

Class X

English

One-page chapter summaries
Large print • CBSE 2026-27 syllabus

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Code 184. 1-9 First Flight prose; P1-P10 poems; S1-S9 Footprints Without Feet; W1-W2 Grammar & Writing. Questions: official CBSE SQPs 2023-24 to 2026-27.

Chapter 1: A Letter to God (First Flight)

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Big idea: Lencho's simple, unshakeable faith in God, and the quiet kindness of strangers who answer it.

Key points

- **Lencho**, a farmer, lives in the only house on the crest of a low hill; his ripe corn field needs only a downpour.
- Rain comes; he calls the big drops '**new coins**'. Then a huge **hailstorm** destroys the whole crop.
- 'A plague of locusts would have left more than this.' Yet one hope remains: **help from God**.
- He writes to God asking for **100 pesos** to resow and live until the next crop.
- The **postmaster**, a fat, amiable man, laughs, then is moved by such faith. He decides to reply.
- He collects money from employees, friends and part of his own **salary**: a little more than half, which he signs 'God'.
- Lencho counts **70 pesos**, is angry, and writes again: send the rest, but not by mail, "**the post office employees are a bunch of crooks.**"
- **Irony**: he suspects the very people who helped him.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Lencho**: hard-working, innocent, total faith in God; ungrateful without knowing it.
- **Postmaster**: kind, generous, did not want to shake 'the faith of a man who believed'.
- Themes: **faith vs reality**, human kindness, irony, nature as giver and destroyer.
- Hailstones = 'frozen pearls'; the field looked as if 'covered with salt'.

Exam focus: how to score

- The **hailstorm** is the turning point: it creates the crisis and tests Lencho's faith (SQP 2026-27 answer).
- Explain the **irony** of the ending: kind helpers are called crooks; God gets the credit.
- Character sketch of the postmaster: humour, compassion, sacrifice. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- How does the hailstorm function as more than just a weather event in the story? (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- What does the postmaster's reaction to Lencho's letter reveal about his character? (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)
- Explain how the devastation caused by the hailstorm reflects the sadness within Lencho. (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)

Remember: New coins → hail → faith → 70 pesos → 'crooks'.

Chapter 2: Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom (First Flight)

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Big idea: Freedom is indivisible: true freedom means freeing both the oppressed and the oppressor.

Key points

- **10 May 1994:** Mandela sworn in as South Africa's first Black President at the **Union Buildings, Pretoria**.
- Guests from many nations; it marked the first **democratic, non-racial government** after apartheid.
- He pledges: **"Never, never and never again"** shall this land see oppression of one by another.
- Jets, helicopters and troop carriers fly past; the generals who once would have arrested him now salute him.
- Two anthems: whites sing 'Nkosi Sikelel-iAfrika', blacks sing 'Die Stem'.
- He remembers heroes like **Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Chief Luthuli**: 'depths of oppression create heights of character'.
- **Twin obligations:** to family and to people/country; apartheid made fulfilling both nearly impossible.
- Childhood 'transitory freedoms' gave way to a hunger for the freedom of his people.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- "Courage was not the absence of fear, but the **triumph over it**."
- "No one is born hating another person... if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love."
- "The oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed." A man who takes away freedom is **a prisoner of hatred**.
- "Freedom is indivisible." The country's greatest wealth is **its people**.

Exam focus: how to score

- Learn 4-5 quotes word-perfect: they lift any answer on courage, freedom or equality.
- Explain 'twin obligations' and why Mandela became a 'man of the people'.
- Apply ideas to today (SQP 2025-26 style). **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- How can Mandela's vision of 'liberating both the oppressed and the oppressor' be applied in modern-day societies to address inequality and discrimination? (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- Speech on the resilience of the human spirit to transcend discrimination, linking 'Long Walk to Freedom' and 'The Trees'. (SQP 2023-24, 6 marks)

Remember: Freedom is indivisible; courage = triumph over fear.

Chapter 3: Two Stories About Flying (First Flight)

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Big idea: Fear is conquered by need and courage; help can come from unexpected places.

Key points

- **I. His First Flight** (Liam O'Flaherty): a young seagull is alone on his ledge; brothers and sister flew the day before.
- Afraid of the wide sea below, he could not flap his wings; parents and siblings scolded and ignored him.
- Starving after 24 hours, he cries 'ga, ga, ga'. His **mother** flies near with a piece of **fish**, then stops just short.
- Mad with hunger, he dives at the fish, falls, then **his wings spread** and he flies. His family celebrates with him.
- **II. The Black Aeroplane**: a pilot flies an old **Dakota** from Paris to England, dreaming of breakfast.
- He chooses to fly into huge **storm clouds**; compass and radio fail; fuel runs low.
- A **black aeroplane with no lights** appears, signals 'Follow me', and guides him to a runway, then vanishes.
- Control tower: **no other plane was flying**; only his was on the radar. Mystery left unsolved.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Seagull**: fearful, then brave; hunger is the external catalyst; mother uses 'tough love'.
- **Pilot**: takes a risk, trusts a stranger 'like an obedient child'.
- Themes: overcoming fear, self-belief, family support, the unexplained.
- Sound words: screaming, shrieking; movement: swooped, soared, curvetting.

Exam focus: how to score

- Compare catalysts of change: seagull (hunger) vs Valli (curiosity) (SQP 2026-27 LA).
- Extracts test **imagery** and sound/movement words; 'contradict' items need text proof.
- Who was the black pilot? Give a reasoned view; there is no single 'right' answer. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Compare and contrast how the catalysts in 'Madam Rides the Bus' and 'His First Flight' drive the protagonists' change. (SQP 2026-27, 6 marks)
- Extract: contradict the view that the young seagull celebrated his maiden flight alone. (SQP 2025-26, 2 marks)
- Extract: how does the author's descriptive language enhance the narrative? (SQP 2024-25, 2 marks)
- Compare the approaches of the seagull's mother and Amanda's mother. (SQP 2023-24, 6 marks)

Remember: Hunger made the gull fly; a ghost plane led the pilot home.

Chapter 4: From the Diary of Anne Frank (First Flight)

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Big idea: A lonely 13-year-old turns her diary into a trusted friend, 'Kitty'.

