

# Last-minute tips to score well in English in board exams

To elevate the overall scores, you must do well in all the three sections of the paper, writes **Mohan Prasad**

**E**nglish is the only subject that is compulsory across the various streams in class XII. More importantly, it is a high-scoring subject. Although, one cannot master it in just a few days, but you can always improve your score in the exam through preparedness. The English paper is divided into three sections: reading, writing, and literature and long reading texts. To score good marks overall, you must do well in each of these sections.

## READING

In the Reading section, two unseen passages were asked earlier—one was around 1100–1200 words in length and the other around 500 words. In the revised syllabus, both the passages will now be of equal length of around 800–900 words.

The most effective way to improve reading comprehension is by reading an unknown passage and summarising it point-wise. While you do not have enough time now to practise many passages,

there is, however, time to track how many minutes you spend on a passage, and in solving all the questions. Ideally, not more than 10–12 minutes should be devoted to a moderately difficult passage. The passages would mostly be from these three types:

**Factual:** Has instructions, descriptions, and reports and are easy to attempt.

**Descriptive:** Involving opinion, which needs careful reading and understanding.

**Literary:** These passages are interesting to attempt. Besides, we have note-making and abstraction, which is of 10 marks; which is easy to score but takes a lot of time to attempt. So, a good strategy would be to attempt it right at the end; because you do not want to spend, say, 30 minutes initially for 10 marks.

In total, in the reading section, we now have 19 questions (instead of the 24

earlier), totalling 30 marks.

## WRITING

Here you have a) short-answer type questions, like advertisements and notices, which are easy, along with posters and invitations; and allow you to show your creativity; b) letter types, including business letters or applications, which are to be written in a formal language, and hence require careful practice; and c) very long answers.

However, the internal choice will make it easy, considering one can leave a question type

he/she is not comfortable with. What is important is to study the standard formats from any text or reference books, so that you do not spend time on thinking during the exam. Practise writing a different composition every day; and while doing so, make sure to stay within the stipulated word limit. Try to beautify and summarise what you write. You should also be aware of common, general topics, as also social issues, since articles based on these can be asked in the exam.

## LITERATURE AND LONG READING

The first question of the section is on a poem. Questions on long reading texts are usually in-depth; so, you will need to go through the entire chapter. Here, the options are your savior. One question from the novels would be regarding an important incident, while the other would be on character sketch. So, practise writing character sketches, especially the unique qualities a person has and how and where those have been displayed.

Do note that questions can be asked from any part of the chapter. In case of poems especially, you need to have complete clarity on the context of the lines. In three mark questions, always write to the point and avoid unnecessary details. There would be two value-based questions, as well, which are easy.

The number of questions in the paper has been reduced from 40 to 35, while the number of internal options has been increased. Thus, you have more flexibility and scope to boost your score.

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