

SSAT Overview

presented by **open door**
education

The Upper Level SSAT is part of the secondary school admissions process for most students applying to independent high schools in the United States. Schools use the SSAT to determine the skill level of applicants and to make informed admissions decisions.

SECTIONS OF THE TEST



Writing Skills *(25 minutes)*

Students choose between two prompts and write an organized and well-developed two-page response. The essay is not scored by the SSAT Board, but it is sent to schools, where it may be reviewed as a writing sample.



Quantitative Skills *(Two sections, 30 minutes each)*

First section: Arithmetic operations, number properties, percents, fractions, decimals, scientific notation, ratios, positive and negative numbers, sequences, data interpretation, and some algebra and geometry.

Second section: Problem-solving skills and application of math skills.



Reading Comprehension *(40 minutes)*

Six to eight short passages from literature, social studies, journalism, poetry, and science. Question types include main idea, purpose, inference, words in context, evidence, and tone.

a:b

Verbal *(30 minutes)*

Vocabulary tested through 30 synonym and 30 analogy questions, ranging from easy to challenging.

FAQs

May I use a calculator? No. That's why it is important to practice computational skills.

What is the format? One essay—the remainder is multiple choice with bubble sheets. The test may include one experimental section that does not impact the student's score.

Should I guess? Only on questions you have narrowed down to two possible answers, because you lose a quarter point for a wrong answer, but are not penalized for leaving it blank.

Does everyone finish the test in the time allotted? Definitely not. Students do not need to answer every question to earn a competitive score.

How do I know how well I have done? Scores are compared to those of students from the past three years. Students receive both an SSAT score (this number, ranging from 500-800, is the less important number) and a percentile (this is the one that counts).

Can I take the test more than once? Yes. Students who wish to retest may do so, and families are able to select which test date results to send to schools. Students may also test on non-official dates through a flex test, which may only be taken once.

When do I prepare? It depends on how much time you have until the test and what your goals are. It's best to start preparing for the SSAT at least two months before the test, though some students wait until closer. A student's comfort and experience with standardized testing are important considerations when deciding when to begin preparation.

How do I prepare?

Assess: Take a practice test to assess where you are starting from and what you most need to work on. Then go back and focus on the questions you missed, and, in particular, why you missed them.

Plan: Create a test prep plan which takes into consideration the amount of time available before the test and the areas of the test you need to work on.

Practice: Study vocabulary by reviewing and learning new roots and words. Review and complete drills for Math with an emphasis on the questions that need the most work. Understand the types of Reading Comprehension passages and questions, then review strategies for each. An Open Door tutor can help devise an effective study plan based on your strengths and challenges.

Confirm: Take one final practice test before the official exam in order to build confidence, identify and address any lingering challenges, and set meaningful, achievable goals.

Where do I register and get more information? www.ssat.org

Students at all levels report benefiting from prep for the SSAT. Parents may call 978-263-6387, email info@opendoor.education, or visit www.opendoor.education to set up a free consultation.

open door
education