

Section A · Reading Skills

CBSE Class 12 English Core (301) · 22 marks · the most scorable section in the paper · Ultimate Revision Sheet

60-SECOND RECALL

Two passages	Q1 Unseen passage — 12 marks · Q2 Case-based factual passage — 10 marks
Combined length	700–750 words for both passages together
Question types	MCQ · Objective type · Short answer in 40–50 words
Passage 1 type	Factual, descriptive or literary
Passage 2 type	Case-based with verbal / visual input — charts, statistics, tables
Golden rule	The answer is always IN the passage. Never bring outside knowledge.

1. What This Section Tests

THE SIX SKILLS *Comprehension* — did you understand what it says?

Interpretation — what does it mean?

Analysis — how are the parts related?

Inference — what does it imply without stating?

Evaluation — how good is the argument or evidence?

Vocabulary — assessed through inference from context, not from a dictionary.

THE RULE THAT DECIDES THIS SECTION Every answer must come from the passage. This section is **not** testing what you know about the topic — it tests whether you can find, understand and rephrase what the writer said. Outside knowledge, however correct, earns **nothing**.

2. The Method — how to attempt

THE SIX STEPS — follow in this order 1. Read the **QUESTIONS** first (2 minutes). You now know what to look for.

2. Read the passage once quickly for the overall sense.

3. Read again slowly, **UNDERLINING** the parts that answer each question. Mark the question number beside the line.

4. Answer in order. For MCQs, eliminate the obviously wrong options first.

5. For short answers, write **40–50 words** — a complete sentence, in your own words where possible.

6. Check the vocabulary questions last, using the sentence around the word.

Time budget: about 35 minutes for the whole of Section A — roughly 20 for the 12-mark passage and 15 for the 10-mark one.

3. Question Types and How to Answer Each

THE TYPES YOU WILL MEET

Type	What it asks	How to answer
Factual / literal	"According to the passage, what ..."	Locate and quote or rephrase directly. Fastest marks in the paper.
Inference	"What can be inferred ..." "The writer implies ..."	The answer is not stated . Find the evidence, then state the conclusion it points to.
Vocabulary	"The word X in para 3 means ..."	Read the whole sentence , substitute each option, pick the one that keeps the meaning.
Attitude / tone	"The tone of the writer is ..."	Look at adjectives and adverbs the writer chooses. See the tone list below.
Title / theme	"Suggest a suitable title"	Must cover the main idea , be short , and not focus on one paragraph only.
Data / visual	"According to the graph ..."	Read axis labels and units first. Compare exactly what is asked — highest, lowest, trend.
Evaluation	"Which statement best supports ..."	Test each option against the passage , not against your opinion.

4. Tone and Attitude Words — keep this list

If the writer is...	The tone is
Praising, approving	Appreciative , laudatory, admiring
Finding fault	Critical , disapproving, condemnatory
Making light of something serious	Sarcastic , ironic, mocking, satirical
Simply informing, no opinion	Objective , factual, neutral, informative
Showing feeling for suffering	Sympathetic , compassionate, empathetic
Expecting good outcomes	Optimistic , hopeful
Expecting bad outcomes	Pessimistic , cynical
Urging the reader to act	Persuasive , argumentative, exhortative
Thinking back / inward	Reflective , contemplative, nostalgic
Warning about danger	Cautionary , alarmed, concerned

5. The Case-Based Passage (10 marks)

WHAT IS DIFFERENT

This passage comes with **verbal or visual input** — a table, bar chart, pie chart, line graph or statistical data. It tests whether you can read **data** as well as prose, and connect the two.

HOW TO READ A CHART IN 30 SECONDS

1. Read the **title** — what is being measured?
2. Read **both axis labels and the units** — percentage? rupees? crores? per year?
3. Note the **highest and lowest** values.

4. Note the **overall trend** — rising, falling, fluctuating, steady.
5. Look for anything that **contradicts** the prose — that is often the question.

THE DATA TRAPS • **Percentage vs absolute number.** A smaller percentage of a bigger total can be a larger number. Read which one is asked.

- **Increase vs rate of increase.** A falling rate of growth is still growth.
- **Read the units.** “In crores” and “in lakhs” change every answer.
- **Do not estimate** when exact figures are given.

6. Writing the 40–50 Word Answer

- THE THREE-PART STRUCTURE**
1. **Direct answer** in the first line — answer the actual question asked.
 2. **Evidence** from the passage — the fact or phrase that supports it.
 3. **Brief explanation** or consequence, if the word limit allows.

Example question: “Why does the writer call the practice harmful?”

Answer: The writer calls it harmful because it damages long-term health. He points out that continuous exposure weakens immunity and raises the risk of chronic illness. This makes the short-term convenience far costlier than it appears. (43 words)

WHAT LOSES MARKS HERE • **Copying whole sentences** from the passage without rephrasing — acceptable for factual questions, penalised for inference ones.

- **Writing far beyond 50 words** — wastes time and adds nothing.
- **Answering a different question** — read the question word: *why, how, what, which*.
- **Leaving MCQs blank.** There is **no negative marking** — always attempt every one.

7. Format and Mark Split what the examiner ticks

Question	Marks	Where the marks are
MCQ / objective	1 each	Correct option only. No explanation needed, no partial marks.
Short answer (40–50 words)	1–2 each	Content is everything. Correct idea, drawn from the passage.
Vocabulary in context	1 each	The meaning as used in that sentence , not the general dictionary meaning.
Title	1	Covers the whole passage, short, relevant.
Data interpretation	1 each	Reading the chart correctly, with the right unit.

8. Question Triggers wording → what to do

If the question says...	Do this
“According to the passage...”	Factual — locate and rephrase directly
“What can be inferred...” / “implies”	Inference — not stated; find the evidence and draw the conclusion

"The word 'X' means..."	Substitute each option into the original sentence
"The tone of the writer is..."	Look at the adjectives he chose; use the tone list
"Suggest a suitable title"	Short, covers the whole passage, not one paragraph
"According to the graph / table..."	Check axis labels and units first
"Which of the following best supports..."	Test each option against the passage
"The writer is most likely to agree that..."	Inference about the writer's position , not yours
"Complete the sentence appropriately"	Match the grammar and the sense of the original line
"State whether TRUE or FALSE"	Find the exact line; a single changed word makes it false
"Justify in about 40 words"	Claim + evidence from the passage + one line of explanation

WHAT ALWAYS APPEARS

1. **[12M]** Unseen passage — MCQ and short answer, mixed factual and inferential.
2. **[10M]** Case-based passage with a chart, table or statistical input.
3. **[1M each]** Vocabulary in context — always two or three of these.
4. **[1M]** Tone / attitude of the writer.
5. **[1M]** Suitable title for the passage.

THE HABIT THAT SCORES — *Underline the answer in the passage and write the question number beside it as you read. This single habit turns Section A into the fastest 22 marks in the paper — you are then copying from your own marked text rather than searching again. Finish Section A in 35 minutes to protect time for Section C.*