

**UPC:** 52031901

**Name of the course:** B.Com. Programme (LOCF)

**Name of the paper:** English Language Through Literature

**Semester:** 3

**Marks:** 75

**Time limit:** 3+1 (one hour reserved for downloading of question paper, scanning and uploading of answer sheets)

The paper contains 3 unseen passages.

Questions 1 and 2 are based on passage 1.

Questions 3 and 4 are based on passage 2.

Questions 5 and 6 are based on passage 3.

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

All questions carry equal marks (3\*25=75 marks)

**Passage 1:** [740 words]

Ever since I was a child of eleven, I had lived with and by the side of Tilak... What I am today is because of him. If he wished to reach a goal, I was there to help him to it; if he wrote a poem I was there to sing it; if he had to beg, I was there to carry the begging bowl...

But now he who had held the strings of my life had left me. A new world sprang up around me. A new life began.

I could not live in Bombay by bhajans and kirtans. The missionaries offered me a job that was made for widows. Most women who lose the prefix —Saubhagyawati (married woman) automatically become matrons of girls' hostels. I became a matron at forty-five rupees a month with spacious living space and permission to keep my family with me. I cannot describe my joy. It is true Tilak was no more; but at least I had my children, Dattu and Baby, and my daughter-in-law Ruth, with me...

And so I stepped into the kindergarten class. I began to learn the alphabet. I had to check accounts written in English. Dattu used to be out at work, Baby at college, and Ruth was away at her parents'. So they gave me a key to the accounts. They taught me numbers and showed me how I could recognize grocery items by their initial letters. C was coconut, S was sugar, P was potatoes, and T was tea. That is how I managed to check the accounts and sign for them.

One of my jobs as matron was to open the mail and read it before passing it out to the girls. I'd get Dattu or Baby to read out the English letters to me. The world had always been kind to me. Nobody had ever refused me help. Even here there were many who helped me. There were about 250 girls in the hostel. Some of the older ones had volunteered to take over some of my chores completely. They swept and dusted, dealt with the washerman and kept an eye on the bhakri makers.

Madamsahib was in the habit of making two visits a day, though I wasn't sure why...But I was told by the girls that the matron was expected to whisper complaints in madamsahib's ear twice a day. The whisperings might, for instance, be about the secret letter this one had received, or the secret glance that one had cast; about how this one had answered back or how that one was not on speaking terms with the other one. The whispering over, punishments would be meted out to fit every crime.

But how could all the girls be alike? Two hundred and fifty girls from 250 homes. Even children born of the same parents are so different from each other. And that is the fun of it. What would we have done with 250 Kue dolls? If there is no wickedness, how is goodness to be recognized?

Certainly, many of the girls were mischievous. They picked up pranks from each other. One evening during study time I thought I heard men's voices upstairs. I went up to investigate, but I only saw girls. As I came down, I again heard men's voices. I went back up and once again I could see only girls there. I thought I was going crazy. Finally one girl felt sorry for me and let out the secret. She even spoke in a man's voice to show me how...

One day a girl asked me to let her see the mail. This wasn't allowed, so I didn't show it to her. She instantly made it the mission of her life to harass me. She carried her intention to the point of

burning up my saris in a heap of dried leaves and twigs. I could smell cloth burning but couldn't think what it was.

I hadn't shown the girl the mail because it often contained anonymous letters full of obscenities. I used to burn these letters without showing them either to the management or to the girls for whom they were meant. If I had shown them to the authorities, the concerned girls would have been immediately punished. If I had shown them to the girls, their minds would have been adversely affected. So I thought it better to make burnt offerings of such letters...

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

**A.** The writer of the autobiographical passage 1 is a strong and independent woman. Do you agree with this statement? Give a reasoned answer in 250-300 words. (10 marks)

**B.** Imagine you are the writer of Passage 1, and you are applying for the position of Matron in the local Girls' Hostel. Draft a Statement of Purpose in 350-500 words which outlines why you think you are a suitable candidate for this job. (15 marks)

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

**A.** Why do some of the girls in the hostel (in passage 1) rebel against the writer? Are their acts of rebellion justified? Give a reasoned answer in 250-300 words, with reference to passage 1.

(10 marks)

**B.** Write a dramatic extract based on the incident in the passage where the girls trick the matron. You must include at least two characters and answer in about 350-500 words. (15 marks)

**Passage 2:** [760 words]

*Mr Patel's voice reading out a letter. Sound of typing.*

CHANDRAKANT PATEL. Dear Dr Devraj Gowda. Thank you so much for your response to my letter. Thank you also for giving me so much information about yourself, your good wife and your daughter, Lata, who is a very talented and educated girl, thanks to your gracious nature. You have asked for more details about myself, my family and of course my son, Alpesh, for whom, as I mentioned in my first letter, I am seeking a matrimonial alliance.

