

Sl. No.

**SSLC MODEL EXAMINATION, FEBRUARY - 2026**  
**ENGLISH**

Time : 2½ Hours

Second Language

Total Score : 80

**Instructions :**

1. The cool-off time of 15 minutes is to be used for reading the question paper.
2. You are not supposed to write anything during the cool off time.
3. Attempt the questions according to the instructions.

**Score**

**Questions 1 - 5 : Read the excerpt from *Trills and Thrills : Birdwatching in India* and answer the questions that follow.**

**5x1=5**

One of the standard questions to me is about the thrilling adventures in a lifetime of exploring for birds. My answer must seem disappointing. Ornithology as a hobby or profession, though full of adventures, rewards and disappointments, is usually one of the most peaceful of pursuits. It is certainly not lacking in excitement and thrills, though. With the richness and variety of bird life in India, exciting discoveries can be made by any birdwatcher. It is refreshing to find that birdwatching as a hobby is growing rapidly in popularity. I had grown up only on the traditional accounts of the nesting habits of birds. These were interesting enough for a keen bird photographer, as I was, to want to record on film. But while concealed in a canvas hide, perched high up on a stepladder, a few yards away from the nests, I noticed some unusual goings on which clearly showed that the birds had not read the textbooks.

1. What question is commonly posed to Dr. Salim Ali about his life as a birdwatcher ?
2. Why can any birdwatcher make exciting discoveries in India ?

3. What aspect does the author find most refreshing in the passage ?

- Birdwatching is full of adventures.
- Birdwatching as a hobby is growing in popularity.
- Birdwatching is a popular profession.
- The Indian birdlife is rich and varied.

4. Why does the author describe ornithology as one of the most peaceful pursuits ?

5. What humorous conclusion does the author draw from the unusual behaviour of the birds ?

- Birds behave intelligently to outwit humans.
- Birds are unaware of their surroundings.
- Birds were afraid of the photographer.
- Birds had not read the text books.

**Questions 6 - 9 : Read the lines from the poem *Mirror* and answer the questions that follow.**

**4x1=4**

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,  
 Searching my reaches for what she really is.  
 Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.  
 I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.  
 She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.  
 I am important to her. She comes and goes.  
 Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.  
 In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman  
 Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

6. What is the mirror compared to in the given stanza ?

7. Why does the mirror call the candles and the moon 'liars' ?

- (A) They are artificial.
- (B) They do not give light.
- (C) They frighten the woman.
- (D) They hide the truth about ageing.

8. What does the expression 'like a terrible fish' suggest ?

- (A) Love of beauty
- (B) Desire for peace
- (C) Fear of ageing
- (D) Need for happiness

9. What does the woman search for when she looks into the lake-like mirror ?

10. [A] Read the lines from given below from the song Another Day in Paradise. Write an appreciation, discussing the theme, imagery, poetic techniques, tone, and the contemporary relevance. 1x5=5

She calls out to the man on the street

"Sir, can you help me ?

It's cold and I've nowhere to sleep,

Is there somewhere you can tell me ?"

He walks on, doesn't look back

He pretends he can't hear her

Starts to whistle as he crosses the street

Seems embarrassed to be there.

Oh, think twice, cause it's another day for

You and me in paradise.

Oh, think twice, cause it's another day for you,

You and me in paradise,

Think about it.

OR

[B] Here are two excerpts from the play Julius Caesar. They are the words of Brutus and Mark Antony delivered on the occasion of Caesar's funeral. Read them carefully and prepare a paragraph comparing the theme of both speeches.

Mark Antony (Original)	Brutus (Simplified)
<p>He was my friend, faithful and just to me :</p> <p>But Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man.</p> <p>He hath brought many captives home to Rome,</p> <p>Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill :</p> <p>Did this in Caesar seem ambitious ?</p> <p>When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept :</p> <p>Ambition should be made of sterner stuff :</p>	<p>Because Caesar loved me, I cry for him.</p> <p>Because he was successful, I am happy for him.</p> <p>Because he was brave, I respect him.</p> <p>But because he was ambitious, I killed him.</p> <p>So, there are tears for his love, happiness for his success, respect for his bravery, and death for his ambition.</p>

**Questions 11 - 14** Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow.

4x1=4

### Digital Detox and Mental Health

In today's fast - paced digital world, mobile phones and social media have become an inseparable part of daily life. The average teenager checks a smartphone dozens of times a day, often without realising it. Notifications, likes, and endless scrolling may seem harmless, but they quietly affect concentration, sleep, and emotional well-being. Many students feel restless or anxious when their phones are out of reach, a condition experts now describe as *digital dependence*.

