

CBSE Class X English

Important Questions & Previous Years' Question Patterns
First Flight & Footprints without Feet

Compiled for: Sunil Kumar Sah, TGT English
GBSSS SP Road Nangloi

This resource contains Very Short Answer, Short Answer, Long Answer / Value-based, and HOTS & Analytical questions framed in the pattern seen in CBSE board examinations for the prescribed prose and poetry chapters of Class X English (First Flight and Footprints without Feet). Questions are modelled on recurring CBSE question patterns; teachers/students should cross-check the latest CBSE sample paper and marking scheme for the current session.

Contents

1. A Letter to God — G.L. Fuentes
2. Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom
3. His First Flight — Liam O'Flaherty
4. Black Aeroplane — Frederick Forsyth
5. From the Diary of Anne Frank
6. Dust of Snow — Robert Frost
7. Fire and Ice — Robert Frost
8. A Tiger in the Zoo — Leslie Norris
9. How to Tell Wild Animals — Carolyn Wells
10. The Ball Poem — John Berryman
11. A Triumph of Surgery — James Herriot
12. The Thief's Story — Ruskin Bond
13. The Midnight Visitor — Robert Arthur
14. A Question of Trust — Victor Canning
15. Footprints without Feet — H.G. Wells

1. A Letter to God

Prose — G.L. Fuentes

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What did Lencho do every night before sleeping?
- 2 Why was Lencho confident that it would rain that day?
- 3 How much money did Lencho ask for in his letter?
- 4 What was the amount of money the postmaster collected and sent to Lencho?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe the hailstorm and the destruction it caused to Lencho's crop.
- 2 Why did the postmaster decide to help Lencho? What does this reveal about his character?
- 3 What was Lencho's reaction when he counted the money sent to him? Why did he react this way?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 Lencho's faith in God was so strong that it moved even a stranger to act like God's provider. Discuss with reference to the story how faith and simplicity shape human behaviour, and what the story teaches us about kindness and compassion.
- 2 "Lencho's faith was greater than the postmaster's charity, and yet it also exposed the limits of blind faith." Justify this statement, bringing out both the positive and ironical aspects of Lencho's character.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Was Lencho's anger at the missing money a sign of ingratitude, or does it reveal something deeper about the nature of unquestioning faith? Analyse critically.
- 2 If you were the postmaster, would you have collected money for Lencho? Justify your answer with reasons connected to the values highlighted in the story.
- 3 The story ends on an ironic note. Explain how irony is used as a literary device to bring out the central theme of the story.

2. Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

Prose — Autobiographical excerpt

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 Who were the dignitaries that came from distant places to attend Mandela's inauguration?
- 2 According to Mandela, what does 'to be free' mean?
- 3 What twin obligations does Mandela speak of?
- 4 What did the author mean by a 'glorious rainbow' at the ceremony?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Why does Mandela regard courage as more important than the absence of fear?
- 2 What did Mandela's country do to him and to men like him, according to the passage?
- 3 How does Mandela describe the change of guard that took place at his inauguration, and why was it significant?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them." Explain this statement in the light of Mandela's understanding of true freedom, and discuss how his personal struggle became a universal one.
- 2 Describe the qualities of leadership that Nelson Mandela displays in the extract. How do his experiences shape his vision of a free and equal South Africa?

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Mandela says oppressors must also be liberated. Analyse this idea — how can an oppressor be a victim of the system he perpetuates?
- 2 Compare Mandela's idea of courage ('not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it') with real-life instances of courage you have observed or read about.
- 3 Evaluate the significance of the setting (Pretoria, the amphitheatre, the mix of military and civilians) in reinforcing the theme of reconciliation.

3. His First Flight (Two Stories about Flying – I)

Prose — Liam O'Flaherty

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 Why was the young seagull afraid to fly?
- 2 What did the young seagull's brothers and sister do that he could not?
- 3 Who forced the young seagull to fly, and how?
- 4 What did the seagull do the moment he touched the water?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe the young seagull's state of mind as he stood alone on the ledge.
- 2 How did the mother seagull tempt her young one to fly?
- 3 What lesson do we learn from the young seagull's ultimate triumph over fear?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 Fear of failure often holds us back from attempting new things, yet the very act of attempting is what leads to growth. Discuss this idea with reference to the young seagull's journey from fear to flight.
- 2 Describe, in your own words, the process by which the young seagull overcame his fear and learnt to fly. What role did hunger and family play in this transformation?

