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INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

B.E.G.C.- 103

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Content

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Question Bank – (Previous Year Solved Question Papers)

Question Paper–June-2023 (Solved)	1-2
Question Paper–December-2022 (Solved)	1-2
Question Paper–Exam Held in July-2022 (Solved)	1-3
Question Paper–Exam Held in March-2022 (Solved)	1-3
Question Paper–Exam Held in February-2021 (Solved)	1-3

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
--------------	-----------------------------------	-------------

BLOCK-I : A TIGER FOR MALGUDI

1. The Indian English Novel	1
2. <i>A Tiger for Malgudi</i> : Detailed Summary	13
3. <i>A Tiger for Malgudi</i> : Analysis	29
4. <i>A Tiger for Malgudi</i> : Style and Characterization	37

BLOCK-II : THE BINDING VINE

5. Introduction to the Novel	44
6. <i>The Binding Vine</i> – Summary and Analysis	52
7. <i>The Binding Vine</i> : Themes	64
8. <i>The Binding Vine</i> – Characterization	69

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
--------------	-----------------------------------	-------------

BLOCK-III : POETRY

9.	Sarojini Naidu	77
10.	Nissim Ezekiel	86
11.	A. K. Ramanujan	96
12.	Kamala Das	105

BLOCK-IV : SHORT STORY

13.	Introduction to the Short Story	114
14.	<i>“The Lost Child”</i> by Mulk Raj Anand	123
15.	<i>“The Other Woman”</i> by Dina Mehta	132
16.	<i>“Swimming Lessons”</i> by Rohinton Mistry	142



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Solved
Sample Question
Papers**

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

B.E.G.C.-103

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: There are **three** Sections in this paper, A, B, and C. Attempt questions from all the **three** Sections. In Section A attempt any **four**; Section B any **two** and in Section C attempt any **three**.

SECTION-A

Q. 1. Explain the following passages with reference to the context, giving brief critical comments:

- (a) She told us how she rode her elephant
When she was ten or eleven
Every Monday without fail
To the Shiva shrine
And back to home again....

Ans. Context: These lines are taken from the poem *Blood* by Kamala Das.

Explanation: Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 108, 'Interpretation'.

- (b) How often I think of going
There to peer through blind eyes of windows
or
Just listen to the frozen air,
Or in wild despair....

Ans. Reference : These lines are taken from *My Grandmother's House* by Kamala Das.

Context : In these lines from 'My Grandmother's House', the poet thinks about the love she once used to get and wants to go there and look through the window. She is in despair to get that love. There is darkness all over, yet the poet is eager to go and bring "an armful of darkness". The imagery "darkness" and "brooding dog" have been used to express the poet's melancholy and longing for love.

- (c) The new poets still quoted
The old poets, but no one spoke
in verse.
Of the pregnant woman
Drowned, with perhaps twins in her

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 101, Q. No. 9.

- (d) We noticed nothing as we went,
A straggling crowd of little hope,
Ignoring what the thunder meant,
Deprived of common needs like soap.

Ans. Context: These lines are taken from Nissim Ezekiel's *Enterprise*.

Explanation: Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 91, Q. No. 7.

- (e) Parting with his poison-flash of diabolic
tail in the dark room—he risked the rain
again.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-'10, Page No. 91, Q. No. 8.

- (f) In the dawn that thrills to a mother's prayer,
In the dawn that shelters a heart's despair
In the sight of pity, the sole of hate,
And the pride of a soul that has conquered

Ans. Context: These lines are taken from Sarojini Naidu's *The Bird of Time*.

Explanation: Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 79, 'Interpretation'.

SECTION-B

Q. 2. Write short notes on the following :

- (a) Rise and development of the short story

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 115, 'The Rise and Development of the Short Story'.

- (b) Post-independence women novelists

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 3, 'Women Novelists'.

- (c) Character of Kishore in *The Binding Vine*

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 71, 'Kishore'.

(d) Stage one of the tiger's life in *A Tiger for Malgudi*

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 14, 'Stage One'.

SECTION-C

Note: Attempt the following questions.