For example, studies show that using screens late at night suppresses melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep. This is why students who browse their phones before bedtime often wake up tired and unfocused in class. Social media can also create unhealthy comparisons, making young users feel inadequate or stressed.

*Digital detox* does not mean giving up technology completely. Instead, it encourages mindful use. Simple habits can make a big difference: turning off non-essential notifications, keeping phones away during study hours, and avoiding screens at least one hour before sleep. Replacing screen time with activities like reading, walking, journaling, or talking with family helps refresh the mind.

Interestingly, even a short break from screens can improve attention and mood. Learning to balance digital life with real-world experiences is an essential life skill. When used wisely, technology supports learning; when overused, it silently steals time, focus, and peace of mind.

11. According to the passage, excessive screen time mainly affects students by :

- increasing their physical strength.
- reducing concentration and disturbing sleep.
- improving their social skills.
- making them more disciplined.

12. What happens when students use mobile phones late at night ?

13. Read the following statements carefully :

- Frequent phone checking can lead to anxiety and restlessness.
- A digital detox means completely avoiding technology.
- Turning off unnecessary notifications can improve focus.
- Short breaks from screens can positively affect our mood.

Choose the correct option :

- Only (i) and (ii) are true
- Only (ii) and (iii) are true
- Only (i), (iii) and (iv) are true
- All four statements are true

14. What is meant by the term *digital dependence* as used in the passage ?

Questions 15 - 18 : Answer either A or B.

1x7=7

15. [A] Prepare a review of the story *Beloved Boles*, highlighting how the narrative explores Teresa's experience focusing on the interconnected themes of alienation, loneliness, social prejudice, and the sustaining power of illusion in her life.

(Hints : Teresa - Polish lady - sense of alienation - emotional and social loneliness - prejudice in the society - longing for belonging - imagined relationship with Boles - illusion as emotional support - escape from harsh reality - sustaining hope amid isolation)

OR

P.T.O.

[B] Prepare a **speech** on the topic 'When Conscience Speaks Louder Than Fear' based on the story *In the Attic*, highlighting how the narrative underscores the value of empathy and moral courage in protecting innocent lives. Bring out how one compassionate act can rekindle faith in humanity even in times of extreme cruelty and violence.

*(Hints : setting of fear and violence - innocent lives in danger - empathy over fear - voice of conscience - moral courage to protect the helpless - attic as a symbol of shelter and hope - compassionate act despite risk - resistance to cruelty - faith in humanity restored - triumph of human values)*

16. [A] Prepare a **character sketch** of Hauchecome, the central character in Guy de Maupassan's '*A Piece of String*'. Highlight his simplicity, self-respect and unyielding pride. Also examine how suspicion and social prejudice turn his life into a tragedy.

OR

1x6=6

[B] Prepare a **narrative** based on the speech *Breaking Barriers, I Will Fly*, tracing Srikanth Bolla's journey as he overcomes daunting challenges in his life. Outline the key incidents in the story and show how determination, resilience, and self-belief guide him from struggle to success.

17. [A] Write a **news article** capturing the emotional journey of the parents in *War*. Focus on the themes of loss, endurance, and the unseen pain caused by war.

1x6=6

OR

[B] In Gabriel García Márquez's short story *The Old Man with Enormous Wings*, the winged old man is subjected to cruelty, neglect, and humiliation. Prepare an **email** to the editor of a newspaper describing his pathetic plight.

18. [A] In Fatou Diome's story *Préférence Nationale*, the narrator faces discrimination and loneliness as a migrant. Prepare her **diary entry** on the day she experienced rejection and social prejudice at the bakery.

1x4=4

OR

[B] The School IT Club is launching an eco-friendly, AI-powered, robotics-enabled 'smart waste collector'. Prepare two creative and catchy **promotional tag lines** to highlight its innovative features.

**Questions 19 - 21 : Answer all the questions.**

**19. Prepare a biographical sketch of the writer Fatou Diome using the hints given below :**

- Early Life and Education: 1x6=6  
Birth-1968 on Niodior Island, Senegal; childhood shaped by social exclusion and traditional attitudes; early exposure to oral storytelling and African culture; migrated to France and studied literature at the University of Strasbourg.
- Major Life Events:  
Struggles as an immigrant woman; pursuit of higher education; experiences of racism and identity conflict.
- Literary Career and Accomplishments:  
Publication of *La Préférence Nationale* and other works; focus on themes of migration, identity, exile, and social injustice; blends autobiography with fiction.
- Honours :  
Works included in academic syllabi; reputation as a powerful contemporary African voice in French literature.

