

ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 10**A Letter to God (First Flight)**

English · Chapter 1 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

HOW TO USE

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER**Section A — Reference to Context (Extract-based, 5 marks)**

Q1. Read the extract and answer the questions: 'The postmaster — a fat, amiable fellow — also broke out laughing, but very soon he became serious... "What faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter..." So, in order not to shake the writer's faith in God, the postmaster came up with an idea: answer the letter.' (a) Who wrote the letter the postmaster is reading, and to whom was it addressed? (b) Why did the postmaster first laugh and then become serious? (c) What 'idea' did the postmaster come up with, and what does it reveal about his character? (d) Find a word from the extract that means 'good-natured / friendly'. [5 marks]

Ans: (a) The letter was written by Lencho, a poor farmer, and it was addressed simply 'To God'. (b) He laughed because he had never seen a letter addressed to God; he became serious because he was deeply moved by the writer's pure, unshakeable faith. (c) His idea was to answer the letter himself by collecting money so that Lencho's faith in God would not be shaken; this reveals that the postmaster is kind, compassionate, sensitive and charitable — a good ordinary man. (d) 'amiable'.

Section B — Very Short / Short Answer (2 marks each, 3 Qs)

Q2. Why did Lencho write a letter to God, and what did he ask for? [2 marks]

Ans: A hailstorm had completely destroyed Lencho's ripe corn crop, leaving his family facing hunger. Being a man of deep faith, his only hope was the help of God, so he wrote a letter addressed 'To God', asking for one hundred (100) pesos to re-sow his field and to support his family until the next harvest.

Q3. What is the central idea of the poem 'Dust of Snow'? [2 marks]

Ans: The poem conveys that even the smallest, most unexpected moments of nature can transform our mood and outlook. A crow shaking a fine spray of snow from a hemlock tree lifts the poet's gloomy spirits and 'saves' part of a day he had regretted, teaching us to find hope in unexpected places.

Q4. What do 'fire' and 'ice' symbolise in Robert Frost's 'Fire and Ice'? [2 marks]

Ans: In the poem, fire and ice are symbols for human emotions. Fire stands for desire, greed and burning passion; ice stands for hatred, coldness and indifference. Frost suggests that either of these uncontrolled emotions is powerful enough to destroy the world.

Section C — Short Answer (3 marks each, 2 Qs)

Q5. What was the irony at the end of 'A Letter to God'? Explain in about 40-50 words. [3 marks]

Ans: The post-office employees, led by the kind postmaster, collected money out of charity to help Lencho — the postmaster even contributed part of his own salary — yet could raise only 70 of the 100 pesos he had asked for. Instead of being grateful, Lencho was angry; certain God had sent the full amount, he believed the staff had stolen the missing 30 and called them 'a bunch of crooks'. The irony is that he suspects and insults the very people who selflessly helped him, while never doubting his unseen God.

Q6. Why is the postmaster an important character in the story? What values does he represent? [3 marks]

Ans: The postmaster is important because his action drives the story's resolution and its central irony. Instead of mocking a letter addressed to God, he is moved by Lencho's faith and resolves not to shake it. He gives part of his own salary and gathers donations from his staff and friends 'for an act of charity'. He represents the values of compassion, selflessness, generosity and respect for another's beliefs — the quiet goodness of ordinary people through whom kindness reaches those in need.

Section D — Long / Value-based Answer (4-5 marks, 2 Qs)

Q7. Describe the character of Lencho with reference to incidents from the story. (about 100-120 words) [6 marks]

Ans: Lencho is a hard-working farmer of simple, unshakeable faith. He knows his fields like the palm of his hand and toils all year for a single corn harvest, showing his diligence. His most striking trait is his deep, childlike faith in God: when the hailstorm destroys his crop, his 'one hope was the help of God', so he naturally writes a letter addressed 'To God' asking for 100 pesos. His faith never wavers — he is not even surprised when money arrives. Yet he is deeply suspicious of people: he asked God not to send the money by mail, and on receiving only 70 pesos he was sure the post-office staff had stolen the rest, calling them 'a bunch of crooks'. Thus Lencho embodies an ironic contrast — total trust in the unseen God beside total distrust of the very people who helped him.

Q8. Value-based: 'A Letter to God' shows the goodness of ordinary people and the importance of gratitude. Discuss the values the story teaches. (about 100-120 words) [7 marks]

Ans: The story teaches several important values. Foremost is compassion and selfless charity: the postmaster, an ordinary salaried man, refuses to mock Lencho's letter and instead gives part of his own pay and gathers donations 'for an act of charity' to help a stranger — proving that quiet goodness lives in everyday people. The story also celebrates faith and hope, seen in Lencho's belief that 'nobody dies of hunger if he has the help of God', which keeps him from despair after losing his crop. At the same time, through Lencho's ungrateful reaction — branding his benefactors 'a bunch of crooks' — the story warns against ingratitude and unfounded suspicion. The lesson for us is clear: kindness should be answered with gratitude, not distrust, and goodness, even when unrecognised, truly matters. God, the story suggests, often works through good human hands.

