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BARRON'S

SSAT[®] ISEE[®]

SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST/ INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM

4TH EDITION

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Introduction to the SSAT and ISEE Exams

1

DOING IT RIGHT!

Welcome!

As you know, getting high scores on any exam involves preparation. This preparation breaks down into two categories. Naturally, you need to show mastery of intellectual abilities—like reading comprehension or use of basic mathematic equations. But nowadays, to succeed at testing requires more than merely knowing information; you also need to be savvy about test-taking skills—like pacing yourself or knowing when to guess.

Those disciplined enough to set aside time for these kinds of preparation are, logically, in the best position to test well on such exams as the Independent School Entrance Examination (ISEE) and the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT); these tests evaluate your intellectual ability as well as your ability to take standardized exams. The bottom line is this: You should prepare, carefully and diligently, before taking the ISEE and the SSAT exams.

However, as well intentioned as your desire might be, time has a way of slipping away. Testing day rapidly approaches, accompanied by feelings of (let's face it) fear. Your pulse races, your hands grow clammy, and your thoughts endlessly cycle through nightmares of self-doubt. You approach the testing site feeling, deep down, that you just aren't ready.

We at Barron's have designed the book you hold in your hands to accommodate students, like you, who find themselves faced with the trial of standardized exams, students who may well have studied hard but are nervous. If you have had the foresight and the self-discipline to begin preparations for your high school placement exam well in advance, congratulations! Barron's *SSAT/ISEE* is designed to reinforce the skills you already possess with plenty of practice sections and thoroughly explained answer keys.

That being said, we at Barron's have designed the book you hold in your hands to accommodate students like you who may have let time slip away from them. If you have purchased this book hoping for last minute tips on acing the exam, rest assured! This book comes to you chock full of study tips, elimination strategies, and information about exam format—information sure to help you succeed. Moreover, our book offers numerous and varied practice selections designed to make you comfortable with testing format, requirements, and pacing.

Now, we know that you want to get right to work. However, we would like to take a minute to thank you for purchasing this book. We strongly believe that our preparation guide to the ISEE and SSAT exams is the best on the market, and we hope that, by the time you finish using our guide, you will feel the same way. We prepared our book to offer more information about the exam you are preparing to take, more opportunities for further practice, and more thoroughly researched answer key explanations than our competitors. We believe that you have in your hands the best tool for "doing it right." So—let's get started!

THE ISEE VERSUS THE SSAT: AN OVERVIEW

The ISEE and the SSAT are the main two entrance exams for *non-parochial* private high schools. By contrast, the COOP (Cooperative Admissions Exam), HSPT (High School Placement Test), and the TACHS (Test for Admission into Catholic High Schools) are the main two entrance exams for *parochial* private high schools.

You should be aware that the ISEE and the SSAT differ somewhat in their organization and in their order of testing. The SSAT, for example, allows a wider range of reading comprehension topics, whereas the ISEE generally limits its passages to science, history, and literature selections. The SSAT begins with an essay, whereas the ISEE ends with one; the ISEE gives you four options for every question, whereas the SSAT gives you five. The ISEE differs significantly from the SSAT regarding such issues as whether you should guess when taking the exam. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the specific information regarding the exam you will take. Check out our discussion of the testing formats of the ISEE (beginning on page 3) and the SSAT (beginning on page 7) later in this introduction you are now reading; we discuss the various sections of the exams, what they test, and how they test. We also provide practice tests (two for the SSAT—see page 257—and two for the ISEE—see page 373) for your use. Finally, if you have more questions regarding the ISEE and/or SSAT, you can contact the companies directly.

Independent School Entrance Examination

ISEE Operations Office
1-800-446-0320
www.iseetest.org
iseeoperations@erblearn.org (e-mail)

Secondary School Admission Test

SSAT BOARD
CN 5339
Princeton, NJ 08543
www.ssat.org (website)
(609) 683-4440
(609) 683-4507 (fax)
(800) 442-7728 (fax)
info@ssat.org (e-mail)

TIP

For the most current information on test dates, fees, and registration, check the ISEE official website: www.iseetest.org (Doing so takes you to a portion of the www.erblearn.org site specifically suggested by the ISEE testing agency.)

THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

The ISEE is a multiple-choice exam, offered by the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), designed to test what you have learned as well as how you learn. The exam is offered at upper, middle, and lower levels, based upon your current grade in school. Regardless of the level at which you take the exam, the ISEE consists of five testing sessions that last approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes distributed across a 3-hour testing period that also includes two scheduled, 5-minute breaks (one after the second, the other after the fourth testing period).

