

English (HL)

Writing Skills

(Inclusive of Unseen Passages for Summary writing & Comprehension, Writing Skills Topics)

STD. VIII (English Medium)

Salient Features

- ☞ Based on the English Balbharati textbook
- ☞ Exhaustive coverage of Unseen Passages for Summary writing & Comprehension, Writing Skills Topics
- ☞ Easy-to-understand explanations of topics
- ☞ Includes Pointers to follow, Format of Question for enhanced comprehension of key topics
- ☞ Includes Solved Examples for thorough understanding
- ☞ Complete coverage of relevant Textual Questions
- ☞ Includes comprehensive coverage of Practice Questions with answers accessible through QR code

Printed at: **Print to Print**, Mumbai

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“Good writing is clear thinking made visible.” –William Wheeler

English has become an essential language for both oral and written communication due to its widespread usage. Developing strong writing skills in English is crucial as it plays a vital role in effective communication in various aspects of life.

Target’s ‘English (HL) Writing Skills: Std. VIII’ is made with the intent of enhancing a student’s ability of understanding, interpreting the various writing skills topics and presenting the interpretation and ideas with clarity and ease. This book is based on the latest textbook prescribed by the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, Pune.

It is a compact book, critically analysed and extensively drafted to aid the students’ understanding of each writing skills’ topic. Its student-friendly structure and format promote effective learning outcomes.

Each chapter begins with the explanation of the topics in an easy-to-comprehend language along-with helpful features like Pointers to follow, Format of question which will help the student understand the topics better. **Illustrative Examples** are included wherever relevant for ease of understanding of the topic. The chapters are generally **classified** into three sections as per the requirement of the topic. **Solved Examples** section includes comprehensive coverage of solved questions pertaining to the topic. **Solved Textual Questions** section covers textbook questions related to the Topic. **Questions for Practice** offers extensive practice of the topic with answers provided in downloadable pdf format through Q.R.code.

The book has extensive coverage of Solved Examples: 9 Non-Textual (Unseen) Passages, 20 Letter Writing, 2 Email Writing, 12 Information Transfer, 9 Speech Writing, 9 Report Writing, 4 Paragraph Writing, 11 Expansion of Theme, 9 Interview Questions, 9 Dialogue Writing, 10 Developing a Story, 22 Miscellaneous forms of writing.

Target’s ‘English (HL) Writing Skills: Std. VIII’ book ensures the establishment of a strong foundation for students, enabling them to enhance their language skills and develop effective communication abilities.

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The journey to create a complete book is strewn with triumphs, failures, and near misses. If you think we’ve nearly missed something or want to applaud us for our triumphs, we’d love to hear from you.

Please write to us at: mail@targetpublications.org

A book affects eternity; one can never tell where its influence stops.

Best of luck to all the aspirants!

Publisher

Edition: First

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Non-Textual (Unseen) Passages For Summary Writing and Comprehension

Summary writing

A summary is the essence or main ideas of a passage, a speech, a chapter or a book expressed in as few words as possible. It is a piece of information that conveys the essential points of a given prose.

Its language should be clear and simple, having continuity of thought and expression. It is not a summing up of disjointed points but a connected and readable piece of composition.

Pointers to Follow

1. Read the passage thoroughly and attentively till you grasp it. Sometimes more than one reading is needed to understand the passage.
2. Thoroughly read the passage to identify the main theme or subject, aiding in the creation of a suitable title.
3. Pick out the important points or ideas and underline them in the original passage. If there is more than one paragraph, the important ideas of each one of them should be noted down separately.
4. Arrange the marked ideas or points in a coherent and connected manner to create a readable summary.
5. Avoid repeating the same idea and use your own language for the summary, without adding any personal opinions and views.
6. Figurative language should be avoided.
7. Re-read your final summary to ensure that there are no mistakes in it.

Guidelines for Summary Writing

- Ideally, a summary must be 1/3rd of the length of the given passage.
- It is important to include all the main points, in addition to the central idea of the summary.
- Make use of complex and compound sentences wherever possible to add more information in a single sentence.
- The language used must be simple.
- A suitable title should be given to the summary.

