

Registration Number:

Date & session:

**ST.JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU -27**

**B.A/B.Com/BBA/BSW/BSC/BVC/BCA – I SEMESTER**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: OCTOBER 2023**

**(Examination conducted in November /December 2023)**

**GE 121 – GENERAL ENGLISH-I**

**(For current batch students only)**

**Time: 2 Hours Max Marks: 60**

**This paper contains SEVEN printed pages and THREE parts**

**Instructions:**

1) ***Answer ONLY ONE of the themes given.*** Please mention the theme you selected before writing your answers.

2) You are allowed to use a dictionary during this examination.

3) You may refer to the passages, but do not copy from them directly.

4) Adhere to the prescribed word limit.

**THEME 1**

**I. Read the short story called “A Tapestry of School Memories” written by Elena Summers.**

School days are like a beautiful quilt, made up of memories stitched together by the wonderful teachers who shape our lives. In every classroom, we meet different teachers, each with their own unique style of teaching.

Miss Thompson, the wise English teacher, loved books. Her classroom was filled with old, cherished books that held stories of adventures and deep emotions. She had a gentle voice that made even tough books feel like bedtime stories. Miss Thompson made us fall in love with reading and writing. She used to say, "Books can take you to far-off places, and your imagination is the key to unlocking them."

Mr. Rodriguez, the science teacher, was like a fun scientist. His classroom was a place of bubbling experiments and exciting discoveries. He believed that we learn best when we explore and ask questions. In his class, we witnessed the magic of chemical reactions and the wonders of the natural world. He said, "Science isn't just facts; it's like an exciting journey of finding things out!"

Coach Johnson, the P.E. teacher, was all about teamwork and hard work. When he blew his whistle, it meant serious business. He pushed us hard during training, but it was all about teaching us the values of teamwork, never giving up, and being strong. He showed us that success comes from not just being skilled but also trusting and supporting each other.

Miss Patel, the math teacher, made math easy and fun. Her classroom was full of numbers, equations, and shapes. She had a special way of making complicated math problems seem simple. She used to say, "Math is more than just calculations; it's about solving problems and seeing the beauty in patterns."

Mr. Kim, the artsy art teacher, was a free spirit. His classroom was like a colorful world where we could use our imagination. He thought that art was a way of expressing our feelings. He often said, "Art is like speaking with your heart; every brushstroke tells a story."

Miss Ramirez, the caring counselor, was always there when we needed to talk. Her office was a safe place where we could share our thoughts and feelings. She helped us through tough times and showed us that our emotions were important. She often reminded us, "You're not alone; your feelings matter."

These teachers, with their different ways of teaching, made our school a wonderful place to learn. They didn't just teach us subjects; they taught us about life and helped us grow into better people.

As the years went by, we collected many great memories. Miss Thompson read Shakespeare's sonnets to us. Mr. Rodriguez made volcanoes explode. Coach Johnson motivated us during soccer games. Miss Patel simplified math. Mr. Kim encouraged our creativity. Miss Ramirez offered guidance and support.

One special memory was the annual talent show. Students from all grades came together to show their hidden talents. The teachers were there too, cheering us on.

We saw a fantastic dance performance that blended ballet and hip-hop. Mr. Kim, our art teacher, was proud of the creativity he had nurtured. There was also a moving poem inspired by Miss Thompson's love for literature. Mr. Rodriguez was amazed by a physics demonstration that seemed like magic. Coach Johnson was excited about the soccer player's incredible juggling skills. Miss Patel was proud when a student solved a tough math puzzle. Miss Ramirez was delighted when a shy student spoke about self-acceptance.

The grand finale was the school choir, led by Miss Thompson. Their voices filled the hall with emotion. Miss Thompson realized that she didn't just teach literature; she helped us find our voices and the power of expression.

After the show, we all celebrated our success backstage. It was a moment of togetherness, showing how the teachers had created a supportive environment for us. The teachers exchanged knowing looks, silently acknowledging their role in shaping us.

Years later, at a school reunion, former students shared stories about their school days. They talked about what they learned and the friendships they made, but most importantly, they remembered the special teachers who touched their lives. Each teacher left a unique mark, a lesson that stayed with them long after they left school.