The ERB gives ISEE exams during three testing seasons: fall (August–November), winter (December–March), and spring/summer (April–July). Students can choose to take the ISEE up to three times per testing season, although taking the test multiple times is not encouraged. Check out the ISEE application booklet or the website for more information on loca-

tions and dates of testing. Exam applicants should preregister for the ISEE by mail or online (for \$105) or by phone (for \$130). Students who miss the registration deadline can sometimes register late or (very rarely) register on a walk-in basis. The ERB can make special arrangements to accommodate students who have documented testing-related disabilities for additional fees; furthermore, the ERB offers fee waivers for students with documented financial need. Contact the ERB directly for details (and fees) concerning any of these special registration and/or testing circumstances.

After your test, your answers and your essay are sent to the ISEE Operations Office for scoring. Approximately 10 to 14 days later, you (and the schools to which you've applied) can get access to your scores, via either e-mail or online account. ISEE does not score your essay but, instead, sends it directly to the school(s) to which you are applying. If waiting 10 to 14 days is unappealing to you, you can request expedited score reporting for an additional fee (\$40). Contact the ERB directly about such topics.

It is your job to figure out which exam level you ought to take. Unless your school administrators tell you otherwise, you should determine which level exam to take using the following chart:

If you are currently in . . .	then you should take the . . .
4th or 5th grade	Lower Level exam
6th or 7th grade	Middle Level exam
8th grade or higher	Upper Level exam

Regardless of the level at which you are taking the ISEE, the format of the exam remains basically the same, as the following chart indicates.

ISEE: Approximately a 2¾ hour-long exam spread over an approximate 3-hour period. Administrators give two breaks.

Section	Upper Level	Middle Level	Lower Level
Verbal Reasoning (see Ch. 3)	40 questions/ 20 minutes	40 questions/ 20 minutes	34 questions/ 20 minutes
Quantitative Reasoning (Ch. 2)	37 questions/ 35 minutes	37 questions/ 35 minutes	38 questions/ 35 minutes
Break	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Reading Comprehension (Ch. 4)	36 questions/ 35 minutes	36 questions/ 35 minutes	25 questions/ 25 minutes
Math Achievement (Ch. 2)	47 questions/ 40 minutes	47 questions/ 40 minutes	30 questions/ 30 minutes
Break	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Essay (Ch. 5)	1 question 30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes

Please note that while this chart implies a particular order to the exam, the ERB reserves the right to vary the order in which a testing section occurs. The test could proceed from verbal to quantitative as easily as from verbal to reading comprehension.

The material in this particular prep book is geared toward students taking the Upper Level exam. However, if you plan to take the Lower or Middle Level exam, parts of this book will still be helpful. Even the study aids provided by the Educational Records Bureau (the people who create and administer the ISEE) and sent to Lower or Middle exam takers target the Upper Level exam rather than the Lower or Middle exams. Rest assured, the Lower, Middle, and Upper exams are identical in type of question, formatting of the exam, and test-taking strategy; what differs is the difficulty level of the questions. Indeed, if you, as a Lower or Middle Level exam taker can master the Upper Level exam, you're probably in better shape for your test than you would be had you only studied material specifically targeted for the lower or middle difficulty level.

The best way to study for the ISEE is to try out some sample questions, so be sure to check out the chapters that review the skills tested in each section (see chart above) as well as the practice tests that appear at the end of this prep book. However, we think that it is useful for you to have a general sense of how the test is put together. Before you try out either the sample questions or the practice exams, take a peek at the following information.

Sections of the Test

Using objective testing format (i.e., multiple choice), the ISEE evaluates four basic academic skills:

- 1. VERBAL REASONING**
- 2. QUANTITATIVE REASONING**
- 3. READING COMPREHENSION**
- 4. MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT**

The tests on Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning all focus more on judging how well you process new information and detect patterns; by contrast, the Reading Comprehension and Math Achievement sections focus more on judging how well you remember skills learned in school (e.g., math formulas or grammar and syntax rules).

VERBAL REASONING

The ISEE's Verbal Reasoning section focuses on testing two skills: your ability to identify and use synonyms and your ability to identify words in context. You will be asked to answer "choose the best definition" questions (that test your knowledge of synonyms) and "complete the sentence" questions (that test your knowledge of words in context). For specific advice on how to prep for this section, see Chapter 3.

QUANTITATIVE REASONING

The Quantitative Reasoning section asks you to detect numerical patterns or to use various math skills you have learned in class to answer problems. These questions can range over a vast range of skills. (See Chapter 2.)

