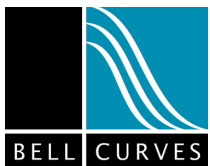


# 7 Winning Strategies

to beat the SSAT<sup>®</sup>  
and the ISEE<sup>®</sup>



**Bell Curves**

Get Ahead of the Curve!

The SSAT<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the Secondary School Admission Test Board, Inc., which was not involved in the production of and does not endorse this product.  
The ISEE<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the Educational Records Bureau, which was not involved in the production of and does not endorse this product.

# SSAT Registration

**When is the SSAT offered?** Tests are offered on 8 national test dates each year, from October to June. Schools and organizations can apply to administer the test on additional dates through Flex Test.

**How often should I take the SSAT?** You may take the exam as often as you like, but schools will be able to see all test scores, and some schools may have specific policies about how often you can take the exam. Check with the schools you are considering for more information.

**How much is the test?** The Elementary level SSAT costs \$80. The SSAT Middle and Upper exams each cost \$116.00. Fee waivers may be available for families who qualify. Contact the school to which you are applying for more details.

**How is my score reported?** When you register for the SSAT, you can select up to 10 schools to receive your scores. After you have completed the test, you can request additional reports online for free.

**For more info:** Visit [www.ssat.org](http://www.ssat.org)

# ISEE Registration

**When is the ISEE offered?** There are no national test dates and scheduling is flexible. Test dates are scheduled by each testing center or regional consortium.

**How often should I take the ISEE?** The ISEE can be taken once every six months.

**How much is the test?** The cost is \$98.00. Fee waivers may be available for families who qualify. Contact the school to which you are applying for more information.

**How is my score reported?** When you register, you must select at least one school to receive your scores, with a maximum of six. After you have completed the test, you can request additional reports online for \$25 per testing date.

**For more info:** Visit [erblearn.org](http://erblearn.org)



# Know the Tests!

While the content of the tests are similar, the ISEE and SSAT have unique formats and scoring nuances. Knowing the details of each will help you perform better.

		SSAT	ISEE
Scoring	Guessing Penalty	Each wrong answer deducts 1/4 of a point from your raw score.	Each wrong answer <b>does not</b> add or subtract points from your raw score.
	Skipping	Unless you can eliminate at least one answer choice, <b>do not</b> guess.	Since there is no guessing penalty, fill in all the answers.
	Scores	500 – 800 for each section 0 – 99 percentiles	760 – 940 for each section 0 – 99 percentiles 1 – 9 Stanines
Sections	Math	2 sections	2 sections
	Reading	1 section	1 section
	Verbal	1 section	1 section
	Writing Sample	1 essay (not graded)	1 essay (not graded)
Question Types	Math	Problem Solving	Problem Solving, Quantitative Comparisons
	Reading	Passage-based Comprehension	Passage-based Comprehension
	Verbal	Synonyms, Analogies	Synonyms, Sentence Completions

The main factor in deciding which test to take is to determine which test is accepted by your schools of choice. Typically, boarding schools take the SSAT and day schools accept the ISEE, but some schools accept either. In that case, try taking a practice test of each type under timed conditions to determine which test works best for you.

## Build your endurance with real practice!

Like an athlete, you will perform at your best only if you train and practice realistically. The SSAT and ISEE each consist of almost three hours of testing. Taking practice tests will build your endurance and stamina.

	SSAT (Middle & Upper)	ISEE (Middle & Upper)
Section 1	Quantitative 25 Questions 30 Minutes	Verbal Reasoning 40 Questions 20 Minutes
Section 2	Reading Comp 40 Questions 40 Minutes	Quantitative Reasoning 37 Questions 35 Minutes
Section 3	Verbal 60 Questions 30 Minutes	Reading Comp 36 Questions 35 Minutes
Section 4	Quantitative 25 Questions 30 Minutes	Math Achievement 47 Questions 40 Minutes
Unscored Essay	25 Minutes (typically administered first)	30 Minutes (typically administered last)
Total	2 hours 35 minutes	2 hours 40 minutes

The ISEE has 3 levels - Lower for current 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, Middle for current 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders and Upper for 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> graders. The Lower test is 2 hours 20 minutes.

The SSAT has 3 levels - Elementary for current 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, Middle for current 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and Upper for current 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> grades. The Elementary test was introduced in 2012 and is 1 hour 50 minutes

## Work smarter, not harder...

Most students attempt to answer every question on the SSAT, but shouldn't! To get a great score, you should focus on achieving the highest possible accuracy rather than finishing as quickly as possible.