Comprehension

In this question, you will be presented with a non-textual (unseen) passage i.e. a passage not from the textbook. The objective of the question is to test your reading ability and comprehension skills. Therefore, you will be expected to grasp the meaning of the passage and answer questions based on it, in your own words.

Pointers to Follow

- i. Read the passage twice.
- ii. Read all the activities carefully and then attempt .
- iii. Attempt the activities according to the marks allotted.
- iv. Marks are indicated against each activity to help you decide how many points to include in the answer.

Solved Examples

Unseen Passages for Summary Writing

Q1. Go through the passage below and write a short summary on it. Suggest a suitable title.

In a faraway village, a man used to help a landlord without asking for anything in return. The man was extremely superstitious. One day, impressed with the work, the landlord rewards the man with a big healthy goat.

The man carries the goat on his shoulders and starts walking back home. Three wicked thugs observe him and decide to trick him.

The first thug comes to him and asks, "Why are you carrying a dog on your shoulders." The man gets angry and tells the thug that it is a goat and not a dog.

As he keeps walking, the second thug passes by and enquires why he was carrying a dead calf on his shoulders. The man's anger multiplies and says, "You fool! Can't you see this is a goat?" However, the second thug's question plants the seed of suspicion in the man's mind.

After walking for some more distance, the third thug approaches the man, and asks in a sarcastic tone, "Why are you carrying a donkey on your shoulders?"

The superstitious man gets scared thinking the goat is actually a ghost. He leaves it right there and runs away. The three thugs take the goat away, laughing at the man's stupidity.



Ans: **Superstitious Man and the Tricky Thugs**

In a village, a superstitious man is rewarded with a healthy goat by a landlord for his selfless help. On his way home, three thieves decided to trick him. They falsely claim the goat to be a dog, a dead calf and a donkey, planting doubt in the man's mind. Fearing that he has a ghost with him, the man leaves the goat. Laughing at the man's foolishness, the three thugs steal the goat.

Q2. Go through the passage below and write a short summary of it. Suggest a suitable title.

Dear Children,

India is not just the land, mountains and rivers. India is you and me, all the millions of young and old who are her citizens. The thoughts and actions of the people who have inhabited India for thousands of years have moulded our society. Out of the past grows the present, and what we do today will shape our future.

When we build a road or plant a tree or inculcate good habits, it is not for ourselves alone but also for those who will be born in the years to come. The work of building is not easy. We must give it all we have and strain every nerve and muscle. It is only by trying that we learn and by doing that we gather strength. All the world over, progress has been possible because of the hard work and sacrifice of pioneers.

These 25 years have laid the foundation of the new modern India. The children of today must continue this work and make our country united and strong. Anything which is easy soon becomes dull. The very hardships we face provide challenge and excitement.

The future is calling you. Don't be disheartened by difficulties. You can change the bad, not only by doing big things but by trying your best to do even ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Indira Gandhi
January 16, 1973

Ans: **Building a Strong and United India**

Indira Gandhi addresses the young citizens of India emphasizing that India is not just its land and geography, but its people. She stresses on the importance of working together to create a brighter future, as our present actions will shape the lives of future generations. She encourages hard work, sacrifice and the cultivation of good habits. She believes that progress and strength come from actively trying and taking action. She encourages kids to embrace challenges and change. She highlights that both big and small contributions are important in making India united and strong.

Q3. Go through the passage below and write a short summary of it. Suggest a suitable title.

There are many different kinds of musical instruments. They are divided into three main classes according to the way they are played. For example, some instruments are played by blowing air into them. These are called wind instruments. In some of these, the air is made to vibrate inside a wooden tube and these are said to be of the woodwind family. Examples of this family are the flute, the clarinet and the bassoon.

Other instruments are made of brass: the trumpet and the horn are examples. There are also various other wind instruments such as the mouth organ and the bagpipes.

Some instruments are played by banging or striking them. One obvious example is the drum, of which there are various kinds. Instruments like this are called percussion instruments.

The last big group of instruments is the ones that have strings. There are two main kinds of stringed instruments those in which the music is made by plucking the strings and those where the player draws a bow across the strings. Examples of the former are the harp and the guitar and that of the latter are the violin and the cello.

