

I.E.S. / I.S.S. Examination, 2026

GENERAL ENGLISH

Complete Model Solutions

Paper Code : SNCS–O–ENG / 78

Time Allowed : Three Hours | Maximum Marks : 100

This booklet contains complete, fully worked solutions to every question set in the General English paper of the I.E.S./I.S.S. Examination, 2026 — the essay, the precis, the paragraph, the word-usage and idiom exercises, and all ten sentence corrections.

Question 1 • Essay

Marks: 30 | Word limit: about 800 words

Topic chosen — (a) The need for rethinking primary education in India

The Need for Rethinking Primary Education in India

India's primary education system stands at a crossroads. Enrolment figures have improved dramatically over the past two decades, largely on account of schemes such as the Right to Education Act and the mid-day meal programme, which brought millions of children who would otherwise have remained outside the classroom into schools. Yet enrolment alone tells only half the story. Nationwide learning assessments have repeatedly shown that a large proportion of children in the primary grades cannot read a simple text fluently or perform basic arithmetic appropriate to their age. This gap between access and actual learning is the central paradox of Indian primary education, and it demands not incremental tinkering but a fundamental rethinking of how young children are taught.

The first problem lies in the very philosophy of instruction. Classrooms across the country remain wedded to rote

memorisation, where children are trained to reproduce textbook answers rather than to understand concepts. A child who can recite the multiplication tables perfectly may still be unable to apply the same logic to a real-world problem involving money or measurement. Assessment structures reinforce this tendency, since examinations reward the retrieval of memorised facts far more than they reward reasoning, curiosity, or the confidence to ask questions. Any serious reform must begin by shifting the goal of early schooling from information transfer to the cultivation of foundational literacy and numeracy, and to nurturing the joy of learning rather than the fear of examinations.

Second, the shortage and uneven distribution of trained teachers continues to hold back government schools in particular. Many primary schools, especially in rural and remote areas, function with a single teacher managing multiple grades simultaneously, or with teachers who have themselves received inadequate pedagogical training. Teacher-education programmes in India often emphasise theoretical knowledge over practical classroom skills such as multi-grade teaching, formative assessment, and handling children with diverse learning needs. Continuous, mentorship-based professional development, rather than one-off workshops, is essential if teachers are to translate new curricular ideas into everyday classroom practice.

Third, the question of language deserves far greater attention than it currently receives. Cognitive research consistently shows that children learn best when the language of instruction in the earliest years is one they already speak and understand at home. Yet many state systems introduce children directly to a second or third language before they have consolidated basic literacy in their mother tongue, leaving them unable to follow instruction at all. The National Education Policy 2020 rightly recognises the importance of home-language instruction in the foundational years, but its implementation across India's linguistically diverse states remains patchy and underfunded.

Fourth, infrastructure and resources remain a persistent constraint. Missing toilets, inadequate classroom space, absent libraries, and a lack of age-appropriate teaching-learning material continue to affect the daily experience of schooling for a significant number of children, particularly girls and children with disabilities. Physical infrastructure is not a peripheral concern; it directly shapes attendance, retention, and the dignity with which children experience school life.

Fifth, the socio-economic context in which children arrive at school cannot be ignored. Malnutrition, parental illiteracy, child labour, and the absence of a print-rich environment at home all affect a child's readiness to learn. Rethinking

primary education must therefore extend beyond the school gate to include community engagement, parental involvement, and convergence with health and nutrition programmes, so that children arrive at school able and ready to benefit from what is taught there.

Finally, technology, used judiciously, offers a genuine opportunity to personalise learning and to reach children in under-resourced schools, but it cannot substitute for a well-trained, motivated teacher standing in front of a class. Digital tools work best as an aid to teachers and a supplement to structured pedagogy, never as a replacement for either.

Rethinking primary education in India, therefore, is not a matter of a single policy change but of aligning curriculum, teacher capacity, language policy, infrastructure, and community support around one central goal: ensuring that every child who enters a classroom actually learns to read, write, and reason with confidence. The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy mission launched under the National Education Policy 2020 is a step in the right direction, but its success will depend on sustained political will, adequate financing, and continuous monitoring of real learning outcomes rather than mere enrolment statistics. Only then can India's substantial investment in universal primary education translate into a genuinely literate and numerate generation, fully able to participate in the nation's

social and economic life.

Question 2 • Precis Writing

Marks: 30 | Original passage: 769 words | Precis in about one-third length (≈256 words) | No title, as instructed

Human cultural evolution, which occupies only a tiny fraction of history, reflects man's persistent effort to free himself from the limitations of his habitat. While people readily welcome technological innovations that increase their mastery over the environment, they resist the corresponding changes required in social organisation, since conservatism is strongest in the social sphere; this largely explains why cultural change has proceeded so slowly.

Besides technology, three further factors drive cultural evolution: contact between groups and the resulting spread of ideas, population growth, and political innovation, especially the rise of centralised states. These factors are closely interrelated and generally operate together rather than in isolation, though population size and political development also depend on other conditions such as the existing level of technology and the nature of the habitat.

Major technological advances typically originate independently in only a few centres and then spread outward to neighbouring peoples — a process anthropologists term diffusion or borrowing — until

checked by a natural barrier such as an ocean, a desert, or unsuitable terrain. In fact, a large share of the content of any culture has been borrowed rather than independently invented. Such diffusion once depended on direct personal contact, however distant; today it spreads impersonally through mass media, and not always peacefully, since conquest by a stronger society has often imposed an alien way of life on the conquered.

