1. WHAT IS SST?

The Scholarship Selection Test (SST) allows independent schools around Australia to choose a testing date which best suits their school program. The SST consists of a sequence of academic ability tests used to select students for the award of a scholarship. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) produces these tests, supplies them to schools, marks candidates’ papers, and reports results to the schools. ACER does not report results directly to parents.

2. FILLING IN THE REGISTRATION FORM

Please read these instructions carefully then complete both sides of the SST Registration Form.

Please complete all information clearly with a pen. Please print clearly.

- Payment
  Check the amount that is payable with the school. The fee should be made payable to the school.

- Scholarship level applied for
  Level 1 students sit the test in their final year of primary school during the testing year for entry into first year of secondary in the following year (entry into Year 7 in NSW, ACT, TAS, VIC and WA or Year 8 in QLD and SA).
  Level 2 students sit the test in their second year of secondary schooling during the testing year for entry into third year of secondary in the following year (entry into Year 9 in NSW, ACT, TAS, VIC and WA or Year 10 in QLD and SA).
  Level 3 students sit the test during Year 10 in the year of school entry (all states).

Please check that the school you are applying for offers the scholarship level you require. Not all schools offer all levels. You will not receive a refund if you apply at an incorrect level to a school that does not offer the level you require.

Section A – Candidate details
- Family Name
  Write the candidate’s surname (family name).
- First name
  Write the candidate’s first name (given name).

- Candidate’s current year
  Complete for your year at school in the testing year.

- Current school
  Write the name of the school you are attending this year.

- Religious denomination
  Write the religious denomination you identify with, or write ‘none’, if applicable. Some independent schools require this information.

Section B – Parent/Guardian details
Write the name and contact details of one (or both) parents or guardians. Please use block capitals for all information other than the signature.

Section C – Examination centre
- Examination centre
  Write the name of the school to which you are submitting the registration form (unless instructed otherwise by the school).

2.1. SUBMITTING YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Before submitting the registration form, please check that you do the following:
- Make sure that both sides of the registration form have been completed.
- Photocopy both sides of the registration form. This is your record of the details included on your registration.
- Check the closing date for lodging registrations with the school.
- Send to the school applied for on this form
  - The registration form
  - The registration fee

2.2. REFUND OF REGISTRATION FEE

Only under the most exceptional situations will a refund of the registration fee be considered. If a refund is awarded, a deduction will be made for administrative and clerical processing. Please see the ‘Refunds’ policy published on our website for further details: http://www.acer.edu.au/tests/scholarship/sst/refund_policy.html
2.3. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION?

ACER will not disclose your personal information to any third party other than the school or schools with whom you registered. ACER may use your test results for subsequent research related to the PSP program. Names will be separated from data in all cases. Should you wish to find out how to access your personal information you can do so by visiting the ACER website: www.acer.edu.au/tests.html and referring to the section ‘Privacy’.

3. PROCEDURE ON THE DAY OF THE EXAMINATION

When you report to the examination centre, bring two HB or B pencils, a pencil eraser, and two blue or black pens. Use a pen for the Written Expression section. For the other tests you must use an HB or B pencil. Do not bring rulers, mathematical instruments of any kind, programmable watches, mobile phones, photographic or other image/data capturing devices, books or notepaper. All the materials you will need, other than pencils, erasers and pens, are provided at the examination room. You may like to bring something to eat or drink during a break.

3.1. THE TEST TIMETABLE

There will be a maximum of four separate tests. Not all schools administer all four tests. Candidates should check with the school which of the following tests they will actually be sitting. The time allowed for each, and the order in which they will be taken are as follows:

1. Written Expression
   (SST Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3) 25 minutes

2. Humanities – Comprehension and Interpretation
   (SST Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3) 40 minutes

3. Mathematics
   (SST Level 1) 40 minutes
   Mathematics and Science
   (SST Level 2 and Level 3) 40 minutes

4. Written Expression
   (SST Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3) 25 minutes

The actual times at which the first test starts and the last test finishes depend on the school. A break will be allowed between tests. Candidates who arrive late for the first test will be admitted only at the discretion of the supervisor. No refunds will be available if candidates arrive late and are not allowed to sit the test as a result.

4. WHAT ARE THE TESTS LIKE?

The test items attempt to assess the following skills: analysis, comprehension, interpretation and reasoning. Candidates are advised to work carefully through the questions appropriate to their level. The answer to each question is clearly important, as is the method by which you arrive at the answer.

Extensive practice on tests of this type will not necessarily improve test scores. Your best preparation is to read widely and think critically. There are sample questions enclosed in this bulletin. If you would like further practice, you could visit ACER’s website at www.acer.edu.au/tests/scholarship/sst/practice.html. You will find a section ‘SST Sample Questions’ where, for a fee, you can purchase Sample Collection of Questions Volumes 1 & 2. These are printed publications that are mailed to you. You also have the opportunity to purchase Sample Questions Online. These are a different set of questions again. They are an interactive online assessment that cannot be downloaded and are non-printable. You can also purchase this material when you register online for a school (see ‘Preparation Material Purchase’ above).