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 The story can be read as an allegory of a child's first step towards independence. Analyse the parallels between the seagull's experience and human growth.
- 2 Was the mother seagull's tactic of using hunger to force her son to fly justified? Discuss both the risk and the necessity of this approach.
- 3 'Chance had thrown him into the air.' Examine how the theme of accidental discovery of one's own capability is central to the story.

4. Black Aeroplane (Two Stories about Flying – II)

Prose — Frederick Forsyth

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What problem did the narrator face while flying over the English Channel?
- 2 Who guided the narrator's plane safely through the storm?
- 3 What surprising fact did the woman at the control room reveal about the black aeroplane?
- 4 What time did the narrator's watch show when he landed?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe the condition of the narrator when he entered the storm clouds.
- 2 How did the black aeroplane guide the narrator to safety? Give details of the route.
- 3 What mystery surrounds the black aeroplane and its pilot in the story?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "There are things that cannot be explained by science or logic." Discuss this idea with reference to the mysterious appearance and disappearance of the black aeroplane in the story.
- 2 Describe the narrator's experience of flying through the storm and analyse how the story blends real danger with an element of the supernatural.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Do you think the black aeroplane and its pilot were a hallucination born of the narrator's fear, or a genuine supernatural intervention? Support your view with evidence from the text.
- 2 Examine how Forsyth builds tension and suspense in the story through the narrator's changing emotions — from confidence to panic to relief.
- 3 The story ends without a rational explanation. Do you think this open-endedness strengthens or weakens the impact of the story? Justify.

5. From the Diary of Anne Frank

Prose — Anne Frank

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What name did Anne Frank give to her diary?
- 2 Why did Anne feel that she could not confide in anyone before starting her diary?
- 3 What subjects did Anne enjoy studying, according to the extract?
- 4 Who was Mr Keesing, and why was he important in Anne's account?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Why does Anne say 'paper has more patience than people'?
- 2 Describe the incident involving Mr Keesing and Anne's essays on chattering.
- 3 What kind of a person was Anne Frank as revealed through her diary entries?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "A diary can become a true friend when human companionship feels inadequate." Discuss this statement with reference to Anne Frank's reasons for starting her diary and naming it 'Kitty'.
- 2 Anne Frank's account of the essay on 'Chatterbox' reveals her wit, intelligence, and ability to turn a punishment into an opportunity. Elaborate with examples from the text.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Anne Frank wrote her diary while living in hiding during a time of persecution. How does the ordinariness of her teenage concerns (school, friends, essays) contrast with the extraordinary circumstances of her life? What does this contrast reveal?
- 2 Evaluate Anne's observation about herself as a 'chatterbox' — do you think self-awareness of this kind is a strength or merely an excuse? Support with reference to the text.
- 3 In what ways does Anne's diary serve as both a personal record and a historical document? Discuss its significance beyond being a teenager's private writing.

6. Dust of Snow

Poetry — Robert Frost

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 Which two birds/objects are mentioned in the poem?
- 2 How did the crow shake the dust of snow onto the poet?
- 3 What change did the small incident bring in the poet's mood?
- 4 Name the tree on which the crow was sitting.

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 How does the poet use ordinary images (crow, hemlock tree, snow) to convey a larger meaning about nature?
- 2 Explain how a small, seemingly unimportant incident can change the mood of a whole day, with reference to the poem.
- 3 Why do you think the poet chose a crow and a hemlock tree — usually seen as symbols of gloom — to bring him joy?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Nature has the power to heal and transform even the darkest of moods." Discuss this central idea of 'Dust of Snow' with reference to the imagery and structure of the poem.
- 2 Analyse how Robert Frost uses simple, everyday rural imagery to explore profound philosophical ideas about mood, nature, and redemption.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 The crow and hemlock are conventionally associated with bad omens and death, yet in this poem they bring relief and joy. Analyse this irony and its significance to the poem's meaning.
- 2 Relate the theme of the poem to your own life — describe a small incident that changed your mood or outlook, drawing a parallel with the poet's experience.
- 3 Comment on the structural economy of the poem — how does Frost achieve depth of meaning in just eight short lines?