The tapestry of school memories remained colorful and important, showing how teachers can have a lasting impact on their students. In the hearts of these students, the teachers were not just educators; they were mentors, guides, and a source of lifelong inspiration.

**A. Answer the questions that follow in 5 sentences each. (4x5=20)**

1. From the various kinds of teachers mentioned in the story, whom did you like the most and why?
2. What is the central message or theme conveyed by the teachers' interactions with the students?
3. "Books can take you to far-off places, and your imagination is the key to unlocking them."How would you explain the above quote from your own reading experience?
4. Apart from books, are there other means by which young children can find worlds to explore? What has your experience been?

**B. Respond to the following questions in about 150 words each. (2x10=20)**

1. Reflect on the idea that teachers leave lasting imprints on their students' lives. How has a teacher from your past influenced your own journey and development?
2. Science fairs, Theatre performances, Sports day etc… In your schooling life, which type of event really excited you the most and why?

**C. Answer the following question in about 250 words each. (1x20=20)**

1. Look up the meaning of the word “tapestry” and explain your thoughts on the title "A Tapestry of School Memories". Using your own memories of school, attempt to narrate your own tapestry of memories

**THEME 2**

**Read the short story titled “Blundering Bike Ride with Senior Nikhil” written by Agnel Periera**

I grew up riding a bicycle, that too not a fancy BMX. I was happy with my few steel bars stuck together, with a sticker that read BSA Mongoose (still love that bike). Many happy days were spent riding, racing with Junior Niki boy and consequently tending to my innumerable wounds. We were happy riding at a max of 45 kmph and I thought then, who needs a damn bike?

Well it does help coming from a family mindset where bikes were seen as Yamraj’s chariot itself. DEATH is always a pillion rider, just waiting for one wrong turn, some other idiot or just the idiot at the wheel to shorten the bright future that lay ahead (I was hiding my report cards by now). Not to mention that annoying jobless uncle whose balcony overlooked the main road and had privy to all our misdemeanours. Many animated stories were exchanged about us Dhooming our way through the people and traffic (but never once did we tell about him secretly smoking and drinking while he watched us out there! Quite honourable of us in hindsight)

Well, to be honest, many initial experiences with a bike, or scooter for that matter, never went down well. The first attempt resulted in me almost mowing down a *pan tapri* (still think it was due to the fact that we were balancing a then overweight sister). Second attempt in Goa resulted me skirmishing with a rickshaw and falling into a ditch and the third time, the bike skid in my own building (where conveniently, another jobless ground floor aunty happened to be around and snitched; this is after I cooked up the story that the scratches were because of a heated football game.).  
  
So again I thought, who needs a damn bike?

But it all changed one fine day.

It was a warm, sunny and cool day with a small drizzle… funny combo, rite? Anything was possible though as it was Independence Day! My spirits were high as I was going for a rally with my cousin brother, senior Nikhil. A Royal Enfield PR strategy, which entailed all owners to rear up their bikes and have a ride of freedom. So by 8 am, I was all geared (in shorts and *chappal*, mind you) and waiting for my blundering brother, senior Nikhil below my place. Ah, if you are wondering why I called him blundering, it will be cleared soon. My brother asked me to wear a white T shirt on a bike which had no rear mudguard! (He however was in black leather from head to boot, whereas had I worn a green hat, my attire would have looked like the Indian flag hugging a very skinny pole.).

So we reached the showroom at 9, an hour later than the said time. Senior Nikhil, had tied the actual Indian flag to the rear end of the bike, forgetting that it had no mudguard. Yes, you guessed it… by the time we reached our first destination, most of it had become entangled in the back part of the bike, with the rear wheel messing it up. Also by now, my white T-shirt was looking like an abstract piece of art, courtesy of all the filth from the streets of Mumbai.

But things looked brighter ahead (mainly cause the dark clouds had cleared). The area outside the showroom was packed with bikes of every colour possible. A few were modified, which immediately caught our attention. Our bike too, like I mentioned was quite beautifully modified but when people saw an entangled flag, a short rider and a fellow who was dressed in shorts, chappals and a previously white T shirt, they had an exasperated look. To cover this sham of a T-shirt, I draped the flag around myself, looking like one of those loud and proud Indians who is hiding something.

