

# OXFORD ACADEMY

## CLASS X ENGLISH DISCOURSE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### Question 1 : Poem Appreciation (5 Marks)

**Question:** Prepare an appreciation of the excerpt from 'Friends, Romans, Countrymen...' by William Shakespeare.

**Answer:**

#### **Appreciation: Friends, Romans, Countrymen...**

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen..." is an iconic speech written by William Shakespeare from his play 'Julius Caesar'. Delivered by Mark Antony during Caesar's funeral, the speech is a masterclass in rhetoric, emotional manipulation, and verbal irony.

The speech is marked by its masterful use of verbal irony—stating the opposite of what is intended. While repeatedly asserting that "Brutus is an honourable man" and that Caesar was "ambitious," Antony subtly undermines Brutus's credibility. He presents concrete evidence to disprove Caesar's ambition: Caesar thrice refused the kingly crown at the Lupercal festival. Antony employs persuasive techniques to shift the crowd's emotions.

He connects with the audience on a personal level ("You all did love him once, not without cause") and uses rhetorical questions ("was this ambition?") to provoke critical thinking. The emotional climax occurs when Antony states, "My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, / And I must pause till it come back to me," using emotional appeal to win the citizens' sympathy. Overall, the passage brilliantly demonstrates how eloquence and strategic irony can influence public sentiment.

### Question 2: Persuasive Comparison Paragraph (5 Marks)

**Question:** Compare the arguments of Mark Antony and Brutus and explain whose speech is more convincing and why.

**Answer:**

Between the two speeches, Mark Antony's argument is significantly more convincing than that of Brutus. Brutus relies on abstract logic, claiming he killed Caesar not out of a lack of love, but because he 'loved Rome more' and feared Caesar's ambition. However, he provides no concrete proof of this ambition. In contrast, Mark Antony uses factual evidence and emotional appeal to disprove the claim. He points out that Caesar brought ransoms to fill the public treasury and wept for the poor, showing genuine empathy rather than cold ambition.

Brutus wants the citizens to view Caesar as a potential tyrant and himself as a patriotic savior. Mark Antony, on the other hand, wants the crowd to see Brutus as a treacherous traitor and Caesar as a selfless, devoted leader who was unjustly murdered.

### **Question 3: Story Review (7 Marks)**

**Question:** Write a story review of Gabriel García Márquez's 'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings'.

**Answer:**

#### **Review: A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings**

Gabriel García Márquez's short story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" is a masterpiece of Magical Realism that explores human cruelty, greed, and society's failure to extend compassion to the weak and vulnerable.

The plot begins when Pelayo discovers an old man with huge wings lying face down in the mud of his courtyard. Instead of treating this mysterious creature with dignity, Pelayo and his wife Elisenda lock him in a chicken coop and charge admission fees to curious onlookers. The old man's presence transforms their financial status, allowing them to build a luxurious mansion. However, as soon as a traveling show featuring a "spider woman" arrives, the fickle public loses interest in the old man.

The characterization in the story is striking. The old man is depicted without any heavenly grandeur—he is bald, toothless, and communicative only through an incomprehensible dialect. Yet, his defining trait is his supernatural patience. He quietly endures being pecked by hens, pelted with stones, and plucked for feathers. In contrast, Pelayo, Elisenda, and the villagers represent opportunistic human nature driven by curiosity and profit.

Through its magical realism—blending the ordinary world with fantastical elements—the story highlights how human society isolates and exploits those who appear different or defenseless. Ultimately, the old man's endurance triumphs over human cruelty when his feathers regrow and he flies away into the horizon.

### **Question 4 : Essay / Write-up (7 Marks)**

**Question:** Prepare an essay on the topic 'Be Humane, Make the World Beautiful' with reference to Wladyslaw Szpilman's 'In the Attic'.

**Answer:**

## **'Be Humane, Make the World Beautiful'**

Wladyslaw Szpilman's survivor testimony, 'In the Attic', provides a moving testament to how genuine compassion can transcend hatred and overcome extreme cruelty. In times of conflict, and war, small acts of human kindness shine brightly, offering hope and restoring our faith in human nature.

During World War II, Szpilman, a Jewish pianist, found himself utterly isolated, starving, and hiding in the ruins of Warsaw. When discovered by Hosenfeld, a German officer, Szpilman expected death. But the German officer treated Szpilman with immense compassion. He kept Szpilman's hiding place a secret, suggested a safer loft in the attic, brought him food and a warm eiderdown, and offered encouraging words to keep his hope alive. More importantly, the officer felt deeply remorseful for the horrific actions committed by his own nation.

The officer's selflessness saved Szpilman's life. His actions remind us that true humanity knows no national, religious, or political boundaries. If everyone adopts compassion, empathy, and kindness toward the vulnerable, we can eradicate hostility and truly make the world a beautiful place to live.

### **Question 4: Character Sketch (6 Marks)**

**Question:** Prepare a character sketch of the Old Man in Gabriel García Márquez's 'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings'.