Key points

- Anne got the diary on her **13th birthday** (12 June 1942); later the family hid from the Nazis in Amsterdam.
- **"Paper has more patience than people."** She writes because she has **no true friend** to confide in.
- She has family, aunts and 30 'friends', but talks only of everyday things, so names her diary **Kitty**.
- Brief life sketch: born 1929 in Frankfurt; family moved to Holland in 1933; she adored her **grandmother**.
- At school, maths teacher **Mr Keesing** punishes her talking with essays: 'A Chatterbox', 'An Incurable Chatterbox'.
- She argues talking is a student's trait, inherited from her mother.
- Third essay, 'Quack, Quack, Quack, Said Mistress Chatterbox', she writes as a **funny poem**.
- Mr Keesing takes the joke well, reads it to the class, and **lets her talk** after that.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Anne**: witty, intelligent, sensitive, lonely, mature beyond her age.
- **Mr Keesing**: strict 'old fogey' but fair and good-humoured.
- Themes: loneliness, the need to confide, humour and creativity, adolescence.
- Kitty = the friend who will listen without judging.

Exam focus: how to score

- Why Anne calls the diary Kitty and why she gives a sketch of her life.
- How Anne wins over Mr Keesing: creative argument and humour.
- Diary entries as Anne: use her lively, honest voice. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Kitty was a trusted friend to Anne. Elaborate. (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)
- Why does Anne want to keep a diary? (NCERT, Thinking about the Text)

Remember: No friend → Kitty; chatterbox → poem → peace with Mr Keesing.

Chapter 5: Glimpses of India (First Flight)

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Big idea: Three pen-portraits of India's diversity: Goa's baker, Coorg's land and people, Assam's tea.

Key points

- **A Baker from Goa** (Lucio Rodrigues): elders recall Portuguese days and their **loaves**; the bakers still remain.
- The **jingling thud of his bamboo** woke children; they ran for **bread-bangles**. Bakers wore the **kabai**, later short pants.
- Bread is essential: **bol** for weddings, **cakes and bolinhas** for Christmas, sandwiches for engagements. Accounts in pencil on a wall.
- **Coorg** (Lokesh Abrol): between **Mysore and Mangalore**; coffee, rainforests; best season Sept-March.
- **Kodavus** may be of Greek or Arab descent; wear the **kuppia**; famous hospitality; **Coorg Regiment**; General Cariappa.
- River **Kaveri**, **Mahaseer** fish, Brahmagiri hills, Nisargadhama, Tibetan monks at **Bylakuppe**.
- **Tea from Assam** (Arup Kumar Datta): Rajvir visits friend Pranjol's tea estate, **Dhekiabari**.
- Legends: a **Chinese emperor's** boiled water and **Bodhidharma's** eyelids. **Second flush (May-July) gives the best tea.**

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Baker: happy, plump, 'jackfruit-like'; a symbol of tradition.
- Coorg: brave, independent people; Kodavus may carry firearms without a licence.
- Rajvir: curious, well-read; Pranjol: takes his home for granted.
- Themes: cultural diversity, heritage, tourism, nostalgia.

Exam focus: how to score

- Know 3-4 facts per part: SQPs ask 'justify' and 'why include' questions.
- Tea legends add cultural depth and make the story engaging (SQP 2026-27 answer).
- LA on tourism and regional culture: give one example from each part. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Why has the writer included the legends about tea's origin in 'Tea from Assam'? (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- How does literature like 'The Baker from Goa', 'Coorg' and 'Tea from Assam' promote tourism and awareness of regional cultures? (SQP 2025-26, 6 marks)
- Justify that the traditional baker and his bread play a significant role in Goan society. (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)

Remember: Bread in Goa, coffee in Coorg, tea in Assam.

Chapter 6: Mijbil the Otter (First Flight)

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Big idea: A rare otter becomes a beloved, playful pet, and a lesson in caring for animals.

Key points

- After his dog **Jonnie** dies, **Gavin Maxwell** decides to keep an otter at **Camusfearna**, Scotland.
- In **Basra, Iraq (1956)** he gets a young otter, **Mijbil**, a new race: **Maxwell's otter**.
- Mij is aloof at first, then bonds with Maxwell; loves water, turns on the **bath tap** himself.
- Airline rule: an 18-inch box. Mij tears it open; blood on his face scares Maxwell.
- On the plane Mij escapes; passengers shriek ('A rat!'). A kind **air hostess** lets Maxwell hold him on his knee.
- In London, Mij plays with **ping-pong balls**, marbles and a terrapin shell, and invents games.
- Londoners guess wildly: a baby seal, a squirrel, a walrus, a hippo, a 'brontosaur'.
- A labourer asks **"Here, Mister, what is that supposed to be?"**

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Maxwell**: patient, caring, observant, humorous narrator.
- **Mij**: playful, intelligent, loves water, needs constant activity.
- Themes: human-animal bond, responsibility of pet ownership, human ignorance about animals.
- Otters 'extend and spread' every drop of water.

Exam focus: how to score

- Otter traits: love of water, play, tap-turning, juggling games.
- Humour that entertains and critiques human arrogance (SQP 2026-27 answer).
- Ignorance of Londoners and what it shows about people. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- How does the writer use humour to entertain readers and critique societal attitudes toward animals? (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- Otters have peculiar behavioural traits. Support with any two traits from 'Mijbil the Otter'. (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- What does Londoners' ignorance about Mijbil reveal about people's perceptions of animals? (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)

Remember: Mij: water-mad, tap-turner, 'what is that supposed to be?'

Chapter 7: Madam Rides the Bus (First Flight)

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Big idea: An eight-year-old's first bus ride shows her the joys of the world and the reality of death.

Key points

- **Valli (Valliammai)**, 8, loves watching the street; the **bus** to town fascinates her most.
- She learns: town is **6 miles** away, fare **30 paise** each way, 45 minutes per trip.
- She saves **60 paise**, resisting peppermints, toys and even the merry-go-round.
- She slips out while her mother naps (1 to 4 pm) and boards the **1 pm bus**.
- The playful **conductor** calls her **"madam"**; she acts grown-up, refuses help and a cold drink.
- She finds an **elderly woman** repulsive and rejects her fussing; enjoys the canal, palm trees, a cow on the road.
- On the return trip she sees **the same young cow lying dead**: the memory haunts her.
- Home by 3:40; she keeps the trip a **secret** from her mother and aunt.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Valli**: curious, determined, independent, self-respecting, thrifty.
- **Conductor**: friendly, humorous, kind.
- Themes: **curiosity and independence**, growing up, life and death (innocence to experience).
- Cow: alive and funny on the way, dead on return = loss of innocence.