The ride finally began, the air was filled with thunder as 200 engines roared with their 350 CC power. The route took us from Bandra to Gateway, covering the fish market of *Mahim* that is famous all over the city, *Worli sea face* coveted for giving many couples the privacy for some romance with a glorious sunset view, *Chowpatti* where families enjoy some salty sea breeze and amazing *chaat*, *Marine Lines* past the famous Xavier’s College and Victoria Terminus before winding past the iconic buildings of an erstwhile British port at *Colaba*. All along the way the bikers were playing music with their horns and mingled with the roar of the engines, it was one enigmatic spectacle to behold. I was enjoying myself, tongue lolled out as the wind whistled through my scanty hair and flew past senior Nikhil’s bald head, who being the rockstar that he is, chose not to wear his helmet (and Mumbai doesn’t have pillion helmet rule).

So the entire rally was a tremendous success. We drew salutes from all the pedestrians and also shouted slogans as we passed by the roads and bi lanes of dear old Mumbai. As for me, I had the time of my life. Apart from the fact that I had a swollen buttock, a running bladder and a now multi coloured T shirt, the magic of two wheeler riding, the enthralling sound of the engine, rolling with 200 bikers made me stop and think… why the hell don’t I have a damn bike?

Thank you my blundering brother, senior Nikhil.

**II.A. Answer the questions that follow in 5 sentences each. (4x5=20)**

1. Do you know how to ride a bicycle? If yes, what is your favourite part of a bicycle ride and if not, do you feel that you are missing out on something?
2. Throughout the story, the writer refers to his brother as ‘Senior’. Do you think it is to highlight the age difference or does it signify something more?
3. Look up the meaning of the word ‘exasperated’. Why do you think the two brothers were given that look?
4. The writer mentions about nosy neighbours and relatives. Have you also experienced such characters in your life and what problems have they created for you?

**II.B. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each. (2x10=20)**

5. The writer has used the words “Yamraj” and “Death” in the story. Growing up, did you hear such cautionary tales? Why do you think such stories are told?

6*. ‘‘…whereas had I worn a green hat, my attire would have looked like the Indian flag...’’* What colour pants do you think the writer was wearing? Independence Day usually sees a lot of creative ways of waving the tricolour. Which is the most interesting flag representation that you have seen and where was it?

**II.C. Answer the question in about 250 words each. (1x20=20)**

7. Have you ever taken part in a group activity? Describe this activity and tell us what aspects of it you found engaging and memorable. If your experience has been negative or indifferent, dwell on what caused the experience to fail.

**THEME 3**

**Read this extract from *The Appalachian Trail* written by Philip D'Anieri.**

The Appalachian Trail had always been a distant dream, a far-off adventure that beckoned me with its promise of self-discovery and rugged beauty. With each passing year, as the responsibilities of work and life accumulated, the dream seemed to recede even further into the horizon. But as I approached my 30th birthday, a burning desire to embark on this epic journey consumed me. It was time to make that dream a reality.

My journey began in March, when the trail was still veiled in winter's frosty embrace. With a backpack filled with provisions and a heart filled with hope, I set out from the southern terminus at Springer Mountain, Georgia. The initial excitement was intoxicating as I hiked the first few miles, the sense of freedom and adventure palpable in the crisp mountain air. Days turned into weeks, and the trail unfurled before me like a winding story waiting to be told. I met fellow hikers with trail names like "Wanderlust" and "Trailblazer," and together we formed a temporary community, sharing stories and shelter in the small, rustic huts that dotted the trail. The camaraderie was heartwarming, but I also cherished the solitary moments when it was just me, the wilderness, and the gentle whisper of the wind through the towering trees.

The physical challenges were immense. My body ached, my feet blistered, and my muscles screamed in protest, but with each step, I felt myself growing stronger. The mountains tested my determination, and the relentless rain and biting cold tested my resilience. There were moments when I questioned my decision to embark on this journey, but those doubts were always eclipsed by the breathtaking vistas and the simple joy of walking through untamed wilderness.

