



CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN

CANDIDATES AND PARENTS SHOULD READ THIS BULLETIN CAREFULLY

1. WHAT IS ACEP?

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)* produces the ACEP** examination for schools in all Australian states to use for the award of scholarships, for school entrance testing and for diagnostic purposes. ACER prepares the examination, distributes it to schools and other centres and sets the standardised procedures for administration. ACER marks candidate papers and reports results to schools. ACER does not award scholarships and does not report to parents. The examination is intended for pupils in their final year of primary school.

Candidates may register for more than one school, in which case they sit for the examination once, and the results are sent to each school applied to. Candidates must register and pay a separate fee to each school to which they apply. Some schools will also offer pencil and paper candidate registration. A list of schools participating with links to individual school websites can be viewed at <http://www.acer.edu.au/acep>. You only need to register at the same school once. That is, submit either an online registration (via the school's website) OR a pencil and paper registration.

* The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is an independent national research and development organisation.

** ACEP IS A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN INITIATED PROGRAM

2. ACEP Dates 2012

Activity	Date	Notes
Deadline for application for Special Sitting Conditions	Monday 2 January 2012	See 'Exception 3.1.7' below
Deadline for Special Centre Requests	Monday 2 January 2012	See 'Exceptions 3.1.4-3.1.6' below
Deadline for ACER Testing Centre Requests	Friday 6 January 2012	See 'Exception 3.1.3' below
Date after which registrations incur a late fee	Friday 13 January 2012	
Date after which online registration facility closes	Friday 20 January 2012	
Examination Date	SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2012	

2.1. Confirmation of Registration

Candidates will not get a letter of confirmation from ACER after registering with a school. Candidate will, however, receive a username and password, and, upon successful payment, an emailed receipt. Candidates are expected to check with the school they have recorded as the examination centre and confirm the address, the time of attendance, and where to report on examination day.

3. WHERE SHOULD CANDIDATES SIT THE TESTS?

Candidates must nominate one examination centre. This may be either a school applied to or an ACER Centre. **This Centre must be the same on every registration form.** It is this Centre to which a candidate's test papers are sent.

If you are applying for one school only then this school will be your examination centre.

3.1. EXCEPTIONS

3.1.1. Capital city candidates applying to schools in another state or a school in the country may do the tests locally as long as that school is an official examination centre. (A list of school examination centres is available from participating schools or can be viewed at ACER's website at www.acer.edu.au/tests/scholarship/cstp/centres.html.)

The candidate must contact the school applied to, AND the school selected as the examination centre, to confirm this arrangement. Candidates are expected to confirm the address of the school, and detail concerning the time of the examination themselves.

3.1.2. Country candidates applying for distant schools (more than 200 km away) may sit at a school in a nearby town or city as long as that school is an official examination centre. See 'Capital city candidates' under '3.1.1' for details concerning examination centre arrangements.

3.1.3. Country and overseas candidates may sit at one of the examination centres set up by ACER. Several days before the examination, candidates at these centres will receive a letter from ACER supplying the address of the centre and the supervisor's name. This letter must be shown to the supervisor on the day of the examination. For country candidates, when registering online you must check the box labelled: 'I wish to sit the test at an ACER Centre (Country Candidates Only)' and then choose the required centre on the 'Preferences and Exam Centre' page of the online registration (after making payment). For overseas candidates you must check: 'I wish to sit the test at an Overseas Centre' and

pay the Overseas Levy, and then choose the required centre on the 'Preferences and Exam Centre' page of the online registration (after making payment).