Q. 3. With reference to the story 'Swimming Lessons', would you agree that learning swimming is a metaphor for adjusting to a new land? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 143, 'Critical Assessment', Page No. 145, 'Narrative Technique', Q. No. 2 (Check Your Progress) and Page No. 150, Q. No. 15.

Q. 4. How does the thematic structure of *The Binding Vine* give many dimensions to the story? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 69, 'Shashi Deshpande's Art of Characterization' and Page No. 73, Q. No. 1.

Q. 5. Describe in detail at least *two* incidents which you found humorous in *A Tiger for Malgudi*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 38, 'Humour', Page No. 41, Q. No. 5, Q. No. 7 and Page No. 42, Q. No. 2.

Q. 6. Critically analyse the poem "My Grandmother's House".

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 108, Q. No. 1 and Page No. 109, Q. No. 1.

Q. 7. Attempt a character analysis of Maganlal from the story 'The Other Woman.'

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 135, 'Maganlal'.



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INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

BLOCK-I : A TIGER FOR MALGUDI

The Indian English Novel



INTRODUCTION

The early Indian English novel started with Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), R. K. Narayan (1906-2001), and Raja Rao (1908-2006). Called the trinity, they started writing in the 1930s and all three saw the turn of the century. With Anand's *Untouchable*, Narayan's *Swami and Friends*, and Rao's *Kanthapura*, the Indian English novel found its place in the arena of Indian literatures. After English education was introduced in India in the early 19th century, Indians also started writing in English. In this chapter, we will know about these novelists.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

THE FIRST INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1838-94) wrote his first novel, *Rajmohan's Wife*, in English. It was serialized as *Wife* in the Calcutta weekly, *The Indian Field*, in 1864, and published in book form in the 1930s. Influenced by Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens, he wrote his novel *Rajmohan's Wife* which deals with social issues. The novel is about the effects of a bad marriage on a woman. It tells the story of the suffering of a middleclass housewife, Matangini, at the hands of her husband Rajmohan, in rural East Bengal. Bankim did not write another novel in English but his novels in Bengali influenced the course of novel writing in the country.

THREE SIGNIFICANT NOVELISTS

Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao made the most significant contribution in Indian English fiction writing. Anand wrote sixteen novels, twelve collections of short stories, more than twenty-five books on art and other general subjects and a large number of articles. Influenced greatly by contemporary writers in

Indian languages, he wrote novels with a social commitment. He was also influenced by western thinkers of his time. Anand wrote about working people like sweepers, coolies and plantation workers. His characters – homeless Munoo in *Coolie*, an untouchable like Bakha or an indentured labourer like Gangu – are all victims of cruelty and exploitation and depict the grim working conditions of the people. *Untouchable* (1935) revolves around the argument for eradicating the caste system. It depicts a day in the life of Bakha, a young sweeper, who is an untouchable. The novel ends with Bakha, alone and very confused in his thoughts. *Coolie* (1936) revolves around a 14-year-old boy, Munoo, and his plight due to poverty and exploitation aided by the social and political structures in place. His other novels are: *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) and *Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953).

R.K. Narayan, born in Madras in 1906, was a full-time writer. He wrote fifteen novels, five collections of short stories, two travel books, four collections of essays and a memoir. His novels capture life in its richness and variety and offer a blend of gentle irony and fellow feeling. His novels look simple but they conceal a certain complexity. Most of his novels and stories are set in the fictional town of Malgudi, his imaginary landscape inhabited by the characters of his novels. Malgudi is a reflection of an Indian society with a variety of cultures, superstitions and values with features of most of the towns of southern India. His novel *Swami and Friends* set in this small town, received recognition in India as well as publicity in England and the United States. His other novels include: *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath – The Printer of Malgudi* (1949), *The*

2 / NEERAJ : INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Financial Expert (1952), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1962), *The Painter of Signs* (1976), *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), *Talkative Man* (1986), and *The World of Nagaraj* (1990).