Exam focus: how to score

- Valli's planning and determination; why she refuses the drink (self-respect, no debt).
- Significance of the dead cow; 'familiar vs unfamiliar' (SQP 2024-25).
- Compare with the seagull: Valli's catalyst is **inner curiosity**. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Compare and contrast how the catalysts in 'Madam Rides the Bus' and 'His First Flight' drive the change. (SQP 2026-27, 6 marks)
- Assess how the story portrays the tension between the comfort of familiarity and the allure of the unfamiliar. (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)

Remember: 60 paise, 'madam', a dead cow, a secret.

Chapter 8: The Sermon at Benares (First Flight)

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Big idea: Death is universal; the wise accept it and do not grieve.

Key points

- **Siddhartha Gautama**, a prince, was shielded from suffering; married and had a son.
- At about **25**, out hunting, he saw a **sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession and a monk**.
- He left to seek enlightenment; after **7 days** under a tree, he was enlightened: it became the **Bodhi Tree**.
- He became the **Buddha** and gave his **first sermon at Benares**, on the Ganges.
- **Kisa Gotami**'s only son died; mad with grief, she begged everyone for medicine.
- Buddha asked for **a handful of mustard seed from a house where no one had died**.
- Every house had lost someone: 'the living are few, but the dead are many'.
- She realised death is common to all and that her grief was selfish.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Kisa Gotami**: grieving mother → wise woman who accepts mortality.
- **Buddha**: teaches through experience, not lecture.
- "The wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world."
- Weeping brings no peace; pain only grows. Mortals are like **ripe fruits** and **earthen vessels**.

Exam focus: how to score

- Why mustard seed? So she discovers the truth **herself**.
- Compare with 'For Anne Gregory': outward things are fleeting (SQP 2024-25 LA).
- Write on acceptance of loss with Buddha's quote. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Both 'For Anne Gregory' and 'The Sermon at Benares' grapple with the idea that external attributes are fleeting and subject to decay. Examine the similarities. (SQP 2024-25, 6 marks)
- What did Kisa Gotami understand the second time that she failed to understand the first time? (NCERT, Thinking about the Text)

Remember: No house without death: so the wise do not grieve.

Chapter 9: The Proposal (First Flight) - Play

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Big idea: A farce: a marriage proposal collapses into silly quarrels over land and dogs.

Key points

- **Anton Chekhov's** one-act farce, set in 19th-century rural Russia.
- **Lomov** (35, nervous, hypochondriac) visits **Chubukov** in evening dress to propose to his daughter **Natalya** (25).
- Chubukov is delighted; Natalya is called in, not knowing why he came.
- Lomov's long talk of his land leads to a fight over **Oxen Meadows**: both claim it.
- They insult each other's families; Lomov leaves with palpitations.
- Natalya learns he came to propose, has hysterics: **"Bring him back!"**
- Lomov returns; they now fight over whose dog is better: **Guess** or **Squeezer**.
- Lomov collapses; Chubukov joins them; they're declared engaged, still quarrelling. 'Champagne!'

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Lomov**: nervous, quarrelsome; marries for a 'quiet and regular life', not love.
- **Natalya**: practical, argumentative, as stubborn as Lomov.
- **Chubukov**: greedy for a good match, hypocritical: abuses Lomov, then embraces him.
- Themes: **marriage as property deal**, pride, humour, satire of the rich.

Exam focus: how to score

- Use stage directions ([excited], [aside]) to show tension and comedy (SQP 2026-27 answer).
- Character sketches and 'why it is a farce'.
- Chubukov's priorities: wealth and land over feelings. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Extract: how do stage directions like [excited] and [aside] enhance dramatic tension? (SQP 2026-27, 2 marks)
- How does Chubukov's reaction to Lomov's proposal reflect his priorities and values? (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- Extract: why is Lomov's tone in "What more do I want?" uncertain and questioning? (SQP 2023-24, 2 marks)

Remember: Proposal → Meadows → dogs → engaged & still fighting.

Chapter P1: Dust of Snow (Robert Frost)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: A tiny moment in nature can lift a sad mood and save a day.

Key points

- A **crow** shakes **dust of snow** from a **hemlock tree** onto the poet.
- This small act **changes his mood** and saves part of a day he had '**rued**' (regretted).
- Crow and hemlock usually suggest gloom, death, bad omen; here they bring joy.
- Message: happiness can come from the smallest, least expected things.
- One sentence, two short stanzas, simple words with a deep meaning.
- Frost: 'a little thing touches a larger thing'.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: nature heals; positive outlook; small moments, lasting impact.
- Snow = joy/renewal; crow & hemlock = sorrow, made positive.
- Key words: hemlock (poisonous tree), rued (held in regret).

Poetic devices to spot

- **Rhyme scheme:** abab, cdcd.
- **Symbolism:** crow, hemlock, snow.
- **Enjambment:** the whole poem is one sentence.

Exam focus: how to score

- Why crow and hemlock, not a pretty bird and tree? Unexpected joy.
- Contrast with 'Fire and Ice' or link with 'The Ball Poem' (brief moments, lasting lessons). **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.
- **Extract (5 marks):** one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- How do 'The Ball Poem' and 'Dust of Snow' propose that momentary events generate a lasting impact? (SQP 2026-27, 6 marks)
- 'Dust of Snow' and 'Fire and Ice' use contrasting elements of nature to convey their messages differently. Examine. (SQP 2024-25, 6 marks)

Remember: Crow + snow = mood saved.

Chapter P2: Fire and Ice (Robert Frost)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Human desire (fire) and hatred (ice) can each destroy the world.

Key points

- Some say the world will end in **fire**, some in **ice**.
- Fire = **desire**: greed, lust, avarice, fury. The poet holds with fire.
- Ice = **hatred**: coldness, rigidity, indifference, intolerance.
- If the world perished twice, ice too 'is also great / And would suffice'.
- Message: our inner emotions, not just nature, can end the world.
- Short, calm, almost casual tone about a huge subject: understatement.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: destructive power of extreme emotions; need for balance.
- Key lines: "From what I've tasted of desire / I hold with those who favour fire."
- "For destruction ice / Is also great / And would suffice."

Poetic devices to spot

- **Symbolism**: fire, ice.
- **Rhyme scheme**: abaabcbcb (fire/desire, ice/twice/suffice).
- **Understatement / irony**: 'would suffice'.

Exam focus: how to score

- Explain what fire and ice symbolise with examples (greed, hatred today).
- Comment on language: simple words, irony/understatement in 'suffice'.
- **Extract (5 marks)**: one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Extract: when the speaker says ice could end the world, he refers to ____ as the means of destruction; comment on the poet's use of language. (SQP 2023-24, 1 + 2 marks)
- Examine how 'Dust of Snow' and 'Fire and Ice' use contrasting elements of nature differently. (SQP 2024-25, 6 marks)

Remember: Fire = desire, Ice = hate; both enough to end the world.