7. Fire and Ice

Poetry — Robert Frost

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What do 'fire' and 'ice' symbolise in the poem?
- 2 According to the poet, in what two ways might the world end?
- 3 Which human emotion does the poet associate with 'ice'?
- 4 How many lines does the poem have?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Explain the symbolic meanings of desire (fire) and hatred (ice) as used in the poem.
- 2 Why does the poet say that 'ice' would also suffice to destroy the world, despite favouring fire as the more likely cause?
- 3 Comment on the tone of the poem — is it pessimistic, philosophical, or a warning? Justify your answer.

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Human emotions, when unchecked, can be as destructive as any natural catastrophe." Discuss this idea with reference to how Frost uses fire and ice as symbols for desire and hatred in shaping human destruction.
- 2 Analyse the poem 'Fire and Ice' as a commentary on human nature and the destructive potential of extreme emotions, referring to both its literal and metaphorical layers of meaning.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Frost wrote this poem in the context of debates about the end of the world (by fire/heat or ice age). Analyse how the poem transcends its scientific context to become a statement on human psychology.
- 2 Compare the destructive powers of 'desire' and 'hatred' as presented in the poem. Which do you think is more dangerous in today's world, and why?
- 3 Examine the use of irony and understatement in the closing lines of the poem ('...would suffice'). How does this restraint add power to the poem's message?

8. A Tiger in the Zoo

Poetry — Leslie Norris

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 Where does the tiger pace in the poem?
- 2 What does the tiger do at night in the jungle, as imagined by the poet?
- 3 Who patrols outside the tiger's cage with a gun?
- 4 What are the tiger's 'stripes' compared to?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Contrast the tiger's life in the wild with its life in the zoo, as depicted in the poem.
- 2 Explain the significance of the last stanza, where the tiger stares at the 'brilliant stars'.
- 3 How does the poet use vivid imagery to bring out the tiger's confinement and loss of freedom?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Confinement, however well-guarded and comfortable, can never replace freedom." Discuss this central theme of the poem 'A Tiger in the Zoo', drawing a contrast between the tiger's natural habitat and its life in captivity.
- 2 Analyse the poem as a critique of how human civilization curtails the freedom of wild creatures, and comment on the poet's use of contrasting imagery to build this critique.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Do you think zoos are necessary for conservation, or do they merely serve human entertainment at the cost of animal freedom? Argue your view using ideas from the poem.
- 2 The tiger's confinement is guarded by 'a man with a gun', while in the wild it was the predator. Analyse this role reversal and what it suggests about power and control.
- 3 Extend the poem's theme to a broader discussion of freedom — can the tiger's situation be compared to any human experience of loss of liberty? Explain with examples.

9. How to Tell Wild Animals

Poetry — Carolyn Wells

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 How can one identify an Asian lion according to the poem?
- 2 What happens if a Bengal tiger 'greet' you, according to the poem?
- 3 How is the crocodile different from the hyena, as per the poem?
- 4 Which animal in the poem 'weeps' when it kills you?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Explain the poet's humorous method of distinguishing a Bengal Tiger from an Asian Lion.
- 2 What tone does the poet adopt in describing these dangerous encounters with wild animals? Support with examples.
- 3 How does the poem use exaggeration and irony to create humour while discussing dangerous animals?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Humour can be an effective tool to convey even serious information." Discuss this statement with reference to the poet's mock-serious style in 'How to Tell Wild Animals'.
- 2 Analyse the poem as a parody of scientific/nature guidebooks. How does the poet use this format to entertain rather than genuinely instruct?

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 The poem describes deadly encounters in a light-hearted, almost comic manner. Discuss how this contrast between the serious subject (being attacked by wild animals) and the playful tone creates the poem's unique humour.
- 2 Examine the use of rhyme, rhythm, and repetitive structure across the stanzas. How do these devices contribute to the comic effect of the poem?
- 3 If the poem were rewritten as a serious, factual account of these animals, what would be lost? Reflect on the value of satire and humour in poetry.

