

# **Selective Schools and Scholarship Tests**

Revised Edition

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Science Press

© Science Press 2010  
First published 2002  
Revised Edition 2010, 2011

Science Press  
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Science Press. ABN 98 000 073 861

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# Introduction

This book is meant to give you some practice in the types of questions which may be found in the Selective Schools Tests and the ACER Cooperative Scholarship Testing Program. These two tests are differently organised but have a number of similarities. The English Language (Reading) tests, the Mathematics tests, and the Written Expression tests in this book are designed as practice for both The Scholarship Test and the Selective Schools Test.

*The General Ability tests are relevant only to the Selective Schools Test.*

## The Scholarship Test

### Test components

ACER produces tests for The Cooperative Scholarship Testing Program (CSTP) and Scholarship Selection tests (SST).

The ACER Scholarship Tests for Level 1, that is, for those in the final year of primary school (Year 6 in New South Wales) consist of three sections. They are:

1. Humanities – Comprehension and Interpretation
2. Mathematics
3. Written Expression – two separate tests

There are 40 Humanities questions and 28 Mathematics questions. The tests are multiple choice in style with answers to be recorded on computer-marked answer sheets. Each of these test lasts for 40 minutes. The Written Expression test lasts for 25 minutes and is in response to a stimulus, such as an image, statement or question.

### Information about the Scholarship Tests

Information about the Scholarship Tests can be found at the ACER's website:

<http://www.acer.edu.au/tests/scholarships.html>

ACER also publishes some booklets designed to give you assistance and practice with the style of questions asked. *Sample Collection of Questions Volume 1* and *Sample Collection of Questions Volume 2*, are available through the website.

ACER can also be contacted at:

ACER  
19 Prospect Hill Road  
Camberwell  
Melbourne Victoria 3124

### Equipment needed for the Scholarship tests

- A good non-smudging pencil rubber
- A B or HB pencil (and a spare)
- A blue or black pen (and a spare)

## The Selective Schools Test

### Test components

Four tests make up the Selective Schools Test:

1. English Language Reading test
2. Mathematics test
3. General Ability test
4. Writing test

The Reading test contains 45 questions, the Mathematics test contains 40 questions and the General Ability test contains 60 questions. These are all multiple-choice questions with answers to be recorded on computer-marked answer sheets. Each of these test lasts for 40 minutes.

The Writing Test lasts for 20 minutes and is in response to a stimulus, such as an image, statement or question.

### Information about Selective Schools Tests

The NSW Public Schools website provides information on Selective Schools Tests and sample papers to familiarise students with the tests. Previous writing tasks are not available.

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/selectiveschools.php>

Students should use this site to familiarise themselves with both the tests and answer sheets.

The Selective Schools Unit's *Application Package* is available on the internet at:

[http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/learning/k\\_6assessments/ss/ss\\_apppackage.pdf](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/learning/k_6assessments/ss/ss_apppackage.pdf)

Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit can be contacted on:

Phone: (02) 9707 6262 Fax: (02) 9707 6265

Email: [ssu@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ssu@det.nsw.edu.au)

Postal Address:

Locked Bag 6109 Milperra DC 1891

### Equipment needed for the Selective Schools tests

The Department of Education and Training advises that you should bring:

- Two HB or B pencils
- A pencil rubber
- A pencil sharpener
- The advice from the Selective Schools Unit which contains your student number.

No other equipment, except a water bottle (with no writing on them other than brand name) is allowed to be brought into the examination room.

### Computer-marked answer sheets

Your answers to the test will be done on separate answer sheets. You will be given practice on how to fill in the computer-marked answer sheets at the beginning of the first test. Selective schools answer sheets are divided into groups of questions according to page number.

### Format of the Selective Schools tests

There are four tests:

- English Language Reading
- Mathematics

- General Ability
- Writing

Reading, Mathematics and General Ability (all multiple choice) go for 40 minutes. Writing goes for 20 minutes.

Each multiple-choice test has questions with four possible answers labelled A, B, C, D.

All questions are answered on a separate answer sheet.

Each question on the answer sheet has four alternatives in ovals. You fill in the oval of the best answer. For example, if you wanted to indicate 'A' as your answer:



Correct answers receive a mark, incorrect and missing answers receive no mark.

### General advice about doing tests

All tests are more easily done when you have made yourself familiar with what is expected of you. You also need to develop an exam technique which allows you to work methodically and without panic when sitting the test. You should always approach a test knowing what to expect and feeling confident that you have prepared yourself adequately. This preparation consists of practising the style of question and practising how to answer in a set time limit.

### Things to keep in mind

1. Be physically comfortable on the day. Eat a proper breakfast and dress appropriately for the weather. Make sure you have the equipment you need and your number if doing the Selective Schools test. Also bring some snacks to eat and something to drink in the breaks. Walk around a bit before the test, this helps to settle any nervous feelings. Don't stand around with friends talking about how nervous you are.

