

The parent and carer guide to senior school entry

Pre-
Tests

11+

13+



Dear Parent/Carer

We have created a handy guide for parents and carers, containing useful facts and information about the Pre-Test, 11+ and 13+ entrance exams.

This guide will give you all you need to know about the entrance exams that your child is likely to take when applying for senior school, plus lots of useful advice on how to support your child preparing for those exams.



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Overview

When your child is applying for an independent senior school for entry at age 11 or 13, they may take a number of exams:

- 11+ exams
- Pre-tests
- 13+ exams
- Scholarship exams

The exams your child takes will depend on the senior schools that they apply to. Deciding which schools to apply to should be a collaborative process between you, your child and your child's current school to ensure you choose the best fit for your child. Try to find out as much as possible about the entry process for each school.

Some useful questions to ask the admission's office, your child's school or research online:

- How do we apply?
- When is the application deadline?
- What is the selection procedure?
- When are the entrance exams?
- What format are the exams in – are they written/oral/online?
- Which subjects will be examined? And at what level?
- Which exam will they sit (e.g. ISEB or school's own)?
- Will there be an interview?

Your child's current school will also be able to tell you about the steps they are taking to prepare your child, and how you can help with that process.



Interview tips

Many senior schools require applicants to attend an interview. Schools like to get to know the pupil behind the exam results and it's also a great way for your child to see if the school is the right school for them.

Be careful not to 'over prepare' your child. An interviewer can spot a child who has been coached a mile off. But it is worth spending time working with your child to build their confidence so that they can talk engagingly about their own opinions and interests.

Broaden your child's general knowledge:

- Encourage your child to read a wide range of material including good quality fiction and non-fiction books

to help broaden their vocabulary and to give them interesting content to talk about. Chat to your child about what they are reading.

- Suggest your child reads the newspaper or watches news and documentaries. Talk to them about what has caught their attention and why. What is their opinion on what they have read or heard?
- If you can, take trips to museums, places of historical and geographical interest or go to the theatre with your child. Alternatively, encourage them to think about places they have visited in the past and to talk about what they remember.

Develop their conversational skills:

- Enable them to talk effortlessly and engagingly – it's a great skill to have

that will be useful throughout their life.

- Discuss a wide range of topics at any opportunity – in the car or at mealtimes for example.
- Ask your child challenging and unusual questions. For example, are there any people they have learnt about in history that they would like to have met? What questions would they like to have asked them and why? Good reasoning skills (critical thinking) will make a good impression with the interviewer.
- Encourage your child to retell stories to friends or relatives.
- Help your child to practise speaking slowly, clearly and with expression.

Reflect on experiences:

- Have a conversation with your child about any experiences they have had

or any challenges they have faced.

What did they learn and how could they talk about the experience during an interview?

- Have they volunteered for anything or raised money for charity?
- Do they have any hobbies or interests they could talk about?

Prepare some questions to ask:

- It is a good idea for your child to prepare some questions to ask the interviewer.
- But make sure they don't ask questions that show they haven't researched the school. For example, your child shouldn't ask 'do you play rugby?' when rugby is mentioned as a sport on the website.
- Having done some research into the school, encourage your child to think

about questions they haven't found answers to:

- › Are there any extra-curricular activities they do now that they would like to continue?
- › Does your child have a particular academic interest they want to pursue – do they have speakers visiting the school or societies they can join?

For more tips and advice on interviews, check out Galore Park's Study Skills for 11+ exams and pre-tests.



Order online at
[galorepark.co.uk/](http://galorepark.co.uk/studyskills)
studyskills

Routes into independent schools

Whether your child is taking the Common Entrance 11+, or Pre-Test and Common Entrance (two years later at 13+), within these there are various routes and options for you to consider for your child's senior schooling.

You could choose private independent schooling for both primary and secondary years. Alternatively, you may have chosen state primary education and are now considering two years of prep school before your child sits the Common Entrance at 13+. This is a common way for families to start steadily and also a way to avoid the social pressures of the 11+ route into grammar schools. It also gives your child the 'prep' they need for life at a senior school, with arguably more discipline

and focus on homework. For the independent public schools – the private schools – online and adaptive Common Pre-Tests are taken in Years 6 or 7. These are multiple-choice in nature, testing English, maths, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. These tests can be taken together or at separate times. A Head's Report from your child's current school is required for each candidate at least two weeks before the first exam. There is an ISEB walkthrough of the Pre-Test for children to familiarise themselves with the feel of the tests. There are also several online platforms (such as Atom Learning) that schools recommend to prepare children for computerised testing and to chart their progress. Galore Park also has a series of revision resources for children

preparing for their Pre-Tests. Visit galorepark.co.uk/11-plus to learn more.

Senior schools use the ISEB Pre-Test to whittle down applications and then may give a further test at the school more focused on its own ethos and standards, alongside an interview with a housemaster and/or teacher. Great weight is placed on these Pre-Tests, before Common Entrance at 13+, to award conditional offers, especially since in recent years the value of the Common Entrance exams themselves at 13+ has been debated.

