**STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086**
**(For candidates admitted during the academic year 2015–16 and thereafter)**

**SUBJECT CODE: 15EL/FC/LS13**
**B.A. / B.Sc. DEGREE EXAMINATION, NOVEMBER 2016**
**FIRST SEMESTER**

**COURSE : FOUNDATION COURSE - ENGLISH**
**PAPER : LANGUAGE AND STUDY SKILLS**
**TIME : 3 HOURS MAX. MARKS: 100**

## SECTION A

**I. Expand any ONE of the following ideas into a paragraph of about 150 – 200 words: (10)**

(a) Books are the windows to the world.
(b) The lessons we take from failure are fundamental to success.

**II. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow: (15)**

The Mayan civilization was the oldest of the three largest civilizations in South and Central America. The empire lasted from about 300 A.D. to 900 A.D.

While Europeans were in the midst of the Dark Ages, Mayans never stopped learning. They tried out new farming methods. They rotated their crops so the soil would last longer. They only farmed crops on the same field once every three years or so. Turkey and ducks were tamed and kept on Mayan farms. That way, Mayans wouldn't have to worry about hunting or trapping food.

The Mayans also learned to make paper out of the bark of the fig tree. They had an advanced writing system. In their system, word-pictures stood for different syllables and ideas. Mayan writing did much more than just record dates and information. The writing told stories about life. The Mayans were also good mathematicians. They came up with the principle of "0" as a number. They also studied the stars and had very advanced calendars. The Mayan farming calendar was based on the movement of the sun and the stars. It had 365 days just like the modern calendar.

Mayan civilization was very organized. Each city had a king and everyone had his position, from stonecutter to nobleman. You were born into your position in life. If your father was a stonecutter, you would cut stone, too. Nobles lived in beautiful houses. Their architecture was splendid. White limestone covered the walls and the floors. The inside walls were painted with murals.

Most Mayans were peasant farmers. They had to give more than half of their crops to the nobles and their king. They farmed corn and beans. Mayans also grew cacao, the basis of chocolate. The first hot chocolate actually came from the Mayans! They made their hot chocolate by mixing water, cacao (same as cocoa), and chili peppers. The Spanish people who later conquered the Yucatan peninsula learned of chocolate from the descendants of the Maya. The Spanish took chocolate back to Europe. In the Mayan empire, chocolate wasn't just a food or drink. Cacao beans were used as currency, or money. People would trade their goods for cacao beans!

No one knows exactly why the Mayan civilization came to an end. By the time Europeans arrived in the New World, the civilization had already crumbled. One idea is that the kings started fighting against each other until all of the peace and wealth ended. Another thought is that the Mayan farms could no longer make enough food for everyone. In a time

**...2**

of extreme drought, peasants might have refused to give the little food that they had to the nobles. Whatever happened, the Mayan empire was long past its peak by the time Europeans arrived. In its height, the empire was active and full of the spirit of learning that many countries in Europe experienced hundreds of years later.

**A. Choose the correct answer.** **(5 x 1 = 5)**

1. The Mayans discovered or invented all of the following except:
a. chocolate. b. rotating crops. c. the wheel. d. the use of the number "0".

2. This passage mostly describes the Mayans in terms of
a. their arts and festivals. b. why their civilization ended.
c. how they assigned jobs. d. what they did and accomplished.

3. Which of these Mayan accomplishments probably had the biggest impact on building their civilization?
a. farming and raising animals b. making chocolate
c. writing with word-pictures d. painting murals

4.What does the word 'splendid' mean in the given context - "Nobles lived in beautiful houses. Their architecture was splendid."
a. wonderful, magnificent b. expensive, costly
c. simple, basic d. terrible, ugly

5. The main idea of this passage is that:
a. the Mayans lived exactly like Europeans did at the time.
b. the Mayans were an advanced civilization for their time.
c. the Mayans were unaware of modern science and technology.
d. the Mayans disappeared and left no history behind.

