

B.A., B.Sc., B.Com. DEGREE END SEMESTER EXAMINATION – APRIL 2026**SEMESTER –2: ENGLISH (COMMON COURSE)****COURSE: 19U2CCENG3: TEXT AND CONTEXT: A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE READING AND WRITING***(For Supplementary 2023/2022/2021/2020/2019 Admissions)*

Time: Three Hours

Max Marks: 75

Passage: 1

The following is an excerpt from an essay “Shooting an Elephant” by George Orwell, in which he describes his experience of shooting an elephant in British ruled Burma where he was serving in the Indian Imperial Police in the 1920s.

Shooting an Elephant

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast’s owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks—five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him. It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged I could shoot, if he took no notice of me it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn’t be frightened in front of “natives”; and so, in general, he isn’t frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do. There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim.

The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one should shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole; actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick – one never does when a shot goes home – but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time – it might have been five seconds, I dare say – he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him, he seemed to tower upwards like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skywards like a tree. He trumpeted for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open – I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited for a long time for him to die. But his breathing did not weaken. Finally, I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

By referring closely to the language used in the passage, explain how the author has effectively described
 (a) the death of the elephant and
 (b) the crowd.

Your answer should be in the form of a commentary (150 words).

[15 marks]

Passage 2

The following is an excerpt from an article titled, “Animal Rights, Animal Wrongs: The Case for Nonhuman Personhood” by Steven M. Wise in which he argues for a new approach to animal rights. Read the passage and answer the questions given below.

Animal Rights, Animal Wrongs

Around the world, what the media often refer to as “the animal rights movement” is taking off. Mass protests, fierce lobbying, litigation, and draft treaties have led to new legislation at the national, provincial, and city levels. It is now forbidden to use great apes in biomedical research, to bullfight in Catalonia, and to operate factory farms and slaughterhouses without adhering to the stricter rules governing the treatment and living conditions of

livestock. However, with a few exceptions, these efforts are not truly about “animal rights” but about “animal welfare.”

One reason for this difference is that worldwide, animals are regarded as “legal things,” incapable of having rights and treated as articles of property. In contrast, humans are deemed “legal persons,” possessing intrinsic value and the capacity for an infinite number of legal rights as the owners of “legal things.” Another reason is that the term “animal” encompasses the enormously diverse biological kingdom of Animalia.

At one end of this spectrum of mental capacity and awareness are animals such as sponges, jellyfish, and sea anemones that scientists believe are unlikely to be conscious or have an ability to feel pain or suffer. These are therefore unlikely to be appropriate subjects of animal welfare legislation (which focuses on preventing unnecessary pain and suffering), though they may be protected by environmental or conservation laws.

At some point along this continuum, however, a primitive level of consciousness and sentience kicks in. A great number of animals fall in this category, such as cows and sheep. These animals have been the subject of welfare legislation ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when early animal welfare movements in the United Kingdom sought to end cruel practices such as beatings and other inhumane treatment. Since then, the animal rights movement has struggled to make further progress with these types of animals.

Animals at the continuum’s other end—including great apes, cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises), and elephants—possess a complex consciousness and self-consciousness, exquisite sentience, robust general intelligence, and a powerful sense of autonomy. They, too, have long received some protection from unnecessary cruelty. But rapid scientific advances over the last half century have demonstrated that their advanced levels of cognition leave them inadequately protected by anticruelty and similar legislation.

The Nonhuman Rights Project, which I lead, is a pioneer when it comes to pushing for animal rights. We are working with legal groups on three other continents to assist them in achieving legal personhood for “nonhuman animals.” Our goal is to have the autonomous and self-determining animals declared to be legal persons, at least when it comes to unlawful detention.

The roots of the animal rights movement do not lie in the anticruelty legislation of the nineteenth century; they reach deeper into the worldwide antislavery movements that began in the eighteenth century and flowered into the broad international human rights movement of the twentieth century.

These newer animal rights campaigners’ demands for fundamental legal rights for nonhumans are often misinterpreted as demanding “human rights” for nonhuman animals. But that is not correct; the new animal rights practitioners recognize that our subjects are not human. We are demanding legal rights that are appropriate to the levels of cognition that scientists are able to determine through their work with nonhuman animals both in the wild and in captivity. Therefore, chimpanzees are entitled to “chimpanzee rights,” elephants to “elephant rights,” and orcas to “orca rights.”

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights speaks, among other things, to humanity’s dignity, entitlement to equal and inalienable rights, recognition as a legal person, and rights to life, liberty, equality, security, and freedom from enslavement. There is no rational reason why autonomous and self-determining nonhuman animals should

not also possess equal and inalienable rights, recognition as a legal person, and rights to life, liberty, equality, security, and freedom from enslavement.

Over the centuries, we humans have slowly and painfully developed a core of near universal values and principles intended to protect our most fundamental interests. It is time we recognize that we share the planet with other species with similar fundamental interests and that our failure to protect those interests both wrongs the animals and subverts the core values and principles that protect our own.

1. Read the Passage, “Animal Rights and Animal Wrongs” and re-read passage 1, “Shooting the Elephant”, and summarise how the authors have attempted to impress upon the readers the need to have a more humane attitude towards animals. (150 words)

[20 marks]

2. Imagine you are Steve M. Wise and you happened to read the news article on killing the elephant in a local newspaper. Write a letter to the editor of the daily expressing your views on the news story. (200 words)

[20 marks]

3. Write a story with the title “The Tyrant”.

OR

4. Write a description of the image given below. In your description you may include your reflections on the figures in the picture, composition, symbolism etc. (150 words)

[20 marks]