You will have your own family life situations to consider alongside the needs and interests of your children. The choice of 'day versus boarding' at

senior level may be less onerous than if you were sending your child to a boarding prep. However, maturity for boarding school and the extracurricular offering at a boarding school are important factors. Another thing to consider is where the boarding school is located and whether it is easy to get to for you to pick up your child at the start and end of term. The emphasis on the academic alongside the extracurricular and how it nurtures different characters and personalities through its pastoral care may also be an important consideration for you. Whether you are thinking of the more famous of the independent schools in London or the South East or further afield in the countryside or north of the country, the best thing for you to do is

to visit the schools with your child to see for yourselves. You can then make a suitable choice that makes sense to you and ensures your child spends the rest of their school years in a nurturing and happy educational setting.

To determine the best route into the school of your choice, it's always best to check with the school your child would like to apply for.



Choosing your independent school

Choosing a school for your child can be a daunting task. Here are some ideas that will hopefully help you navigate through this stage in your family's life.

Research your options

Whether you are starting your journey with the choice of prep school, i.e. Nursery to Year 6 or 8 (ages 2 to 11 or 13), or whether you are considering the move into senior school, Years 7 or Years 9 to 13 (ages 11 or 13 to 18), a good place to start is a school's website.

You can get a feel for what they have to offer in terms of:

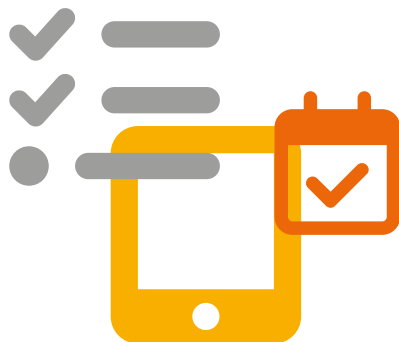
1. Day, flexi-boarding, full boarding – think about what is going to suit your child and you as a family.
2. Subjects, extracurricular activities and sport.
3. Location, facilities, access to outside space.
4. Exam results, scholarships to senior schools, Ofsted reports, etc.
5. Where the children go next. In the case of prep schools, which senior schools do the children go on to? It is important the Head Teacher has a good rapport with the senior schools. In the case of senior schools, what subjects do the pupils go on to study at university and which universities do they get into?

To find out more about a school you are interested in, download a prospectus from the school website. It is also important to check carefully the admissions criteria and the deadlines for registering your child. Speak to the registrar if necessary.

Book to attend tours and open days

1. Visiting a school is the best way to see if you like it and if you think it will suit your child.
2. Schools will run open days or tours.
3. Current pupils may take you on a guided tour. If they do it is a perfect opportunity to ask them questions – it's very likely they will be quite open and reveal the reality of school life.

4. You are likely to be able to meet the Head or Deputy Head and other key members of staff. There will often be a chance to ask questions. Make a list beforehand:
- › Where do pupils go on to?
 - › If your child has particular interests or talents, find out whether these will be catered for.
 - › Try to get a feel for the level of pastoral support.



Resources to help you research your options

You may have a list of possibilities or you may not. Here are some ideas that may help:

1. Find independent reports on schools such as:
 - › **The Good Schools Guide** which has been helping parents choose the right school for their children for more than 30 years.
[goodschoolsguide.co.uk](https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk)
 - › **The Tatler Schools Guide** – an impartial guide to all the best public and prep schools in the UK.
2. Independent education experts: Companies such as **Their Best Years**, [theirbestyears.com](https://www.theirbestyears.com) offer bespoke advice, assisting families with their

entry process into prep schools and senior schools.

3. Other people's experience and opinions: It is always useful to ask around and find out which schools children in your area go to. But remember experiences of the same schools can be different. It can depend on things such as the nature of a particular year group, on the Head Teacher in post at the time, and parental and family expectations.

Choosing a senior school

Whether you are looking at entry at 11+ or 13+, you should start to consider possible senior school options for your child in Year 5. During Year 5 your Head Teacher is likely to invite you to have

a meeting to discuss the possible and realistic options. Make sure you arrange this meeting as soon as you can.

It is worth noting that over the last couple of years there has been a shift to pre-testing (when it is used) in the autumn term of Year 6, instead of in Years 7 or 8. This means that you need to have registered your child with one or two schools by the end of Year 5.

Guidance from your child's Head Teacher:

1. Your child's academic ability will have been tested throughout their time at prep school. The Head will therefore have a good idea about the academic ability of your child and which senior schools might be

appropriate. Many schools require their applicants to sit a pre-test and may only offer places to those who meet their academic entry criteria.

2. The Head should also be able to help you with guidance on what schools might suit your child's skills, personality and interests.
3. You might already have ideas about what school(s) may be suitable – discuss these with your Head.
4. You know your child best of all. Think carefully about what school might be right for them and do not be swayed by what others are doing.