Chapter P3: A Tiger in the Zoo (Leslie Norris)

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Big idea: A caged tiger's quiet rage shows the cruelty of taking away freedom.

Key points

- In the zoo the tiger **stalks** '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.
- He should be **snarling** at the jungle's edge, baring white fangs, **terrorising the village**.
- But he is **locked in a concrete cell**, 'his strength behind bars', ignoring visitors.
- At night he hears patrolling cars and stares 'with his brilliant eyes / At the brilliant stars'.
- Structure: zoo → jungle (2 stanzas) → zoo: a **contrast**.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: freedom vs captivity; animal rights; helpless anger.
- 'Quiet rage': suppressed anger. 'Brilliant stars': his longing for freedom.
- Zoo words: few steps, concrete cell, bars. Wild words: lurking, sliding, snarling.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Alliteration**: 'pads of velvet', 'sliding... grass'.
- **Repetition**: quiet, brilliant.
- **Imagery & contrast; transferred epithet**: 'quiet rage'.
- **Rhyme**: abcb.

Exam focus: how to score

- List contrasting words for cage vs wild (common 3-mark ask).
- Effect of repetition ('quiet', 'brilliant'). Link with 'The Trees' on freedom. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.
- **Extract (5 marks)**: one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- 'The Trees' and 'A Tiger in the Zoo' resonate the theme of freedom and the desire to break free. Examine. (SQP 2025-26, 6 marks)
- Extract: why does the poet say 'vivid' stripes; how is the contrast between confinement and inner emotion reinforced? (SQP 2024-25, 1-2 marks)
- How does Norris use vivid imagery to depict the confinement of the captive tiger? (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)

Remember: Velvet pads, quiet rage, brilliant eyes on brilliant stars.

Chapter P4: How to Tell Wild Animals (Carolyn Wells)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: A comic 'guide' to identifying wild animals in the most dangerous way.

Key points

- **Asian Lion:** large, tawny; if he roars as 'you're dyin'.
- **Bengal Tiger:** 'noble wild beast', black stripes on yellow **ground**; notice **if he eats you**.
- **Leopard:** hide 'peppered' with spots; he will 'lep and lep again'.
- **Bear:** hugs you 'very, very hard'; 'just one more caress'.
- **Hyena** comes with merry smiles; if they **weep**, they're **Crocodiles**.
- **Chameleon:** small, no ears, no wings; if there is nothing on the tree, it's the chameleon.
- Humour comes from **irony** and **poetic licence**.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: humour; danger of wild animals; playful language.
- 'ground' = background; 'discern' = identify; 'novice' = beginner.
- Poetic licence: 'dyin'' rhymes with 'lion'; 'lept/lep'; 'A novice might nonplus'.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Irony & humour.**
- **Poetic licence:** dyin'/lion, lept, lep.
- **Rhyme scheme:** ababcc.
- **Alliteration:** 'Bengal Tiger to discern'.

Exam focus: how to score

- Find the humour in each stanza: identification comes only when it is too late.
- Why 'incorrect' spelling and grammar? For rhyme and rhythm.
- **Extract (5 marks):** one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Extract: what does the poet imply by 'noble wild beast'; how is humour used in describing the Bengal Tiger? (SQP 2025-26, 1 + 2 marks)
- Identify the phrase in the extract that is advisory in nature. (SQP 2025-26, 1 mark)

Remember: Know the beast once it eats, hugs or weeps!

Chapter P5: The Ball Poem (John Berryman)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Losing a ball teaches a boy the first lesson about loss and responsibility.

Key points

- A boy's ball bounces down the street into the **harbour** water.
- "No use to say 'O there are other balls'": the loss is about **memories**, not money.
- He stands rigid, trembling, 'staring down / All his young days into the harbour'.
- The poet **would not intrude**: a dime, another ball, is worthless now.
- The boy senses **first responsibility** in a 'world of possessions'.
- "Money is external": no one buys a ball back.
- He learns the **epistemology of loss**: 'how to stand up / Knowing what every man must one day know'.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Themes: loss is universal and part of growing up; acceptance; maturity.
- Ball = childhood/innocence; harbour = the deep past.
- 'epistemology of loss' = understanding what it means to lose something.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Symbolism**: ball = childhood.
- **Repetition**: 'how to stand up'.
- **Free verse** with **enjambment**.
- **Alliteration**: 'balls, balls'.

Exam focus: how to score

- Why the poet doesn't buy a new ball: the boy must learn on his own.
- Phrase showing loss is universal: 'what every man must one day know'.
- **Extract (5 marks)**: one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- How do 'The Ball Poem' and 'Dust of Snow' propose that momentary events generate a lasting impact? (SQP 2026-27, 6 marks)
- Extract: what does 'how to stand up' suggest about the boy's emotional growth? (SQP 2025-26, 2 marks)
- Extract: which phrase conveys the poet's idea that loss is universal? (SQP 2025-26, 1 mark)

Remember: Money is external; learn to stand up after loss.

Chapter P6: Amanda! (Robin Klein)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: A nagged child escapes into dreams of freedom.

Key points

- Alternate stanzas: a parent's **commands**, then Amanda's **daydreams** in brackets.
- Nagging: don't bite your nails, don't hunch, sit up straight, homework, room, shoes, chocolate, acne.
- Dream 1: a **mermaid** on a 'languid, emerald sea'.
- Dream 2: an **orphan** roaming the street: **"The silence is golden, the freedom is sweet."**
- Dream 3: **Rapunzel**, tranquil in her tower, who will **never let down her hair**.
- End: 'Stop that sulking... Anyone would think that I nagged at you, Amanda!' (irony).

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: freedom of childhood vs constant correction; **communication gap** between parent and child.
- Amanda: imaginative, sensitive, defiant through silence.
- Speaker (mother): caring but nagging; her concern is about appearance and health.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Repetition**: 'Amanda!'.
- **Allusion**: Rapunzel.
- **Metaphor**: 'silence is golden'.
- **Alliteration**: 'soft dust'; **irony** in the last stanza.

