

MASTERG.NET CBSE COACHING CLASSES

Janakpuri, New Delhi • Complete Solutions & Marking Scheme

Subject: English Communicative (Class X)

Max. Marks: 40

Chapter: Two Gentlemen of Verona (A.J. Cronin)

Time Allowed: 1.5 Hours

COMPREHENSIVE ANSWER KEY & EVALUATION GUIDELINES

SECTION A: MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (1 MARK EACH)

Q1. The driver, Luigi, did not approve of the narrator purchasing wild strawberries from the two boys because:

- (a) the strawberries looked overripe and were not fresh
- (b) the boys were untidy, shabby, and poorly dressed [Correct]**
- (c) the boys were demanding an unreasonably heavy price
- (d) he structurally disapproved of small young children working

ANSWER & VALUATION RULE:

(b) Luigi focused entirely on external appearances; he was put off by their ragged, worn-out garments and shabby demeanor. (1 Full Mark for correct option).

Q2. Nicola was visibly displeased and annoyed when Jacopo asked the narrator to drive them to Poleta in his car because Nicola:

- (a) did not want a complete stranger to become involved with their secret plans
- (b) preferred traveling by train so they could enjoy the Italian countryside scenery
- (c) possessed deep pride and did not want to ask anyone for unnecessary favours [Correct]**
- (d) felt highly uncomfortable taking assistance from someone they did not know well

ANSWER & VALUATION RULE:

(c) Nicola possessed an innate, fierce sense of dignity and self-reliance. He hated feeling like an object of pity or requesting obligations/favours from others. (1 Full Mark).

Q3. What primary quality or attribute of Nicola and Jacopo struck the narrator and his companion most significantly during their stay in Verona?

- (a) Their intense desire to amass money rapidly
- (b) Their infinite willingness and absolute commitment to work [Correct]**
- (c) Their natural entrepreneurial ability to perform diverse, complex tasks
- (d) Their child-like sense of fun and vibrant humor despite their environment

ANSWER & VALUATION RULE:

(b) Although they performed many tasks, it was their persistent, uncomplaining diligence and sheer *willingness to work* at all hours that left a profound impact. (1 Full Mark).

Q4. The narrator decided to remain waiting outside and did not enter Lucia's hospital room primarily because:

- (a) he did not want to intrude into the deeply personal privacy of a family reunion [Correct]**
- (b) he was certain that the two boys would explicitly object to his presence
- (c) the nurse explicitly informed him that Lucia would never welcome a total stranger
- (d) he feared the boys would feel he was aggressively spying on their domestic matters

ANSWER & VALUATION RULE:

(a) The narrator was a refined gentleman himself. He recognized that the boys wanted to keep their sister's illness a secret and chose to preserve their self-respect by not intruding. (1 Full Mark).

Q5. Nicola and Jacopo were among the very first individuals to actively join the underground resistance movement against the occupying German forces because:

- (a) the German soldiers had directly injured their elder sister's spine
- (b) they deeply resented the strict military rule imposed upon their city
- (c) the brutal realities of the war and the Germans had entirely ruined their family [Correct]**
- (d) a targeted bombing raid by the Germans had destroyed their family home

ANSWER & VALUATION RULE:

(c) The war had killed their widower father, destroyed their home via bombing, left them starving, and ultimately caused their sister's debilitating spinal tuberculosis. They joined out of a deep-seated domestic tragedy caused by the war. (1 Full Mark).

SECTION B: REFERENCE TO CONTEXT (EXTRACT BASED) (5 MARKS EACH)

Q6. Extract: "We do many things, sir," Nicola answered seriously...

"We do many things, sir," Nicola answered seriously. He glanced at us hopefully. "As a matter of fact, we do a lot of things for a living... We show tourists round the town... to Juliet's Tomb... and run errands."

MARKING SCHEME & MODEL ANSWERS:

- (i) The narrator was surprised because he had just purchased wild strawberries from them the previous day and had not expected strawberry-sellers to also double as shoe-shiners. (1 Mark)
- (ii) It reveals that Nicola is completely mature, lacks any false pride, and believes in the absolute dignity of labor. He is not ashamed of humble jobs. (1 Mark)
- (iii) He hoped the narrator would utilize their multi-faceted services, which would allow them to earn more money for their critical financial requirements. (1 Mark)
- (iv) They guided him around Verona (e.g., to Juliet's Tomb), secured American cigarettes, bought opera tickets, and recommended quality local restaurants. (1 Mark for any two points)
- (v) "Errands". (1 Mark)

Q7. Extract: He coloured deeply under his sunburn, then grew pale...

He coloured deeply under his sunburn, then grew pale. He smiled uncomfortably. "Just plans, sir," he answered in a low voice. "We have current plans, which we are not ready to share."

MARKING SCHEME & MODEL ANSWERS:

- (i) "He" refers to Nicola, the elder brother. He changed color because the narrator's probing questions about their earnings made him uncomfortable and embarrassed. (1 Mark)
- (ii) The narrator suggested that the boys were saving up all their earnings to emigrate to the United States of America to start a new life. (1 Mark)
- (iii) He speaks in a low voice because he wants to guard his private family tragedy. He does not want to manipulate people or use his sister's illness to elicit pity, sympathy, or charity. (1 Mark)
- (iv) It reveals immense self-respect, severe pride, emotional maturity far beyond his chronological age, and a preference for independent struggle over external charity. (1 Mark)
- (v) Their true plans were to accumulate enough money every single week to pay for the expensive medical care, hospital room rent, and treatment of their sister Lucia, who was battling spinal tuberculosis. (1 Mark)

SECTION C: SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (3 MARKS EACH)

Q8. In spite of their regular, multi-faceted earnings, Nicola and Jacopo chose to live an extremely frugal lifestyle... What did the narrator initially surmise?

