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Poets and Pancakes — CBSE Class 12 English Core Chapter Test

FREE CHAPTER TEST · CLASS XII · ENGLISH CORE (301) · PATTERN OF THE CBSE SAMPLE QUESTION PAPER 2026-27

TIME ALLOWED	MAXIMUM MARKS	QUESTIONS	NAME / ROLL NO.
45 minutes	21	13 (A 8 · B 4 · C 1)	

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following instructions very carefully and strictly follow them:

1. This question paper contains 13 questions. All questions are compulsory.
2. This question paper is divided into three sections: A, B and C.
3. Section A (Q1–8) contains objective questions of 1 mark each.
4. Section B (Q9–12) contains short answer questions of 2 marks each; answer in 40–50 words.
5. Section C (Q13) contains a long answer question of 5 marks with an internal choice; answer in 120–150 words and attempt only one of the alternatives.
6. Answer in your own words, within the word limits.
7. This chapter test follows the question types, marks and word limits of the Literature section (Section C) of the CBSE Class XII English Core (301) Sample Question Paper 2026-27, for one chapter: 21 marks in 45 minutes.
8. The answer key and the marking scheme are at the end of this booklet. Attempt the paper in 45 minutes before you look at them.

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Chapter: Poets and Pancakes (Flamingo) · **Topics:** The make-up department · The office boy and Subbu · The legal adviser · The MRA and the English poet

SECTION A

This section comprises 8 objective questions of 1 mark each, testing comprehension, interpretation, inference and appreciation of the chapter.

1. In the title Poets and Pancakes, 'Pancake' refers to 1

(A) a sweet dish served in the Gemini canteen

(B) the brand of make-up material bought by Gemini Studios

(C) a nickname for the office boy

(D) a film made by Gemini Studios

2. Gemini Studios was founded in 1940 by 1

(A) Kothamangalam Subbu

(B) Stephen Spender

(C) S.S. Vasan

(D) the legal adviser

3. Why was the office boy in the make-up department angry with Kothamangalam Subbu? 1

(A) Subbu had refused to pay him.

(B) Subbu had insulted his poems in public.

(C) Subbu had sent him away from the studio.

(D) He blamed Subbu, the No. 2 at Gemini, for the failure of his own ambitions.

4. What was the author's job at Gemini Studios? 1

(A) Cutting newspaper clippings and filing them in a cubicle

(B) Writing songs for films

(C) Applying make-up to the actors

(D) Managing the story department

5. Which plays did the Moral Re-Armament group present when it visited Madras in 1952? 1

(A) Hamlet and Macbeth

(B) Jotham Valley and The Forgotten Factor

(C) The God That Failed and The Encounter

(D) Chandralekha and Avvaiyar

6. How did the legal adviser of Gemini Studios silence an angry actress? 1

(A) He threatened to dismiss her.

(B) He switched on the recording equipment and played her own outburst back to her.

(C) He called the police.

(D) He asked the Boss to speak to her.

7. How did the author find out who the English poet visiting the studio really was? 1

(A) He read about him in The Hindu.

(B) The Boss introduced him.

(C) Subbu told him.

(D) He saw an issue of The Encounter at the British Council Library and realised the visitor was its editor.

8. The God That Failed helped the author understand why the studio had invited Spender, because the book showed 1

(A) Spender's break with communism, which pleased the anti-communist studio

(B) that Spender was a film director

(C) that Spender had written Tamil poems

(D) that the studio wanted to make an English film

SECTION B

This section comprises 4 short answer questions of 2 marks each. Answer each in 40–50 words.

9. Why did most people at Gemini Studios think the author was doing nothing? (40–50 words) 2

10. Give two qualities of Kothamangalam Subbu as described in the chapter. (40–50 words) 2

11. Why was the English poet's talk at Gemini Studios a puzzle for the audience? (40–50 words) 2

12. What is the tone of the chapter Poets and Pancakes? Give an example. (40–50 words) 2

SECTION C

This section comprises 1 long answer question of 5 marks. Answer in 120–150 words.

13. (a) Poets and Pancakes gives an insider's view of the Tamil film industry of the 1940s. Discuss the humour and satire with which the author presents life at Gemini Studios. (120–150 words) 5

OR

(b) Describe the visit of the Moral Re-Armament group and of the English poet to Gemini Studios, and what each visit shows. (120–150 words)

END OF THE QUESTION PAPER

ANSWER KEY — SECTION A

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
(B)	(C)	(D)	(A)	(B)	(B)	(D)	(A)

MARKING SCHEME AND WORKED SOLUTIONS

Value points are shown with their marks in brackets. Credit any other relevant point made in the student's own words.

Q1. Answer (B). Pancake was the brand name of the make-up material Gemini Studios bought in truckloads.

Q2. Answer (C). Gemini Studios, Madras, was founded by S.S. Vasan in 1940.

Q3. Answer (D). A frustrated would-be poet, he felt Subbu's closeness to the Boss had kept him from getting his due.

Q4. Answer (A). He sat in a cubicle cutting out newspaper reports; most people thought he was doing next to nothing.

Q5. Answer (B). The MRA troupe staged Jotham Valley and The Forgotten Factor; their sets and music impressed the Madras theatre world.

Q6. Answer (B). Hearing her own words played back, the actress was left speechless.

Q7. Answer (D). The visitor was Stephen Spender, editor of The Encounter.

Q8. Answer (A). The book was a collection of essays by writers disillusioned with communism, Spender among them — which explained the studio's interest.

Q9. (2 marks) Answer: his clipping work looked trivial.
He sat in a cubicle tearing and cutting out newspaper reports and filing them, [1] work that looked trivial to others; so they thought he did nothing, and some came to him with their troubles, like the office boy who poured out his grievances. [1]

Q10. (2 marks) Answer: loyal, poet, actor, generous.
Any two [1 + 1]: utterly loyal to his principal (the Boss); a poet whose talent was not fully used; a gifted actor who could do any role well; generous and improvident — his house was always full of relatives and others whom he fed; he could solve the story problems of the studio with many ideas.

Q11. (2 marks) Answer: unfamiliar subject and accent.
The audience were Tamil film people for whom English poetry had little meaning, [1] and the poet's accent made his talk very hard to follow; nobody knew why an English poet had been invited. [1]

Q12. (2 marks) Answer: gentle humour and satire, with an example.
The tone is gently humorous and satirical: the author laughs at the studio's ways without bitterness; [1] for example, the make-up department turns decent-looking actors into grotesque figures, or the baffled studio staff listen to an English poet they cannot understand. [1]

Q13. (5 marks) Answer: humour of incidents and characters; satire without bitterness.
Value points [5]: the make-up room with truckloads of Pancake turns actors into grotesque figures; the office boy, a frustrated poet, blames Subbu; the author's own clipping job is thought to be no work at all; Subbu, the loyal No. 2, is drawn with affection and irony; the legal adviser silences an actress by playing back her own outburst; the visits of the MRA troupe and of an English poet nobody understands are told with gentle satire; the author uses self-mockery and understatement, never bitterness — the result is a warm, humorous picture of human weaknesses.
OR Value points [5]: in 1952 the MRA troupe staged Jotham Valley and The Forgotten Factor; their professional sets and music impressed Madras, and Gemini's people saw them many times; the English poet's visit puzzled everyone: his accent and subject were beyond the audience; later the author found he was Stephen Spender, editor of The Encounter, and The God That Failed, about writers disillusioned with communism, explained the studio's welcome; the visits show the studio's anti-communist leanings and the gap between the film world and English literary culture, told with gentle irony.

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