

ISEB Common Pre-Test Style Practice Papers



English (11), Maths (10) and Verbal Reasoning (9) • multiple choice

Name

Primary school

Date

Date of birth

How the real ISEB Pre-Test works. The Common Pre-Test is an online, adaptive test used by many independent senior schools as a shared first stage: your child sits it once and results go to every school on their list. There are four sections: **English** (40 min), **Maths** (40 min), **Non-Verbal Reasoning** (30 min) and **Verbal Reasoning** (25 min), totalling 2 hours 15 minutes. Because it is adaptive, the real test changes question difficulty based on each answer given, which a printed paper cannot reproduce.

Section	Real timing	Questions here
English	40 min	11
Mathematics	40 min	10
Verbal Reasoning	25 min	9
Non-Verbal Reasoning	30 min	see below

What this paper does not cover. ISEB's Non-Verbal Reasoning section (30 minutes) needs dedicated, verified figures to be worth practising, so we point you to our full [Non-Verbal Reasoning paper](#) and [spatial reasoning hub](#) instead of reproducing it badly here. ISEB also does not publish a familiarisation booklet with worked verbal reasoning examples, unlike some regional tests, so the Verbal Reasoning section here uses classic, well-established 11+ reasoning formats.

Please read. This is an original Pip practice paper written to match ISEB's own published test framework. It is not a past paper: ISEB's own adaptive online format cannot be reproduced on paper, and the real test's exact question types are not published. Pip is not affiliated with, endorsed by or connected to ISEB, the Independent Schools Examinations Board.



English

About 15 minutes • 11 questions • the real ISEB English section is 40 minutes and longer than this sample

COMPREHENSION

The Clockmaker's Apprentice

1. Mr Aldous had not taken on an apprentice in eleven years, and the whole street knew it, which was why Priya's first morning in his workshop drew more curious faces to the window than she liked. Inside, the shop smelled of oil and brass, and every surface held a clock in some state of undress: cases open, wheels exposed, tiny 5. springs coiled and waiting like held breath. Mr Aldous did not look up when she entered. "Sweep first," he said, "then watch. Do not touch anything that ticks." Priya swept for what felt like an hour before he finally waved her over to the bench, where he was easing a mechanism no bigger than a matchbox out of a pocket watch. "This," he said, holding it to the light, "took a man in Switzerland four months to 10. build, and it will outlive both of us if nobody rushes it." She understood then that patience was not a virtue in this room. It was the entire job.

An original passage written for this practice paper.

- 1 Why did more people than usual look in through the workshop window that morning?
 - ☐ A Mr Aldous had a new clock on display
 - ☐ B It was Priya's first day, and he had not taken an apprentice in eleven years
 - ☐ C A famous customer was visiting
 - ☐ D The shop was having a sale
 - ☐ E There had been an accident
- 2 What was the first task Mr Aldous gave Priya?
 - ☐ A Fixing a pocket watch
 - ☐ B Sweeping the workshop
 - ☐ C Polishing brass
 - ☐ D Watching him work
 - ☐ E Answering the door
- 3 Which of these is closest in meaning to "undress" as used in line 4 ("every surface held a clock in some state of undress")?
 - ☐ A Being cleaned
 - ☐ B Being sold
 - ☐ C Having its casing opened and parts exposed
 - ☐ D Being broken beyond repair
 - ☐ E Being wound up
- 4 What can be inferred about how Mr Aldous feels about the mechanism he shows Priya?
 - ☐ A He thinks it is ordinary and unremarkable
 - ☐ B He is frustrated it took so long to build
 - ☐ C He deeply respects the care and time it took to make
 - ☐ D He wants to sell it quickly
 - ☐ E He does not trust it to work
- 5 What does the final sentence, "It was the entire job," mainly suggest about patience in Mr Aldous's workshop?
 - ☐ A Patience is one skill among many needed for the job
 - ☐ B Patience is not important in clockmaking
 - ☐ C Patience is the single most essential quality for this work
 - ☐ D Priya lacks patience
 - ☐ E The job requires speed above all else

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

6 Which sentence uses the correct form of the verb?

- ☐ A The team of scientists were studying the results. ☐ B The team of scientists was studying the results.
☐ C The team of scientists is studying the results, were they not?
☐ D The team of scientists have been study the results. ☐ E The team of scientists be studying the results.