READING COMPREHENSION

The Reading Comprehension portion of the ISEE tests your ability to read prose passages quickly and for detail. This part of the ISEE tests many skills through coordinated testing exercises. You will be given various reading passages and asked to identify writing elements

such as the main idea of the passage or the definition of a word as used in the context of the reading selection. Test writers can also ask you to identify why an author is writing and what the author might write next, if the passage continued. (See Chapter 4.)

MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT

You will be asked to compute answers to math equations involving mixed numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, and integers; be sure to review the concepts in Chapter 2 to help clarify your understanding of these topics.

THE ESSAY

While the ISEE uses primarily an objective means to test your ability to use various verbal and math skills, it also provides schools with a subjective means of judging your abilities. This subjective testing format comes in the shape of an essay that focuses on a limited, highly polemic (i.e., controversial) topic. In other words, you will be asked to compose an opinionated essay complete with supporting detail. You should know, however, that the Educational Records Bureau does not evaluate your writing; the ERB sends your unread essay, along with your test scores, to the school(s) of your choice to aid with student admission and classroom placement.

Study Tips

At this point you may be wondering how best to maximize your performance on the ISEE. Naturally, you should study, familiarize yourself with the structure and pacing of the exam, and practice taking some tests. Study the chapters that follow and, if you have time and interest, check out the free material on the ISEE website; you can download or print out their advice and test prep as well. However important studying the material is, you should also pay attention to how the test is laid out on the pages of the testing booklet; we have taken great pains to mimic as well as we could the visual layout of the exam, so as to ease your test-taking nerves. Finally, the ISEE strives for consistency across testing sessions; you will do well to study the following chart, which outlines the type of questions that appear on the ISEE and the frequency with which these types of questions appear. For example, someone taking the Reading Comprehension section of the Upper Level ISEE can expect to see somewhere between 6 and 8 questions that ask him or her to identify a Main Idea question, while someone taking the Lower Level ISEE might only expect to see somewhere between 4 and 7 such questions.

	Lower Level	Middle Level	Upper Level
Type of Questions:			
Main Idea	4-7	6-8	3-7
Supporting Idea (Fact)	9-10	10-11	5-11
Inference	10-12	11-12	6-14
Vocabulary (Word in Context)	4-6	5	5-9
Organization/Logic	2-3	3-4	3-5
Tone/Style/Figurative Language	1-4	1-3	1-4

The following hints might also be of some reassurance to you. First, if you're the type of person who likes to write as you think, know that you can write in the test booklet if you need space to figure out problems or make diagrams; however, you are not allowed to bring your own scratch paper, and only answers submitted on the answer form will be scored. Second, don't forget that machines tally up your score, and stray marks will confuse the computer and invalidate answers. Third, as you might expect, you can check your work on the section being tested until the proctor calls an end to the timed testing period. Fourth, ISEE questions are worth one point each, and the test only recognizes correct answers. Since the ISEE treats skipped and wrong answers equally, you should answer every question on this exam, even if you have no clue what the correct answer is. In this case, luck is on your side.

Finally, take the essay seriously. You might be tempted, now that you know that the ERB does not score your writing, to slack off on the writing portion of the exam. Resist the temptation. Not only does the essay help your desired school determine which study options you have, but the essay can be a deciding factor (either in your favor or against) if your scores on the remainder of the exam are less than stunning. To that end, you want to make your writing as easy to read as possible for the school administrators who will one day be reading your work; be sure to use a blue or black ink pen for the essay, which will cut down on smearing and illegibility, and if your cursive handwriting is hard to read, consider printing.

TIP

Be sure to check the official SSAT website for the most up-to-date information:
www.ssat.org

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST

The SSAT is a multiple-choice exam, offered by the Secondary School Admission Test Board (SSATB), designed to test *what you have learned as well as how you learn*. The exam is offered at an Upper and Middle level, based upon your current grade in school. Regardless of the level at which you take the exam, the SSAT consists of five testing sessions that last approximately 2 hours and 35 minutes, distributed across a 3-hour testing period that also includes scheduled breaks.

The SSAT dates back to 1950 when the Secondary School Admission Test Board was first developed. The SSAT began as a way to provide a fair evaluation of student performance across schools. The current form of the SSAT operates according to a very flexible schedule, and its test time and location can be set by individual schools and (once per month during the school year and then once more in June), usually on a Saturday. To sign up for the test, check out the contact information on page 2; you may register online or via fax, phone, or mail using a downloaded registration form. If you have special needs—such as economic hardship or a learning disability—be sure to contact the SSAT Board. The organization offers a limited number of test fee waivers, and students with documented disabilities may apply for special testing conditions (like large print or Braille versions of the test and/or even extended testing times, up to an extra 50 minutes per section of the test).