5. Children can be late developers. Do you feel your child might fall in this category? Some children in Year 6 (when pre-tests are taken) are far from being developed emotionally let alone academically. Again as a parent you know your child so don't be afraid to discuss this with your Head.

As a final word of advice, trust your instinct, talk to your Head Teacher and do your research. Remember you may be lucky enough to have made your choice and have been offered a place, for others the decision may be harder. In either case it is never too late to change your mind and reconsider your plans.

What is Common Entrance?

- Common Entrance (often shortened to CE) is the name for the 11+ and 13+ exams provided by the Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB).
- Independent schools which prepare children for Common Entrance follow the ISEB Common Entrance specifications.
- The Common Entrance exams are created by ISEB and marked by the senior school for which the child has applied.
- Common Entrance is strongly supported by many of the top independent prep and senior schools in the UK. ISEB publishes lists of the schools which use Common Entrance on their website: [iseb.co.uk](https://www.iseb.co.uk).
- The Common Entrance specifications and exams are renowned for being rigorous and challenging and providing a strong academic grounding in preparation for senior school.
- Some schools may choose not to follow the ISEB's Common Entrance syllabus and may offer exams from other exam boards such as CEM, GL or their own exams.



What are Pre-Tests?

There are various pre-tests on offer, including:

- ISEB Common Pre-Tests
- Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) Pre-Tests
- GL Assessment Pre-Tests
- UKiset Pre-Tests
- Individual school's own pre-tests.

All these tests have to be completed in a certain amount of time. Many of these tests are computerised and adaptive; this means that the tests adapt according to how many questions are answered correctly. The more correct answers given, the more demanding questions are offered to the child. The senior school will choose which of these pre-tests are required.

What are the ISEB Common Pre-Tests?

ISEB Common Pre-Tests are a set of online, adaptive tests taken when your child is in Year 6 or Year 7 (age 10–12). The tests are taken either in the child's own school or at the senior school for which they are entered. If your child is offered a place after completing these tests, they will usually still be required to sit Common Entrance at 13+ examinations in Year 8.

How do I register my child for the ISEB Common Pre-Tests?

Parents need to register their children for the Common Pre-Tests via the ISEB Guardian Portal: iseb.eva.tech/guardian. There is more information about this here: iseb.co.uk/assessments/common-pre-tests/cpt-for-families.

Which subjects are tested in the ISEB Common Pre-Tests?

English, mathematics, non-verbal reasoning and verbal reasoning.

When will my child take the ISEB Common Pre-Tests?

The ISEB Common Pre-Tests can be taken from 1 October to 30 June.

Who marks the ISEB Common Pre-Tests?

The tests are taken and marked online.

ISEB Common Pre-Tests overview

The parts of the Pre-Tests can be taken in any order and more than one part can be taken in a session. Children must, however, complete each part in one sitting.

Subject	Time	Contents
English	40 minutes	Online multiple-choice tests which adapt to an individual child's ability level.
Mathematics	40 minutes	
Non-verbal reasoning	30 minutes	
Verbal reasoning	25 minutes	

Entrance exams at 11+

There are various 11+ exams for entrance to senior school at age 10 to 12. These include:

- ISEB Common Entrance at 11+
- Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) 11+
- National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) 11+
- GL Assessment 11+
- Moray House
- Grammar School 11+
- School's own 11+ exams.

The 11+ exams can cover English, maths, science, verbal reasoning and non-verbal reasoning, but the subjects tested will depend on the individual senior school's requirements.

What is ISEB Common Entrance at 11+?

Common Entrance at 11+ is used by independent senior schools for entrance at age 11 or 12.

Which subjects are tested in ISEB Common Entrance at 11+?

English, mathematics and science.

When will my child take ISEB Common Entrance at 11+?

Common Entrance at 11+ can be taken in either the autumn term (November) or spring term (January) during Year 6. Most children take the January exam, and many schools use the November papers for mock exams.

Who marks ISEB Common Entrance at 11+?

11+ exams are marked by the school for which the child has applied. ISEB provides a detailed mark scheme for senior schools.

ISEB states that senior schools should give a grade to the child for each subject (or in some cases for each paper within that subject) and grade boundaries for that year. This information is passed on to the junior/prep school that the child is currently attending.



ISEB Common Entrance at 11+ overview

Subject	No. of exams	Contents	Time
English	2	Paper 1: Comprehension Paper 2: Composition	45 minutes
Mathematics	1	Non-calculator paper covering: number, calculations, fractions, proportions and percentages, measures, shape and space, algebra, handling data	60 minutes
Science	1	Questions on biology, chemistry and physics	60 minutes

Entrance exams at 13+

Some senior schools set their own 13+ exams for entrance in Year 9, but many independent schools use ISEB Common Entrance at 13+.

What is ISEB Common Entrance at 13+?

Common Entrance at 13+ is used by senior schools as part of the process for assessing children for entry into their schools at age 13. Your child may be required to take ISEB Common Pre-Tests before taking Common Entrance at 13+.