7 Which sentence is correctly punctuated?

- ☐ A The librarys new books have arrived. ☐ B The library's new books have arrived.
☐ C The librarys' new books have arrived. ☐ D The library's' new books have arrived.
☐ E The librarys new book's have arrived.

8 Which word correctly completes the sentence? "Although she practised for hours, she still could not play the piece ____."

- ☐ A perfect ☐ B perfectly ☐ C perfection ☐ D perfecting ☐ E perfectness

9 Which of these is a complete, grammatically correct sentence?

- ☐ A Running quickly through the rain. ☐ B Because the bus was late. ☐ C She waited patiently at the bus stop.
☐ D Whenever it starts to rain heavily. ☐ E The bus, which was late, and cold.

10 Which word is spelled correctly?

- ☐ A Enviromment ☐ B Environment ☐ C Enviroment ☐ D Enviornment ☐ E Envirnoment

11 Which sentence uses formal language most appropriately for a letter to a headteacher?

- ☐ A Hiya, just wanted to say thanks for the trip! ☐ B Thank you so much, it was well good.
☐ C I am writing to thank you for organising the recent school trip. ☐ D Cheers for sorting the trip out.
☐ E That trip was awesome, thanks a bunch.



Mathematics

About 10 minutes · 10 questions · no calculator · the real ISEB maths section is 40 minutes and longer than this sample

1 What is the value of the 7 in 47,208?

- ☐ A 7 ☐ B 70 ☐ C 700 ☐ D 7,000 ☐ E 70,000

2 Work out: $8 + 4 \times 6 - 3$

- ☐ A 69 ☐ B 29 ☐ C 23 ☐ D 32 ☐ E 35

3 Work out $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{5}$, giving your answer as a fraction in its simplest form.

- ☐ A $\frac{19}{20}$ ☐ B $\frac{4}{9}$ ☐ C $\frac{17}{20}$ ☐ D $\frac{7}{10}$ ☐ E $\frac{3}{10}$

4 Find 25% of 84.

- ☐ A 16 ☐ B 21 ☐ C 25 ☐ D 30 ☐ E 31

5 How many millimetres are there in 4.6 metres?

- ☐ A 46 ☐ B 460 ☐ C 4,600 ☐ D 4.6 ☐ E 0.46



- 6** A quadrilateral has three angles of 90° , 100° and 85° . What is the size of the fourth angle?
☐ A 75 ☐ B 85 ☐ C 100 ☐ D 275 ☐ E 360
- 7** Find the mean of these numbers: 12, 18, 9, 15, 21
☐ A 13 ☐ B 15 ☐ C 18 ☐ D 21 ☐ E 75
- 8** Notebooks cost £3.5 each. Zara buys 6 of them, then gets 15% off the total for being a loyalty member. How much does she pay?
☐ A £21.00 ☐ B £17.85 ☐ C £18.85 ☐ D £20.85 ☐ E £24.15
- 9** Red and blue counters are mixed in the ratio 4:5. There are 45 counters altogether. How many are blue?
☐ A 20 ☐ B 25 ☐ C 22.5 ☐ D 5 ☐ E 45
- 10** If a number machine squares the number you put in and then subtracts 1, what comes out if you put in 6?
☐ A 33 ☐ B 35 ☐ C 41 ☐ D 36 ☐ E 11

Verbal Reasoning

About 10 minutes • 9 questions • the real ISEB verbal section is 25 minutes and longer than this sample

- 1 Find the next letter in the sequence: B, D, F, H, ?
☐ A J ☐ B I ☐ C K ☐ D H ☐ E L
- 2 Find the next letter in the sequence: Z, W, T, Q, ?
☐ A N ☐ B M ☐ C O ☐ D L ☐ E P
- 3 Find the next letter in the sequence: A, C, F, J, ?
☐ A O ☐ B N ☐ C P ☐ D M ☐ E Q
- 4 Find the next number in the sequence: 3, 7, 15, 31, ?
☐ A 63 ☐ B 61 ☐ C 65 ☐ D 59 ☐ E 68
- 5 Find the next number in the sequence: 2, 6, 12, 20, ?
☐ A 30 ☐ B 28 ☐ C 32 ☐ D 26 ☐ E 35
- 6 Find the next number in the sequence: 100, 91, 83, 76, ?
☐ A 70 ☐ B 68 ☐ C 72 ☐ D 66 ☐ E 75
- 7 Puppy is to Dog as Kitten is to ____
☐ A Cat ☐ B Kitten ☐ C Mouse ☐ D Paw ☐ E Milk
- 8 Author is to Book as Composer is to ____
☐ A Piano ☐ B Music ☐ C Song ☐ D Note ☐ E Orchestra
- 9 Foot is to Leg as Hand is to ____
☐ A Finger ☐ B Glove ☐ C Arm ☐ D Wrist ☐ E Palm

Answer sheet

Circle or mark your chosen letter for each question.