- 3.1.4. Special centres in Australia.** Only those candidates living over 200 kilometers from their nearest school or ACER Centre (see 'Examination Centres' list in Section 3 above) may request a Special Examination Centre. The candidate's parent(s) or guardian(s) should find an appropriate supervisor and test site for the candidate to take the test on the same day as candidates elsewhere in Australia. The supervisor should be a teacher or person who has experience in exam supervision and should not be the candidate's current teacher, related to the candidate, or coaching the candidate for the ACEP. Any costs associated with supervision will be the responsibility of the candidate. When registering online you must check the box labelled: 'I wish to sit the test at an ACER Special Centre' and then choose the 'Special Centre' on the 'Preferences and Exam Centre' page of the online registration (after making payment).
- 3.1.5. Saturday Sabbath Observation.** Candidates who observe the Sabbath on Saturday can sit the test as per exception 4 above on a date as close as practicable to the test date – candidates should select 'Special Test Centre' when they register.
- 3.1.6. Special centres overseas.** Candidates living overseas, or who are on a short-term overseas exchange, are expected to attend an ACER examination centre in one of the cities listed in section 3 above. If a candidate is not able to attend one of the listed overseas centres a special examination centre may be approved. The supervisor should be a teacher or person who has experience in exam supervision and not the candidate's current teacher, related to the candidate, or coaching the candidate for the CSTP. Any costs associated with supervision will be the responsibility of the candidate. When registering online you must check the box labeled: 'I wish to sit the test at an ACER Special Centre', pay the Overseas Levy and then choose the 'Overseas Special Centre' on the 'Preferences and Exam Centre' page of the online registration (after making payment).
- 3.1.7. Special Sitting Conditions.** Candidates who have documented physical and/or learning disabilities are advised to contact the school at which they are sitting for further advice regarding the provision of special conditions. Please note that the provision of extra time and/or special test forms is the decision of the school and must be finalized by the date provided in the table above. If the candidate requires a Braille format test ACER needs at least eight weeks notice to produce a test.

4. FILLING IN THE ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM

Please read these instructions carefully then complete the ACER Registration Form. It is recommended that parents and candidates complete the online registration form together.

Registration Selection Page

Please select the type of registration you require by selecting the correct statement. For all options apart from the first you will need a username and password that will have been emailed to you.

ACER Registration Form

Please use 'Title Case' for all fields – 'John Smith' not 'john smith' or 'JOHN SMITH'

You will note that some information is required and some is optional – we recommend that candidates complete as much of the information as possible.

Candidate Details

- **Current School**

Insert the name of the school you are attending in the testing year.

- **Current School Principal**

Insert the name of the principal at the school you are attending in the testing year.

- **Religious Denomination**

Write the religious denomination you identify with, where applicable. Some independent schools require this information. Should you have a concern about supplying this information you should check with the school/s to which you are applying as to whether they require this information.

Primary/Secondary Contact Details

Complete the parental information for one or both parents/guardians. Please ensure that the email is entered TWICE correctly or you will not receive your username and password.

It is recommended that you note down the email address you have provided should you maintain more than one email address.

Exam Centre Information

See Exceptions above. Please indicate if you intend to sit a school other than your first preference, if you intend to sit at an ACER Centre, a Special Centre or at an Overseas Centre.

Preparation Material and Overseas Centre Payment

If you wish to purchase Sample Collections of Questions you may do so here.

You should also indicate the purchase of the Overseas Levy here (see Country and Overseas Candidates above). Candidates will only be able to sit the test overseas if payment of the overseas levy has been paid. The overseas levy is payable once only.

Extra Information

Many schools collect further information specific to their school. Please note that these fields will be available to all schools you apply to that choose to collect this information, so ACER recommends supplying generic and not school-specific information. Enter this information in the spaces provided.

Payment

Candidates must submit a separate registration and pay the registration fee to each school for which they apply. After the first registration you should use your username and password that is emailed to you for each subsequent registration

Each school determines its own fee.

In all cases the candidates will be charged the basic registration fee. If you submitted your registration after the deadline you will also pay a Late Registration Surcharge. **SOME SCHOOLS DO NOT ALLOW LATE REGISTRATIONS.** Candidates who will sit the test overseas pay the Overseas Surcharge. This fee is a once only payment made to the first preference school and is in addition to the basic registration fee.

Please note that a registration is not complete until payment is made. You will be emailed a receipt upon successful payment of a registration.

School Preference

Once your credit card payment has been approved you must list the order of preference for this school. Select the order of preference from the drop box (choices range from 1-10). If you have applied for several schools they should all be listed here. You cannot have the same preference number for more than one school. If previous schools you have conducted an online registration for are not listed, you might have registered for the school(s) using a different username and password. ACER will contact you closer to the exam date to clarify your preference order in this case.