4.1. WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Two topics for writing will be set and they will allow you to use different styles of writing. They are presented as two separate tests. About one and a half A4 pages of ruled paper will be provided for each, but you are not asked to make the pieces of writing any specific length, and quality is more important than length. This part of the test is concerned with your ability to express your thoughts and feelings in writing. What you have to say and the way you say it will be assessed.

The stimulus for each given topic may be a picture, a statement or a combination of the two. In general terms it might be said that the stimulus will allow candidates to: tell a real or imagined story; describe a situation, incident or scene; outline or explain something; and express a point of view or make an argument.

The stimulus material you are given must be the basis of your writing, and you will be penalised if you seem to be rehearsing a piece of writing that is not developed from the stimulus.

You should respond to the stimulus in the way that is most interesting to you, and which best displays your ability to write and express yourself. Some topics might suggest that you write a story; others might suggest a description, a conversation, a discussion or a poem. Whichever style you choose, it is clear, lively, vivid and interesting writing that is being sought. It is important to spend some time thinking about each of the topics. If you finish your writing before time is up, use the rest of the time to go over your work and to make any alterations that you feel would improve it.
In assessing written expression, markers at ACER consider the following issues:

**4.1.1. THOUGHT AND CONTENT**
(The quality of what is said in the piece of writing)
- what is made of and developed from the task
- the kinds of thoughts and feelings offered in response to the task

**4.1.2. STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION**
(The quality of the structure and organisation developed to say something)
- the shape and form of the piece
- the sequence and cohesion of the piece

**4.1.3. EXPRESSION, STYLE AND MECHANICS**
(The quality of the language used to organise and present what is said)
- the effectiveness and appropriateness of the language
- the expressiveness and fluency of the language
- the control of the mechanics of English

**4.2. HUMANITIES – COMPREHENSION and INTERPRETATION**
This test asks you to look at written and visual material and answer questions on it. The topics for the material may be drawn from subject areas such as English, Art, History, Geography and Social Studies, though no special knowledge in these areas is assumed. All the information you need to answer the questions is printed on the paper, so if you do not know or understand something you may be able to work out what it means from the stimulus material.

The test contains a number of units with several questions in each unit. Overall there will be about 40 multiple-choice questions in this test. We do not expect all candidates to answer every one of them correctly. Each question has four alternative answers, marked A, B, C and D.

**4.3. MATHEMATICS and SCIENCE**
This test consists of 28 multiple-choice questions. For Level 1 candidates, all the questions are on aspects of mathematics. For Level 2 and Level 3 candidates, half the questions are on mathematics topics and half on science topics. This test attempts to measure mathematical and scientific abilities, in contrast to tests of school achievement in these areas. Consequently, the material used for the questions in this test is selected from a wide variety of sources, and may differ from standard school-based curriculum materials.

**4.4. MARKING YOUR ANSWERS**
A special answer sheet is provided for the Humanities, and the Mathematics/Science tests.

For each question there are four small ovals labelled A, B, C and D. Record your answer to each question by marking the oval of your choice with your pencil.

*Example (Answer ‘B’ selected)*

If you wish to change an answer, erase it completely and mark the oval corresponding to your new answer.

Note these important points:
- You require a good quality pencil eraser.
- Use only an HB or B pencil.
- Do not make any marks on the answer sheet other than in the designated areas.
- Never use ink, ballpoint pen, felt pen or fine-leaded propelling pencil on any part of your answer sheet.
Written Expression (25 minutes)

Two topics for writing will be set, and in the 25 minutes allowed you will have time to plan and edit your writing. The task will be to write on a set topic. What you write can be imaginary or based on real events. You may write in the form of a story, a letter, or a poem. Most importantly it should be short, lively, and interesting to read. Your writing will be assessed on what you have to say, how well you organise your thoughts, and how well you express yourself.

Below is an example of an ACER writing task.

Use the picture on the right as the basis for a piece of writing.

Write about something that happened or might have happened.

You can write about yourself and people you know, or about imaginary characters and events.

Your writing will be judged on the kind of situations, characters, events and feelings that you present, and on how well you express yourself and engage the interest of the reader.

Mathematics (40 minutes)

In this test you will have to answer questions about the mathematics you have learnt and solve problems using the information provided in the question. There are no difficult calculations to perform. Calculators are not required and are not to be used.

Questions are answered by selecting the correct answer from the choices provided.

1  The sum of the greatest and smallest of the numbers 217, 9, 63 and 14 is

   A  23  
   B  72  
   C  226  
   D  280

The numbers to be added are 217 and 9 and their sum is 226, so you would mark C on your answer sheet.