Raja Rao, born in 1908 in a Brahmin family and educated in Mysore, Madras and Europe. His novels include *Kanthapura* (1938) and *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965), *Comrade Killer* (1976) and *The Chess Master and His Moves* (1988). His first novel, *Kanthapura*, brings out the impact of Gandhi and his ideas on a small Mysore village. The narrator, an old woman, tells us about life in the village. She narrates the story in a garrulous and digressive style. It includes narration, description, religious discourses, poetry, folklore, history and legend together. *Kanthapura* is a work of realism in fiction, yet it is not purely realistic. It has myths, Gods and Goddesses, superstitions and mysterious insights. This novel is an excellent piece of work that includes a few significant events of history in contemporary India like the Salt March of Gandhi, his hunger strikes, his arrest and the brutal massacre of the people participating in the *Satyagraha*.

POST INDEPENDENCE NOVELISTS

Bhabhani Bhattacharya (1906-1988)'s first novel, *So Many Hungers*, was published in 1947. Later he wrote *Music for Mohini* (1952), *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1952), *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960), *Shadow From Ladakh* (1966) and *A Dream in Hawai* (1978). Bhattacharya's novels have a social purpose. Manohar Malgonkar (1913-2010)'s first novel *Distant Drum* (1960) and *Bandicoot Run* (1982) have an army setting. He wrote a number of other novels. *Spy in Amber* (1971) is about espionage. *Combat of Shadows* (1962) focuses on passion and murder. *The Princes* (1963) gives a picture of the times when the princely states merged with India. *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) is a novel on the partition. *The Devil's Wind* (1972) portrays the first war of Independence of 1857. *Cactus Country* (1992) is about the 1971 war.

Other novelists of the period include: Khushwant Singh, G.V. Dasani, Salman Rushdie, Boman Desai, Rohinton Mistry and Amitav Ghosh.

Khushwant Singh's (1915-2014) is known for his novel *A Train to Pakistan*, a partition novel. The novel portrays the horror and the violence during partition. Set in Punjab in the fictional village of Mano Majra on the border of Pakistan, Mano Majra is a microcosm of the communal temper during the days of partition. The novel narrates the life of the Muslim and Sikh

inhabitants disrupted by the communal massacres that occurred in the wake of the partition.

G. V. Desani (1909-2000), known as the master of the absurd, wrote *All About Hatter*, a comic farce that lampooned Anglo and Indian culture, spiritual traditions and an admixture of the two. Arun Joshi (1939-1993) became famous with his first novel *The Foreigner* (1968). His other novel notable is *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*. Influenced by the French writer Camus, he wrote existentialist novels portraying the aimless existence of men who are indifferent to everybody and everything. He wrote on the problems of East and West encounter in the Post Independent Indian society. Chaman Nahal (1927- 2013) rose to fame with his novel on Partition, *Azadi* (1975), which won the *Sahitya Akademi Award* for the year 1977.

Salman Rushdie (b.1947), according to Richard Cronin in his article "India" says, "Modern Indian Literature was born in 1981, when Rushdie published *Midnight's Children*". Most of his novels are set in India. His narrative style has a blending of myth and fantasy with real life. His writing career started with a science fiction, *Grimus* (1975). His next novel *Shame* (1983) depicts the political turmoil in Pakistan. *The Satanic Verses* (1988) is allegorical novel. *The Moor's Last Singh* (1995) examines India's recent history through the life of a Jewish Christian family. His next novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) has both myth and reality. *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) and *The Golden House* attracted significant attention. His *Midnight's Children* (1981) is considered as his best work. The novel, awarded the *Booker Prize* in 1991 followed by the *Booker of Booker Prize* in 1993, portrays the history of India from 1910 to the Declaration of Emergency in 1975 through the eyes of Saleem Sinai, a telepath with a nasal defect. Rushdie uses the technique of magical realism. His *Midnight's Children* is written with a blend of comedy and tragedy.

Boman Desai (b.1950)'s novel *The Memory of Elephants* (1988) is tautological in nature. Protagonist Homi Seervai, a Parsi Scientist from Bombay, invents a machine that can scan his brain for memories of the good time. But the machine goes wrong and he experiences ancestral and racial memories. His other novels *The Memory of Elephants*, *Asylum*, *U.S.A* and *A Woman Madly in Love* are a re-enactment of his past experiences and deal with the Parsi community. He uses expostulatory technique, and contemporary dialogue to make the plots in his novels effective.