Examination Centre

If you are applying for one school only then this will be the default examination centre. If you are applying for more than one school, the school you have chosen as your first preference school will be your default examination centre. For some candidates the examination centre will be an established ACER Centre (either Country Australia or Overseas) or another participating school (see Exceptions 1, 2 and 3 above).

4.1. CLOSING DATE FOR LODGING REGISTRATIONS ONLINE THROUGH A SCHOOL'S WEBSITE

The actual date for the close of registrations will vary slightly from school to school. Make sure you know the closing date for registrations set by all schools to which you have applied. Registrations received by schools after the late fee date will incur a late fee surcharge of \$120* (incl. GST) in addition to the Basic Registration Fee. Once the online registration facility has been closed at a school you will not be able to complete a registration or edit your registration details.

Early registration is appreciated.

* *Some schools may impose a higher surcharge. Check with the school directly.*

4.2. CHANGING EXAMINATION CENTRES

Transfer to another centre after the closing date will only be possible under exceptional circumstances, and then only if examination papers are available at the new centre. ACER and the schools concerned must approve transfers. Please contact the school applied for in the first instance.

5. PROCEDURE ON EXAMINATION DAY

- You must report to the examination centre no later than 8.45 a.m.

When you report to the examination centre, bring two HB or B pencils, a pencil eraser, and two blue or black pens. Use a pen for the Written Expression section. For the other tests you must use an HB or B pencil. Do not bring rulers, mathematical instruments of any kind, programmable watches, mobile phones, photographic or other image/data capturing devices, books or notepaper. All the materials you will need, other than pencils, erasers and pens, are provided at the examination room. You may like to bring something to eat or drink during the break between Test 2 and 3.

5.1. MARKING YOUR ANSWERS

A special answer sheet is provided for the Humanities, and the Mathematics/Science tests. For each question there are four small ovals labelled **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**. Record your answer to each question by marking the oval of your choice with your pencil.

Example (Answer 'B' selected)



If you wish to change an answer, erase it completely and mark the oval corresponding to your new answer.

Note these important points:

- You require a good quality pencil eraser.
- Use only HB or B pencil.
- Do not make any marks on the answer sheet other than in the designated areas.
- Never use ink, ballpoint pen, felt pen or fine-leaded propelling pencil on any part of your answer sheet.

6. REFUND OF REGISTRATION FEE

Only under the most exceptional situations will a refund of the registration fee be considered. If a refund is awarded, a deduction will be made for administrative and clerical processing. Please see the Refunds policy published on our website for further details: www.acer.edu.au/acep/refund.html

7. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION?

ACER will not disclose your personal information to any third party other than the school or schools with whom you registered. ACER may use your test results for subsequent research related to the ACEP program. Names will be separated from data in all cases. Should you wish to find out how to access your personal information you can do so by visiting the ACER Website: www.acer.edu.au/tests and referring to the section 'Privacy Policy'.

Written Expression (30 minutes)

Two topics for writing will be set, and in the 25 minutes allowed you will have time to plan and edit your writing.

The task will be to write on a set topic. What you write can be imaginary or based on real events. You may write in the form of a story, a letter, or a poem. Most importantly it should be short, lively, and interesting to read. Your writing will be assessed on what you have to say, how well you organise your thoughts, and how well you express yourself.

