

S. Number of Question Paper answered:  
Unique Paper Code : 62031105  
Name of Course : B. A. Programme (LOCF)  
Name of Paper : English Language Through Literature  
Semester : I  
Maximum Marks : 75  
Duration : 3 + 1 hours (one hour reserved for  
downloading of question paper, scanning and uploading of answer sheets)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

The paper contains 3 unseen passages. Each passage has two questions based on it.

Students will attempt **any THREE out of SIX** questions.

All questions carry equal marks (25 Marks x 3 = 75 Marks).

### Passage 1: (650 words)

November 16, 1973

Dear Mr. McCarthy:

I am writing to you in your capacity as chairman of the Drake School Board. I am among those American writers whose books have been destroyed in the now famous furnace of your school.

Certain members of your community have suggested that my work is evil. This is extraordinarily insulting to me. The news from Drake indicates to me that books and writers are very unreal to you people. I am writing this letter to let you know how real I am.

I want you to know, too, that my publisher and I have done absolutely nothing to exploit the disgusting news from Drake... We have declined to go on television, have written no fiery letters to editorial pages, have granted no lengthy interviews. We are angered and sickened and saddened. And no copies of this letter have been sent to anybody else... It is a strictly private letter from me to the people of Drake, who have done so much to damage my reputation in the eyes of their children and then in the eyes of the world...

I gather from what I read in the papers and hear on television that you imagine me, and some other writers, too, as being sort of ratlike people who enjoy making money from poisoning the minds of young people. I am in fact a large, strong person, fifty-one years old, who did a lot of farm work as a boy, who is good with tools. I have raised six children, three my own and three adopted. They have all turned out well. Two of them are farmers. I am a combat infantry veteran from World War II, and hold a Purple Heart. I have earned whatever I own by hard work. I have never been arrested or sued for anything. I am so much trusted with young people and by young people that I have served on the faculties of the University of Iowa, Harvard, and the City College of New York.

Every year I receive at least a dozen invitations to be commencement speaker at colleges and high schools. My books are probably more widely used in schools than those of any other living American fiction writer.

If you were to bother to read my books, to behave as educated persons would, you would learn that they... do not argue in favor of wildness of any kind. They beg that people be kinder and more responsible than they often are. It is true that some of the characters speak coarsely. That is because people speak coarsely in real life. Especially soldiers and hardworking men speak coarsely, and even our most sheltered children know that. And we all know, too, that those words really don't damage children much. They didn't damage us when we were young. It was evil deeds and lying that hurt us...

I read in the newspaper that your community is mystified by the outcry from all over the country about what you have done ... your fellow Americans can't stand it that you have behaved in such an uncivilized way. Perhaps you will learn from this that books are sacred to free men for very good reasons, and that wars have been fought against nations which hate books and burn them.

If you and your board are now determined to show that you in fact have wisdom and maturity when you exercise your powers over the education of your young, then you should acknowledge that it was a rotten lesson you taught young people in a free society when you denounced and then burned books—books you hadn't even read. You should also resolve to expose your children to all sorts of opinions and information, in order that they will be better equipped to make decisions and to survive.

Again: you have insulted me, and I am a good citizen, and I am very real.

Kurt Vonnegut

Questions 1 and 2 are based on passage 1.

**1. This question has two subparts, A+B. Both have to be answered:**

**A.** What are the arguments that the writer of the letter makes to criticize the receiver, McCarthy's actions? Write a reasoned answer (in 250-300 words) with close reference to passage 1. (10 marks)

**B.** Imagine you are a school teacher who used Vonnegut's novel in his classroom. Write a letter in 350-500 words to Vonnegut, describing to him how and why there was an outrage following your use of the book in the classroom, and the way you were criticized and copies of the novel were burnt in front of you. Refer to those reasons Vonnegut indicates for which the book was burnt to help you imagine what the school teacher may have written in her/his own letter. (15 marks)

**2. This question has two subparts, A+B. Both have to be answered:**

**A.** What arguments does Vonnegut make to underline the worth of his novel, and of books in general? Write an answer in 250-300 words, with close reference to Passage 1. (10 marks)

**B.** Imagine that Kurt Vonnegut telephones the teacher who used the book in his/her class, to thank him/her for daring to use his book in his/her class, and to reassure him/her that he/she did no wrong. A conversation such as this is likely to touch on the power of literature and freedom of expression. Draft a telephonic conversation that would have taken place between them, using appropriate directions to indicate tone of voice, pauses, volume, and emotion such as may be conveyed through a telephonic conversation. (15 marks)

**Passage 2:** (229 words)

**Morning in the Burned House**

In the burned house I am eating breakfast.

You understand: there is no house, there is no breakfast,  
yet here I am.

The spoon which was melted scrapes against  
the bowl which was melted also.

No one else is around.

Where have they gone to, brother and sister,  
mother and father? Off along the shore,  
perhaps. Their clothes are still on the hangers,

their dishes piled beside the sink,  
which is beside the woodstove  
with its grate and sooty kettle,

every detail clear,  
tin cup and rippled mirror.

The day is bright and songless,

the lake is blue, the forest watchful.

In the east a bank of cloud  
rises up silently like dark bread.

I can see the swirls in the oilcloth,  
I can see the flaws in the glass,  
those flares where the sun hits them.