10. The Ball Poem

Poetry — John Berryman

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What does the boy lose at the beginning of the poem?
- 2 Where does the ball finally go, according to the poem?
- 3 What does the poet mean by saying the boy is learning 'his first responsibility'?
- 4 What colour is the ball mentioned in the poem?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Why does the poet advise that no one should 'intrude' or offer money to console the boy?
- 2 What does the loss of the ball symbolise in the larger context of human life?
- 3 How does the poet describe the boy's emotional state after losing the ball?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Loss is an inseparable part of growing up, and how one learns to cope with it shapes one's character." Discuss this central theme of 'The Ball Poem' with reference to the boy's experience of losing his ball.
- 2 Analyse how the poet uses the simple, everyday incident of a lost ball to explore profound ideas about impermanence, loss, and the process of maturing into responsibility.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 The poet says money 'is external' to the boy's grief. Analyse why material compensation cannot substitute for emotional loss, with reference to the poem.
- 2 Do you agree that experiencing loss at a young age helps in building emotional resilience? Discuss with reference to the poem and your own understanding.
- 3 Examine the shift in the poem from a concrete, physical loss (the ball) to an abstract, philosophical reflection on loss in general. How does Berryman achieve this transition?

11. A Triumph of Surgery

Footprints without Feet — James Herriot

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What was Tricki's problem when Mrs Pumphrey called the vet?
- 2 What treatment did James Herriot prescribe for Tricki at his surgery?
- 3 How did Mrs Pumphrey spoil Tricki at home?
- 4 What was Tricki's condition when he was discharged from the surgery?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe the pampered lifestyle Mrs Pumphrey gave to Tricki, and how it affected his health.
- 2 How did the strict regimen at Herriot's surgery help Tricki recover?
- 3 What does the story suggest about the dangers of over-indulgence, whether in pets or people?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Excessive love, if not tempered with discipline, can do more harm than good." Discuss this theme with reference to Mrs Pumphrey's pampering of Tricki and Herriot's corrective treatment.
- 2 Describe James Herriot's approach to treating Tricki. What does his method reveal about his professional skill and understanding of animal psychology?

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Compare Mrs Pumphrey's method of caring for Tricki with Herriot's. What broader lesson about upbringing (of children, pets, or oneself) can be drawn from this contrast?
- 2 Herriot tricked Mrs Pumphrey into believing Tricki was being pampered even during treatment. Was this deception justified? Discuss the ethics of this 'triumph'.
- 3 Analyse the humour in the story. How does Herriot use irony (calling the strict regimen a 'triumph of surgery') to entertain while making a serious point?

12. The Thief's Story

Footprints without Feet — Ruskin Bond

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What was the name of the thief in the story?
- 2 What skill did Hari Singh possess that made him a successful thief?
- 3 What did Hari Singh steal from Anil, and how much money was it?
- 4 Why did Hari Singh finally decide to return the money?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe the relationship that develops between Hari Singh and Anil before the theft.
- 2 Why does Hari Singh feel that Anil's trust troubled him more than his usual fear of being caught?
- 3 What internal conflict does Hari Singh experience on the night of the theft?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Trust has the power to transform even a hardened wrongdoer." Discuss this statement with reference to Hari Singh's transformation in 'The Thief's Story'.
- 2 Trace the journey of Hari Singh from a professional thief to a person who chooses honesty and self-improvement. What factors bring about this change?

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Hari Singh says, 'It's a hard world for a boy who earns his living by stealing.' Analyse how circumstances, rather than inherent nature, shape the choices of characters like Hari Singh.
- 2 Do you think Anil's casual, non-judgmental attitude towards Hari Singh (even after discovering the theft) was a deliberate strategy or genuine trust? Justify your view.
- 3 Evaluate the ending of the story — Hari Singh leaves without collecting his unpaid wages or saying goodbye. What does this choice reveal about his changed values?

13. The Midnight Visitor

Footprints without Feet — Robert Arthur

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 Who was Ausable, and what was his profession?
- 2 Who was Fowler, and why was he disappointed with Ausable?
- 3 What trick did Ausable use to get rid of Max?
- 4 What report did Max want to steal from Ausable?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe how Ausable invents the story of the balcony to outwit Max.
- 2 How does the story subvert Fowler's (and the reader's) expectations of a 'secret agent'?
- 3 What qualities of presence of mind and quick thinking does Ausable display in the story?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Wit and presence of mind can be more powerful than physical force or dramatic action." Discuss this theme with reference to how Ausable handles the dangerous situation with Max.
- 2 Analyse how Robert Arthur builds suspense in 'The Midnight Visitor' and then subverts it with humour through the twist involving the non-existent balcony.

