

A Brief Overview of the SSAT

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education

The Upper Level SSAT is a standardized test designed to evaluate the skills students have acquired over all their grade and middle school education. Secondary 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 should an organized and well-developed two-page response. It is unscored by the SSAT Board but sent to the schools that receive your scores, where it may be reviewed for any number of reasons.



Quantitative Skills (broken into 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 passages short passages from literature, social studies, journalism, and science. Question types: main idea, purpose, inference, words in context, evidence, and tone.

a:b

Verbal (30 minutes)

Vocabulary tested through 30 synonym and 30 analogy questions. Many students find this section the most challenging as the vocabulary level ranges from easy to very difficult and the analogies are designed to increase in difficulty.

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 multiple choice with bubble sheets.

Should I guess? Only on questions you have narrowed down to two possible answers, because you lose .25 point for a wrong answer, but are not penalized for a blank.

Does everyone finish the test in the time allotted? Definitely not, and most students skip multiple questions! The test is designed to be as difficult as possible.

How do I know how well I have done? Scores are compared to those of the past three years. Students then 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.

When do I prepare? It depends on the 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 there are many students who 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 and what you most need to work on. Go back to the missed questions, working to understand what you missed but also why you missed it.

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 and review strategies for each.

Collaborate: A tutor can provide guidance by helping determine how much time a student should spend on each subject area; assisting in review, learning, and practice; and providing additional practice materials beyond those that can be found online.

Confirm: Students should plan to take one final practice test before the actual 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 978-265-6387, email info@OpenDoor.education, or visit OpenDoor.education to set up a free consultation.

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