Ans: **Family of Musical Instruments**

There are three main types of musical instruments, depending on how we play them. Wind instruments are played by blowing air into them. Examples include woodwind, brass and other wind instruments like flute, clarinet, trumpet, bagpipes etc. Percussion instruments are played by banging or striking them such as drums. Stringed instruments make up the third group, which includes plucked string instruments like the harp and guitar, as well as bowed string instruments like the violin and cello.



Q4. Go through the passage below and write a short summary on it. Suggest a suitable title.

Ambedkar was an Indian Nationalist, a Buddhist, a political leader, and a jurist. He was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He was born in a lower-class family on 14th April 1891. His mother died when he was just five years old.

In 1908, Ambedkar got married at the immature age of 14, to a girl named Ramabai who was nine years old at that time but still, he continued his education and passed the intermediate examination with flying colors. Due to his great interest in studies, Dr. Ambedkar was brilliant from his childhood. His low cast birth made him suffer a lot of discrimination and humiliation in his school. He went to England in 1923 for his higher studies and there, he received the degrees of M.Sc., Ph.D., and DMS law.

Many public institutions are named in his honor including BR Ambedkar Bihar University, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University in Hyderabad, etc. He always supported equality of opportunity irrespective of a person's caste, color, or creed. He was also touched by the difficulties faced by the laborers and therefore he also organized a separate community for them named "Savantantara Mazdoor Dal". With his continuous efforts, he was gaining popularity all over and became the hero of the lower-caste people.

Ans:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: The Architect of Equality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the chief architect of the Indian constitution. Born in a lower-caste family, he lost his mother at a young age. Despite marrying early, he continued his education and earned various degrees. Since he faced a lot of discrimination, he supported equality irrespective of one's caste, color or creed. He created a laborers' community called 'Savantantara Mazdoor Dal'. There are many institutions named in his honor. His efforts gained him popularity and made him a hero among the lower-caste people.

Unseen Passages for Comprehension

Q5. (A) Read the following passage and complete the given activities:

A1. Name the following.

- i. Architect of the Hawa Mahal monument.
- ii. Architectural styles in the Hawa Mahal.

The Hawa Mahal in Jaipur is considered one of the most iconic attractions of the city. The five-storey building looks like a honeycomb of a beehive and it is always windy inside, owing to the numerous windows. There are more than 953 small windows or *gharokhas*. This amazing ventilation that the palace enjoys is the reason why it was named the Hawa Mahal, which literally translates into the 'Palace of the Winds'.

It was built in 1799 by the architect Lal Chand Ustad for Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. The main purpose behind the construction of this palace was to allow the ladies of the royal family to view daily life on the road without being seen themselves. The Hawa Mahal is a five-story building, and it is the tallest building in the world that has been built without a foundation. It is made of red and pink colored sandstone.

More than a palace, the Hawa Mahal reflects a truly harmonious amalgamation of the Hindu Rajput and Islamic Mughal architectural styles. The Rajput style can be seen in the domes canopies, and fluted pillars, while the stone inlay filigree work and the arches are perfect depictions of the Mughal style of architecture.

A2. What is the significance of the name Hawa Mahal?

A3. Give synonyms for the following from the passage:

- i. famous
- ii. aim
- iii. combination
- iv. flawless

A4. Do as directed:

- i. Hawa Mahal is made of red and pink colored sandstone. **(Change the voice)**
- ii. The Hawa Mahal in Jaipur is considered as one of the most iconic attractions of the city.

(Add a Question Tag)

A5. Have you visited any famous monuments? Describe any monument you know or visited.

B. Read the above passage and write a summary of it in a paragraph. Suggest a suitable title.

**Answers**

- A1.** i. Lal Chand Ustad ii. Hindu Rajput and Islamic Mughal
- A2.** The name "Hawa Mahal" translates to "Palace of the Winds". This name reflects the fact that the building has many windows, which create a continuous flow of wind inside.
- A3.** i. iconic ii. purpose iii. amalgamation iv. perfect
- A4.** i. Red and pink colored sandstone has been used to make Hawa Mahal.
ii. The Hawa Mahal in Jaipur is considered as one of the most iconic attractions of the city, isn't it?
- A5.** Yes. During my last summer vacation, I visited the Taj Mahal in Delhi. I had read and heard about it already, but seeing it for the first time was wonderful. It is fully made of white marble and surrounded by trees on all sides. The serene gardens, reflective pool create a peaceful atmosphere, making the Taj Mahal a truly captivating sight. Our guide explained each part of the historic monument in detail. We also heard the story of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. It was an amazing experience.