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 Compare the popular, dramatic image of a 'secret agent' with the character of Ausable as portrayed in the story. What point is the author making about reality versus fiction/stereotypes?
- 2 Ausable's plan works because he understands Max's psychology as much as the situation itself. Analyse how understanding human behaviour becomes his greatest weapon.
- 3 If Max had not believed the story about the balcony, how might the situation have unfolded? Speculate on an alternate outcome, staying true to the characters as established.

14. A Question of Trust

Footprints without Feet — Victor Canning

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What was Horace Danby's secret passion, besides safe-breaking?
- 2 What lie did the young woman tell Horace Danby about the house?
- 3 What did Horace Danby unknowingly do that led to his arrest?
- 4 How long was Horace Danby sentenced to prison?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe how the young woman outwits and traps Horace Danby.
- 2 What kind of a thief was Horace Danby? How was he different from a typical criminal?
- 3 Why does the title 'A Question of Trust' suit the story? Explain with reference to the misplaced trust between the characters.

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Irony often teaches the deepest lessons." Discuss the ironical elements in 'A Question of Trust', focusing on how the master thief himself becomes a victim of deception.
- 2 Analyse the character of Horace Danby — his skill, his love for books, his carefulness, and his one fatal error of trusting a stranger. What broader lesson does his story convey?

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 The story shows a thief being outwitted by an even cleverer criminal. Does this poetic justice make Horace Danby a more sympathetic character to the reader? Discuss.
- 2 Analyse the theme of trust from multiple angles in the story — Horace's trust in the woman's story, and the irony that trust becomes his undoing despite being a criminal himself.
- 3 Do you think Horace Danby's punishment was justified, given that another (more calculating) criminal escaped consequence entirely? Discuss the question of justice raised by the story.

15. Footprints without Feet

Footprints without Feet — H.G. Wells

Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

- 1 What was Griffin's area of expertise/research?
- 2 How did Griffin lose all his money in London?
- 3 What did Griffin do to the landlord who tried to raise the rent?
- 4 How did Griffin escape after being cornered by the crowd and a constable?

Short Answer Questions (3 Marks)

- 1 Describe the incidents that reveal Griffin's misuse of his invisibility to commit petty crimes.
- 2 Why did Griffin choose to set fire to the lodging house before leaving?
- 3 What difficulties did Griffin face despite being invisible, as shown in the story?

Long Answer / Value-Based Questions (5–6 Marks)

- 1 "Power without a moral compass often turns destructive." Discuss this theme with reference to Griffin's misuse of his scientific discovery of invisibility.
- 2 Trace Griffin's actions from the discovery of invisibility to his becoming a fugitive. What does his story suggest about the relationship between scientific power and ethical responsibility?

HOTS & Analytical Questions

- 1 If you were granted the power of invisibility like Griffin, how would you use it? Contrast your intended use with Griffin's choices, and reflect on what separates responsible use of power from misuse.
- 2 Griffin, a brilliant scientist, becomes a thief and outlaw. Analyse the factors (isolation, desperation, absence of a moral guide) that may have contributed to this downfall.
- 3 The story's title, 'Footprints without Feet', is deeply ironic and unsettling. Discuss how this image is used throughout the narrative to build suspense and reflect Griffin's psychological state.

Exam Tips — Answering Strategy

- 1 Very Short Answer (1 mark): Answer in one line/phrase directly from the text; avoid unnecessary elaboration.
- 2 Short Answer (3 marks): Write in 30–40 words; include 2–3 relevant points with a brief explanation for each.
- 3 Long Answer / Value-based (5–6 marks): Write in 100–120 words; introduction, 3–4 developed points with textual reference, and a concluding line linking to the value/theme.
- 4 HOTS/Analytical: These require your own reasoning supported by the text — avoid one-sided answers; acknowledge alternate viewpoints where relevant, then justify your stand.
- 5 Always support answers with reference to specific incidents, dialogues, or images from the text rather than vague generalisations.
- 6 For poems, quote a short relevant line (in quotation marks) to strengthen literary/analytical answers.