*... Fade out Patel's voice. Interior. Rustle of papers.*

DEVRAJ GOWDA. (reading out from Patel's letter). I am returning the photograph of your daughter Lata which you had kindly sent. I am also enclosing a photo of Alpesh. Please do let us know if 21st and 22nd September are suitable to you to receive us. It is better that we meet personally for all parties concerned, to do the needful. Yours sincerely, Chandrakant Patel.'

PREMA GOWDA. No!

DEVRAJ GOWDA. I knew you would say that.

PREMA GOWDA. We should call the Raos again.

DEVRAJ GOWDA. They did not respond to our letter.

PREMA GOWDA. Maybe they haven't received it. (Pause. Weakly.) We had four responses from Gowdas.

DEVRAJ GOWDA. If we had put our names in the advertisement, there wouldn't have been any. I think you are fooling yourself.

PREMA GOWDA. This stupid girl! It is my fault. I shouldn't have helped you with the nursing home. I should have been a proper housewife.

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Good. I am glad you realize your mistakes.

PREMA GOWDA. Go jump in a well!

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Maybe if we were living with my parents, they would have kept an eye on her.

PREMA GOWDA. Go on. Say it. I am the wicked woman. I am the woman who stood up for my rights and told my mother-in-law what I thought of her. I am the one who talked my husband into leaving his father's home and setting up his own. It is all my fault now. Right?

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Okay. Okay. We are both to blame.

*Pause.*

PREMA GOWDA. Do you think it will work with these Patel people?

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Who knows?

PREMA GOWDA. They seem desperate.

DEVRAJ GOWDA. We are desperate.

PREMA GOWDA. He is thirty-plus and divorced.

DEVRAJ GOWDA. She is twenty-four and notorious.

*Pause.*

PREMA GOWDA. Hmm

DEVRAJ GOWDA. After all, if they can consider an inter-caste marriage, they must be broad-minded, like us.

PREMA GOWDA. Or really, really desperate. (Sighs.) I can't do this to Lata! He is divorced, and there's no mention of his education. Lata is so well-read!

DEVRAJ GOWDA. He is richer than we are.

PREMA GOWDA. When do they want to come?

DEVRAJ GOWDA. 21st and 22nd September. We can take them to the farm. That will impress them.

PREMA GOWDA. The photograph doesn't say very much of him. I mean, he isn't standing in front of the Eiffel Tower or Big Ben. (After a while.) It's worth a try.

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Then I will confirm with them?

PREMA GOWDA. We need to get the gate painted. And buy a microwave.

LATA. Please, Amma! Please don't insist I agree to this! You are ruining my life.

PREMA GOWDA. You should have thought of our lives before sleeping with that terrorist!

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Lata, go to your room.

PREMA GOWDA. You have ruined our lives!

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Prema . . .

PREMA GOWDA. She has to do it in his hostel! Couldn't they go to a hill station or somewhere?

LATA. You wouldn't have allowed me.

PREMA GOWDA (tearfully). All those boys knew about you!

LATA. That's not true.

PREMA GOWDA. They told their mothers and their grandmothers and the whole wide world!

LATA. No they did not. Because it is not true!

PREMA GOWDA. Oh, so the whole Gowda community is lying about you?

LATA. People believe what they want to believe.

PREMA GOWDA. Why would they want to say all this then?

LATA. Because of you!

PREMA GOWDA. How dare you?

LATA. They don't like you so they talk about me!

DEVRAJ GOWDA. Lata—please.

PREMA GOWDA. Lata, I am your mother.

LATA. I am forced to be displayed to some has-been because you don't have the courage to tell them all to go jump in a well.

PREMA GOWDA. I . . . don't know what to say to this girl! (Pause.) Don't just stand there. Say something to her!

DEVRAJ GOWDA. All the better that his first wife divorced him. Even if they know about you, it shouldn't matter to them.

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

**A.** The dramatic extract in Passage 2 depicts a couple discussing a possible marriage proposal for their daughter. What are the aspects considered by the parents? Do you agree with their criteria for selecting a match for Lata? Discuss giving examples from the passage. (10 marks)

**B.** Imagine you are Lata and pen down your thoughts and feelings in your diary immediately after returning to your room. Write a diary entry keeping in mind Lata's reactions to the marriage proposal. (15 marks)

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

**A.** In Passage 2, Devraj Gowda says, 'They must be broad-minded, like us.' Are Devraj and Prema 'broad-minded'? Assess the Gowda family on the basis of its preoccupations with caste, class and marriage giving suitable examples from the dramatic extract. (10 marks)

**B.** Write the letter that Devraj Gowda sent to Chandrakant Patel giving information about his daughter Lata and about their family. Refer to the beginning of the dramatic extract in Passage 2 to gather hints from Chandrakant's letter to Devraj. (15 marks)

**Passage 3:** [740 words]

'She's the coolest cat in the place,' a starry-eyed first-year science undergraduate whispers to her friend as Tehmina Dadyseth strides past them, her vibrant red miniskirt swinging, a plate of samosas in her hand, clearly late for her first class of the day. 'I wish I were her.'

