

sst

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN

CANDIDATES AND PARENTS SHOULD READ THIS BULLETIN CAREFULLY

I. WHAT IS SST?

The Scholarship Selection Test (SST) allows independent schools around Australia to choose a testing date which best suits their school program. The SST consists of a sequence of academic ability tests used to select students for the award of a scholarship. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) produces these tests, supplies them to schools, marks candidates' papers, and reports results to the schools. ACER does not report results directly to parents.

2. FILLING IN THE REGISTRATION

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

- **Scholarship level applied for**

Level 1 students sit the test in their final year of primary school during the testing year for entry into first year of secondary in the following year (entry into Year 7 in NSW, ACT, TAS, VIC and WA or Year 8 in QLD and SA).

Level 2 students sit the test in their second year of secondary schooling during the testing year for entry into third year of secondary in the following year (entry into Year 9 in NSW, ACT, TAS, VIC and WA or Year 10 in QLD and SA).

Level 3 students sit the test during Year 10 in the year of school entry (all states).

Please check that the school you are applying for offers the scholarship level you require. Not all schools offer all levels. You will not receive a refund if you apply at an incorrect level to a school that does not offer the level you require.

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 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. To ensure you receive your username and password please enter your correct email address TWICE in the spaces provided. It is recommended that you note down the email address you have provided should you maintain more than one email address.

Examination Centre

Some schools may require you to select an examination centre. Please contact the school if you have any questions regarding this.

Preparation Material Purchase

If you wish to purchase Sample Collections of Questions or Online Sample Questions you may do so here. Please note that the Online Sample Questions are an interactive online assessment that cannot be downloaded and are non-printable.

Extra Information

Many schools collect further information specific to their school. 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.

Each school determines its own fee.

In all cases the candidates will be charged the Basic Registration Fee. Candidates who will sit the tests at country centres may pay a surcharge fixed by the school. Payment for online registration is completed using a credit card

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

2.1. CLOSING DATE FOR LODGING REGISTRATIONS WITH THE SCHOOL

The actual date for the close of registrations will vary from school to school. Make sure you know the closing date for registrations set by all schools to which you have applied. 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.

2.2. 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: http://www.acer.edu.au/tests/scholarship/sst/refund_policy.html

2.3. 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 PSP 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.html and referring to the section 'Privacy'.

3. PROCEDURE ON THE DAY OF THE EXAMINATION

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 a break.

4. 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**
(SST Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3) 25 minutes
- 2. Humanities – Comprehension and Interpretation**
(SST Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3) 40 minutes
- 3. Mathematics**
(SST Level 1) 40 minutes
Mathematics and Science
(SST Level 2 and Level 3) 40 minutes
- 4. Written Expression**
(SST Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3) 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.

5. 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/sst/practice.html. You will find a section 'SST 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).

5.1. 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:

5.1.1. 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

5.1.2. 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

5.1.3. 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

5.2. 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**.

5.3. 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.

5.4. 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 an 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.

Reading and Viewing (40 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 pounds,¹ 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 realised 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.

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- 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 colouration 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

1C 2C 3B 4B 5A 6D

Answers to the Reading and Viewing practice examples

1B 2A 3A 4D 5C