BEGE-144

Understanding the Novel

Assignment July, 2025 & January 2026 Session

(Based on Blocks 1 - 4)

TMA 01/2026 - 26

Max. Marks: 100

Answer all questions.

Section A

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

(a) Stream of Consciousness

(b) Flat and Round Characters

(c) Setting of a Novel

(d) Symbolism as a Narrative Device

Section B

Answer the following in about 350 words each: **4 X 20 = 80**

2. Discuss the relationship between form and realism in the novel. How has the novel evolved as a literary genre to represent changing social realities?

3. Critically examine Edna Pontellier's emotional and psychological transformation in *The Awakening*. How does Kate Chopin challenge the patriarchal ideals of nineteenth-century society?

4. Analyse *Paraja* as a novel of tribal identity, displacement, and resistance. Discuss how Gopinath Mohanty presents the interaction between indigenous culture and exploitative social structures.

5. Examine the significance of tradition, change, and cultural conflict in *Things Fall Apart*. How does Chinua Achebe challenge colonial representations of African society?

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

(a) Stream of Consciousness

Answer

Stream of consciousness is a narrative technique that represents the movement of thought, memory and feeling. Rather than presenting ideas in a neat chronological order, it follows associations as they arise. A passing sound or object may suddenly recall a distant incident. Writers use shifting time, incomplete sentences, interior monologue and free indirect discourse to suggest this mental flow. James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* illustrate different approaches. The technique makes inner experience central to the novel and reveals tensions between outward behaviour and private consciousness. It is not simply confused writing: its pattern often has purpose.

(b) Flat and Round Characters

Answer

E. M. Forster distinguished flat and round characters in *Aspects of the Novel*. A flat character is organised around one dominant quality or idea. Such a figure readily suggests comic effects or familiar social types. A round character has several interacting traits and can surprise the reader convincingly. Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, changes her judgement through experience and self-examination. Roundness is not merely the number of details supplied; it involves believable complexity. Flat characters are not necessarily inferior, because a novel may need sharply defined supporting figures. The distinction explains how characterisation contributes to narrative design.

(c) Setting of a Novel

Answer

Setting refers to the place, period and social environment in which a novel's events occur. It includes geography and climate but also institutions, beliefs, class relations and everyday customs. Setting explains why characters act as they do. The industrial city in Dickens, for instance, exposes poverty and inequality, while the villages in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* reveal Igbo communal life before and during colonial intrusion. Setting can establish atmosphere, create conflict and carry symbolic meaning; a confined room may suggest emotional restriction. It is therefore not a decorative background. It shapes the plot, characters and the novel's view of society.