MODEL ANSWER & MARKING BREAKDOWN:

- **Observation:** The narrator noticed that despite performing multiple strenuous jobs (selling fruits, polishing shoes, hawking newspapers, guiding tourists), they wore heavily frayed, mismatched garments and subsisted solely on cheap, basic meals like black bread and figs. (1.5 Marks)
- **Surmise:** Based on this extreme thrift, the narrator logically surmised that the boys were accumulating a substantial sum of money in order to emigrate to the United States of America to establish a lucrative career. (1.5 Marks)

Q9. The author asks the boys, "Must you work so hard?..." They reply, "We are not complaining, sir." Analyze what this concise response teaches the reader.

MODEL ANSWER & MARKING BREAKDOWN:

- **Dignity of Labor & Fortitude:** This response shows that the boys do not view their extreme physical hardships as a tragedy or a reason to beg. They accept life's challenges with stoic resilience. (1.5 Marks)
- **Devotion to Duty:** It reveals an extraordinary sense of responsibility and dedication. Because their labor is driven by unconditional love for their ailing sister, the physical exhaustion becomes secondary, completely eliminating any space for self-pity or complaint. (1.5 Marks)

Q10. Briefly describe how the devastating impacts of the war structurally transformed and disrupted the comfortable early childhood and family structure of the boys.

MODEL ANSWER & MARKING BREAKDOWN:

- **Pre-War Life:** Prior to the outbreak of the war, the children lived a cultured, comfortable life. Their father was a well-known, widely respected widowed singer who provided well for them. (1 Mark)
- **War's Devastation:** The war completely shattered this unit. Their father was killed in early battles, a bomb completely pulverized their family home, and the three young children were cast into the cold streets, facing starvation and exposure. (1 Mark)
- **Medical Tragedy:** The severe exposure to the brutal winter and prolonged malnutrition directly caused their sister Lucia to contract a life-threatening case of tuberculosis of the spine. (1 Mark)

Q11. Why did the narrator choose *not* to speak to the boys about what he discovered from the nurse at the hospital, keeping his knowledge entirely hidden?

MODEL ANSWER & MARKING BREAKDOWN:

- **Preserving Dignity:** The narrator realized that the two young boys operated with an extraordinary sense of personal honor, pride, and independence. They deliberately went to great lengths to hide their domestic hardships. (1.5 Marks)
- **Mutual Respect:** He understood that confronting them with his knowledge would deeply humiliate them and puncture their self-esteem. By maintaining a polite silence, he respected their secret and allowed them to retain their cherished dignity as self-reliant caretakers. (1.5 Marks)

SECTION D: LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (6 MARKS EACH)

Q12. "Appearances are deceptive. Behind their shabby, untidy exteriors were hidden two noble souls..." Critical Evaluation.

DETAILED EVALUATION GUIDELINES (6 MARKS):

Introduction (1.5 Marks): The essay must highlight how the proverb 'Appearances are deceptive' works in a highly positive context here. While the outer shell (shabby attire, dusty skin, uncombed hair) evoked immediate dismissal from individuals like Luigi, their inner core was magnificent.

Character Analysis & Core Evidence (3 Marks):

- *Dignity and Multi-tasking:* They willingly shined shoes, sold newspapers until midnight in freezing squares, and ran errands without a shred of shame.
- *Unmatched Selflessness:* They completely starved themselves and ignored personal comfort, funneling every single lira into the hospital at Poleta to pay for Lucia's treatment.
- *Patriotism and Maturity:* Despite being merely 12 and 13 years old, they had already displayed extreme courage by actively serving as scouts in the anti-Nazi resistance movement during German rule.

Conclusion (1.5 Marks): Their sacrifice, supreme work ethic, and fierce devotion to family elevate them to the status of true 'gentlemen'. In a post-war world characterized by moral decay and destruction, their selfless love promises a genuine, guiding hope for the emotional regeneration of human society.

Q13. Diary Entry of the Narrator capturing your evolving impressions...

MODEL DIARY ENTRY FORMAT & CONTENT (6 MARKS):

Format (1 Mark): Includes Date, Time, and a personal, reflective salutation ("Dear Diary" or similar).

Content Framework (5 Marks):

Verona, June 2026

I am utterly consumed by what I witnessed today. I cannot bring myself to sleep. When I first encountered those two boys on the outskirts of Verona, selling wild strawberries in their mismatched, oversized clothing, I initially felt a wave of casual pity mixed with mild curiosity. My driver looked down on them, but something in their intense, serious eyes stayed with me.

Over the next few days, that curiosity turned into absolute amazement. I saw them shining shoes in the scorching sun, guiding tourists, and even hawking papers in a deserted, freezing piazza at midnight. They were earning well, yet they ate nothing but figs and bread. I thought they were merely driven by a desire to accumulate wealth to emigrate to America. How short-sighted and wrong I was!

Today's journey to the hospital in Poleta shattered all my preconceptions. Watching through the glass as they sat with their sister Lucia—their faces illuminated by pure, unconditional affection—and hearing the nurse recount their tragic history left me breathless. These tiny, fragile shoulders have been carrying the weight of an entire family's survival, fighting tuberculosis, surviving bombings, and preserving their honor without asking for a single coin of charity. I chose not to speak to them on the way back, for I could not risk bruising that magnificent pride. They are not merely boys surviving in the ruins of war; they are the truest gentlemen I have ever had the privilege to meet. They have restored my faith in humanity.