Which subjects are tested in ISEB Common Entrance at 13+?

Children take exams in:

- Compulsory core subjects – English, mathematics and science.

- Non-compulsory subjects – children can take papers in history, geography, theology, philosophy and religion, French, Classical Greek, Latin, Spanish and German.

Which specifications are tested in ISEB Common Entrance at 13+?

Common Entrance at 13+ tests the ISEB Common Entrance specifications. These are available on the ISEB website: iseb.co.uk.

Are there levels for ISEB Common Entrance at 13+?

In some subjects, papers are set at different levels. The level your child will take is decided by their senior school and the school for which they have applied.

Which ISEB Common Entrance at 13+ subjects have coursework?

Geography has coursework, and theology, philosophy and religion, has optional coursework.

When will my child take ISEB Common Entrance at 13+?

Common Entrance at 13+ is taken in either the spring term (January) or, more commonly, the summer term (May/June) during Year 8. Papers are also produced in the autumn term (November), although these are generally used for mock exams.

Who marks ISEB Common Entrance at 13+?

The exams are marked by the school for which the child has applied. ISEB provides a detailed mark scheme for senior schools but senior schools set their own grading systems. ISEB states that senior schools should give a grade to the child for each subject (or in some cases for each paper within that subject) and grade boundaries for that year. This information is passed on to the junior/prep school which the child is currently attending.



ISEB Common Entrance at 13+ overview

Subject	Level	No. of exams	Overview	Time
13+ English	2	2 papers per level	Paper 1: Reading (literary prose) and writing (prose for a practical purpose) Paper 2: Reading (poetry) and writing (imaginative, descriptive or narrative)	70/75 minutes
13+ Mathematics	3	Foundation: 2 papers Core: 3 papers Additional: 1 paper	Foundation – Non-calculator and Calculator Core – Non-calculator, Calculator, Mental Arithmetic Test Additional Paper	60 minutes 60 minutes (10 minutes for Mental Arithmetic Test) 60 minutes
13+ Science	2	Level 1: 1 paper Level 2: 3 papers	Biology, chemistry and physics Paper: Biology Paper: Chemistry Paper: Physics	60 minutes Each 40 minutes
13+ History	1	1 paper	Evidence and essay questions	60 minutes
13+ Geography	1	1 paper and coursework	Location knowledge, Ordnance Survey map work and thematic studies Individual fieldwork enquiry to be submitted in addition	60 minutes
13+ Theology, Philosophy and Religion	1	1 paper and optional coursework	Two syllabuses available for religious studies (chosen by school) Syllabus A paper: Old Testament, New Testament, World Religions and Contemporary Issues Syllabus B paper: Old Covenant, Jesus Christ and the Sacraments, and the Church	60 minutes or 40 minutes if coursework option completed
13+ French	2	2 papers and 1 speaking test per level	Paper: Reading and writing Paper: Listening Paper: Speaking	60 minutes 25 minutes 6 minutes
13+ German	1	2 papers and 1 speaking test per level	Paper: Reading and writing Paper: Listening Paper: Speaking	60 minutes 25 minutes 6 minutes
13+ Spanish	2	2 papers and 1 speaking test per level	Paper: Reading and writing Paper: Listening Paper: Speaking	60 minutes 25 minutes 6 minutes
13+ Classics: Classical Civilisation Classical Greek Latin	1 2 3	1 paper per level	Comprehension, translation, syntax and non-linguistic studies	45 minutes 60 minutes 60 minutes

Scholarship exams

Some senior schools set their own exams for scholarship and/or bursary purposes, or they use ISEB Common Academic Scholarship Exams (CASE) at 13+ to assess exceptional academic performance.

What are ISEB Common Academic Scholarship Exams (CASE)?

CASE are the scholarship exams set by ISEB. CASE are set at a higher level than Common Entrance at 13+ and can be taken by the most academically able children.

If your child takes CASE they may not be required to take the 13+ Common Entrance exams. This will be decided by the senior school. Whether your child is entered for CASE or 13+ Common

Entrance is decided by your child's current school and the senior school for which they are applying.

Which subjects can be tested in ISEB Common Academic Scholarship Exams?

Children can take CASE in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, French, Latin and theology, philosophy and religion.

When will my child take ISEB Common Academic Scholarship Exams?

The exams are taken in either the spring term (February) or, more commonly, the summer term (May) during Year 8.

Who marks ISEB Common Academic Scholarship Exams?

The papers are marked by the senior school for which the child has applied.