Exam focus: how to score

- Role of **parentheses**: they mark Amanda's inner world (SQP 2024-25).
- Effect of repeating 'Amanda!' and exclamation marks: frustration, nagging tone.
- **Extract (5 marks)**: one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Extract: analyse how repeating Amanda's name and exclamation marks shape the tone and mood. (SQP 2026-27, 2 marks)
- How does repetition in 'Amanda!' highlight the speaker's expectations and Amanda's responses? (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- Summarise the role of the use of parentheses in the poem 'Amanda!'. (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)

Remember: Mermaid, orphan, Rapunzel: all alone and free.

Chapter P7: The Trees (Adrienne Rich)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Trees kept indoors break free to the forest: a symbol of liberation.

Key points

- Trees inside the poet's house are **moving out into the forest**, empty till now.
- In the empty forest no bird could sit, no insect hide, 'no sun bury its feet in shadow'.
- All night roots disengage from veranda cracks; leaves strain toward the glass.
- Boughs shuffle 'like **newly discharged patients**', half-dazed, to the clinic doors.
- The poet sits writing long letters, scarcely mentioning the forest's departure.
- "Listen. The glass is breaking." Trees stumble into the night; winds rush to meet them.
- 'The moon is broken like a mirror', its pieces flash in the crown of the tallest oak.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: **freedom from confinement**; nature vs human control; often read as women breaking free.
- Rich is called a feminist and radical poet.
- Breaking glass and moon = painful but necessary change.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Simile**: 'like newly discharged patients', 'broken like a mirror'.
- **Personification**: sun's 'feet', trees moving.
- **Imagery**: sound, sight, smell.
- **Free verse**.

Exam focus: how to score

- Explain imagery of movement from house to forest (SQP 2024-25).
- 'Listen' creates immediacy; 'stumbling' = unsteady, uncertain.
- Link with 'A Tiger in the Zoo' / 'Long Walk to Freedom'. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Extract: how does the sequence of sensory experiences enhance meaning and impact readers? (SQP 2026-27, 2 marks)
- 'The Trees' and 'A Tiger in the Zoo' resonate the theme of freedom. Examine. (SQP 2025-26, 6 marks)
- How does the imagery of the trees' movement reflect themes of liberation and growth? (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)

Remember: Roots loosen, glass breaks, trees go free.

Chapter P8: Fog (Carl Sandburg)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Fog, like a cat, arrives silently, watches, and moves on.

Key points

- "The fog comes / on little cat feet."
- It sits looking over **harbour and city** 'on silent haunches'.
- 'and then moves on': fog is **temporary**, like moments in life.
- The poet never says 'like a cat': it is an **extended metaphor**.
- Free verse: no rhyme, short lines, everyday language that breaks traditional rules.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: nature's quiet, mysterious beauty; impermanence (transient).
- Cat qualities: silent, watchful, independent, leaves when it wants.
- 'little': gentle, soft, unthreatening mood.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Extended metaphor**: fog = cat.
- **Personification**.
- **Visual imagery**.
- **Free verse**.

Exam focus: how to score

- Explain the cat metaphor with **3 cat-like actions** (comes, sits, moves on).
- 'and then moves on' = transience of life (SQP 2025-26).
- **Extract (5 marks)**: one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- How does the poem use the 'cat metaphor' to characterise the fog's nature? (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- How does the line 'and then moves on' reflect the transient nature of the fog and life's impermanence? (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- Extract: significance of the word 'little'; type of imagery used. (SQP 2023-24, 2 + 1 marks)

Remember: Fog = a cat: comes, sits, moves on.

Chapter P9: The Tale of Custard the Dragon (Ogden Nash)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: The 'coward' everyone mocked turns out to be the bravest of all.

Key points

- **Belinda** lives in a little white house with **Ink** (kitten), **Blink** (mouse), **Mustard** (dog) and **Custard** (dragon).
- Custard has sharp teeth, spikes, scales, a mouth like a fireplace, but cries for 'a nice safe cage'.
- The others boast of bravery and **tease** him, calling him 'Percival'.
- A **pirate** climbs in the 'winda' with two pistols and a cutlass.
- Belinda cries 'Help!'; Mustard flees; Ink trickles down; Blink 'strategically mouseholed'.
- **Custard jumps up and gobbles the pirate.**
- The others boast again; Custard modestly agrees 'everybody is braver than me'.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: **don't judge by appearances**; true courage shows in action; humility.
- A humorous **ballad**, close to a parody.
- 'realio, trulio': coined words for rhyme and fun.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Rhyme**: aabb (couplets).
- **Simile**: 'brave as a barrel full of bears'.
- **Onomatopoeia**: Meowch, Weeck, clatter, clank.
- **Coined words / poetic licence**: realio, trulio, winda.

Exam focus: how to score

- Irony: the 'brave' ones run, the 'coward' saves them.
- Relevance today: judging people by surface traits (SQP 2026-27 answer).
- **Extract (5 marks)**: one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about.
3-mark SA (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Assess how the poem's message about not judging by appearances is still relevant today. (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- Extract: examine the portrayal of Blink; what atmosphere do the lines create? (SQP 2024-25, 2 + 1 marks)
- How does the poem challenge the notion that individuals should conform to societal expectations? (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)

Remember: The coward ate the pirate.

Chapter P10: For Anne Gregory (W.B. Yeats)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Only God can love a person for herself alone, not for her looks.

Key points

- Written as a **conversation** between a young man (old man in some readings) and young **Anne**.
- He says young men, in despair at her 'great honey-coloured / Ramparts at your ear', will never love her for herself alone.
- She replies she can **dye her hair** brown, black or carrot so they love her for herself.
- He answers: an old religious man found a text proving **only God** could love her 'for yourself alone / And not your yellow hair'.
- Human love is drawn to **outer beauty**; true, unconditional love is divine.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Theme: inner vs outer beauty; nature of human love.
- 'Ramparts' = walls of a fort: her hair is like a protective wall.
- Yeats: Irish poet, Nobel Prize 1923.

Poetic devices to spot

- **Metaphor**: hair as ramparts.
- **Dialogue form**; **rhyme**: abcbdb.
- **Repetition**: 'for yourself alone / And not your yellow hair'.

Exam focus: how to score

- Who speaks each stanza and what each believes.
- Compare with 'The Sermon at Benares': outer attributes are fleeting (SQP 2024-25). **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.
- **Extract (5 marks)**: one-word / MCQ / 2-mark 'analyse' items; quote the word asked about.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Both 'For Anne Gregory' and 'The Sermon at Benares' grapple with the idea that external attributes are fleeting. Examine the similarities. (SQP 2024-25, 6 marks)
- What does the young man mean by 'great honey-coloured ramparts at your ear'? (NCERT, Thinking about the Poem)

Remember: Yellow hair wins men; only God loves the real you.

