BEGC-106

Popular Literature

Assignment July 2026 Session

(Based on Blocks 1 - 4)

Max. Marks: 100

Answer all questions.

Section A

Write short notes in about 100 words each: **4 × 5 = 20**

1.

(i) Mass Culture and Popular Culture

(ii) Fairy Tales in Children's Literature

(iii) The Unreliable Narrator

(iv) Graphic Memoir

Section B

Answer the following in about 300 words each: **16 X 5 = 80**

2. Examine the relationship between popular literature and the literary canon. Illustrate your answer with suitable examples from the course.

3. Analyse Alice's journey of identity and self-discovery in *Through the Looking-Glass*.

4. Discuss how Agatha Christie creates suspense and misdirection in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*.

5. Critically examine *Bhimayana* as a graphic narrative that combines visual storytelling with social protest.

1.

(i) Mass Culture and Popular Culture

Answer

Mass culture refers to cultural products made and circulated on a large scale, mainly through industries such as publishing, cinema, television and digital media. They reach wide audiences and are often shaped by advertising, profit and standard methods of production. A popular film, a bestselling detective novel or a widely streamed series can be part of mass culture. The term sometimes carries a critical meaning: when entertainment is produced like a factory product, different stories may begin to follow familiar formulas.

Popular culture is a broader idea. It includes stories, songs, fashions, games and other practices that many people enjoy, discuss and make part of everyday life. People are not simply passive consumers. They may retell stories, create jokes, change meanings, start fan communities or use popular art to express disagreement with society. Therefore, an industrially produced work can become popular culture through what audiences do with it.

The distinction also raises the question of who decides what counts as valuable art. Older critics often placed mass entertainment below serious literature because it was commercially successful and easily accessible. Yet popularity does not automatically mean a work lacks imagination or social meaning. Agatha Christie's detective fiction, for instance, uses a familiar form to explore trust, deception and the reader's expectations. Similarly, graphic narratives can use accessible storytelling to raise difficult issues.

The same work may also be interpreted differently by different groups. One viewer may enjoy a detective programme mainly for its mystery, while another notices its ideas about class or justice. This is why studying audiences matters as much as studying the industries that sell cultural products. Popular culture is a process of shared interpretation, not only a collection of items.

Mass culture mainly draws attention to the large-scale production and distribution of culture, while popular culture draws attention to its place in people's lives. The two frequently overlap, but they should not be treated as identical. Looking at both helps us understand how literature can entertain readers, influence public ideas and sometimes challenge established literary tastes.