**20. The Drama Club of your school is staging the play *Shakuntalam*. Prepare a formal event invitation inviting students, teachers, parents, and the general public to watch the play. Include details such as the date, time, venue, and the special attractions of the performance.** 1x4=4

**21. Read the passage given below and frame three appropriate Wh-questions and one Yes/No question based on it.** 1x4=4

Bablu Kewat had been an indifferent student at best. He still remembers his science teacher Mrs Sharma, and the egg incubator that he had made under her supervision. But when Bablu's father died leaving his mother struggling to support her small family, he dropped out of school to get a job and help her out. He joined a workshop as a busboy, getting tea for the owner. He slowly worked his way up to becoming a welder. Gradually he took over the mortgage of the workshop. After that, he ran the business himself, growing it steadily. Bablu and Gowri had an arranged marriage, after meeting just once, briefly, in the presence of both their families.

Question 22 - 26 : Find below a table featuring the greatest music composers in the world. Read it carefully and answer the questions that follow.

5x1=5

Composer	Country	Musical Period	Famous Works	Why He Is Remembered
Ludwig van Beethoven	Germany	Classical and Romantic	<i>Symphony No.9</i>	Composed great music even after losing his hearing.
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Austria	Classical	<i>The Magic Flute, Don Giovanni</i>	Child prodigy; wrote more than 600 musical works; music is clear and melodious
Johann Sebastian Bach	Germany	Baroque	<i>The Well-Tempered Clavier</i>	Famous for complex and well - structured music; strong spiritual feeling
Frédéric Chopin	Poland	Romantic	<i>Nocturnes, Études</i>	Wrote mainly for the piano; music is emotional and expressive

22. A child prodigy who composed more than 600 musical works is \_\_\_\_\_.

23. What is the nationality of the musician who composed *The Well - Tempered Clavier* ?

24. Which composer is known for composing great music even after losing his hearing ?

(A) Johann Sebastian Bach

(B) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(C) Ludwig van Beethoven

(D) Frédéric Chopin

25. Which combination of composer and work is correct based on the information given ?

(A) Mozart - *Symphony no. 9*  
 (B) Chopin - *Nocturnes and Etudes*.  
 (C) Bach - *The Magic Flute*.  
 (D) Beethoven - *Don Giovanni*

26. Mention the musical period of the composer whose famous works include *Nocturnes* and *Etudes*.

27. Edit the passage given. Errors are given in bold.  $6 \times \frac{1}{2} = 3$

My Journey by the romantic Cochin Forest Tramway was on (a) February 1946, shortly before it was dismentled (b) to make way for the gigantic Parambikulam hydro - electric project. The huge dam and reservoir has now complete (c) submerged Parambikulam but (d) all the lovely country around it. We reached Parambikulam just as it is (e) getting dark. In the verandah of the forest bungalow, I found a large group of Kadar adivasis, and in there (f) midst, a bare-footed 'topless' European male in crumpled khaki shorts.

28. Fill in the blanks using appropriate forms of phrasal verbs given in brackets.  $5 \times 1 = 5$

The passengers had (a) on their journey to Sulmona at sunrise. They tried to (b) their confused and anxious thoughts about the war through conversations.

The woman, whose son was going to the war front soon, could not (c) how other parents could speak so bravely of their children at the war front. Her strength almost (d) when she thought of sending her son to the war front. As the discussion

continued, the stout man's initial heroic words about his dead son (e) to be a mask of his unbearable pain.

(run out, turn out, set out, make out, sort out)

29. Complete the following passage choosing the right words from the brackets.  $6 \times \frac{1}{2} = 3$

The king entered (a) hermitage (b) great humility and respect. He placed his weapons (c) the ground (d) he did not wish to disturb the peaceful life of the sages. His actions reflected (e) anger (f) pride.

(on, because, by, nor, with, neither, the)

30. Complete the conversation between the narrator in *Préférence Nationale* and her French Friend.  $5 \times 1 = 5$

French Friend : You went to the bakery this morning, (a) ?

Narrator : Yes, I did.

French Friend : Would you mind (b) ?

Narrator : I didn't even get through the qualifying round.

French Friend : You had better (c) .

Narrator : Yes, I know. If people judged me by my qualifications, (d) .

French Friend : That's right. You would be in a better position. (e) ?

Narrator : People behave this way because their mindset is hard to change.

31. Report the following dialogue.  $2 \times 1 = 2$

Mr Student : Who do you want to write to ?

Teresa : I want to write to Boleslav Kashput in the town, on the Warsaw Road.

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

32. Complete the passage with appropriate words choosing from those given in brackets.

$4 \times \frac{1}{2} = 2$

On our school trip to Mysore, we stopped at a roadside (a). We were given a (b) to enjoy our fruit bowl, which was served as part of a light (c). We also enjoyed a glass of (d), which was refreshing and energising for the journey ahead.

(spork, brunch, motel, mocktail, smog)

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