THE ISEB COMMON PRE-TESTS FRAMEWORK

PURPOSE OF THE TESTS

The ISEB Common Pre-Tests are designed for senior schools to use as one part of their admissions process. They enable pupils to demonstrate their ability and potential through four tests:

- English
- Mathematics
- Verbal Reasoning
- Non-Verbal Reasoning

The Pre-Tests are a shared test, meaning that pupils only need sit the tests once and their results can be shared across multiple senior schools.

Senior schools are then able to use the results from the tests as part of their admissions process.

Pupils can sit the four tests at the same time or separately.

Tests can be taken between the beginning of October and the end of June, but can only be sat once by a pupil in any academic year.

WHO IS TO BE ASSESSED?

The tests are designed for pupils in Years 6 and 7. Some senior schools use the tests for admissions into Year 7, whilst others use it for entry into Year 9.

The Mathematics and English tests are broadly based on the National Curriculum, meaning the tests are suitable for all pupils seeking entry into Senior Schools.

Applicants can also take the tests overseas.

The tests have been designed with fairness and equity, with accessibility features built into the online testing platform.

- Pupils will be able to select a coloured overlay to help improve the visibility of the questions, particularly for pupils who face visual discomfort and disturbance when reading.
- The font size can be adjusted to suit visually impaired applicants.
- The timer for the test will be visible to all applicants (even those with 25% extra time) and it can be hidden from view if the countdown makes a pupil anxious.

For further information about how the tests and questions have been designed to improve the user experience for pupils with SEND refer to the SEND Guidance for the Common Pre-Tests.

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THE ISEB COMMON PRE-TESTS FORMAT

The four tests are all online, adaptive, multiple-choice tests. An adaptive test is one where the questions are chosen to be the most suitable for each pupil. The system assesses the pupil's ability after each response and selects the next question to have the most appropriate level of difficulty. This means that a pupil does not need to spend time answering questions that are too hard or too easy for them and the whole test can be shorter while still providing an accurate score.

In an adaptive test, each pupil receives a path through the questions that is unique to them and pupils may be presented with a differing number of questions. The system does not allow them to go back and change previous answers, for example, if they think they have made a mistake. We ensure that the length of the test is optimised to provide an accurate score for every pupil and can anticipate when an answer might have been selected at random and is not characteristic of the child's general ability.

RESULTS AND STANDARDISATION

Senior schools receive the scores as age-standardised scores. It does not matter what age a pupil is or what time in the academic year they sit the tests, the score is adjusted for age and placed on a scale which makes a comparison with a standardisation sample taken from the independent schools' sector (the average is 100).

In the very unlikely event of a candidate taking the tests more than once within a single academic year, the first set of results will stand.

1. ENGLISH

English Test Format

The English test assesses two distinct areas of knowledge: Reading Comprehension and Grammar.

Reading Comprehension Content

Pupils will be presented with several short passages (between 300 – 500 words) each with a series of multiple-choice questions. The questions and the passages are adaptive, giving a more personalised route through the Reading Comprehension. Selected passages are age-appropriate and could be fiction, non-fiction, or poetry.

Questions will assess knowledge covering the following domains:

- Retrieval of information
- Making inferences.
- Explaining the meaning of words in context.
- Explaining how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases (for example, choice of adjectives or literary devices: personification, alliteration, similes, metaphors).
- Summarising main ideas.
- Making comparisons (across the text, between characters, between formality).

Grammar Content

Pupils will be assessed on their knowledge of English grammar: vocabulary, punctuation, grammar and spelling.

Vocabulary – knowledge of word meaning, word families, prefixes and suffixes.

Punctuation – knowledge of how punctuation should be used.

Grammar – knowledge of what is grammatically correct, rather than complex terminology (pupils will be expected to be able to identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions); clauses; formal and informal language; verb agreement; sentence structure. In most questions, pupils will be asked 'What is grammatically correct?' rather than having to recall the names of specific tenses.

Spelling – knowledge of spelling patterns and common exception words.

2. MATHEMATICS

Questions will assess a pupil's knowledge of mathematics topics from the **National Curriculum Programme of Study** up until the end of Year 5:

- Number and place value
- Calculations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- Fractions, decimals and percentages
- Measurement
- Geometry
- Statistics.

Some questions will assess mathematical fluency in the form of arithmetic questions, others will require solving mathematical problems, possibly including more than one of the topics.

3. VERBAL REASONING

The Verbal Reasoning test measures a pupil's comprehension, reasoning and logic. The ISEB Common Pre-Tests focus on using letter, word and language-based questions. Pupils will be assessed on their knowledge of vocabulary and definitions. The test will identify the following:

- Problem solving techniques
- Trial and error skills
- Working logically
- Recognising suitable solutions.

The ISEB Test Walkthrough will give examples of some of the types of questions that might be used to assess these aptitudes, other question types might be used during the test.

4. NON-VERBAL REASONING

The Non-Verbal Reasoning test assesses logic, critical thinking and problem-solving skills using figures and diagrams. There will be instructions before each question to explain how to answer the question.

The Non-Verbal Reasoning test contains two types of questions:

- Non-Verbal Reasoning – Analyse 2D figures and diagrams to look for patterns (similarities and differences, completing the diagram, code matching).
- Spatial Reasoning – Manipulate 3D figures and diagrams to visualise them in a different way.

The ISEB Test Walkthrough will give examples of some of the types of questions that might be used to assess these aptitudes, other question types might be used during the test.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details about the ISEB Common Pre-Tests please visit the ISEB website where you will find the most up-to-date information as well as a range of helpful guidance and support resources.

www.iseb.co.uk/pre-tests