'You wish you were a crack, you mean,' sniffs the friend. 'All these rich arts girls are crack, but she's the crackest. Look what she's doing now!'

Because Tehmina, having reached Room 33, has dropped dramatically to her knees in the open doorway, and is holding out the samosas like a tribute to the professor, pleading to be let

in. The unseen professor relents and the briber rushes in gratefully, still on her knees, dropping her register in her eagerness and scurrying back out a moment later to retrieve it.

‘Clumsy too! And a show off, maaroing that fake American accent!’

‘Arrey, she lived in America till she was ten, and it’s very slight – besides, her Hindi is so good!’ Her friend isn’t convinced.

‘Do you know she organized an antim sanskar with an actual funeral pyre and last rites for three of her friends who are getting married this month? She has no respect for religion – must be because she’s Parsi.’

‘That was a bonfire party.’ The starry-eyed first-year defends her heroine stoutly. ‘Anyway, I think it’s a shame that girls come here – to the best women’s college in India, for heaven’s sake – to get quality education and then get married off without even completing their degree! Tinka’s protesting against that in a symbolic sort of way – what’s wrong with that?’

‘It’s against our traditions.’ Her friend shakes her head. ‘And I don’t think she’s pretty, she’s so frowny and browny – there are at least ten girls in MH more fair-complexioned than her!’

These accusations are not entirely invalid. As Tinka Dadyseth officially enters our narrative, seated within the gracious, red-bricked walls of Miranda House, University of Delhi, furiously scribbling on a chart paper with a black crayon, it must be admitted that she is not conventionally pretty. She is wheatish and unfashionably thin, with slender, tennis-player limbs, unusual in a time when most girls aspire to voluptuous curves. Eschewing the floral prints in vogue, Tinka dresses in skirts of red, orange or emerald-green, teamed with white tops in the summer, and black polo necks in the winter. In an establishment as conventionally fashionable as Miranda House, this is indeed brave. Her hair is black and wavy, her large eyes combative, her nose straight, her mouth generous, her opinions decisive. Her face is long, ending in a pointy chin, and when she smiles, two tiny dimples flash in her cheeks. ‘You look like an imp,’ Jimmy used to say, chucking her under the chin. ‘A young imp – an implet. An implet with dimplets.’

But we mustn’t talk about Jimmy. Nobody in Tinka’s family does.

Now she gives a satisfied little grunt and leans back from the chart paper banner she has been working on.

HANG US! screams the banner in psychedelic colours. Underneath, in smaller handwriting: Quality photo prints from around the world!

It is the eighteenth Republic Day of independent India and Miranda House is celebrating with a mela on the front lawn. There are several stalls selling tea and chaat and jewellery and kolhapuri chappals, as well as the standard hoopla and lucky dip. Usually a fiercely guarded all-girls bastion, Miranda House has opened its gates to the general public today, as the proceeds of the mela will go to soldiers’ widows and orphans. Students from other colleges have been allowed in, and the crowd is peppered with carefully groomed hopeful young men.

Principal Vidya Surendran makes a short speech, the choir performs a rousing version of ‘Kadam kadam badhaye ja’, a second-year botany student renders a particularly lachrymose rendition of ‘Aye mere vatan ke logo’ and the mela is declared open.

The photo prints stall does brisk business through the day, some of which might have to do with how animatedly Tinka makes her sales pitch. The other girls in the stall are all extremely charming, but none of them light up like Tinka does while talking about the merchandise. ‘This is the Rann of Kutch,’ she tells a group of smitten boys, her eyes glowing with passion. ‘A moonscape – literally a moonscape – doesn’t the sand look like waves in the sea?’

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

**A.** Why do some of the girls not like Tehmina? Is their dislike justified? Quote and use words and phrases from the text to show what in the passage made you draw the conclusions you have come to. (10 marks)

**B.** Based on the introduction to Tehmina that this passage provides, imagine the conversation she has with any of the people whose photographs she wants to take. You can represent this conversation through a dialogue or a story or an essay. (15 marks)

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

**A.** What picture of college life emerges from this passage? Quote and use words and phrases from the text to show what you drew your conclusions on. (10 marks)

**B.** Imagine you are the teacher to whom the plate of samosas is offered, and who allows Tehmina to enter the class late. Write in the form of a dialogue or dramatic extract the conversation which takes place at this time. Your answer should be about 350-500 words and include at least two characters. (15 marks)