★ TOPPER ANSWER TEMPLATES

3 TEMPLATES · MEMORISE THE FORMAT

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-6 mark question: 'Describe the character of Lencho / What kind of a man was Lencho? Justify with examples from the story.'

2019 OD, 2020 Delhi, 2023 — very common long answer

Step 1 [1 mark]	Open with a topic sentence naming 2-3 traits	'Lencho is a hard-working farmer of unshakeable faith, simple yet stubbornly trusting in God.' Name the traits FIRST so the examiner sees your thesis.
Step 2 [2 marks]	Prove each trait with a specific story detail	Hard-working: he toiled in his fields and his only hope was the corn crop. Deep faith: when the hail ruined everything, his 'one hope was the help of God', so he wrote a letter addressed simply 'To God'. Unwavering belief: when only 70 pesos came, he never doubted God — he was sure the full 100 had been sent.
Step 3 [1 mark]	Show his other side — his suspicion of people	Yet he is suspicious of fellow humans: he asked God not to send the money through the mail, and finally called the post-office staff 'a bunch of crooks' for the 'missing' 30 pesos — even though they had given the money themselves.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Close with the larger judgement	Thus Lencho embodies a touching but ironic contrast — blind, childlike trust in the unseen God alongside deep distrust of the very people who helped him. His faith is admirable; his suspicion of people is the source of the story's irony.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Listing traits without ONE concrete example from the text per trait (–1 mark for 'no textual support').
- Mixing up the amounts — writing he asked for 70 and got 100.
- Forgetting the irony / his distrust of people, which is half of his character.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 3-mark question: 'What was the irony at the end of the story 'A Letter to God'?'**

2018, 2022 AI, 2024

Step 1 [1 mark]	State the situation plainly	The post-office employees, led by the kind postmaster, collected money out of charity to help Lencho — the postmaster even gave part of his own salary. They could raise only 70 of the 100 pesos he had asked for.
Step 2 [1 mark]	State the twist	When Lencho received the 70 pesos he was not grateful; he was angry. He firmly believed God had sent the full 100, so the missing 30 must have been stolen — by the post office.
Step 3 [1 mark]	Name it as irony and explain why	This is situational irony: Lencho suspects and insults ('a bunch of crooks') the very people who selflessly helped him, while never once doubting his unseen God. The helpers are branded thieves; that reversal of expectation is the irony.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Saying the irony is 'God did not send money' — that misses the real target of the irony (the helpers).
- Not actually using the word 'irony' / not explaining the reversal of expectation.
- Vague answer with no mention of the postmaster's charity.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark value-based question: 'The postmaster's act shows the goodness of ordinary people. Discuss what values the story teaches.'**

2019, 2022, SQP

Step 1 [1 mark]	Identify the central value	The story celebrates compassion and selfless charity — the quiet goodness of ordinary people who help a stranger expecting nothing in return.
Step 2 [2 marks]	Prove with the postmaster's actions + Lencho's faith	The postmaster, instead of mocking the 'letter to God', was moved by Lencho's faith and decided not to shake it. He gathered money from employees and friends and added part of his own salary 'for an act of charity'. This shows generosity, empathy and respect for another's beliefs.
Step 3 [1 mark]	Add the lesson / contrast	The story teaches that human kindness can answer prayers — God works through good people. It also warns against ingratitude and unfounded suspicion, seen in Lencho's reaction.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Personal value statement / conclusion	We learn that faith is precious, but so is gratitude; the right response to kindness is thankfulness, not suspicion. Goodness, like the postmaster's, often stays unrecognised yet truly matters.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Only narrating the plot without naming any VALUE (compassion, charity, gratitude, faith).
- Forgetting the postmaster's specific charitable acts (own salary + collection).
- No personal reflection / lesson line, which value-based answers explicitly reward.

MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES

- Extract-based answers: award the vocabulary/word-meaning sub-part fully only if the EXACT word from the extract is given ('amiable').
- Character sketch: minimum two traits WITH a textual example each for full marks; mere adjectives without evidence cap the score.
- Irony question: must name it as situational irony AND identify that the helpers (post-office staff) are the ones accused — answers that say 'God did not help' get at most 1 of 3.
- Value-based answers: must NAME at least one value (charity/compassion/gratitude/faith) and add a personal-lesson line; pure plot narration caps at half marks.
- Factual accuracy on figures (100 asked / 70 received / 30 'missing') and on the author's name (G. L. Fuentes) is expected; repeated errors lose presentation marks.
- Poetry answers: naming both symbols correctly (fire=desire, ice=hatred; crow/hemlock turned positive) is required for full marks.