### SSAT Scoring

<b>Jane Jones</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Question</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
		<b>Correct</b>	E	A	B	A	A	E	E	C	C	A	D	C	E	D	C	B	E	A	D	C	C	A	B	E	D		
		<b>Student</b>	✓	✓	E	C	D	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	B	E	✓	C	✓	A	A	✓	B	✓	E	✓	D	✓	✓		
	<b>4</b>	<b>Question</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		
	<b>Correct</b>	D	C	A	B	C	C	E	E	D	B	D	B	C	D	E	A	D	E	D	A	C	E	E	A	B			
	<b>Student</b>	✓	E	✓	✓	B	E	A	A	✓	✓	B	A	A	B	B	✓	✓	B	C	✓	D	D	✓	B	C			
	Quant section results: RAW SCORE: 15      Total Correct: 22      Total Wrong: 28      Total Skipped: 0																												

<b>Belle Curves</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Question</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
		<b>Correct</b>	E	A	B	A	A	E	E	C	C	A	D	C	E	D	C	B	E	A	D	C	C	A	B	E	D		
		<b>Student</b>	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	B	✓	✓	C	✓	E	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓		
	<b>4</b>	<b>Question</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		
	<b>Correct</b>	D	C	A	B	C	C	E	E	D	B	D	B	C	D	E	A	D	E	D	A	C	E	E	A	B			
	<b>Student</b>	✓	✓	-	C	A	✓	D	✓	C	-	✓	✓	✓	B	✓	-	B	A	✓	-	-	D	-	-	✓			
	Quant section results: RAW SCORE: 21      Total Correct: 24      Total Wrong: 12      Total Skipped: 14																												

**Raw Scores**

Correct Answers = +1  
 Wrong Answers = -1/4  
 Blank = 0

SSAT Scaled Scores (Upper Level)											
Score	Reading	Quant	Verbal	Score	Reading	Math	English	Score	Reading	Math	English
53	800	-	-	35	698	725	722	17	602	626	614
52	796	-	-	34	693	720	716	16	596	620	608
51	785	-	-	33	688	715	710	15	590	614	602
50	779	800	-	32	683	710	704	14	585	608	596
49	776	800	-	31	677	704	698	13	580	602	590
48	769	800	-	30	671	698	692	12	575	596	584
47	764	794	-	29	666	692	686	11	569	590	578
46	758	788	-	28	661	684	680	10	563	584	572
45	752	782	-	27	656	678	674	9	557	579	566
44	747	777	-	26	650	672	668	8	551	574	560
43	742	772	-	25	644	668	662	7	545	569	554
42	737	767	-	24	639	663	656	6	539	563	548
41	731	761	-	23	634	658	650	5	533	557	542
40	725	755	800	22	629	653	644	4	528	552	536
39	720	750	782	21	623	647	638	3	523	547	530
38	715	745	767	20	617	641	632	2	518	542	524
37	710	740	752	19	612	636	626	1	512	536	518
36	704	736	737	18	607	631	620	0	506	530	512

You can increase your score by slowing down and focusing on the easy and medium questions and skipping the harder questions. Developing a solid pacing plan will increase your score!

## ...by focusing on accuracy, not speed!

There is no guessing penalty on the ISEE, which means you should *answer* every question. But that doesn't mean you have to *spend time* on every question. Since ISEE questions are not in a predictable order of difficulty, you should skip the hard questions and try them later. If you are running out of time, guess.

### ISEE Scoring

Sam Smith

Verbal Reasoning		Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		Correct	B	C	C	A	C	A	B	B	D	A	D	C	C	B	D	A	B	D	B	D
Student	✓	D	✓	-	-	B	✓	✓	C	B	B	✓	A	✓	C	-	-	✓	C	B		
Verbal Reasoning		Question	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
		Correct	B	C	A	B	C	C	B	D	D	B	D	B	C	D	A	A	D	C	D	A
Student	✓	✓	-	✓	B	E	A	B	C	✓	B	-	✓	✓	D	✓	-	-	-	-		
Section 1 results: RAW SCORE: 14			Total Correct: 14					Total Wrong: 16					Total Skipped: 10									

Belle Curves

Verbal Reasoning		Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		Correct	B	C	C	A	C	A	B	B	D	A	D	C	C	B	D	A	B	D	B	D
Student	✓	D	✓	✓	C	B	✓	✓	C	B	B	✓	A	✓	C	✓	✓	✓	C	B		
Verbal Reasoning		Question	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
		Correct	B	C	A	B	C	C	B	D	D	B	D	B	C	D	A	A	D	C	D	A
Student	✓	✓	✓	✓	B	✓	A	✓	C	✓	B	✓	✓	C	D	✓	B	✓	✓	C		
Section 1 results: RAW SCORE: 22			Total Correct: 22					Total Wrong: 18					Total Skipped: 0									