Because diffusion is almost universal, neighbouring societies in a common region tend to reach similar levels of cultural development, though differing habitats, distinct historical backgrounds, or mutual traditionalism and hostility can still produce marked variation even between adjoining groups.

Cultural borrowing, however, is never random. Since the indiscriminate adoption of every new idea the moment it appeared would produce social chaos, groups implicitly decide which innovations to accept, thereby preserving the order and stability that social life requires. Cultural evolution, in the end, depends as much on collective decision-making and implementation within the group as on the innovations themselves.

Question 3 • Paragraph Writing

Marks: 10 | Word limit: about 200 words

Statement chosen — (c) Talent is universal, opportunity is not.

Talent is distributed evenly across humanity, but the opportunity to discover and develop it is not. A child born in a well-resourced city with access to good schools, mentors, and exposure to diverse fields has a far greater chance of realising her potential than an equally gifted child born in a remote village with no library, no coach, and no role model to look up to. Everyday life is full of examples of extraordinary ability that never found expression simply because circumstances did not permit it: the athlete who never saw a proper stadium, the mathematician who never studied beyond a village school, the artist whose family could not spare her from domestic labour. This mismatch between ability and access is not a natural law; it is a social and economic construction, shaped by geography, gender, caste, income, and infrastructure. Addressing it requires deliberate intervention rather than passive hope — scholarships that reach the most disadvantaged, rural sports academies, digital access in remote regions, and mentorship programmes that actively seek out hidden ability instead of waiting for it to present itself. A society that wishes to make

full use of its human potential must therefore treat the expansion of opportunity, and not merely the celebration of talent, as its central task.

Question 4 • Use of Words in Sentences

Marks: $2 \times 5 = 10$

(a) Intrinsic

Honesty and compassion are qualities of intrinsic value, prized for their own sake rather than for any reward they bring.

(b) Unilateral

The company's unilateral decision to cut wages without consulting the workers' union led to widespread protests.

(c) Economize

After losing his job, he had to economize on household expenses so that his savings would last longer.

(d) Conundrum

Deciding whether to accept the foreign posting or stay close to her ageing parents presented her with a genuine conundrum.

(e) Hanker

Even after years abroad, he continued to hanker after the simple home-cooked food of his childhood.

Question 5 • Idioms in Sentences

Marks: $2 \times 5 = 10$

(a) on a shoestring

The young couple travelled across Europe on a shoestring, staying in hostels and cooking their own meals.

(b) bite the bullet

Faced with mounting losses, the manager finally decided to bite the bullet and shut down the unprofitable unit.

(c) cook the books

The auditors discovered that the finance officer had been cooking the books for years to hide the company's losses.

(d) barking up the wrong tree

If you think I took your umbrella, you are barking up the wrong tree, since I was not even in the office that day.

(e) under the weather

Priya stayed home from school today because she has been feeling a little under the weather since morning.

Question 6 • Sentence Correction

Marks: $1 \times 10 = 10$

(a) **Original:** *They must be talking about it for ages.*

Corrected: They must have been talking about it for ages.

Reason: An action continuing from the past up to now, as signalled by 'for ages', needs the modal perfect continuous 'must have been talking', not the simple modal continuous.

(b) **Original:** *She said, How can you do this?*

Corrected: She said, "How can you do this?"

Reason: Direct speech must be enclosed in quotation marks.

(c) **Original:** *Sun is the source of life on our planet.*

Corrected: The Sun is the source of life on our planet.

Reason: Unique natural objects such as the Sun, the Moon and the Earth always take the definite article 'the'.

(d) **Original:** *An extremely tall man came around the corner.*

Corrected: An extremely tall man came around the corner. (No error)

Reason: The article 'an' correctly precedes 'extremely', which begins with a vowel sound, and the rest of the sentence is grammatically sound; the sentence needs no change.

(e) Original: It is a walled garden, consisted of a stone arch and two sections for vegetables.

Corrected: It is a walled garden, consisting of a stone arch and two sections for vegetables.

Reason: The participle describing the garden must be the present participle 'consisting', not the past tense form 'consisted'.

(f) Original: According to psychology, shop lifting is a compulsory behavioural trait.

Corrected: According to psychology, shoplifting is a compulsive behavioural trait.

Reason: 'Compulsory' (obligatory) is the wrong word here; the intended sense is 'compulsive' (driven by an irresistible urge). 'Shoplifting' is also written as one word.

(g) Original: They insisted that he consulted a psychiatrist.

Corrected: They insisted that he consult a psychiatrist.

Reason: After verbs of insistence/demand expressing a subjunctive mood, the that-clause takes the base form of the verb ('consult'), not the past tense.

(h) Original: I can remember it as if it was yesterday.

Corrected: I can remember it as if it were yesterday.

Reason: The subjunctive 'were', not 'was', is used after 'as if / as though' for a hypothetical or unreal comparison.

*(i) **Original:** We wanted to discuss about the arrangements for the wedding.*

Corrected: We wanted to discuss the arrangements for the wedding.

Reason: 'Discuss' is a transitive verb and is never followed by the preposition 'about'.

*(j) **Original:** It is not long enough, isn't it?*

Corrected: It is not long enough, is it?

Reason: A negative statement must be followed by a positive question tag; since the main clause is negative ('is not'), the tag must be 'is it?', not 'isn't it?'.