As part of the registration process, you may select two schools to which you will have your score reports sent; you may add additional score reports or, conversely, cancel score reports for an additional fee. After you register, the SSAT Board will send you an Admission Ticket to confirm your testing date. If you find that you need to cancel or change a testing date, you may do so at a cost; call the SSAT Board directly or check out their website for the required fee, as prices are subject to change. About two weeks after you take the SSAT, you and the schools you select will receive copies of your SSAT Score Report; your scores will remain on active file for one academic year after you take the SSAT, in case you find you need to request more copies of your results.

It is your job to figure out which exam level you ought to take. Unless your school administrators tell you otherwise, you should determine which level exam to take using the following chart:

If you are currently in . . .	then you should take the . . .
5th, 6th, or 7th grade	Middle Level exam
8th grade or higher	Upper Level exam

Regardless of the level at which you are taking the SSAT, the format of the exam remains basically the same, as the following chart indicates:

SSAT: Approximately a 2½ hour-long exam spread over an approximate 3-hour period. Administrators give two scheduled breaks.

Section	Upper Level	Middle Level
Writing Sample (essay) (Ch. 5)	1 question/25 minutes	1 question/25 minutes
Break	5 minutes	5 minutes
Quantitative Skills (Ch. 5)	25 questions/30 minutes	25 questions/30 minutes
Reading Comprehension (Ch. 4)	40 questions/40 minutes	40 questions/40 minutes
Break	10 minutes	10 minutes
Verbal Skills (Ch. 3)	60 questions/30 minutes	60 questions/30 minutes
Quantitative Skills (Ch. 5)	25 questions/30 minutes	25 questions/30 minutes
Experimental Section	16 questions/15 minutes	16 questions/15 minutes
Total test time: 3 hours, 5 minutes		

Note that while this chart implies a particular order, the SSAT Board reserves the right to vary the order in which the testing section takes place. The essay portion usually comes first in the testing process, but a quantitative testing section could follow the first break as easily as a reading comprehension section might. It would do you better when studying to know the type of testing and the range of knowledge tested rather than memorizing a particular order in which topics are tested. Also note that the SSAT has increased the amount of time students can use to take the test by 30% since its inception, allowing students taking the test to finish the SSAT within the scheduled testing time more comfortably.

The material in this particular prep book is geared toward students taking the Upper Level exam. However, if you are supposed to take the Middle Level exam, you can still use this book to prepare for the exam. Rest assured: the Middle and Upper exams are identical in type of questions, formatting of the exam, and test-taking strategy; what differs is the difficulty level of the questions. Indeed, if you, as a Middle Level exam taker can master the Upper Level exam, you're probably in better shape for your test than you would be had you only studied material specifically targeted for the Middle Level.

The best way to study for the SSAT is to try out some sample questions, so be sure to check out the chapters that review the skills tested in each section (see chart above) as well as the practice tests that appear at the end of this prep book. However, we think that it is useful for you to have a general sense of how the test is put together. Before you try out either the sample questions or the practice exams, take a peek at the following information.

Sections of the Test

The SSAT tests academic skills using four different testing sections:

1. **WRITING SKILLS**
2. **QUANTITATIVE SKILLS (BROKEN UP INTO TWO TESTING SECTIONS)**
3. **READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS**
4. **VERBAL SKILLS**

WRITING SKILLS

The SSAT begins with a subjective method of examining your abilities: an essay. Note that the SSAT Board does not evaluate this essay, but sends it, unread, with your scores to the schools indicated during registration. The school(s) of your choice is (are) free to use this essay in whatever way seen fit (as a way of making final judgment on a potentially weak application or as a means of determining classroom placement once admission decisions have been finalized). For help on how to make your writing as strong as possible, see Chapter 5.

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS

The first part of the Quantitative Skills section focuses on your ability to work with basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; percents, fractions, and decimals; ordering of numbers (greater than and less than); ratio and proportion; positive and negative numbers; odd and even numbers; sequences; frequency; basic algebra and geometry; angle measurement; and graph interpretation. The second part of the exam tests your problem-solving skills and your ability to use previous knowledge of mathematic concepts to solve modern problems. This portion of the exam asks a wide range of questions. For further practice, see Chapter 2.

READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

The Reading Comprehension Skills section attempts to judge how well you comprehend what you read and your ability to infer vocabulary meaning through reading. Typically you need to read six to eight reading passages; you can be sure you will be asked to infer the meanings of words based on their usage in the reading passages or to create a title capturing the main idea of the passage. While, naturally, you are called upon to use your reading skills, the emphasis is on showing that you understand what you read. For more practice, see Chapter 4.