ISEB Common Academic Scholarship Exams overview

Subject	No. of exams	Overview	Time
CASE English	1 paper	Two or more unseen, thematically related passages with questions on content, style and structure	105 minutes
CASE Maths	1 paper	Questions are based on the Common Entrance specifications for each subject	90 minutes
CASE Science	1 paper	Three sections: biology, chemistry and physics	90 minutes
CASE History	1 paper	Unseen evidence question and choice of essay questions	60 minutes
CASE Geography	1 paper	Data response, essay and structured questions	60 minutes
CASE Theology, Philosophy and Religion	1 paper	Questions are based on the theology, philosophy and religion Common Entrance syllabuses A & B	60 minutes
CASE French	2 papers and 1 oral per level	Paper: Reading and writing Paper: Listening Paper: Senior schools will conduct their own Speaking tests	60 minutes Approximately 30 minutes
CASE Latin	1 paper	Comprehension, translation, grammar and derivation	60 minutes

You've chosen the independent school

NOW PASS THE EXAMS



Sign up to our free email mailing list at galorepark.co.uk/e-updates to receive the latest news, expert blog articles and special offers.

Pre-
Tests

11+

13+

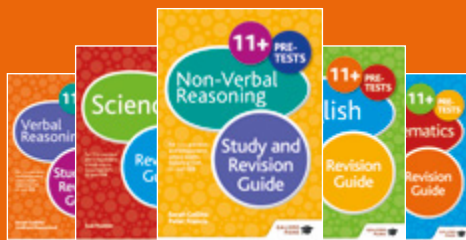
GALORE
PARK
FROM HODDER EDUCATION



11+ and Pre-Tests Revision Journey

REVISION GUIDES

Consolidate revision and learn to understand the question types for all topics that could be tested in pre-tests and 11+ independent school entrance exams.

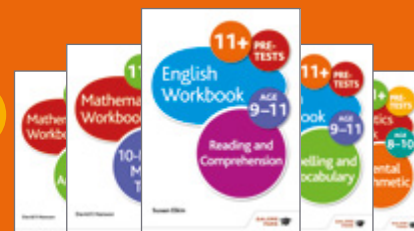
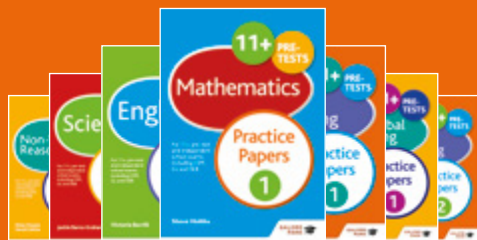


WORKBOOKS

Increase confidence with practice of even more question variations, and apply knowledge learned in the Revision Guide.

PRACTICE PAPERS

Perfect exam technique by practising with a variety of exam-paper styles under time pressure, including specific papers for CEM and GL exams.



Past papers are available to buy from ISEB at iseb.co.uk/shop



Order online at galorepark.co.uk



Call: 01235 759555

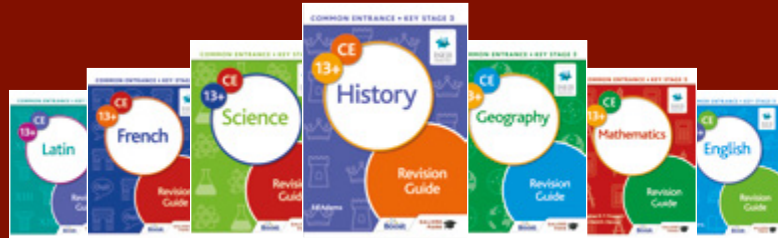


Email: primary@hachette.co.uk

13+ Common Entrance Revision Journey

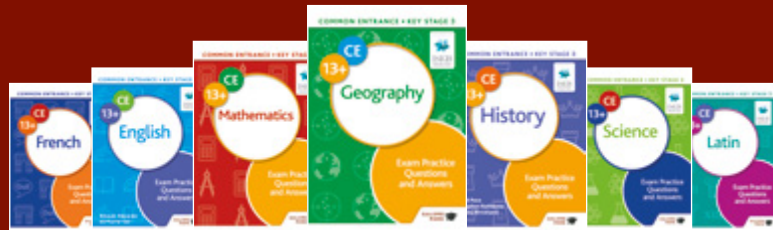
REVISION GUIDES

Consolidate knowledge and revisit content covered as part of the specification across all topics which could be tested at 13+ Common Entrance exams.



EXAM PRACTICE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Apply knowledge learned in the Revision Guide with a wealth of exam-style questions. Check your answers and find out how to improve in weaker areas.



Past papers are available to buy from ISEB at iseb.co.uk/shop



Sign up to our free email mailing list at galorepark.co.uk/e-updates to receive the latest news, expert blog articles and special offers.

Practise using past papers

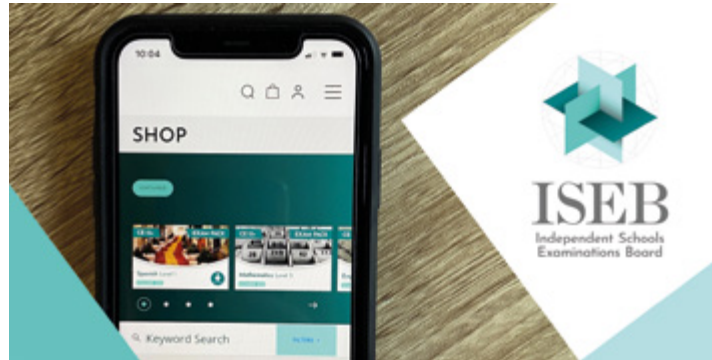
One of the best ways to support your child in preparing for their exams is to practise using past papers.