I can't see my own arms and legs  
or know if this is a trap or blessing,  
finding myself back here, where everything

in this house has long been over,  
kettle and mirror, spoon and bowl,  
including my own body,

including the body I had then,  
including the body I have now  
as I sit at this morning table, alone and happy,

bare child's feet on the scorched floorboards  
(I can almost see)  
in my burning clothes, the thin green shorts

and grubby yellow T-shirt  
holding my cindery, non-existent,  
radiant flesh. Incandescent.

**Questions 3 and 4 are based on passage 2.**

**3. This question has two subparts, A+B. Both have to be answered:**

**A.** The poem (passage 2) depicts the childhood memories of the speaking voice. Are those memories pleasant or unpleasant? Respond using suitable examples from the poem to support your answer (250-300 words). (10 marks)

**B.** Paraphrase the full poem "Morning in the Burned House" (passage 2) in 350-500 words. (15 marks)

**4. This question has two subparts, A+B. Both have to be answered:**

**A.** What was the fate of the family members of the speaking voice in the poem. Read the poem in Passage 2 closely and use examples from it to support your observations and statements. Answer in 250-300 words. (10 marks)

**B.** Imagine you are the poetic voice in the poem (passage 2). Write a personal essay (in 350-500 words) on the importance of memories of past times in shaping our experiences and our perspective of the present. (15 marks)

**Passage 3: (660 words)**

Mama, Maud Martha, and Helen rocked slowly in their rocking chairs, and looked at the late afternoon light on the lawn and at the emphatic iron of the fence and at the poplar tree. These things might soon be theirs no longer. Those shafts and pools of light, the tree, the graceful iron, might soon be viewed passively by different eyes.

Papa was to have gone that noon, during his lunch hour, to the office of the Home Owners' Loan. If he had not succeeded in getting another extension, they would be leaving this house in which they had lived for more than fourteen years. There was little hope...

"We'll be moving into a nice flat somewhere," said Mama. "Somewhere on South Park, or Michigan, or in Washington Park Court." Those flats, as the girls and Mama knew well, were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's. This was not mentioned now.

"They're much prettier than this old house," said Helen. "...I have...friends that wouldn't come down this far for anything, unless they were in a taxi."

Yesterday, Maud Martha would have attacked her. Tomorrow she might. Today she said nothing. She merely gazed at a little hopping robin in the tree, her tree, and tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry.

"Well, I do know," said Mama, turning her hands over and over, "that I've been getting tired and tired of doing that firing. From October to April, there's firing to be done."

“But lately we’ve been helping, Harry and I,” said Maud Martha. “And sometimes in March and April and in October, and even in November, we could build a little fire in the fireplace. Sometimes the weather was just right for that.”

She knew, from the way they looked at her, that this had been a mistake. They did not want to cry.

But she felt that the little line of white, sometimes ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron would never drift across any western sky except that in the back of this house. The rain would drum with as sweet a dullness nowhere but here. The birds on South Park were mechanical birds, no better than the poor caught canaries in those “rich” women’s sun parlors.

“It’s just going to kill Papa!” burst out Maud Martha. “He loves this house! He lives for this house!”

“He lives for us,” said Helen. “It’s us he loves.”

“And he’ll have us,” added Mama, “wherever.”

“You know,” Helen sighed, “if you want to know the truth, this is a relief. If this hadn’t come up, we would have gone on, just dragged on, hanging out here forever.”

“It might,” allowed Mama, “be an act of God. God may just have reached down and picked up the reins.”

“Yes,” Maud Martha cracked in, “that’s what you always say – that God knows best.”

...

Helen saw Papa coming. “There’s Papa,” said Helen.

They could not tell a thing from the way Papa was walking. It was that same dear little staccato walk, one shoulder down, then the other, then repeat, and repeat. They watched his progress. He passed the Kennedys’, he passed the vacant lot, he passed Mrs. Blakemore’s. They wanted to hurl themselves over the fence, into the street, and shake the truth out of his collar. He opened his gate – the gate – and still his stride and face told them nothing.

“Hello,” he said.

Mama got up and followed him through the front door. The girls knew better than to go in too.

Presently Mama’s head emerged. Her eyes were lamps turned on.

“It’s all right,” she exclaimed. “He got it. It’s all over. Everything is all right.”

The door slammed shut. Mama’s footsteps hurried away.

“I think,” said Helen, rocking rapidly, “I think I’ll give a party. I haven’t given a party since I was eleven. I’d like some of my friends to just casually see that we’re homeowners.”

**Questions 5 and 6 are based on passage 3.**

**5. This question has two subparts, A+B. Both have to be answered:**

**A.** Write a detailed character sketch of Maud Martha (in 250-300 words) based on your reading of passage 3. Study her thoughts, her interactions with the others, her style of speaking, her reactions to others, and their reactions to her. (10 marks)

**B.** Rewrite the short story (in passage 3) from Helen's perspective in 350-500 words. (To build your narrative, focus on those portions of the original story that focus on Helen's actions and her interactions with other characters.) (15 marks)

**6. This question has two subparts, A+B. Both have to be answered:**

**A.** What do you think is the theme of passage 3? Examine the plot, the ending, the interactions and words of the characters in detail, and write a reasoned answer in 250-300 words. (10 marks)

**B.** Imagine that after the events described in the story (in passage 3), Mama and Maud Martha have a conversation, and confess to each other what they were actually feeling when earlier they thought they would lose their house. Draft that conversation in the form of a dialogue – keeping in mind the personal details, personality traits, and speaking styles of the two characters that can be gleaned from the short story. Use appropriate stage directions wherever necessary. (Answer in about 350-500 words). (15 marks)