

Tribhuvan University

2078

Bachelor Level 4 Yrs. Prog. / Humanities / I Year

Full Marks: 70

Comp. Eng. 401 : Reading and Writing in English

Time: 3 hrs.

*Candidates are required to give their answers in their own words as far as practicable. The figures in the margin indicate full marks.*

Section "A" : (Long Questions)

2×15=30

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Answer any TWO questions, but no. 2 is compulsory.

1. If you have ever been involved in or witnessed a situation in which someone was in trouble, write a narrative essay about the incident. If people failed to help the person in trouble, explain why you think no one acted. If people did act, tell how. Be sure to account for your own actions.

2. Apply four levels of reading to O Henry's Story - "The Gift of the Magi" given below:

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One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. and sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. one dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So, Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the

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home. Furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, though, they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling-- something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thing and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.



Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass, her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. the other was Della's hair. Had the queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mne. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take your hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it"

"Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.



"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation-as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch, As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value-the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love which is always a tremendous task, dear friends - a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do--oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.



Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his stop on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit for saying little silent prayer about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stopped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two-and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again--you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice--what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.



"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you--sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year--what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first,"

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then alas! A quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay the Combs-- the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims--just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.



But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "Let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men--wonderfully wise men--who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. O all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

3. Rewrite the following factual statements to make them effective thesis statement. Make sure each thesis statement is a clearly and specifically worded sentence.

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- a. Many hospitals will not admit patients without health insurance because they are afraid that such patients will not be able to pay their bills.
- b. Several supreme Court decisions have justified that art containing explicit sexual images is not necessarily pornographic.
- c. Many women earn less money than men do, in part because they drop out of the workforce during their child-rearing years.
- d. People who watch more than five hours of television a day tend to think the world is more violent than do people who watch less than two hours of television daily.
- e. In recent years, the suicide rate among teenagers-especially middle-and-upper-middle-class families has risen dramatically.

Section "B" : (Short Questions)

4×10=40

Answer any FOUR questions, but no. 5 is compulsory.

- 4/ ✓ Make notes of the following passage by using headings and sub-headings: L

Despite all the research every one of us catches cold and most of us catch it frequently. Our failure to control one of the commonest of all ailments sometimes seems ridiculous. Medical science regularly practises transplant surgery and has rid whole countries of such killing diseases as Typhus and the Plague. But the problem of common cold is unusually difficult and much has yet to be done to solve it. It is known that a cold is caused by one of a number of viral infections that affect the lining of the nose and other passages leading to the lungs but the confusing variety of viruses makes study and remedy very difficult. it was shown in 1960 that many typical colds in adults are caused by one or the other of a family

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of viruses known as rhinoviruses, yet there still remain many colds for which no virus has as yet been isolated.

There is also the difficulty that because they are so much smaller than the bacteria which cause many other infections, viruses cannot be seen with ordinary microscopes. Nor can they be cultivated easily in the bacteriologist's laboratory, since they only grow within the living cells of animals or plants. An important recent step forward, however, is the development of the technique of tissue culture, in which bits of animal tissue are enabled to go on living and to multiply independently of the body. This has greatly aided virus research and has led to the discovery of a large number of viruses. Their existence had previously been not only unknown but even unsuspected.

The fact that we can catch a cold repeatedly creates another difficulty. Usually, a virus strikes only once and leaves the victim immune to further attacks. Still, we do not gain immunity from colds. Why? It may possibly be due to the fact that while other viruses get into the bloodstream where anti-bodies can oppose them, the viruses causing cold attack cells only on the surface. Or it may be that immunity from one of the many different viruses does not guarantee protection from all the others. It seems, therefore, that we are likely to have to suffer colds for some time yet.

5. Read the following passage and answer the questions given under it:

A coordination problem (a term of art in economics and management) occurs when you have a task to perform, the task has multiple and shifting components, the time for completion is limited, and your performance is affected by the order and sequence of the actions you take. The trick is to manage it so that the components don't bump into each other in ways that produce confusion, frustration and inefficiency.

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them, and the order of their placement seems random in relation to the order of your needs. There is no "right" place to start, so you lunge after one thing and then after another with awkward reaches.

Unfortunately, two or three other people are doing the same thing, and each is doing it in a different sequence. So there is an endless round of "excuse me," as if you were in an old Steve Martin routine.

But no amount of politeness and care is enough. After all, there are so many items to reach for-- lids, cup jackets, straws, napkins, stirrers, milk, half and half, water sugar, Splenda, the wastepaper basket, spoons. You and your companions may strive for a ballet of courtesy, but what you end up performing is more like bumper cars. It's just a question of what will happen first --- getting what you want or spilling the coffee you are trying to balance in one hand on the guy reaching over you.

I won't even talk about the problem of finding a seat.

And two things add to your pain and trouble. First, it costs a lot, \$3 and up. And worst of all, what you're paying for is the privilege of doing the work that should be done by those who take your money. The coffee shop experience is just one instance of the growing practice of shifting the burden of labor to the consumer --- gas stations, grocery and drug stores, bagel shops (why should I put on my own cream cheese?), airline check-instruction, parking lots. It's insert this, swipe that, choose credit or debit, enter your PIN, push the red button, error, start again. At least when you go on a "vacation" that involves working on a ranch, the work is something you've chosen. But none of us has chosen to take over the jobs of those we pay to serve us.

- a. How does the writer describe the traditional process of getting a cup of coffee??



- b. According to the writer, how do the two kinds of coffee shops differ in terms of their physical setting?
  - c. What does the writer blame for the situation he describe?
  - d. List some of the obstacles writer says customers face in a modern- day coffee.
  - e. Who is the "you" the writer addresses in this essay?
6. Answer the following questions briefly and to the point:
- a. What does Stan Cox think is wrong with air conditioning [2]
  - b. Is Bruce Catton's purpose in comparing Grant & Lee the same as his purpose in contrasting them? That is, do their similarities also make a statement about the US history? Explain. [4]
  - c. Daniel Engber ends his essay "Let Them Drink Water" with a surprising analogy? What two things is he comparing? Is this comparison logical? What point does it make? [4]
7. Who is your view is right, the younger Salman Rushdie or the older one? Was he right to compromise his principles in order to obtain a degree? How would you act if you act if you had to choose between a university degree and your self-respect? (A 1996 Commencement Speech)
8. Give the meanings of any FIVE of the following words and then use each of them in sentences of your own (in the same sense of meaning you have given):  
cajole, repugnant, queries, suffice, foster, trauma, sanctified

Immediate

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