Shashi Tharoor (b.1956) uses the narrative and theme of the famous Indian epic *Mahabharata* in his novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* and weaves a satirical story of Indian life drawing his ideas by going back and forth in time.

Allan Sealy's (b.1951) first novel, *The Trotter-Nama* (1988), is the story of seven generations of an Anglo Indian Family 'The Trotters'. It depicts the experiences of the Anglo Indian community of being outsiders both in India and Britain. His other novel *The Everest Hotel: A Calendar* (1998) brought him international acclaim and he was short listed for the Booker Prize in 1998. His second novel *Hero* was published in 1991. His other works include: *Brainfever* (2003), *Wisdom Brings Success* (2011) and *Pearls of Wisdom* (2016).

Another fiction writer Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay in 1952 and migrated to Canada in 1975 where he began his writing career. In his novels he writes about middle class Parsi households struggling to come to terms with the complex phenomenon of Indian modernity. His first novel *Such a Long Journey* (1991) is set in Mumbai in 1971 during the time of the India Pakistan war, when the city was engulfed by globalization on one hand and illiteracy, unemployment, exploitation and homelessness on the other. In his other novels, *A Fine Balance* (1996) and *Family Matters* (2002) we find a poignant picture of the Parsi community struggling in pursuit of an identity for themselves.

Amitav Ghosh became popular for his novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988), for which he won the *Sahitya Akademi Award*. The novel is a narrative built out of an intricate, constantly crisscrossing web of memories of many people, it never pretends to tell a story. Instead, it invites the reader to invent one, out of the memories of those involved, memories that hold mirrors of differing shades to the same experience. The novel is set against the backdrop of historical events like the Swadeshi Movement, Second World War, Partition of India and Communal riots of 1963-64 in Dhaka and Calcutta. His other novels are: *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), *The Glass Palace* (2000) and *Hungry Tide* (2004).

Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English August* (1988) tells the story of a young civil servant, Agastya. An urbanite living in the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Calcutta, he experiences isolation and alienation in the small town of Madna. There is a sense of loss and nostalgia especially when he receives letters from friends or when

he sees passing trains. The novel is entertaining, funny and has a touching story to tell. His other novels *The Last Burden* and *The Memories of the Welfare State* are also characterised by a very sense of humour portraying the life of middle class Indians.

Vikram Seth is the author of *A Suitable Boy* (1994). His other novels include: *The Golden Gate* (1986), and *An Equal Music* (1999). *A Suitable Boy*, which sold over one million copies world-wide, made him famous. Set in the newly independent India in the 1950s when India was struggling through a time of crisis with communal disharmony, corruption and perpetual fights between modernity and the forces of tradition, the novel follows the story of four families over a period of 18 months, and centres on Mrs. Rupa Mehra's efforts to arrange the marriage of her younger daughter, Lata, to a "Suitable Boy". Lata is a 19-year-old university student who refuses to be influenced by her domineering mother or opinionated brother, Arun. Her story revolves around the choice she is forced to make between her suitors Kabir, Haresh, and Amit. The novel is well written, touching, humorous and widely panoramic. It truthfully portrays social and political events of the era.

Amit Chaudhuri's novella, *A Strange and Sublime Address* (1991), won the *Betty Trask Prize* and the *Commonwealth Writer's Prize* in 1991. His novel *Afternoon Raag* (1993) won the *Southern Art Literature Prize* and the *Encore Award* for second best novel of the year. His novel *Freedom Song* (1998) won the *Los Angeles Times Book Prize* in the year 2000. His other novel is *A New World* (2000). His novels examine Calcutta life using characters of different ages. *A Strange and Sublime Address* illuminates the life in Calcutta through the eyes of a ten-year-old Bombay bred boy Sandeep who is visiting his uncle's extended family during two summer vacations.

WOMEN NOVELISTS

Women novelists in the post-independence period are: Shashi Deshpande, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya and Arundhati Roy.

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004)'s novels reveal her preoccupation with the changing socio-economic scene in post independence period. Her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) gave her fame and success. The novel portrays the plight of women at large and their struggle with forces beyond their control in earlier times. It tells about an Indian peasant woman Rukmani, her love for her husband Nathan and her struggle. It also portrays conflicting western and eastern values.