#### Raw Scores

Correct Answers = +1  
Wrong Answers = 0  
Blank = 0

#### ISEE Scaled Scores

Raw Score	Verbal Reasoning	Quant Reasoning	Reading	Math	Raw Score	Verbal Reasoning	Quant Reasoning	Reading	Math
...	-	-	-	...	16	855-885	861-891	857-887	850-880
35	910-940	-	-	901-931	15	852-882	858-888	853-883	847-877
34	907-937	-	-	898-928	14	849-879	854-884	849-879	845-875
33	904-934	-	-	896-926	13	846-876	851-881	845-875	842-872
...	...	...	...	...	12	844-874	847-877	841-871	839-869
23	875-905	884-914	883-913	869-899	11	841-871	844-874	838-868	837-867
22	873-903	881-911	879-909	866-896	10	838-868	840-870	834-864	834-864
21	870-900	878-908	875-905	863-893	9	835-865	837-867	830-860	831-861
20	867-897	874-904	872-902	861-891	8	832-862	833-863	827-857	828-858
19	864-894	871-901	868-898	858-888	7	829-859	830-860	823-853	826-856
18	861-891	868-898	864-894	855-885	6	826-856	827-857	819-849	823-853
17	858-888	864-894	860-890	853-883	...	...	...	...	...

When taking the ISEE, you can skip harder questions and come back to them once you've answered all the questions you know. If you still can't do them or are running out of time, GUESS! With the ISEE, leave nothing blank.

## Estimate to simplify calculations!

SSAT and ISEE math questions often look more difficult than they are. Estimation and taking advantage of the multiple choice answers make the questions much easier.

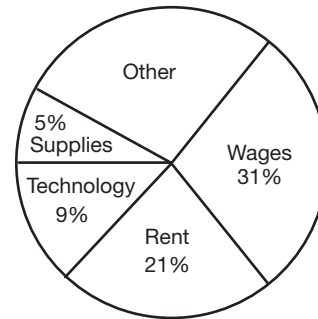
1. Which of the following is equal to  $\frac{3}{8}$  of 32?

- (A) 4
- (B) 8
- (C) 12
- (D) 38
- (E) 96

2. Mr. Chan purchased 841 square yards of cloth at a cost of \$14,297 to make dresses. How much did Mr. Chan spend per square yard of cloth?

- (A) \$21.25
- (B) \$17.00
- (C) \$8.25
- (D) \$5.00
- (E) \$2.75

OFFICE BUDGET ALLOCATION



3. If the monthly office budget is \$30,000, what is the amount spent each month on rent?

- (A) \$3,100
- (B) \$4,200
- (C) \$6,300
- (D) \$6,600
- (E) \$9,800

Answers: C, B, C

Eliminating even one answer choice puts the odds in your favor and can increase your score.

## Answer questions in your own words first!

Ignore the choices at first so you don't get distracted and fall into traps.

### SENTENCE COMPLETIONS (ISEE)

4. Because the evidence against the criminal was so insufficient, the presiding judge was not ----- by it.
- (A) convinced
  - (B) surprised
  - (C) aggravated
  - (D) entertained
5. Hardly -----, the company's new product shares many design elements with previous models.
- (A) detrimental
  - (B) anachronistic
  - (C) innovative
  - (D) banal
6. To adequately portray the impact of Martin Luther King Jr.'s fight for civil rights in a short presentation, Susan had to ----- the most ----- achievements in his life.
- (A) repudiate . . . trite
  - (B) compare . . . profound
  - (C) trivialize . . . notable
  - (D) emphasize . . . significant

Answers: A, C, C

Learning vocabulary words will help your performance in sentence completions, analogies, synonyms, and passage-based reading.



## Make a sentence!

Know what you are looking for before you try to find it. A sentence will allow you to express the relationship between the words.

7. Mountain is to peak as

- (A) hair is to head
- (B) house is to roof
- (C) moon is to sun
- (D) ice is to pole
- (E) water is to fountain

9. Librarian is to library as

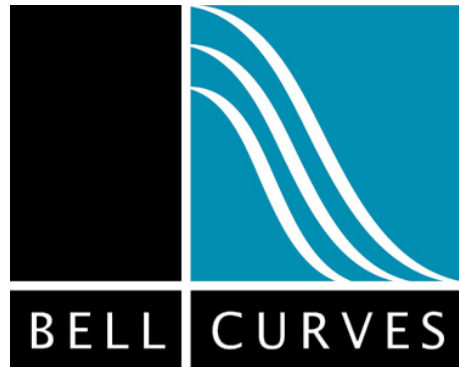
- (A) patron is to studio
- (B) aficionado is to gallery
- (C) advocate is to workshop
- (D) curator is to museum
- (E) haberdasher is to stable

8. Thin is to gaunt as

- (A) portly is to obese
- (B) skeletal is to bones
- (C) dowdy is to handsome
- (D) restive is to fatigued
- (E) awkward is to angular

Answers: B, A, D

Analogies on the SSAT usually contain a few common relationships that can be expected on every test. Some typical sentences are: [word 1] is a big/small [word 2], [word 1] is used for [word 2], and [word 1] is the lack of [word 2].



**Contact us for SSAT and ISEE Courses and Tutoring!**

151 West 46<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 900 New York, NY 10036  
bellcurves.com | 877-223-3828