B.**Hawa Mahal: The Historical Marvel**

The Hawa Mahal was built in 1799 by Lal Chand Ustad for Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. The Jaipur attraction gets its name because it is very windy owing to more than 953 windows. Its initial purpose was to allow the royal ladies to see outside without being seen themselves. Made of red and pink colored sandstone, the five-storey building showcases both Rajput and Mughal architectural style influences.

Solved Textual Questions**Summary Writing**

- Q6.** Read the first three paragraphs on Page 92. (From... 'One morning... up to... a discussion after hall) of your textbook. Re-read the same noting down only important points. Rewrite the important points in your own simple language. Make certain that your summary is less than half the length of the original passage. *(Lesson 4.4: Ramanujan)*

Ans: One day in 1913, Hardy received a packet from India containing untidy sheets of paper filled with lines of non-English script and numbers. He wasn't interested, but read the letter written in broken English by an Indian, asking for opinions on his mathematical discoveries. The contents of the sheets were theorems that were either already discovered or far-fetched. The fact that there were no proofs annoyed and bored Hardy. He put the letter down and went on with his daily schedule. He went for a tennis game after having lunch and came back to his room in the afternoon. Even though there was no change in his usual routine, something wasn't right inside his mind. He wasn't able to enjoy the game as the letter from India kept troubling him. The theorems were so outrageous and crazy that Hardy had never seen them before nor could have ever imagined them. He wondered if the man was faking intelligence to play a prank, but he knew it wasn't true. Thus, he sent a message to his friend Littlewood, so that they could have a talk and come to a conclusion.

Questions for Practice**Unseen Passages for Summary Writing**

- Q7.** Go through the passage below and write a short summary on it. Suggest a suitable title.

One fine morning, a minister from Emperor Akbar's court had gathered in the assembly hall. He informed the Emperor that all his valuables had been stolen by a thief the previous night. Akbar was shocked to hear this because the place where that minister lived was the safest place in the kingdom. He invited Birbal to solve the mystery. Birbal said, "It is definitely not possible for an outsider to enter into the minister's house and steal the valuables. This blunder is definitely committed only by another minister of that court." Saying so, he arranged for a donkey to be tied to a pillar. He ordered all the courtiers to lift the donkey's tail and say "I have not stolen." Birbal added "Only then we can judge the culprit." After everyone had finished, he asked the courtiers to show their palm to him. All the courtiers except Alim Khan had a black patch of paint on their palm. Birbal had actually painted the donkey's tail with a black coat of paint. In fright, the guilty minister did not touch the donkey's tail at all. Thus, Birbal once again proved his intelligence and was rewarded by the king with 1000 gold coins.



Ans:

Birbal catches a thief

Once, a thief stole all the valuables from Akbar's minister's home. When the emperor sought Birbal's help to solve the case, Birbal first deduced that it must be the work of another minister and devised a plan. He tied a donkey to a pillar and asked all ministers to touch its tail and deny involvement. Birbal had painted the donkey's tail black, and the guilty minister avoided touching it out of fear. Birbal's clever test to prove innocence led the emperor to reward him with 1000 gold coins.

Q8. Go through the passage below and write a short summary on it. Suggest a suitable title.

Butterflies are one of the most beautiful creatures in our world. They are colourful insects with scaly wings. We can find them in our gardens, parks, and forests. Research estimates specify that about 28,000 butterfly species exist in this world.

Butterflies have a great sense of smell. They are amazing fliers, and their speed varies from species to species. Some can fly as fast as 30 miles per hour or even faster. Slower butterflies fly at about 5 miles per hour. Butterflies exist all around the globe. They thrive in all kinds of habitats: hot, cold, dry, moist etc. However, most of these species are abundantly found in tropical areas.