4 / NEERAJ : INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Her novels also deal with hunger and poverty, two major problems in India. Her other works include novels such as: *Some Inner Fury* (1955), *A Silence of Desire* (1963) *Possession* (1963), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *The Coffey Dams* (1969), *The Nowhere Man* (1972), *Two Virgins* (1973), *The Golden Honey Cows* (1977) and *The Pleasure City* (1984).

Shashi Deshpande (b.1938), who started her career with short stories, wrote: *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *Come up and be Dead* (1982) *If I Die Today* (1982), *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Vine* (1993), *A Matter of Time* (1996) and *Small Remedies* (2000). She won *Sahitya Akademi Award* for her novel *That Long Silence*, which revolves around a middle aged educated woman caught between modern trends and traditional practices. Her novels deal with themes of inner conflict of the female psyche, search for identity, man-woman relationship and parent-child relationship. In her novels, she projects the real dilemma of the middle class educated women.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala wrote eight novels, a collection of four short stories and a few screen-plays. She wrote *To Whom She Will* (1955), *The Nature of Passion* (1956), *The House Holder* (1961), and *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), *Esmond in India* (1958), *A Backward Place* (1965), *A New Dominion* (1973) and *Heat and Dust* (1975). In her novels, she explores the urban middle class Indian life and some novels deal with the east-west encounter. *Heat and Dust*, the most well acclaimed work of the writer, explores the east and west encounter through romance. Set in two different eras, Colonial India of the 1920 and independent India of the nineteen seventies, the novel tells the story of two women. It focuses on the emotions of women and their problems in two different eras in Indian history.

Nayantara Sehgal's (b.1927) began her literary career with her novels *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954) and later wrote *A Time to Be* (1958), *From Fear Set Free* (1962), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and *The Day in Shadow* (1971). Nayantara Sehgal also published two autobiographies and a number of articles. *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), a well-acclaimed novel, novel presents both political bickering as well as the domestic turmoil. Her novels show the social and cultural changes happening in India. She portrays oppressed women who had to struggle to be free from male bondage.

Anita Desai, Born in 1937 in Mussoorie, started writing at a very young age and published her first story

at the age of nine. She has received numerous awards including the 1978 National Academy of Letters Award for the novel, *Fire on the Mountain* and the Guardian Award in 1983 for the children's fiction *The Village by the Sea*. Her first novel was *Cry the Peacock* (1963). Later she wrote *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye Bye, Blackbird* (1971), *The Peacock Garden* (1974), *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), *Cat on a Houseboat* (1976), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *Village by the Sea* (1982), *In Custody* (1984), *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988), *Journey to Ithaca* (1996), *Fasting, Feasting* (1999), *Diamond Dust* (2000) and *The Zigzag Way: A Novel* (2004). Her novels deal with various themes.

Manju Kapoor (b. 1948) wrote her first novel *Difficult Daughters*. Set in the time of partition, it tells the story of three generations of daughters beginning with the third generation daughter. The story is seen through the eyes of Ida who returns to Punjab to reconstruct her mother Virmati's past.

Arundhati Roy, born in 1961 in Shillong, Meghalaya, completed her first novel *The God of Small Things*, in 1996. Arundhati Roy became the first Indian citizen to win the prestigious *Booker Prize* in 1997 for this novel. Set in Aymanam, Kerala (India) during the late 1960s, it tells the story of an Indian boy-and-girl-twins, Estha and Rahel, whose mother has left her violent husband to live with her blind mother and brother Chacko. The novel gives a vivid description of the life of abject poverty and sadness in a small Indian town.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. Name the three significant novelists writing in English in the 1930s.

Ans. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao were the significant novelists writing in English in the 1930s.

Q. 2. What are the various themes that Mulk Raj Anand has dealt with, in his novels?

Ans. He deals with the themes like the caste system, class-structure, religion, education and status of women in Indian society. He reveals his social humanism by protesting against social evils and the tradition ridden society. He hates and detests all types of exploitations and protests against anti-human forces. Paul Brians calls him as the "activist writer." The central theme of the novels of Mulk Raj Anand is human protest from all sides, "Protest ... and sympathy ... and compassion."