**Answer:**

### **'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings'**

The old man in Gabriel García Márquez's story 'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings' is a deeply symbolic figure representing the weak, the vulnerable, and the marginalized in society. Physically, the old man lacks traditional angelic grandeur. He is dressed like a ragpicker, with only a few faded hairs on his bald skull and very few teeth left in his mouth. He appears like a 'drenched great-grandfather'. His defining feature—his enormous buzzard wings—are filthy, half-plucked, and entangled in mud, making him unable to stand or fly initially. He speaks in an incomprehensible dialect with a strong sailor's voice.

The old man's true strength lies in his supernatural patience. He remains calm while locked in a filthy chicken coop. He does not react with anger when onlookers throw stones at him, or pull out his feathers. He simply endures suffering without retaliation.

His quiet resilience allows him to survive the harsh winter and human cruelty. Eventually, his

wings regrow, and through persistent effort, he achieves flight and disappears over the horizon. The old man serves as a mirror reflecting society's lack of empathy, while proving that patience and quiet dignity can triumph over cruelty.

### **Question 5: Formal Email (6 Marks)**

**Question:** Draft a formal email congratulating Mr. Arunachalam Muruganantham on his exemplary work for women empowerment and hygiene.

**Answer:**

*To: arunachalam@padmanindia.org*

*Subject: Congratulations on Your Visionary Work for Women Empowerment*

*Dear Mr. Muruganantham,*

*I hope this email finds you well.*

*I am writing to express my deepest admiration and heartfelt congratulations for your extraordinary contributions to women's health, hygiene, and empowerment across India.*

*Your transformation from a school dropout to the 'Padman of India' is an absolute inspiration to millions. Your selfless dedication to design a low-cost sanitary napkin affordable to rural women is commendable. By placing your patents in the public domain and supporting self-help groups, you have not only safeguarded women's health but also created thousands of sustainable livelihoods.*

*Your vision of using the power of women to empower women exemplifies true social entrepreneurship. Thank you for showing our generation that education and innovation should be used to solve real societal problems.*

*Wishing you continued success and good health in all your future endeavors.*

*Warm regards,*

*Anil Kumar*

*Student Coordinator, English Club*

*Government HSS, Thrissur*

### Question 6: Speech (6 Marks)

**Question:** Draft a motivational speech from the perspective of Srikanth Bolla to be delivered on International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

**Answer:**

Respected Principal, dedicated teachers, and my dear friends,

A very warm good morning to you all. On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, it is an honor to stand before you today.

When I was born without eyes into a poor farming family, society looked at me as a burden. Many people thought I could achieve nothing. But I realized early in life that disability is not an obstacle; it is merely an added challenge to test our determination. Throughout my life, I faced numerous barriers. When I wanted to study science in high school, the system said no because of my visual impairment. I fought a six-month legal battle to win my right to study science. When top Indian institutes closed their doors to me, I worked harder and became the first international blind student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Instead of settling for a comfortable corporate career in the USA, I returned to India to launch Bollant Industries. Today, our company employs hundreds of differently-abled individuals, producing eco-friendly products and grossing millions of dollars.

My dear friends, never let anyone tell you what you can or cannot do. The world may look at you and say, 'You can do nothing.' But you must look back at the world and say, 'I can do anything!' Embrace your resilience, persevere through hardships, and transform every obstacle into an opportunity.

Thank you very much.

### Question 7: Paragraph (4 Marks)

**Question:** Write a paragraph on 'Survivor Testimony and Its Significance' based on Szpilman's 'In the Attic'.

**Answer:**

Wladyslaw Szpilman's memoir 'In the Attic' is classified as a survivor testimony because it provides a first-hand, eyewitness account of surviving the horrific atrocities, destruction, and persecution during World War II. Unlike standard historical records that focus on military strategies and statistics, survivor testimonies document individual human suffering, emotional trauma, and personal resilience. They offer an authentic human face to historical tragedies. Such accounts enhance our understanding of history by reminding us of the devastating consequences of hatred, war, and discrimination. By reading survivor testimonies, society

learns to value peace, empathy, and mutual respect, inspiring future generations to prevent such human rights violations and build a better world.

**Question 18 [B]: Advertisement Jingles (4 Marks)**

**Question:** Create two advertisement jingles for eco-friendly seed pens.

**Answer:**

Jingle 1:

""Write today, plant tomorrow, keep away the nature's sorrow!""

Jingle 2:

""Use the pen and plant the seed, make the earth green indeed!""

**Question 20: Event Invitation (4 Marks)**

**Question:** Prepare an invitation card for a motivational talk by Srikanth Bolla organized by the school Innovation Club.

**INVITATION CARD**

ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, THRISSUR

**INNOVATION CLUB - EVENT INVITATION**

Dear Sir,

The Science Club of St. Joseph's HSS cordially invites the staff and students of your esteemed institution to a Motivational Talk organized under the Young Innovators Programme (YIP).

**Details of the Event:**

- Event : Motivational Talk on "Transforming Barriers into Opportunities"
- Chief Guest : Mr. Srikanth Bolla (CEO, Bollant Industries)
- Date : 18th August 2026
- Time : 10:00 AM
- Venue : School Main Auditorium

We request you to depute a team of interested students and teachers to attend this inspiring session.

Thrissur  
03/08/2026

Student Coordinator  
Sd/-