

soil. The commercial fertilizers commonly used today can be classified into three major categories; namely, nitrogen (N), phosphate and potash fertilizers.

Besides knowing the type of fertilizer to use, a farmer also needs to know when to apply the fertilizer and how to apply it. The fertilizer should be applied at the time when the plants need a particular nutrient most. The time and method of application will determine how profitably the fertilizers have been used in farming. Fertilizers which have not been properly applied cannot be absorbed in large quantities by plant roots. These fertilizers may be washed away by rain or they may kill the plants. This would mean a definite financial loss for the farmer.

2) Write a critical discussion of the following TWO texts, pointing out features of comparison and/or contrast. You should write at least 250 words. (20 marks)

A)

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

John McCrea

B)

The Outpost Trench was about 200 yards from the main trench, which was now our front line. It had been solidly made, ten feet deep, with timbered fire-steps, splayed sides, and timbered steps at intervals to front and rear and to machine-gun emplacements. Now it was wrecked as though by earthquake and eruption. Concrete strong-posts were smashed, and tilted sideways; everywhere the chalky soil was pocked and pitted with huge shell-holes; and wherever we looked the mangled effigies of the dead were our memento. Shell-twisted and dismembered, the Germans maintained the violent attitudes in which they had died. The British had mostly been killed by bullets or bombs, so they looked more resigned.

But I can remember a pair of hands (nationality unknown) which protruded from the soaked ashen soil like the roots of a tree turned upside down; one hand seemed to be pointing at the sky with an accusing gesture. Each time I passed that place the protest of those fingers became more expressive of an appeal to God in defiance of those who made the War. Who made the War? I laughed hysterically as the thought passed through my mud-stained mind. But I only laughed mentally, for my box of Stokes gun ammunition left me no breath to spare for an angry guffaw. And the dead were the dead; this was no time to be pitying them or asking silly questions about their outraged-lives. Such sights must be taken for granted, I thought, as I gasped and slithered and stumbled with my disconsolate crew. Floating on the surface of the flooded trench was the mask of a human face which had detached itself from the skull.

From Memoirs of an Infantry Officer by Siegfried Sassoon

3). Write your views on the following topic presenting an argument for or against the same

In the past, sporting champions used to be motivated primarily by the desire to win a match and bring glory to his or her own country. These days, they are more likely to be motivated by prize money and the opportunity to be famous.

How does this attitude to sports affect the sporting champions themselves, sports, and the country?

You should write at least 200 words. (10 marks)

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University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Department of English

Selection Test for BA in English (General) External Degree Registration

April 2016

Duration: Two Hours

Answer All the Questions

1) Write a précis of the following paragraph in about 100-110 words (20 marks)

In the early days of farming, people did not understand how plants obtained essential nutrients. It so happened that wood ash, fish remains and slaughterhouse waste were thrown on vacant land just to get rid of them. Then, people started to notice that the grass, bushes and shrubs on this vacant land began to grow very well. They reasoned that if their farmland were similarly treated, the growth of their crops would also improve. People gradually began to realize that the nutrients required by plants came from the soil and that the amount of nutrients could be increased by the application of such organic remains to the soil. Thus started the manuring process in farming.

The practice of manuring has been practiced as early since the seventeenth century. However, the importance of manuring was not properly understood until scientists began to study the nutritional needs of plants and gave birth to fertilizers. Thus, gradually, the use of fertilizers became accepted by farmers.

There are many types of manure and fertilizer currently being used. Manure is a substance derived from animals and plants. The most important advantage of using manure is the fact that they not only supply a wide range of plant nutrients, but also improve the structure of the soil.

It cements together the soil particles to form soil crumbs. The crumb structure is a desirable condition of cultivated soil. The addition of manure to soil will increase the inorganic and humus content which helps to prevent soil erosion and loss of plant nutrients when it rains. The common manure used in farming consists of farmyard manure, compost, blood meal, bone meal and fish meal.

Unlike manure, fertilizers are inorganic substances which do not improve the structure of the soil. They only supply extra amounts of nutrients to the growing plants when applied to the