Chapter S1: A Triumph of Surgery (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Love must be sensible: over-pampering made Tricki ill; discipline cured him.

Key points

- Vet **James Herriot** is worried about **Tricki**, Mrs Pumphrey's overfed little dog.
- She feeds him cream cakes, chocolates, plus **malt, cod-liver oil and Horlicks**; no walks.
- Tricki becomes fat, listless, refuses food, vomits; Herriot sees 'a bloated sausage'.
- Herriot insists he be **hospitalised for about a fortnight**; she almost swoons.
- At the surgery: **no food for two days, only water**, then normal food and play with other dogs.
- Mrs Pumphrey sends **eggs** and **wine** to 'build him up'; the staff enjoy the gifts.
- In **two weeks** Tricki is lithe and fit. She calls it **"a triumph of surgery"**: ironic, there was no surgery.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Herriot**: wise, firm, kind, humorous; puts the animal's health first.
- **Mrs Pumphrey**: rich, loving but foolish, lacks self-control.
- Themes: responsible pet care, saying 'no', irony.
- Tricki: a victim of excessive love.

Exam focus: how to score

- Why the title is ironic.
- Role of the surgery: structured care vs pampering (SQP 2025-26 LA).
- Character sketch of Herriot or Mrs Pumphrey. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Comment critically on the role of the Surgery in 'A Triumph of Surgery'. (SQP 2025-26, 6 marks)
- Evaluate how James Herriot's characterisation contributes to the theme of responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. (SQP 2024-25, 6 marks)
- 'A Triumph of Surgery' is a powerful example of the importance of saying 'no'. Explain. (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)

Remember: No food, play, two weeks: a 'surgery' without a knife.

Chapter S2: The Thief's Story (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Trust and kindness can reform even a thief.

Key points

- Narrator, a **15-year-old thief**, calls himself '**Hari Singh**'; he wins over **Anil**, a struggling writer.
- Anil gives him food and shelter for work and teaches him to **write his name**, promising sentences and numbers next.
- Hari cheats on shopping; Anil knows but says nothing.
- One night Anil hides a bundle of notes (sold a book) under his mattress; Hari steals it.
- He plans the 10:30 Express to Lucknow but **can't board**; he thinks of the chance to learn and be a 'big man'.
- In the rain he returns and slips the notes back under the mattress.
- Next morning Anil gives him a **fifty-rupee note, still wet**: he knows but forgives.
- Hari's smile now **comes by itself**, without effort: real change.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Hari**: clever, observant, flatterer at first; finally honest, wants education.
- **Anil**: easy-going, trusting, generous, forgiving.
- Theme: **values are caught, not taught**; trust and education transform people.

Exam focus: how to score

- Trace Hari's **character arc**: manipulator → reformed (SQP 2023-24 LA).
- Why Hari returned: education, Anil's trust, conscience.
- Compare first smile vs final smile (SQP 2026-27). **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Compare Hari's initial approach to Anil with his honest smile at the end. What does this change reveal? (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- Evaluate the adage 'Values are caught, not taught' for Anil and Hari Singh. (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- Trace the character arc of the thief in 'The Thief's Story'. (SQP 2023-24, 6 marks)

Remember: Wet note, silent trust, a smile that comes by itself.

Chapter S3: The Midnight Visitor (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Quick thinking beats a pistol: Ausable outwits Max with an invented balcony.

Key points

- **Ausable**, a fat secret agent with an American accent, takes young writer **Fowler** to his sixth-floor room in Paris.
- Fowler is disappointed: no romance or thrill.
- **Max**, a rival agent, waits inside with a **pistol** for a report on **new missiles**.
- Ausable calmly blames 'that nuisance of a **balcony**' under the window that Max must have used.
- A knock: Ausable says it is the **police**, coming to protect the paper.
- Max hides on the 'balcony', drops from the window and **falls** (there is no balcony).
- It was **Henry**, the waiter, with drinks. **"There is no balcony."**

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Ausable**: calm, intelligent, quick-witted, a master storyteller.
- **Max**: smooth but overconfident and gullible.
- **Fowler**: romantic young writer, expects movie-like spies.
- Themes: presence of mind, appearance vs reality, suspense.

Exam focus: how to score

- Balcony = power of narrative / perception over reality (SQP 2026-27 LA).
- Misdirection and suspense techniques (SQP 2025-26 LA).
- Ausable vs typical secret agents. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Discuss what the non-existent 'balcony' symbolises in 'The Midnight Visitor'. (SQP 2026-27, 6 marks)
- How does the author use misdirection to enhance suspense and the unexpected ending? (SQP 2025-26, 6 marks)
- Comment on one element of Robert Arthur's writing style that creates tension and suspense. (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)

Remember: No balcony, no police: only brains.

Chapter S4: A Question of Trust (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: A clever thief is out-thieved; 'honour among thieves' is a myth.

Key points

- **Horace Danby**, about 50, a respectable locksmith, robs one safe a year to buy **rare books**.
- He has studied **Shotover Grange** for two weeks; about **£15,000** of jewels are in the safe.
- He wears **gloves**, calls the dog **Sherry** by name, and sneezes (hay fever, flowers).
- A young, pretty **lady in red** enters, posing as the owner's wife; threatens to call the police.
- Scared, Horace **takes off his gloves** to give her his lighter, and agrees to open the safe for her 'forgotten numbers'.
- He hands her the jewels and leaves happily.
- Arrested later: his **fingerprints** are everywhere; the real wife is a grey-haired woman of 60.
- He is now assistant librarian in prison; angry at the phrase 'honour among thieves'.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Horace**: meticulous planner, but vain, gullible under pressure.
- **Lady**: smart, confident, manipulative: 'in the same profession'.
- Themes: **crime doesn't pay**, trust misplaced, irony.

Exam focus: how to score

- Why gloves off: fear and desperation broke his careful routine (SQP 2026-27 answer).
- Clues that the lady was a fake; irony of the title.
- Did he deserve his punishment? **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Why does Horace take off his gloves to give the young lady his lighter? What does it show about his state of mind? (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- Horace Danby was a meticulous planner but still he faltered. Where did he go wrong and why? (NCERT, Think about it)

Remember: Gloves off = fingerprints on = prison.

Chapter S5: Footprints Without Feet (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Science without ethics: Griffin's brilliant discovery turns him into a lawless man.