Parents and guardians are able to purchase Common Entrance (CE) and Common Academic Scholarship Exam (CASE) past papers through the ISEB shop.

You will also find lots of useful supporting information in the 'Families Hub' on the ISEB website, including support guides, key dates in examination cycles and examples of non-verbal reasoning tasks for the Common Pre-Tests.



Learn more at iseb.co.uk.



Wellbeing

Entrance exams are an essential part of getting into many independent senior schools, and there is no denying it can be a stressful and emotional process. However, with mindful and well-planned preparation, you can make the whole experience easier and calmer for both yourself and your child.



We know preparing for exams can be very stressful for the whole family so we've compiled some tips and advice to help you and your child to take a mindful approach to revision and exams.

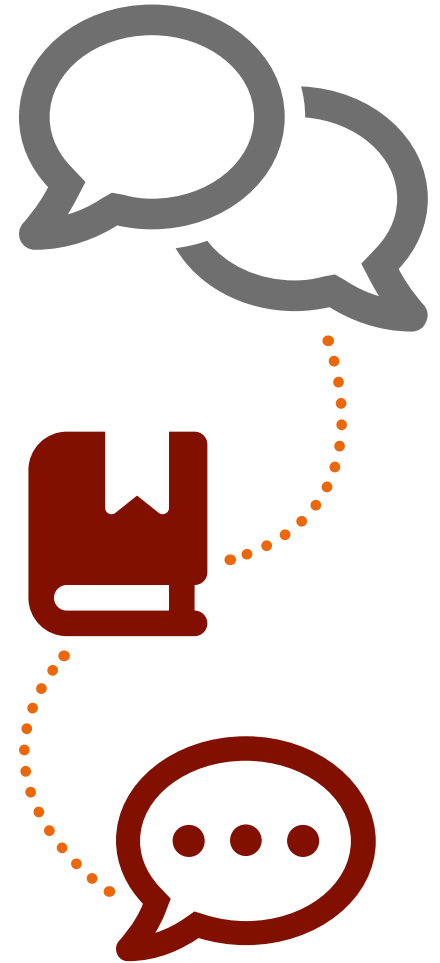
- Remember, the aim is for your child to find the right school for them, and the tests and interviews are a part of that process. Not every school will be the perfect fit, and that's OK!
- Try to be realistic about balancing work and relaxation. An overtired, overworked child will perform far less effectively than a child who has had regular breaks and has enjoyed other activities in their spare time.

- Remind your child that making mistakes is part of the learning process – and part of life! The journey to the entrance exams is exactly that – a journey. There will be ups and downs as they refine their exam techniques and subject-specific skills and knowledge. Try to avoid your child becoming disheartened by mistakes they will inevitably make. Point out that if they already knew everything, they wouldn't need to go to school.
- Remember that your child is giving up their weekends or evenings to do revision, so make sure they have something to look forward to afterwards, even if it's something as simple as their favourite snack.
- If your child does become anxious, try to intervene early and talk about the bigger picture. You might like to teach them some simple breathing techniques that can be used to help them relax when they are revising but can also be used if they panic in an exam.
- Pay extra attention to what your child likes and dislikes, what they find easy and what they find difficult. In this way, you can build their confidence through their strengths and offer support (resources or extra lessons) for their weaker areas.

There are more tips on looking after your child's wellbeing during the entrance exam journey, including making sure they get enough sleep, exercise and a healthy, balanced diet in Galore Park's Study Skills books – order online at galorepark.co.uk/studyskills. Plus, the NHS has lots of great advice. Search for 'exam stress' on nhs.uk.

Gathering information

- Start to gather information about the exams and tests that your child will be expected to take as early as possible. Communicate with your child, their current school and the school you hope your child will go to.
- If your child attends a prep school, they are likely to cover all of the ISEB examination topics as part of the school curriculum and their school will help with much of the exam preparation, but a parent's practical and emotional support in addition to this will be vital to your child.
- If your child attends a state school, we recommend you contact your child's existing school, and the senior school that you wish to apply to and seek advice about additional areas your child may need to cover to prepare for their entrance exams.
- Ask the school to which your child is applying exactly which exam type, subjects and levels your child will be sitting. If your child is taking an ISEB exam you can familiarise yourself with the specifications by downloading them from [iseb.co.uk](https://www.iseb.co.uk).





Preparing your child for entrance exams

We encourage you to start working with your child at least a year before the exams. There is then time for your child to build familiarity and confidence, and for you to identify knowledge gaps and any areas where confidence is lacking. A little-but-often approach to revision helps to avoid stressful, last-minute cramming.