English 1 to 11

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
3	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
4	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
5	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
6	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
7	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
9	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
10	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
11	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

Maths 1 to 10

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
3	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
4	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
5	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
6	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
7	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
9	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
10	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

Verbal Reasoning 1 to 9

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
3	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
4	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
5	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
6	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
7	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
9	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

English answers

- Q1 • B** The passage explains that Mr Aldous "had not taken on an apprentice in eleven years, and the whole street knew it", which is why Priya's arrival drew attention.
- Q2 • B** He tells her plainly: "Sweep first," he said, "then watch."
- Q3 • C** The passage goes on to describe "cases open, wheels exposed", which is what "undress" figuratively means here: the clocks are shown with their inner workings uncovered.
- Q4 • C** He describes it taking "a man in Switzerland four months to build" and says it "will outlive both of us if nobody rushes it", showing real respect for the craftsmanship and patience involved.
- Q5 • C** By saying patience "was not a virtue" but "the entire job", the passage stresses that patience is not just helpful but essential and central to the work.
- Q6 • B** "Team" is a singular collective noun here, so it takes the singular verb "was", even though it refers to multiple people.
- Q7 • B** "Library's" correctly shows singular possession (the books belonging to the library) with the apostrophe before the s.
- Q8 • B** The word describes how she plays, so it needs to be an adverb: "perfectly", not the adjective "perfect".
- Q9 • C** Only "She waited patiently at the bus stop" has a subject and a full verb and expresses a complete thought. The others are sentence fragments.
- Q10 • B** Environment has an "n" before the final "ment": en-vi-ron-ment.
- Q11 • C** A letter to a headteacher calls for formal register. "I am writing to thank you for organising the recent school trip" avoids slang and informal phrasing.

Mathematics answers

- Q1 • D** 7 is in the thousands column of 47,208, so its value is 7,000.
- Q2 • B** Multiplication is done before addition and subtraction: $4 \times 6 = 24$. Then $8 + 24 - 3 = 29$.
- Q3 • A** A common denominator of 20 gives $\frac{15}{20} + \frac{4}{20} = \frac{19}{20}$, which is already in simplest form since 19 and 20 share no common factor.
- Q4 • B** 25% is a quarter, so $84 \div 4 = 21$.
- Q5 • C** 1 metre = 1,000 mm, so $4.6 \text{ m} = 4.6 \times 1,000 = 4,600 \text{ mm}$.
- Q6 • B** Angles in a quadrilateral total 360° . $360 - 90 - 100 - 85 = 85^\circ$.
- Q7 • B** Add the numbers: $12 + 18 + 9 + 15 + 21 = 75$. Divide by how many there are (5): 15.
- Q8 • B** $6 \times \text{£}3.5 = \text{£}21.00$. A 15% discount means she pays 85%: $\text{£}21.00 \times 0.85 = \text{£}17.85$.
- Q9 • B** 45 shared into $4 + 5 = 9$ parts is 5 per part. Blue is the larger share, 5 parts: $5 \times 5 = 25$.
- Q10 • B** 6 squared is 36, then $36 - 1 = 35$.

Verbal Reasoning answers

- Q1 • A** The rule is each letter moves 2 places forward in the alphabet. This gives J.
- Q2 • A** The rule is each letter moves 3 places back in the alphabet. This gives N.
- Q3 • A** The rule is the gap between letters grows by one each time: +2, +3, +4, then +5. This gives O.
- Q4 • A** The rule is double the number, then add 1, giving 63.
- Q5 • A** The rule is the amount added grows by 2 each time: +4, +6, +8, then +10, giving 30.
- Q6 • A** The rule is the amount subtracted shrinks by 1 each time: -9, -8, -7, then -6, giving 70.
- Q7 • A** A puppy grows into a dog, and a kitten grows into a cat. Both pairs show a young animal and the adult it becomes.
- Q8 • B** An author creates a book, and a composer creates music. Both pairs link a creator to the general thing they create.
- Q9 • C** A foot is attached to the end of a leg, and a hand is attached to the end of an arm.



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