Key points

- Scientist **Griffin** swallows rare drugs and becomes **invisible**.
- His landlord tries to evict him; Griffin **sets fire** to the house and escapes naked.
- In London two boys see **muddy footprints** appearing from nowhere.
- He spends a night in a **big London store**, clothing and feeding himself.
- At a **Drury Lane** theatrical shop he gets bandages, dark glasses, false nose, whiskers; robs the shopkeeper.
- He takes two rooms at an inn in **Iping**; **Mrs Hall** finds him eccentric.
- A **clergyman** and wife hear money being taken: the room seems empty.
- Confronted, he removes his clothes; constable **Jaffers** is knocked unconscious; Griffin escapes.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Griffin**: brilliant, but **lawless**, bad-tempered, selfish, violent.
- **Mrs Hall**: curious, friendly, then angry.
- Themes: misuse of science, isolation, power without responsibility.
- H.G. Wells: science fiction.

Exam focus: how to score

- Character sketch of Griffin: genius + misuse (SQP 2024-25 LA).
- Incidents at the inn and the vicarage (sequence matters).
- His moments of comfort and identity (SQP 2025-26). **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Griffin experiences moments of comfort and normalcy while invisible. How do these moments impact his identity and actions? (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- Evaluate how Griffin's character is shaped by ambition, the unintended consequences of his science, and society's reactions. (SQP 2024-25, 6 marks)

Remember: Invisible genius, visible crimes.

Chapter S6: The Making of a Scientist (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Curiosity, a first-rate mind and the will to win make a scientist.

Key points

- At **22**, **Richard Ebright** and his college room-mate publish a new theory on how cells work.
- Only child, grew up north of **Reading, Pennsylvania**; collected butterflies, rocks, fossils, coins.
- After his father died, his **mother** became his biggest support: books, trips, telescopes.
- Book: **The Travels of Monarch X**; he tags monarchs for **Dr Frederick A. Urquhart**.
- Seventh grade: **loses** a science fair (slides of frog tissue) and learns real experiments matter.
- Eighth grade: viral disease of monarchs; later proves **viceroy** butterflies copy monarchs.
- Purpose of the **12 tiny gold spots on a monarch pupa**: a hormone for full development.
- Also a debater, orator, canoeist, photographer; mentor **Richard A. Weiherer**.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- Ebright: curious, hard-working, competitive 'for the right reasons'.
- Mother: encouraging, provides 'the right tools'.
- Recipe: "Start with a **first-rate mind**, add curiosity, and mix in the will to win for the right reasons."

Exam focus: how to score

- Role of mother, book and failure in shaping him.
- Early successes as building blocks for later work (SQP 2024-25).
- Extracts on the gold-spots project. **3-mark SA** (40-50 words): Content 2 + Expression 1; accuracy errors can cost up to 1 mark.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Justify the opinion that Ebright's early successes were essential for his later achievements in science. (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)
- Extract: Ebright's approach to finding the purpose of the gold spots was highly effective. Elaborate. (SQP 2023-24, 2 marks)

Remember: Monarch X → gold spots → cell theory.

Chapter S7: The Necklace (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Vanity and pride cost Matilda ten years of hardship, for a fake necklace.

Key points

- **Matilda Loisel**, pretty but born to a clerk's family, marries a petty clerk and dreams of luxury.
- Invitation to the **Minister of Public Instruction's** ball; she weeps: no dress.
- Husband gives **400 francs** he saved for a gun; she buys a dress.
- She borrows a **diamond necklace** from friend **Mme Forestier**; shines at the ball.
- Necklace lost. They buy a replacement for **36,000 francs** (Loisel's 18,000 + loans).
- **Ten years** of poverty to repay; Matilda becomes a hard, rough woman of the poor.
- She meets Mme Forestier: **"Mine were false. They were not worth over five hundred francs!"**
- Guy de Maupassant; famous twist ending.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Matilda**: vain, discontented, proud; later hard-working and responsible.
- **M. Loisel**: loving, self-sacrificing, content.
- Themes: **vanity and materialism lead to downfall**, honesty, appearance vs reality, irony.

Exam focus: how to score

- Irony throughout (SQP 2026-27): suffering for a worthless necklace.
- What if she had confessed? Honesty theme (SQP 2025-26).
- Diary entry as M. Loisel / Matilda. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Analyse how the writer uses irony to convey that vanity and materialism lead to one's downfall. (SQP 2026-27, 3 marks)
- How does 'The Necklace' illustrate the significance of honesty for a happy, stress-free life? (SQP 2025-26, 3 marks)
- How does Matilda's desire for material wealth drive the plot? (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)
- Write M. Loisel's diary entry on class, social status and social mobility. (SQP 2023-24, 6 marks)

Remember: One night of glory, ten years of debt, a fake necklace.

Chapter S8: Bholi (Footprints)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Education and a kind teacher turn a neglected 'simpleton' into a confident woman.

Key points

- **Sulekha**, called **Bholi**, is the 4th daughter of **Numberdar Ramlal**.
- Fell off a cot at **10 months**; **smallpox** at 2 left pockmarks; she **stammers**.
- A girls' school opens; the Tehsildar asks Ramlal to set an example, so Bholi is sent.
- Parents think: no one will marry her, let the teachers worry about her.
- The kind **teacher** gently helps her say her name: **"Put the fear out of your heart."**
- Years later, **Bishamber Nath**, a lame, middle-aged grocer, agrees to marry her.
- At the wedding he sees her pockmarks and demands **Rs 5,000** dowry; Ramlal pays.
- Bholi flings the garland into the fire, speaks **without a stammer**, refuses the 'mean, greedy, contemptible coward'; she will serve her parents and teach.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Bholi**: neglected → confident, educated, self-respecting.
- **Teacher**: compassionate; sees Bholi as 'her masterpiece'.
- Themes: girls' education, dowry, gender bias, confidence.

Exam focus: how to score

- Bholi's main obstacle was **psychological** (fear), not physical (SQP 2026-27 answer).
- Role of education and the teacher (SQP 2023-24).
- Character sketch: before vs after. **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Extract: the teacher's words suggest Bholi's primary obstacle is psychological rather than physical. Elaborate. (SQP 2026-27, 2 marks)
- Extract: how does the author's use of Bholi's perspective help build the narrative? (SQP 2024-25, 2 marks)
- How does education play a transformative role in Bholi's life? (SQP 2023-24, 3 marks)

Remember: From 'Bh-Bh-Bholi' to 'I won't marry this coward'.

Chapter S9: The Book That Saved the Earth (Footprints) - Play

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Arrogance plus ignorance is dangerous; a nursery-rhyme book saved Earth.

