Excerpt From: Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*. Apple Books.

With work as an excuse he does not go home to Massachusetts all summer. The firm is entering a competition, submitting designs for a new five-star hotel to be built in Miami. At eleven at night, he is still there, along with most of the other designers on his team, all rushing to finish drawings and models by the month's end. When his phone rings, he hopes it's Maxine, calling to coax him into leaving the office. Instead it's his mother.

"Why are you calling me here so late?" he asks her, distracted, his eyes still focused on the computer screen.

"Because you are not at your apartment," his mother says. "You are never at your apartment, Gogol. In the middle of the night I have called and you are not there."

"I am, Ma," he lies. "I need my sleep. I shut off the phone."

"I cannot imagine why anyone would want to have a phone only to shut it off," his mother says.

"So, is there a reason you're calling me?"

She asks him to visit the following weekend, the Saturday before his birthday.

"I can't," he says. He tells her he has a deadline at work, but it's not true—that's the day that he and Maxine are leaving for New Hampshire, for two weeks. But his mother insists; his father is leaving for Ohio the following day—doesn't Gogol want to go with them to the airport, to see him off?

He knows vaguely of his father's plans to spend nine months at a small university somewhere outside Cleveland, that he and a colleague have "received a grant funded by the colleague's university, to direct research for a corporation there. His father had sent him a clipping about the grant printed in the campus newspaper, with a photograph of his father standing outside the engineering building: "Prestigious grant for Professor Ganguli," the caption read. At first it was assumed that his parents would shut up the house, or rent it out to students, and that his mother would go too. But then his mother had surprised them, pointing out that there would be nothing for her to do in Ohio for nine months, that his father would be busy all day at the lab, and that she preferred to stay in Massachusetts, even if it meant staying in the house alone.

"Why do I have to see him off?" Gogol asks his mother now. He knows that for his parents, the act of travel is never regarded casually, that even the most ordinary of journeys is seen off and greeted at either end. And yet he continues, "Baba and I already live in different states. I'm practically as far from Ohio as I am from Boston."

"That's no way to think," his mother says.
"Please, Gogol. You haven't been home since May."

"I have a job, Ma. I'm busy. Besides, Sonia's not coming."

"Sonia lives in California. You are so close."

"Listen, I can't come home that weekend," he says. The truth seeps out of him slowly. He knows it's his only defense at this point. "I'm going on a vacation. I've already made plans."

"Why do you wait to tell us these things at the last minute?" his mother asks. "What sort of vacation? What plans?"

"I'm going to spend a couple of weeks in New Hampshire."

"Oh," his mother says. She sounds at once unimpressed and relieved. "Why do you want to go there, of all places? What's the difference between New Hampshire and here?"

"I'm going with a girl I'm seeing," he tells her. "Her parents have a place there."

Though she says nothing for a while, he knows what his mother is thinking, that he is willing to go on vacation with someone else's parents but not see his own.

"Where is this place, exactly?"

"I don't know. Somewhere in the mountains."

"What's her name?"

"Max."

"That's a boy's name."

He shakes his head. "No, Ma. It's Maxine."

I (i) How is non-verbal communication used in this telephonic conversation between Gogol and his mother? What elements of paralanguage do they use?   5

(ii) What is the mood of this conversation? How does the author convey it to you?   5

(iii) Are there any barriers to effective communication between Gogol and his mother? Are they semantic or channel-based? Describe at least two of them.   5

(iv) How are silences and pauses used in this extract? 5