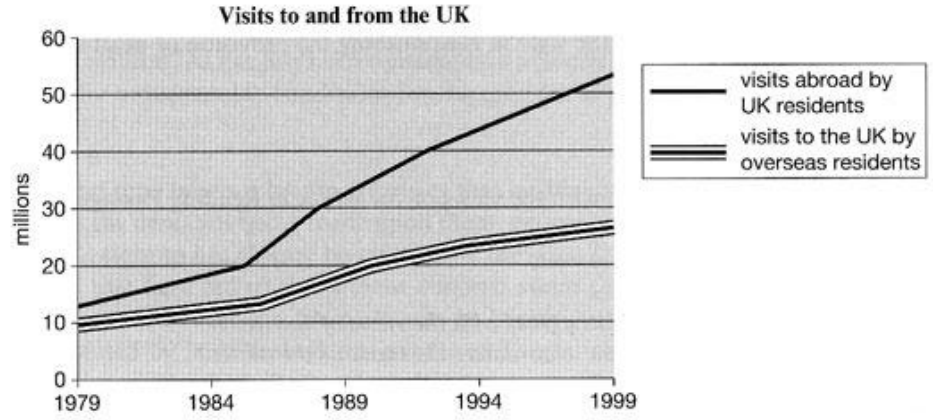
**B. Answer the following questions.**

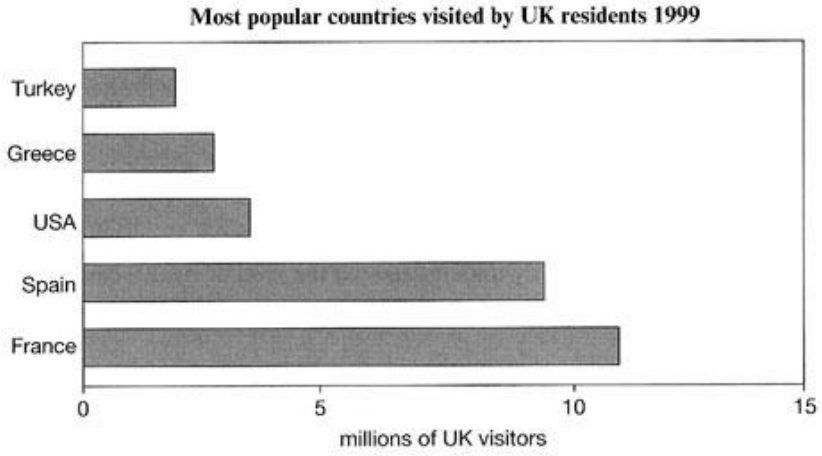
6. What made the Mayan calendars special? **(2)**
7. What are the two ways that prove Mayan civilization was "very organized." **(4)**

**C. Make sentences from any FOUR of the following words.** **(4 x 1 = 4)**

Murals trapping descendants drought conquered advanced

**III. The line graph shows visits to and from the UK from 1979 to 1999, and the bar graph shows the most popular countries visited by UK residents in 1999. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features and make relevant comparisons in about 100- 150 words.** **(10)**




**IV. Give instructions on how to set an alarm on a mobile phone. (5)**

## SECTION B

**V. Describe any FIVE of the following in about one or two sentences each: (5 x 2 = 10)**

**a)** contents **b)** cumulative index **c)** acknowledgement
**d)** prologue **e)** epigraph **e)** blurb **f)** glossary

**VI. Given below is a list of books used for writing a research paper. Compile a bibliography using the information given. Unless otherwise mentioned, you may assume that the material is in the print medium. (5 x 2 = 10)**

A book titled The Botany of Desire by Michael Pollan, published by Random House, New York in 2001.

The Secret Life of Plants, a book by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, published in 1989 by HarperCollins in London.

Hope Jahren's book titled Lab Girl, published in London by Little Brown Group in 2016. The book is subtitled A Story of Trees, Science and Love.

A novel by Daniel Quinn called Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit. First Published in 1992 by Bantam/Turner Books in New York City.

The Vandana Shiva Reader by Vandana Shiva, published in 2014 by The University Press of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky.

## SECTION C

**VII. Draft a notice to be put up on the Games Club notice board by the Sports Secretary informing the students about a lawn tennis coaching camp conducted by the Madras Tennis Association. The camp will commence on 15th November and will end on 20th December on the college campus. Timings for both Shift I and Shift II is between 5:30 – 7:30 pm and a maximum of 75 students will be accepted into the coaching camp. A fee of Rs. 800 will be charged. Interested students must register with the Sports Secretary by 1st November. (5)**

**VIII. Read the following passage and make notes on it: (10)**

Indigo is an ancient dye and there is evidence for the use of indigo from *Indigofera* from the third millennium BC.