There are many ways in which you can help your child prepare for all types of entrance exams:

Every day

- It is a good idea to make sure school-set homework is completed well. This doesn't mean you have to do it with your child but, as it is likely to be relevant to the exams, make sure it is done to a high standard.
- Be wary of giving your child too much help (or allowing a tutor to do so). It is important that both you and your child have a realistic picture of what they can do independently in order to set targets and fill gaps. Remember they will have to do the exam on their own.
- Encourage your child to read daily. High-quality fiction and non-fiction texts will broaden their vocabulary, give them interesting books to talk about at an interview and widen their general knowledge. Discuss the books your child reads with them and ask them questions about the characters, themes and what they like or dislike about the book. Encourage them to read beyond their usual tastes – if they always choose fantasy, help them choose some historical or science fiction, or an autobiography. This is particularly good preparation for English exams in which any type of text could arise.
- You might like to watch the news together, read the paper, watch documentaries and talk about the events of the day. This is invaluable preparation for interviews as it will develop your child's conversational skills, enhance their thinking and questioning skills and expose them to a wide range of interesting topics. Being able to talk naturally and engagingly about a variety of subjects is a great skill to have.

Weekends and holidays

- If you have more time at the weekend, you may choose to do some subject-specific extension work. The type of tasks you do will depend on how far away the exam is.
- If the exams are still months away, focus on specific skills which your child needs to practise, such as working out the meaning of unfamiliar words in English or calculating the angles in a triangle in maths. Your child's current school should be able to guide you as to what areas need the most work.
- As you get closer to the exam, focus on exam-type questions or past papers. You may like to introduce a timer to help your child develop their time management skills. These past

papers are available on any school website or your child's current school may provide them for revision. Galore Park also offers a range of practice papers for a variety of subjects. Visit galorepark.co.uk/practice-papers to learn more.

- Weekends are a great time to take learning beyond the written word and make day trips or museum visits with your child. Choose places that fit with the topics your child is studying for their exams. For example, you may want to visit:
 - › places of historical or geographical relevance
 - › the theatre to watch shows or plays linked to authors or texts studied in English
 - › places of worship for theology, philosophy and religion

- › other places that link to your own child's particular interests, which they may like to talk about at the interview – for example, Bletchley Park is great to visit if your child is interested in maths or a Royal Institute Christmas Lecture if they are a keen scientist
 - › the beach or a train journey can even provide inspiration for a piece of creative writing or give context for something your child may be asked to read. Non-study time is also very important.
- Remember, enjoying hobbies, sports, healthy food, time with friends and family, and having plenty of sleep is vital in making the study that follows effective.



How to revise well

Before revision

Try to find a calm, quiet, well-lit and ventilated space for your child to revise where they won't be disturbed by noise, interruptions or distractions.

- Ensure your child has the right equipment, such as:
 - › textbooks and revision books
 - › notebooks or paper to practise and make notes
 - › pens, including different colours and highlighters for note-making
 - › sticky notes for reminders, marking pages and covering answers for self-testing.
- If you can, you may want to sit together and make a realistic timetable for revision.

- Try not to let your child plan too much or too little. Help them to strike a balance.
- Alternate the subjects they like the most or find the easiest with those subjects that they find harder or enjoy less.
- Don't forget to include day trips, treats, family events, etc. on the planner too.

It is a good idea to discuss study priorities with your child. Talk to your child about what they feel needs the most work – they will have had feedback from their teachers and you may be able to look at their work to see where to put the focus.

During revision

Encourage your child to work in short bursts. Sessions of 20–30 minutes with clear aims are far more productive than hours at a time when concentration will wane after a short time.

- Suggest using revision materials that are made up of short units and break subjects down into clear topics or sections.
- During breaks make sure your child has water, healthy snacks and fresh air. Exercise also makes for a good break and will help to re-energise your child ready for their next revision session.

- For tricky topics, encourage your child to give the questions a go themselves as this is key for the exam but be there to help your child understand concepts and practise methods should they need it.
- Timed practice papers and tests should be done independently to best replicate test conditions and help them become familiar with the exam format.
- Don't panic if your child finds something hard. Try to explain that it's not that they don't understand it, they just don't understand it yet.

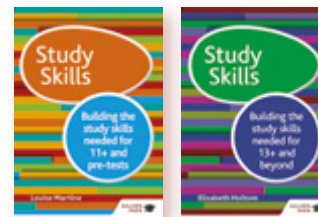
After revision

- It's a good idea to discuss the revision session with your child, giving them another chance to go over things and ask questions. If they can explain a concept to you, they have a good chance of grasping it.
- After breaks, you might like to spend some time reviewing what has already been revised.
- If something is proving particularly difficult, encourage your child to talk to their teacher about it.
- Make sure your child doesn't work too late into the evening. Early nights and relaxation at the end of a revision

session are very important to keep the brain rested and working at its best.

- Each person learns differently and each subject requires different skills. There are many different approaches to revision so find what works best for your child in each subject.

Learn more revision tips in Galore Park's Study Skills books.