2  What is the length of a pin two-fifths as long as a pin 4 centimetres (cm) long?

   A  \(\frac{5}{8}\) cm  
   B  \(\frac{4}{5}\) cm  
   C  \(\frac{3}{5}\) cm  
   D  2 cm

The answer is \(\frac{3}{5}\) cm, so you would mark C on your answer sheet.

3  How many odd numbers less than 50 are exactly divisible by 3?

   A  7  
   B  8  
   C  16  
   D  25

4  The diagram represents a rectangle 18 cm by 8 cm. How long is the side of a square the same area as this rectangle?

   A  9 cm  
   B  12 cm  
   C  13 cm  
   D  16 cm

5  Two dolphins were swimming. The first dolphin swam for half an hour at a certain speed. The second dolphin swam for one hour at half the speed of the first dolphin. The first dolphin swam

   A  the same distance as the second dolphin.  
   B  half as far as the second dolphin.  
   C  twice as far as the second dolphin.  
   D  four times as far as the second dolphin.

6  A pattern is to be formed from four square pieces of cardboard, each with a perimeter of 4 cm. Each piece of cardboard must touch at least one other piece of cardboard. What is the longest perimeter of a pattern which can be formed from the four pieces of cardboard?

   A  8 cm  
   B  10 cm  
   C  12 cm  
   D  16 cm
This test asks you to look at written and visual material and answer questions about it. The material will be presented in a variety of forms such as informative writing, poems, stories, diagrams, cartoons or drawings.

All the information you need to answer the questions will be printed in the stimulus material to which the questions refer. The test has several units with a number of questions in each unit.

Here is a practice example:

The following passage was written by a man who works with a film unit which photographs animals in different parts of the world.

In the middle of the watering place, like a huge boulder rolled down through a furrow in the mud, the bulk of a gigantic tortoise loomed out of the dusk. At last, a giant galapago in its natural surroundings! I stood amazed in the presence of this prehistoric bulk which rose like a black island from the depths of the mud.

It moved. A tiny head, attached to the hump by a snake-like neck, looked up, and bright brown eyes set in wrinkled skin watched us keenly. Apparently the tortoise did not like what he saw – man his enemy – and with a slow deliberate movement he raised himself up in the mud and began to crawl away.

Five hundred pounds; three hundred years old, the oldest living animal: facts and figures ran through my mind. To list his dimensions would do nothing to describe the galapago. It was the massive bulk, the bearing of age, the ancient reptilian world that he represented, which impressed me.

The high-domed shell wobbled away, supported by feet like cut-off stovepipes. He ploughed through the bush, dragging a long streamer of jungle vine that was hooked under his shell, crushing the grass, and leaving a wake of trampled undergrowth. His breathing could be heard clearly fifty feet away. The slowness of prehistoric ages was in his step. He was a symbol of the ancient islands. Undisturbed, he would live to an even greater age. He moved slowly – and why not? He had plenty of time.

A scarlet flycatcher, delicate and finely plumaged, sat on a vine above him, watching him pass, and then darted off in a brilliant flash to catch an insect. It returned to perch on the slowly wobbling carapace of the moving tortoise. I realised that we had cut our way into the last hidden sanctuary of the giant tortoise. It was a sanctuary where we did not belong.

1 500 pounds: about 135 kilograms
2 50 feet: about 17 metres

1 To the writer, the most interesting thing about the tortoise was that it
   A was the largest example of the species.
   B was a living representative of a past age.
   C moved with such ponderous dignity.
   D had never before been confronted by a human being.
2 In the first paragraph, the writer conveys his initial impression of the tortoise mainly by
A concentrating on his own startled reactions.
B comparing it with large solid objects.
C contrasting the dark colouration of the tortoise with the lighter surroundings.
D using scientific language to give an accurate picture of the tortoise.

3 The writer uses the description of the flycatcher mainly to
A point out the contrast between the two creatures.
B emphasise how insensitive the tortoise was to external influences.
C show the untouched beauty of the sanctuary.
D illustrate the friendly nature of the tortoise.

4 The tortoise moved along in a manner that was
A careful and quiet.
B precarious and uncertain.
C slow but threatening.
D lumbering and determined.

5 The writer’s feelings about finding the tortoise seem to change during the passage.
Which one of the following pairs of phrases best describes how he felt at the beginning and at the end of the passage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>beginning</th>
<th>end</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A concern that the tortoise might not appear</td>
<td>certainty that he had made a great discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B fascination with the physical characteristics of the animal</td>
<td>regret that he would not be able to capture the animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C excitement about the emergence of the tortoise</td>
<td>recognition that man was an intruder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D apprehension that his hiding place would be discovered</td>
<td>relief that he would be able to escape from the situation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers to the Mathematics practice examples
1C 2C 3B 4B 5A 6D

Answers to the Reading and Viewing practice examples
1B 2A 3A 4D 5C