One of the most memorable moments came during a clear, moonlit night in the Smoky Mountains. I had set up camp near Clingmans Dome, the highest point on the trail, and as I lay in my sleeping bag, I gazed up at the star-studded sky. The universe felt vast and infinite, and in that moment, I realized how small I was in the grand scheme of things. It was a humbling and awe-inspiring experience, a reminder of the beauty and wonder that exists beyond the confines of our everyday lives. As I continued northward, I encountered unexpected acts of kindness from strangers who lived along the trail. One family invited me into their home for a warm meal and a shower, while another hiker offered me a spare pair of dry socks when I was caught in a torrential downpour. These moments of generosity and connection reminded me that there is goodness in the world, even in the most remote places.

The trail also brought me face to face with the stark realities of nature. I witnessed a majestic black bear foraging for berries, its massive form a reminder of the wildness that still exists in these woods. I crossed streams teeming with life, and marveled at the vibrant colors of wildflowers that painted the landscape. Nature's beauty was all around me, a constant source of inspiration. As I hiked through Virginia, I encountered the infamous "Virginia Blues," a term used by thru-hikers to describe the mental fatigue that often sets in during the long, monotonous stretches of the trail. It was during this time that I faced my own inner demons. I questioned my purpose and wondered if I was simply running away from the responsibilities and challenges of my everyday life. But as I walked and thought, I realized that the trail was not an escape; it was a crucible in which I was being tested and forged into a stronger, more resilient version of myself.

The journey also forced me to confront my fears. I had always been afraid of heights, and the Appalachian Trail offered ample opportunities to face that fear head-on. I crossed rickety suspension bridges high above rushing rivers and navigated narrow ridges with sheer drops on either side. Each step was a triumph over fear, a reminder that I was capable of more than I had ever imagined. The northern section of the trail presented its own set of challenges, including the infamous White Mountains of New Hampshire. The steep, rocky terrain and unpredictable weather tested my skills and endurance. But with each grueling climb and treacherous descent, I felt a sense of accomplishment that was unmatched by anything I had experienced before.

As I approached the final stretch of the trail in Maine, I couldn't help but reflect on the person I had become over the course of my journey. I had shed the trappings of modern life – the constant notifications, the deadlines, the never-ending to-do lists – and had embraced a simpler, more deliberate way of living. I had learned to appreciate the small things – a hot meal, a warm fire, a friendly face – in a way that I had never before.

As I descended from the summit, I couldn't help but feel a mixture of sadness and gratitude. The trail had given me so much – physical strength, mental resilience, a deep connection to nature – but it had also taken me away from the world I knew and loved. It was a bittersweet ending to an unforgettable journey.

In the weeks and months that followed, I struggled to readjust to the pace and demands of everyday life. The trail had become my sanctuary, a place where I had found solace and clarity. But gradually, I began to realize that the lessons I had learned on the trail could be applied to the world beyond. I learned to embrace discomfort and uncertainty, to welcome challenges as opportunities for growth, and to savor the beauty of the present moment. The Appalachian Trail had not only been a physical journey; it had been a journey of the soul, a quest to discover my true self.

The Appalachian Trail will always hold a special place in my heart, a reminder of the transformative power of nature and the human spirit. It taught me that we are capable of far more than we often believe, and that the path to self-discovery is often found in the most unexpected places. The trail may have ended, but my journey of self-discovery continues, one step at a time.

**III.A. Answer the questions that follow in about 5 sentences each. (4x5=20)**

1. What prompted the narrator to embark on the journey along the Appalachian Trail?
2. Have you come across animals in the open? Narrate any one instance.
3. If you had to choose one place to go for a trek, which would it be and why?
4. What do you understand by the terms “wanderlust” or “trailblazer” as mentioned in the story?

**III.B. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each. (2x10=20)**

1. “*…I realized that the trail was not an escape; it was a crucible in which I was being tested and forged into a stronger, more resilient version of myself.”* What did you understand from this statement? Narrate an incident which made you or someone you know, undergo a transformation.
2. The writer describes moments of camaraderie as well as solitude. Are you someone who prefers to be surrounded by people or would you rather be left alone? Describe your preference with personal examples.

**III.C. Answer the question in about 250 words each. (1x20=20)**

1. How do you understand the thematic significance of nature as both a source of beauty and a testing ground for one's physical and mental limits? Have you been somewhere where you were both awed by and afraid of nature’s display? Describe the experience of that moment.