2. Always put up your hand and seek clarification from the Presiding Officer (the person running the test) if there is something you don't understand.
3. Do not talk about your answers in the break between tests, otherwise you may scare yourself and upset your performance in the second session. If others want to talk about their answers move away from them. You may have given the right answer but someone talking confidently about their answer may undermine your own confidence.
4. Eat something between test sessions to keep your energy levels up.
5. Give yourself plenty of positive talk before and during the test.
6. Remember that many of the questions will be hard and that you won't get them all right. This is the same for the other students. Do not panic because the test seems hard: tell yourself everything is okay and work steadily. Do not worry about what other students are doing.
7. Read the question and underline what you are asked for; then work out the answer before looking closely at the alternatives. If you have worked out the answer it is very encouraging to see that answer as one of the alternatives.
8. Remember, they are looking for the *best* answer to each question. This might mean that there are two correct answers but one is better. Don't colour in the first answer you think is right. Read all four alternatives first.
9. Never leave a blank on the answer sheet. Always fill out an answer on the answer sheet before moving on to the next question. If you don't fill in an answer and you forget to leave a blank you will have the rest of your answers on that page in the wrong spots and you will waste valuable time going back to redo them.
10. If you don't know the answer, have a guess. A guess gives you a one-in-four chance of gaining a mark. You can usually narrow down the answer to two or three alternatives before

making an educated guess. Colour in the oval, but mark the **question sheet** with a \* or some other symbol and come back to it later. If you don't get a chance to come back later, at least you have already put in your best guess answer.

11. Keep checking that the number on the answer sheet matches the number of the question. This prevents unnecessary errors and then you don't get upset or waste time working out where you went wrong.
12. Do not spend too long on any one question. Keep moving through the paper, working methodically.
13. Keep your eye on the time. The clock at the test centre will be the official starting and finishing timer. Make sure you can see the clock from your seat and set your own watch to match. Keep your watch on your desk in front of you at all times. Remember this is a timed test. Make sure you know how much time is available to you and don't spend too long on any question.
14. If you have worked methodically you should finish in time, but if you have a few questions not done with 30 seconds to go, fill in an oval for each remaining question. You might be lucky enough to pick up a mark or two. Remember, you can't pick up a mark if the ovals are blank.

### Format of this book

This book is divided into four sections: English Language Reading, Mathematics, General Ability and Written Expression. In each section are four tests for you to practise on, except for the Written Expression section, which has nine practice tests. Some general information about each section is given, then a series of questions which make up a 40-minute test. There are answer sheets provided in the back of the book for you to do your answers on. The answers to the questions appear in the back section of the book. These tests can be used to familiarise yourself with the type of questions or to practise doing the questions within the time limit.

# English Language Reading Tests

The Selective Schools' English Language Reading test and the Scholarship's Humanities tests are similar.

The tests will contain several passages for you to read followed by questions which test your reading. The passages can be drawn from a range of subject areas, for example, English, history, geography, social studies. The answers are drawn from the information in the passages, not from outside knowledge.

## Hints for doing the English Language Reading test

This test is based on your reading of a number of passages. It is a good idea to read the passage once by skim reading it, i.e. run your eye down the passage quickly to get an understanding of the subject matter. Then, read the passage slowly and carefully. Only after having read the passage once by skimming and once by careful reading should you attempt to start the questions. In fact it is often a good idea to slow read the passage twice after skimming before you start the questions. You will need to practise this technique, especially the skimming, to gain confidence in your ability to use it effectively in the test.

In the next column you will see an example of the instructions that accompany the Selective Schools English Language Reading test. Read these through to make sure that you understand the instructions and to become familiar with them. However, you must remember to thoroughly read through the instructions in the actual test.

## Instructions

1. You have 40 minutes to complete the test. It contains 45 questions.
2. This test contains several passages. In most passages every fifth line is numbered on the right-hand side to help you answer the questions.
3. Read each passage and then mark your answer to the questions on the separate answer sheet.
4. With each question there are four possible answers **A, B, C** or **D**. For each question you are to choose the **ONE** answer you think is best. To show your answer, fill the oval for one letter (**A, B, C** or **D**) on the answer sheet in the section headed English Language Reading.
5. If you decide to change an answer, rub it out completely and mark your new answer clearly.
6. If you want to work anything out you may write on the question booklet.
7. If you need the help of the supervisor during the test, raise your hand.

## **DO NOT OPEN THIS BOOKLET UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD**

In three different places in the English Language test you will see this message.

When you see it follow the steps.

## **ANSWER CHECK (Example)**

Look on your Answer Sheet – the last question you answered should have been Question (e.g.) 11.

If it was, keep going. If it wasn't, put your hand up for help.