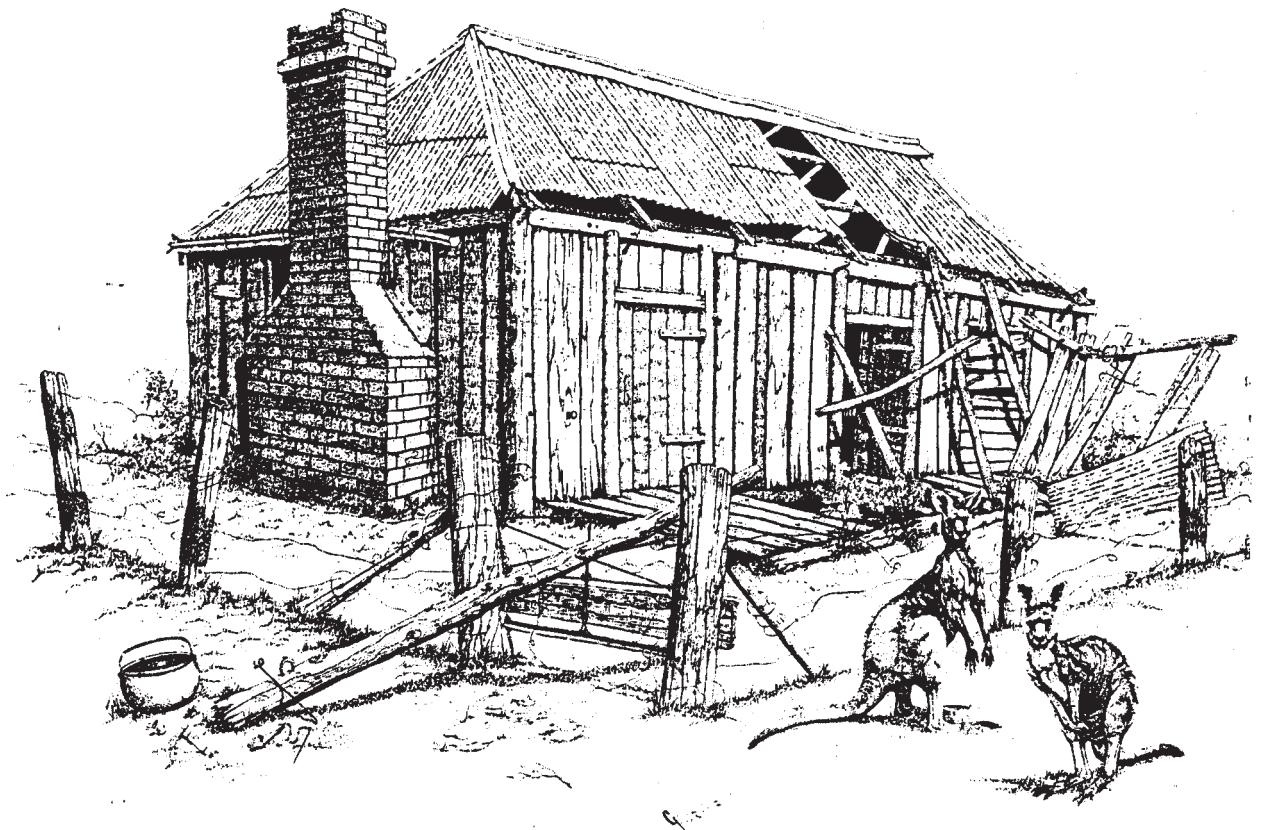
Below is an example of an ACER writing task.

Use the picture below as the basis for a piece of writing.

Write about something that happened or might have happened.

You can write about yourself and people you know, or about imaginary characters and events.

Your writing will be judged on the kinds of situations, characters, events and feelings that you present, and on how well you express yourself and engage the interest of the reader.



Reading and Viewing (45 minutes)

This test asks you to look at written and visual material and answer questions about it. The material will be presented in a variety of forms such as informative writing, poems, stories, diagrams, cartoons or drawings.

All the information you need to answer the questions will be printed in the stimulus material to which the questions refer. The test has several units with a number of questions in each unit.

Here is a practice example:

The following passage was written by a man who works with a film unit which photographs animals in different parts of the world.

In the middle of the watering place, like a huge boulder rolled down through a furrow in the mud, the bulk of a gigantic tortoise loomed out of the dusk. At last, a giant *galapago* in its natural surroundings! I stood amazed in the presence of this prehistoric bulk which rose like a black island from the depths of the mud.

It moved. A tiny head, attached to the hump by a snake-like neck, looked up, and bright brown eyes set in wrinkled skin watched us keenly. Apparently the tortoise did not like what he saw – man his enemy – and with a slow deliberate movement he raised himself up in the mud and began to crawl away.