The rainforests serve to be the home to a large number of butterfly species. To avoid extreme environmental conditions, many of these species are known to migrate. However, the concept of migration when it comes to butterflies is still a grey area. Not much of it is well understood. Most of the species which migrate do so for comparatively shorter distances.

If I had been offered to swap my life, I would want to be a butterfly. This is because they represent freedom. Their ability to fly without any limits or bounds makes them charming. Butterflies are not just attractive; they make us happy. They are wonderful beings who mean no harm. Nature is their home, and the sky is their abode.

Ans:

Beautiful Butterflies

Butterflies are beautiful insects with colourful wings present everywhere around us. There are about 28,000 butterfly species in the world. They have a strong sense of smell and can fly from 5 to 30 miles per hour. Butterflies live in various habitats, but most are found in tropical areas, especially rainforests. Many butterfly species migrate, but not much is known about this phenomenon. The author expresses a desire to be a butterfly if given the chance because they represent freedom and happiness in nature.

Unseen Passages for Comprehension

Q9. (A) Read the following passage and complete the given activities:

A1. Complete the following sentences based on the passage:

- i. People who experience pleasant events _____.
- ii. The wise man tries to attain fortune by _____.

Ignorance invariably gives rise to superstition. When individuals lack understanding of why something occurs in a particular manner, they tend to attribute it to either good or bad luck. Those who frequently experience pleasant events are labelled as "lucky," while those who consistently face misfortune are deemed "unlucky," as if there is an inherent quality within individuals that attracts such fortune.

When individuals embrace the notion of good and bad luck, they tend to develop beliefs in various superstitions, convinced that inanimate objects have the power to bring them either good fortune or misfortune. These individuals become anxious if salt spills towards them on a table, if they sleep in a hotel room numbered 13, if they pass under a ladder, or if they glimpse the new moon through glass. These actions, without any rational basis, are thought to bring about negative consequences.

Now, of course, all such superstitions are pure nonsense, and no educated person should bother about them for a moment. There is really no such thing as luck or chance; and only foolish people waste their lives in waiting for a miracle of good luck to bring them a fortune.

The wise man will try to attain it by hard work, effort, enterprise and leaves nothing to chance. Most people who are called "lucky" have good fortune because they work for it.

A2. We believe in all kinds of superstitions. Find evidence from the lesson and write in your own words.

A3. Find words from the extract that mean the following:

- i. belief or practice not based on reason or knowledge.
- ii. amazing or wonderful occurrence



- iii. not in a living state
- iv. state of lack of awareness, knowledge or education

A4. Write verb forms:

- i. frequently ii. pleasant iii. understanding iv. ignorance

A5. Have you ever encountered people who strongly believe in superstitions? How do you react to their beliefs?

B. Read the above passage and write a summary of it in a paragraph. Suggest a suitable title.**Answers**

A1. i. are labelled as “lucky”

ii. hard work, effort, enterprise and leaving nothing to chance.

A2. Some of the superstitions mentioned in the passage are:

- i. Believing inanimate objects bring good fortune or misfortune
- ii. Considering it unlucky to spill salt
- iii. Choosing to avoid sleeping in a hotel room numbered 13
- iv. Avoiding passing under a ladder
- v. Considering it unlucky to see the new moon through glass

A3. i. superstition ii. miracle iii. inanimate iv. ignorance

A4. i. frequent ii. please iii. understand iv. ignore

A5. In my experience, I have come across individuals who strongly follow superstitions. While I respect their personal beliefs, I personally find it challenging to relate to such beliefs. I trust in rational thinking and logical explanations instead of believing in superstitions. However, I try to approach these situations with an open mind and engage in respectful conversations to understand their perspectives.

B.**The Myth of Luck**

People are superstitious because they are ignorant. Hence, they call some people lucky and others unlucky. They think objects have the power to bring them fortune or misfortune. These beliefs lead to anxiety over spilled salt, room numbers, ladders or seeing the new moon through glass. However, superstitions are nonsense and educated individuals should not waste time on them. Instead, success comes from hard work, effort and seizing opportunities. ‘Lucky’ people achieve good fortune through their own efforts.