

**St. Peter's Senior Secondary School**  
**English Core (301)**  
**Assignment 1**

Welcome to Class XII,

Books prescribed for Class XII: Flamingo (NCERT)  
Vistas (NCERT)

Split up of marks

Written Exam (External)	80
*ASL (Internal Assessment)	20
Total	100

- \*Assessment of Speaking and Listening skills is an ongoing process. The marks are calculated on the basis of performance in internal exams and ASL exam.
- The Assignments should be neatly done on loose sheets or any copy.

**Q1. Read the given passage carefully.**

1. Given the standing of some of its institutions of higher learning, the IITs and IIMs, India is a potential knowledge power. Realising the potential, however, is not going to be easy. The impressive strides made by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) notwithstanding, universal access to quality school education- a minimum necessary condition for any progress towards making India a knowledge society', as the 2006 report of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) puts it-remains a distant goal.
2. There is as yet no legislation at the national level to affirm the right to education, a fundamental right under the Constitution. The number of school buildings for elementary and secondary education falls far short of requirements and so does the number of qualified teachers. The pressure on government budgets, which forces governments to hire teachers on contract paying a pittance of a salary, is playing havoc with quality. While the incursion of the private sector in the field is providing some competition, mechanisms to enforce the required standards are lacking.
3. Not that there are no national standards or standards-enforcing agencies. We have the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to bring out textbooks in various subjects for school education. The central government runs several model schools. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) conducts examinations for schools affiliated to it across the country. The states too have their school boards to conduct exams and enforce minimum standards. In their anxiety to show spectacular performance, some states are overly lenient-in marking answer papers.

4. Questions arise even over the standards applied by CBSE. Going by the number of students securing 90% or more in their higher secondary exam, it would appear India is on the brink of a knowledge revolution. The numbers are so large that the cut-off point for admission to top colleges is now above 90%. However, admissions to IITs and medical colleges are not based only on CBSE or state board exam results. Leading undergraduate colleges offering non-professional degree courses hold their own admission tests. Obviously, higher secondary school results are not taken to be a reliable index of the quality of a student's learning capability or potential.
5. It is not difficult to see why. In the CBSE class XII exams, the number of successful candidates securing more than 90% in economics this year turned out to be over 8000 in the Delhi region alone; in English it was above 9000. The numbers seem to be growing every year. If the country produces so many children who attain very high levels of performance even before graduation, we can expect India to produce Amartya Sen's by the dozens.
6. While scoring high marks or even 100 out of 100 may not be out of a good student's reach in subjects like mathematics or physics, it is difficult to figure out the quality of the answers that fetch 90% marks in Economics or English. The standards applied by higher secondary boards like CBSE seem to have been diluted to the point that leaves a big gap between what students learn at school and what they have to face on entering institutions of higher learning. Thriving teaching shops around the country promise to bridge that gap.
7. In an attempt to remedy the situation, NCERT had recently commissioned experts to rewrite textbooks on macro and micro economics. Though not entirely free from blemishes, these new texts should go some way in helping beginners get acquainted with the basic concepts in the subject and their applications.
8. Not surprisingly, their introduction is facing roadblocks. Teachers do not like to be compelled to look at textbooks they are not familiar with. Those who revel in seeing students score 90% are chary of ushering in something that may stop the rush of such scores. Lastly, even teaching shops see red as they fear loss of business if the higher secondary finalists can get their skills upgraded without buying their help.
9. One wonders if our Knowledge Commission is aware of these insidious impediments to India's knowledge ambitions.

**1. On the basis of your understanding of the above passage, answer the following questions by choosing the most appropriate option.**

1. **Why is quality school education a distant goal?**
  - (a) There are no fundamental rights.
  - (b) There is no legislation at the national level.
  - (c) Measures to enforce the required standards are not there.
  - (d) There are no minimum necessary conditions.
2. **What is the tone of writer when he remarks: 'India is on the brink of a knowledge revolution.'**
  - (a) Optimistic
  - (b) Imaginative

- (c) Sarcastic
- (d) Presumptuous
- 3. **What are some states doing for ensuring good performances?**
  - (a) Lenience in marking
  - (b) Following their own school boards
  - (c) Following CBSE
  - (d) All of these
- 4. **Why do teachers oppose the new textbooks?**
  - (a) They are not familiar with them.
  - (b) They want students to score good marks.
  - (c) They are happy with the old books.
  - (d) Teaching shops would lose their business.

**2. Answer the following questions as briefly as possible.**

- 5. What remains a distant goal?
- 6. What is the main factor that has affected the quality of education?
- 7. Which are the standard enforcing agencies in India?
- 8. Why do leading undergraduate colleges hold their own admission tests?
- 9. What is the problem created by the results of CBSE examinations?
- 10. Why does the author state, "we can expect India to produce Amartya Sen's by the dozens?"

**3. Which word in the passage means the same as**

- 1. Reputation (para 1 )
- 2. Impressive (para 3).

For the next assignment revise Formal Letters and Notice Writing. These formats were covered in Class XI.