

What can you be doing with your child at home to start preparing for the ISEB pre-tests?

English 11+ pre-test

1. Your child should read a wide range of texts non-fiction and fiction. The texts should challenge your child's vocabulary. It is a good idea to read short stories, poems and quality newspaper articles.
2. Keep a notebook of new words your child has learnt when reading the range of texts. (Aim for 5 new words per text.)
3. Ensure that your child is secure with the main parts of speech:
Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions (You can use flashcards to help with this).
4. Revise and learn the figurative language techniques:
Metaphors, similes, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, repetition (You can use flashcards to help with this).
5. Write out index cards for punctuation rules:
Commas, apostrophes (contraction and possessive), speech marks, parentheses, compound sentences.
6. Make synonym flashcards for:
a) Ask b) bad c) big d) small e) good f) happy g) sad

Mathematics 11+ pre-test

1. Practise times tables until they can be recited perfectly – you can play games doing this.
2. Practise mental arithmetic skills – help your child by testing them.
3. Ensure that your child knows the definition of each term and also knows the relevant formula.
4. Practise questions that involve problem solving and words. Write out the word formula as an equation and then solve it to find the solution.

Non-verbal reasoning for 11+ pre-tests

The skills needed are very similar to some of the mathematics' skills.

The spotting of changes in patterns and relationships of between:

- shapes, lines, arrows, shading, patterns and line styles
- numbers, scale and proportion and angles
- positions and directions, rotations, reflections and translations

Useful skills

- Learn times tables off by heart.
- Know number bonds.
- Practise mental maths whenever the opportunity arises. For example, add and subtract numbers on car number plates. Play games that require concentration and thought: Jenga, building blocks, Lego and card towers.
- Jigsaw puzzles – have a puzzle race, talk through the options with your child.

Mathematics 11+ pre-test continued

Assisting with logical thinking

- Talk through the questions: find the similarities with each option and spot the difference
- Practise drawing shapes and then drawing their mirror images. You can do this with emojis to make it more enjoyable
- Playing games such as chess, draughts, quizzes, spot the difference, Sudoku. All these games help to illuminate options and reach logical conclusions which are vital skills.

Verbal reasoning for the 11+ pre-tests

Verbal reasoning is all about solving word and language-based problems.

This is not just about spelling and words it also involves code breaking.

Questions fall into the following categories

- constructing words (English)
- understanding word meaning (English)
- working with numbers and algebra (maths and English)
- applying algebra skills (maths and English)
- developing logic skills (critical thinking in maths and English)

Useful skills

1. Knowing what the terms mean that will come up in verbal reasoning
 - a) A compound word
 - b) Suffix
 - c) Prefix
 - d) Synonym
 - e) Antonym
 - f) Homonym

BEWARE OF HOMOGRAPHS – these are words that are spelt in the same way but have different meanings and may or may not be pronounced in the same way.

Examples: close, content, invalid, object, sow, use

2. Keep reading

This will improve language skills and will be an exposure to lots of new ideas.

3. Activities and games to boost skills

a) Improving pattern and relationship skills

- Mental arithmetic – it will help to spot patterns and relationships between numbers.
- Times tables – it will help to spot connections between numbers quickly and accurately.
- Quick fire addition, subtraction, multiplication and division questions - this can be done in the car on the way to school or on the way to the supermarket or you could do this on a walk.

b) Improving the ability to analyse and think logically

Play word games.

- Bananagrams, Boggle and Scrabble all help with anagram questions. They will improve vocabulary and spelling and problem-solving skills, develop memory and improve concentration.
- Crosswords are good for learning new words and improving spellings
- 'Spot the odd word out' which encourages logical thinking
- Play word joust – choose a word then each person takes it in turns to say another word that has the same meaning (synonym). The game comes to an end when no more words can be found.
- Look at the letters on car number plates and try to make a word out of the letters. A further challenge is to try to make words using the letters in the same order.



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