Order online at
galorepark.co.uk/studyskills

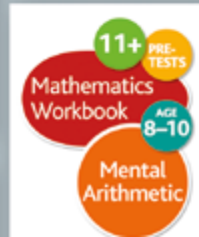
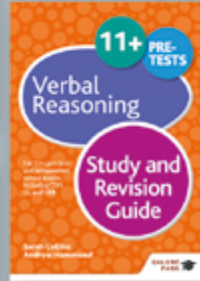
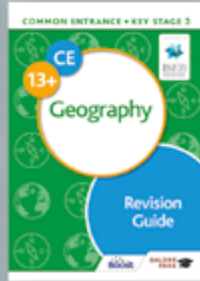
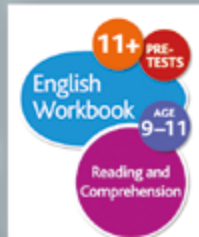
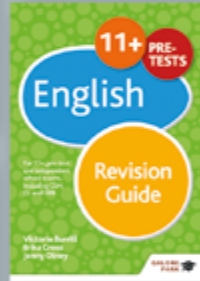
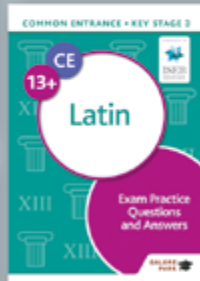
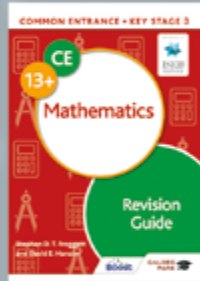
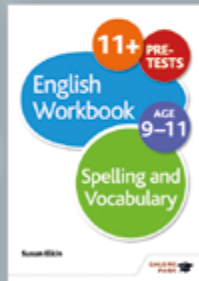
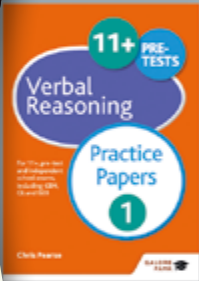
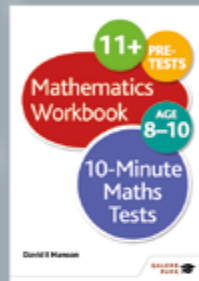
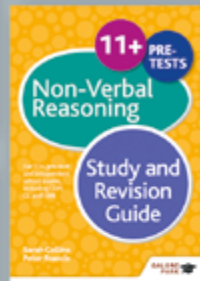
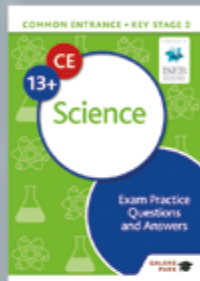
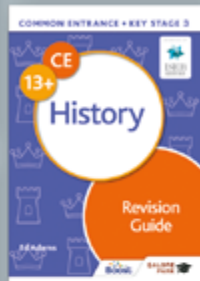
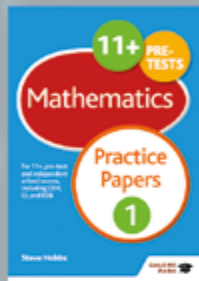
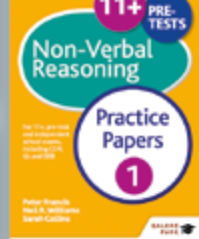
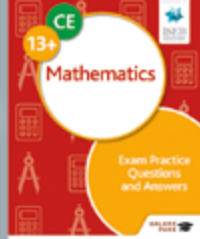
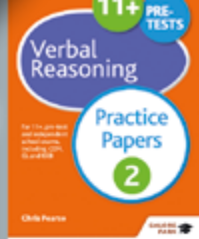
Key dates for senior school applications

- Revision/preparation: start at the end of Year 4 or beginning of Year 5, depending on maturity. It also depends on whether applying to a girls, boys or mixed school which have different exam dates.
- Interview dates: after 11+/Pre-Tests or at a specific school during their own testing following the ISEB Pre-Test.
- Exam dates:
 - › Pre-Tests are taken at any time between October to June.
 - › 11+ exams are in November or January depending on application in July to October or October to December.
- Exam results: available to prep schools the Friday following the examinations, then shared with parents who are informed on the Saturday. Any concerns by senior school Heads to be given by the Tuesday prior to publication. Offers given following further meeting, tests and/or interview with senior school. There is potential to be put on the school's waiting list for an offer up to the term of Year 8 when pupils sit their 13+ Common Entrance exams.
- Visit the ISEB website to learn more about the exam dates for 11+, Pre-Test and 13+ exams.
- Each school provides their timetables in information for parents in the admissions process so it is very clear when you need to do things by. Talk to the school you are applying for to get more information about their timetables.

Good luck

Our best advice is to keep calm. This will reduce stress for both you and your child, and candidates always perform better when they are in a relaxed state of mind and feel well prepared. Remember, these exams are not only about gauging whether your child is a good fit for the school but also whether the school is a good fit for your child. The ideal outcome of this process is that your child finds a school that is right for them.







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