The earliest example of indigo from *Indigofera* probably comes from the Bronze Age Indus Valley Civilization (3300 -1300 BC), also known as the Harappan Civilization. This is the largest known ancient civilization and at its peak may have supported a population of over 5 million inhabitants. The town of Rojdi (2500 -1700 BC) was the regional centre in what is now Gujarat. When it was excavated, archaeologists recovered seeds from at least 4 different species of the genus *Indigofera* from the site. Archaeologists also recovered remnants of cloth dyed blue dated to 1750 BC from Mohenjo-Daro (present day district of Larkana, Sindt, Pakistan), another town of the Harappan Civilization.

There are at least 50 different species of *Indigofera* growing in India. In the Northwest region, indigo has been processed into small cakes by peasant producers for many centuries. It was exported through trade routes and reached Europe. Greeks and Romans (300 BC - 400 AD) had small amounts of blue pigment in hard blocks, which they thought was of mineral origin. They considered it a luxury product and used it for paints, medicines and cosmetics.

The Greeks called this blue pigment ‘indikon’, meaning a product from India, ad this word became indigo in English. Another ancient term for the dye is ‘nili’ from the Sanskrit meaning dark blue from which the Arabic term for blue ‘al-nil’ is derived. This word entered Spanish as anil and later made its way to Central and South America where it is used to refer to indigo. The English word aniline is also derived from anil, and it is used to describe a class of synthetic dyes.

In the late 1200s, Marco Polo returned from his trips through Asia and described how indigo was not a mineral but in fact was extracted from plants. Small quantities of indigo were available in Europe then, but they were very expensive due to the long land journey required and the levy imposed by traders along the route.

By the late 15th century, Vasco da Gama discovered a sea route to China, allowing indigo to be imported directly. Large scale cultivation of indigo started in India and in the 1600s large quantities of indigo were exported to Europe. In Europe, Indigo was often referred to as Blue Gold as it was an ideal trading commodity; high value, compact and long lasting. However the cost of indigo dropped considerably by the end of the 17th century.

By the 19th century, natural indigo production could no longer meet the demands of the clothing industry, and a search for synthetic indigo started. In 1865, Adolf von Baeyer, a German chemist began working on the synthesis of indigo and in 1897 synthetic indigo was launched. In 1905, Baeyer won the Nobel prize in Chemistry for his work on organic dyes including indigo. The much cheaper synthetic indigo quickly superseded natural indigo for commercial dyeing and by 1914 natural indigo production had declined to 1,000 tonnes.

Most commercial dyeing now uses synthetic indigo and in 2002 synthetic indigo production was 17,000 tonnes. The world's current production of natural indigo could not cope with the demand for this dye. However, environmental concerns and an increased demand for natural and sustainable dyes may lead to a resurgence of natural indigo production.

**IX. Summarise the above passage, bringing down the word length to about one third.** **(10)**

**X. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word that would complete the collocation.** **(1 x 10 = 10)**

1. If you park there, you will have to …….. a fine.
   a) pay b) take c) have
2. He …… no attention to my requests.
   a) paid b) took c) had
3. I …….. a cough to catch her attention.
   a) gave b) paid c) took
4. Although the doctors tried hard, they couldn't …….. his life.
   a) save b) bring c) take
5. Abbreviations …… space and hence they are very common in newspaper headlines.
   a) catch b) save c) take
6. Do you …….. a diary?
   a) keep b) have c) save
7. Few people can ……. a secret.
   a) keep b) save c) have
8. He still ……. in touch with most of his old school mates.
   a) keeps b) saves c) take
9. I asked her what her problem was but she …….. quiet.
   a) kept b) took c) saved
10. They …….. close to hitting each other.
    a) came b) took c) brought

**XI. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences selecting the most appropriate idiom from the one given in the brackets.** **(5 x 1 = 5)**

1. Madhu was excited when she found out that she would have her own front row parking spot at the office, but that was just _____ (the icing on the cake/ best of both worlds).

2. We thought our neighbors, the Guptas, were rich beyond our wildest dreams, but it turns out that we're all _____ ( in a bowl of soup/ in the same boat).

3. The lawyer knew that _____ ( burning the midnight oil/ beating around the bush) would get the accused all worked up.

4. Working at the store was at first overwhelming to Prithvi, but he now _____ (knows the ropes/ hits the hay).

5. For music lovers, portable speakers are _____ (a hot potato / best thing since sliced bread).

*********