Key points

- A **Historian** in the **25th century** recalls the Martian invasion of **2040**, stopped by one book.
- The 20th century was the 'Era of the Book'; then came television and computers.
- **Think-Tank**, ruler of Mars, with a huge 'brain', commands Captain Omega, Lieutenant Iota, Sergeant Oop; **Noodle** is his apprentice.
- Martians in **Centerville Public Library** think books are **sandwiches**, then hats.
- Noodle suggests books are for reading. They read **Mother Goose** rhymes and think them code.
- 'Hey Diddle Diddle' = cows jump over the moon: Earthlings seem advanced.
- **Humpty Dumpty**'s picture looks like Think-Tank; he panics, fearing a plot against him.
- He **orders Mars evacuated to Alpha Centauri**; Earth is saved.

Characters, themes & key quotes

- **Think-Tank**: arrogant, foolish, can't admit mistakes, insults others.
- **Noodle**: humble, clever, tactful; the real saviour.
- Themes: **value of books**, satire of arrogance and blind power, humour.

Exam focus: how to score

- Think-Tank's errors and their effect on leadership (SQP 2026-27 LA).
- Satirical science-fiction elements (SQP 2024-25).
- Stage directions and the Historian's role (SQP 2025-26 extract). **6-mark LA** (100-120 words): Content 3 + Expression 2 + Accuracy 1. Use 3 clear points + a link to the theme.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Think-Tank rules with absolute authority and arrogance yet makes ridiculous mistakes. Evaluate how this impacts his leadership. (SQP 2026-27, 6 marks)
- How does 'The Book that Saved the Earth' include elements of satirical science fiction? (SQP 2024-25, 3 marks)
- Extract: how do the stage directions contribute to atmosphere and understanding of the scene? (SQP 2025-26, 2 marks)

Remember: Sandwich → hat → code → Humpty Dumpty → retreat!

Chapter W1: Grammar (Section B, 10 marks)

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Grammar is 10 easy marks: attempt any 10 of 12 one-mark items set in real-life contexts.

Key points

- **Format:** 12 items (gap filling, editing, transformation); **answer any 10**, 1 mark each.
- **Topics:** Determiners, Tenses, Modals, Subject-verb concord, Reported speech (commands/requests, statements, questions).
- Items appear inside notices, emails, reports and blogs: read the whole sentence.
- **No half marks** in grammar: spelling and exact form matter.
- **Error-correction:** write both 'Error' and 'Correction' columns.
- **Reported speech:** change tense back one step, pronouns, time words.

Rules to remember

- Determiners: **few/a few** (countable), **little/a little** (uncountable); **those** for plural.
- Concord: 'Neither... nor' → verb agrees with the nearer subject; **"Each of..." takes 'has'**.
- Modals: **must** = rule/duty; **might** = possibility; **should** = advice.
- Tenses: 'since...' → present perfect: 'has lost'.
- Reported speech: now→then, yesterday→the previous day, next week→the following week, 'Are you...?' → asked if/whether...
- Advice: Doctor: "You should..." → The doctor advised the patient to...

Exam focus: how to score

- Do the 10 surest items first; attempt all 12 if time permits.
- Copy only the answer, neatly; never rewrite the question.
- Practise with the **Words and Expressions-II** workbook (Units 1-4, 7-11).

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Each of the participants in the Science Fair **have** been given guidelines. Find the error.
Answer: have → has (SQP 2026-27, 1 mark)
- Report: Juhi asked her friend, "Are you prepared for the mathematics test next week?"
Answer: ...if she was prepared for the mathematics test the following week. (SQP 2026-27, 1 mark)
- Saira saw there was ___ food left (few / least / any / little). Answer: little (SQP 2026-27, 1 mark)
- This hill station ___ (lose) its natural beauty since I last saw it. Answer: has lost (SQP 2026-27, 1 mark)

Remember: Few for count, little for amount; 'each' takes 'has'.

Chapter W2: Writing Skills + Paper Pattern

Class X • English • CBSE 2026-27

Big idea: Two 5-mark tasks: a formal letter and an analytical paragraph, each 100-120 words.

Key points

- **Paper (80 marks, 3 hrs):** Reading 20, Writing & Grammar 20, Literature 40; plus 20 internal assessment.
- **Reading:** discursive passage (400-450 words) + case-based factual passage with chart/data (200-250 words), 10 marks each.
- **Formal letter** (Q4, 5 marks, one of two): letter of complaint/enquiry/editor/authority, **100-120 words**.
- **Letter marks:** **Format 1 + Content 2 + Organisation 1 + Accuracy 1**.
- **Format:** sender's address, date, receiver's designation & address, **subject**, salutation, body, complimentary close, name.
- **Format:** ½ mark lost if 1-2 parts missing, 0 if more than two missing.
- **Analytical paragraph** (Q5, 5 marks): on a chart, graph, map, product features or cues; 100-120 words.
- **Paragraph marks:** **Content 2 + Organisation 2 + Accuracy 1**. No title; analyse, compare and conclude; don't just describe.

Formats & structure

- Letter body: para 1 purpose ('I wish to draw your attention to...'); para 2 problems/effects; para 3 suggestions & request.
- Close: 'Yours sincerely / faithfully', name, (A concerned resident).
- Paragraph flow: introduce the data → main trends with figures → comparison → conclusion.
- Linkers: firstly, moreover, however, whereas, consequently, overall.
- Literature answers: SA 40-50 words (3 marks); LA 100-120 words (6 marks).

Exam focus: how to score

- Cover every content point in the question (issue, effects, solutions, appeal).
- Use formal tone, no contractions; stay within the word limit.
- Quote numbers from the chart; end with an overall trend or recommendation.

★ Important questions from CBSE sample papers

- Letter: As Maya Nair, write to the RWA Secretary on the need for a community centre in Green View Colony, explaining its benefits. (SQP 2026-27, 5 marks)
- Letter: As Nandan Banerjee, write to the Editor about open burning of hospital and domestic waste: health effects, scientific disposal, awareness. (SQP 2026-27, 5 marks)
- Analytical paragraph: analyse why a student study desk organiser (bamboo, adjustable shelves, anti-slip base, 5-year guarantee) is a good purchase. (SQP 2026-27, 5 marks)
- Analytical paragraph: using SWOT notes, evaluate whether Vikram should become Debate Club President. (SQP 2026-27, 5 marks)

Remember: Letter: F1-C2-O1-A1. Paragraph: C2-O2-A1.