Five hundred pounds¹, three hundred years old, the oldest living animal: facts and figures ran through my mind. To list his dimensions would do nothing to describe the *galapago*. It was the massive bulk, the bearing of age, the ancient reptilian world that he represented, which impressed me.

The high-domed shell wobbled away, supported by feet like cut-off stovepipes. He ploughed through the bush, dragging a long streamer of jungle vine that was hooked under his shell, crushing the grass, and leaving a wake of trampled undergrowth. His breathing could be heard clearly fifty feet² away. The slowness of prehistoric ages was in his step. He was a symbol of the ancient islands. Undisturbed, he would live to an even greater age. He moved slowly – and why not? He had plenty of time.

A scarlet flycatcher, delicate and finely plumaged, sat on a vine above him, watching him pass, and then darted off in a brilliant flash to catch an insect. It returned to perch on the slowly wobbling carapace of the moving tortoise.

I realized that we had cut our way into the last hidden sanctuary of the giant tortoise. It was a sanctuary where we did not belong.

¹ 500 pounds: about 135 kilograms

² 50 feet: about 17 metres

1 To the writer, the most interesting thing about the tortoise was that it

- A was the largest example of the species.
- B was a living representative of a past age.
- C moved with such ponderous dignity.
- D had never before been confronted by a human being.

- 2 In the first paragraph, the writer conveys his initial impression of the tortoise mainly by
- A concentrating on his own startled reactions.
 - B comparing it with large solid objects.
 - C contrasting the dark coloration of the tortoise with the lighter surroundings.
 - D using scientific language to give an accurate picture of the tortoise.
- 3 The writer uses the description of the flycatcher mainly to
- A point out the contrast between the two creatures.
 - B emphasise how insensitive the tortoise was to external influences.
 - C show the untouched beauty of the sanctuary.
 - D illustrate the friendly nature of the tortoise.
- 4 The tortoise moved along in a manner that was
- A careful and quiet.
 - B precarious and uncertain.
 - C slow but threatening.
 - D lumbering and determined.
- 5 The writer's feelings about finding the tortoise seem to change during the passage.
- Which one of the following pairs of phrases best describes how he felt at the beginning and at the end of the passage?

	<i>beginning</i>	<i>end</i>
A	Concern that the tortoise might not appear	Certainty that he had made a great discovery
B	Fascination with the physical characteristics of the animal	Regret that he would not be able to capture the animal
C	Excitement about the emergence of the tortoise	Recognition that man was an intruder
D	Apprehension that his hiding place would be discovered	Relief that he would be able to escape from the situation

Answers to the Mathematics practice examples

3B 4B 5A 6D

Answers to the Reading and Viewing practice examples

1B 2A 3A 4D 5C

8. THE TEST TIMETABLE

There will be a maximum of four separate tests. Not all schools administer all four tests. Candidates should check with the school which of the following tests they will actually be sitting. The time allowed for each, and the order in which they will be taken are as follows:

- 1. Written Expression**
25 minutes
- 2. Humanities – Comprehension and Interpretation**
40 minutes
- 3. Mathematics**
40 minutes
- 4. Written Expression**
25 minutes

The actual times at which the first test starts and the last test finishes depend on the school. A break will be allowed between tests. Candidates who arrive late for the first test will be admitted only at the discretion of the supervisor. No refunds will be available if candidates arrive late and are not allowed to sit the test as a result.

9. HOW TO DO YOUR BEST IN THE EXAMINATION

Pay clear attention when the Supervisor addresses the candidates and shows you where to record your answers to each test.

Read the instructions on the front cover of each test carefully. It is important for you to read each test question carefully before you start answering it.

Do not rush or you may make careless mistakes. Work steadily. If you find one question too difficult do not spend a long time on it. Leave it out but be sure you mark your next answer against the right question. Every question is of equal value for scoring marks.

If you have four alternative answers to choose from, and you are sure two of them are wrong but cannot make up your mind about the other two, mark the letter of the answer you think most likely to be correct. You may have time to come back and think about the question again but in the meantime you have done the best you can. No marks will be deducted for incorrect answers.

