground is now green with grass, the slopes dark with pine. A few cattle drink at a clear stream flowing past moss-covered stones; it is a Constable landscape. The stream changes into a white torrent, and as we climb higher I wish more and more that I had brought with me something warmer than the pair of shorts that have served me so well in the desert. The stream (which, we are told, rises in Heaven Lake) disappears, and we continue our slow ascent. About noon, we arrive at Heaven Lake, and look for a place to stay at the foot, which is a resort area. We get a room in a small cottage, and I am happy to note that there are thick quilts on the beds.
- Standing outside the cottage we survey our surroundings. Heaven Lake is long, sardine-shaped and fed by snowmelt from a stream at its head. The lake is an intense blue, surrounded on all sides by green mountain walls, dotted with distant sheep. At the head of the lake, beyond the delta of the inflowing stream, is a massive snow-capped peak which dominates the vista; it is part of a series of peaks that culminate, a little out of view, in Mount Bogda itself.
- For those who live in the resort there is a small-hall by the shore. We eat here sometimes, and sometimes buy food from the vendors outside, who sell kabab and naan until the last buses leave. The kababs, cooked on

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