The tests are not meant to be easy. Although the questions are difficult they do not require factual information beyond the last year of primary school. You need to be able to think about what you have learnt and apply this knowledge in new situations. This ability is developed over a long period of time as the combined result of sound methods on the part of the teacher and interest and effort on behalf of the pupil.

Do not worry if you know you have left questions out and cannot finish. Many others may also find the tests hard.

If you do reach the end of a test, look back over your work. You may have left out some questions, or wish to change some of your answers.

10. WHAT ARE THE TESTS LIKE?

The test items attempt to assess the following skills: analysis, comprehension, interpretation and reasoning. Candidates are advised to work carefully through the questions appropriate to their level. The answer to each question is clearly important, as is the method by which you arrive at the answer.

Extensive practice on tests of this type will not necessarily improve test scores. Your best preparation is to read widely and think critically. There are sample questions enclosed in this bulletin. If you would like further practice, you could visit ACER's website at www.acer.edu.au/tests/scholarship/ACEP/practice.html. You will find a section 'ACEP Sample Questions' where, for a fee, you can purchase Sample Collection of Questions Volumes 1 & 2. These are printed publications that are mailed to you. You also have the opportunity to purchase Sample Questions Online. These are a different set of questions again. They are an interactive online assessment that cannot be downloaded and are non-printable. You can also purchase this material when you register online for a school (see 'Preparation Material Purchase' above).

10.1. WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Two topics for writing will be set and they will allow you to use different styles of writing. They are presented as two separate tests. About one and a half A4 pages of ruled paper will be provided for each, but you are not asked to make the pieces of writing any specific length, and quality is more important than length. This part of the test is concerned with your ability to express your thoughts and feelings in writing. What you have to say and the way you say it will be assessed.

The stimulus for each given topic may be a picture, a statement or a combination of the two. In general terms it might be said that the stimulus will allow candidates to: tell a real or imagined story; describe a situation, incident or scene; outline or explain something; and express a point of view or make an argument.

The stimulus material you are given must be the basis of your writing, and you will be penalised if you seem to be rehearsing a piece of writing that is not developed from the stimulus. You should respond to the stimulus in the way that is most interesting to you, and which best displays your ability to write and express yourself. Some topics might suggest that you write a story; others might suggest a description, a conversation, a discussion or a poem. Whichever style you choose, it is clear, lively, vivid and interesting writing that is being sought. It is important to spend some time thinking about each of the topics. If you finish your writing before time is up, use the rest of the time to go over your work and to make any alterations that you feel would improve it.

In assessing written expression, markers at ACER consider the following issues:

10.1.1. THOUGHT AND CONTENT

(The quality of what is said in the piece of writing)

- what is made of and developed from the task
- the kinds of thoughts and feelings offered in response to the task



10.1.2. STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

(The quality of the structure and organisation developed to say something)

- the shape and form of the piece
- the sequence and cohesion of the piece

10.1.3. EXPRESSION, STYLE AND MECHANICS

(The quality of the language used to organise and present what is said)

- the effectiveness and appropriateness of the language
- the expressiveness and fluency of the language
- the control of the mechanics of English

10.2. HUMANITIES – COMPREHENSION and INTERPRETATION

This test asks you to look at written and visual material and answer questions on it. The topics for the material may be drawn from subject areas such as English, Art, History, Geography and Social Studies, though no special knowledge in these areas is assumed. All the information you need to answer the questions is printed on the paper, so if you do not know or understand something you may be able to work out what it means from the stimulus material.

The test contains a number of units with several questions in each unit. Overall there will be about 40 multiple-choice questions in this test. We do not expect all candidates to answer every one of them correctly. Each question has four alternative answers, marked **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**.

10.3. MATHEMATICS and SCIENCE

This test consists of 28 multiple-choice questions. For Level 1 candidates, all the questions are on aspects of mathematics. For Level 2 and Level 3 candidates, half the questions are on mathematics topics and half on science topics.

This test attempts to measure mathematical and scientific abilities, in contrast to tests of school achievement in these areas. Consequently, the material used for the questions in this test is selected from a wide variety of sources, and may differ from standard school-based curriculum materials.