VERBAL SKILLS

The Verbal Skills section focuses on two specific types of questions: (1) synonyms and (2) antonyms. These questions test your ability to identify words and their relationship to each other. The SSAT will also ask you to show off your vocabulary skills by asking you to make analogies between words. Clearly, then, you need a good vocabulary for acing this section, so for further practice, check out Chapter 3.

One last comment. The SSAT continually tries to maintain rigorous and appropriate tests. To this end, it often includes experimental sections, consisting of 16 questions. You may be asked to take this part. It is not scored, but your answers help shape future exams, so take these challenges seriously.

Helpful Tips

At this point you may be wondering how best to maximize your performance on the SSAT. Naturally, you should study, familiarize yourself with the structure and pacing of the exam, and practice taking some tests. However, the following hints might also be of some reassurance.

First, if you're the type of person who likes to write as you think, know that you can write in the test booklet if you need space to figure out problems or make diagrams; however, you are not allowed to bring your own scratch paper, and only answers submitted on the answer form will be scored. Second, don't forget that machines tally up your score, and stray marks will confuse the computer and invalidate answers. Third, as you might expect, you can check your work on the section being tested until the proctor calls an end to the timed testing period.

More strategically, you should know how the SSAT scores your answer. Correct SSAT questions are worth one point each; skipped answers receive no penalty yet no credit. The SSAT, however, penalizes incorrect answers by $\frac{1}{4}$ point. Given that you run a risk of losing points by giving wrong answers, you should not guess wildly. If you cannot rule out any of the five answer options as being absolutely wrong, then you should not hazard a guess at all. However, if you can rule out any answer option (and, the more options you can eliminate, the better), then you should make an educated guess.

How can you make educated guesses? First off, don't assume that the answer will be the option you know least about. Sometimes the correct answer is the most obvious one. That being said, don't automatically pick the answer that seems obvious. Use the training that you've been taught (or will have learned by the time you finish studying this book). Check out root stems, prefixes, and suffixes. Review your math, and don't forget to carry or round off as necessary. Revisit your answers, as time allows. As annoying (and repetitive) as it sounds, read the questions carefully, and be sure you know what the question is asking you. Use logic, and stay calm. And, last but not least, practice using test samples, drills, and practice exams—like the ones in this book. Familiarity with the format, the structure, the range of questions, and the timing deadlines can only serve to strengthen your performance on the actual test.

Finally, take the essay seriously. You might be tempted, now that you know that the SSATB does not score your writing, to slack off on the writing portion of the exam. Resist the temptation. Not only does the essay help your desired school determine which study options you have, but the essay can be a deciding factor (either in your favor or against) if your scores on the remainder of the exam are less than stunning. To that end, you want to make your writing as easy to read as possible for the school administrators who will one day be reading your work; be sure to use a blue or black ink pen for the essay, which will cut down on smearing and illegibility, and if your cursive handwriting is hard to read, consider printing.

COUNTDOWN

You may be frustrated if you plan to pick up the skills necessary to ace an exam like the ISEE or the SSAT and move on. Mastering these exams usually comes as the result of hard, consistent work rather than quick attempts to marshal one's wits. Moreover, the usual method of gauging your progress is not available to you in this case; neither the ISEE nor the SSAT exam publishes test scores achieved on their exams. Therefore, unlike with other standardized tests, you cannot take a practice exam and expect to rank yourself against other entering high school students across the nation. We've said it before, and we'll say it again: Your best

method for preparing yourself for the ISEE or the SSAT is simply a great deal of basic skills preparation.

After all, some skills simply get better through consistent use. Verbal ability is one such skill. The more you read, the more you encounter verbal skills tested on exams such as the ISEE and SSAT. Analytical ability is another such skill; making comparisons, detecting contrasts, and analyzing theme and main idea patterns—all of these skills grow sharper with use and are almost impossible to pick up and drop at need. Absolutely the best way to prepare for an exam—and necessarily reduce test anxiety—is to cultivate an appreciation for all things intellectual.

Study Strategies

Cultivating such an appreciation does not have to be tedious; find creative and fun ways to incorporate intellectual activity in your life. First . . . read! Read! READ! Both the ISEE and SSAT, for example, use reading passages that are from four to six paragraphs long; moreover, both use primarily an informative, newsy writing style. Select short passages from weekly news magazines or the topical parts of your local newspapers (e.g., the weekly “science” section or the daily “living and arts” sections), and accustom yourself to identifying the author’s intent in writing, the main points of the passage, and the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Also try out the vocabulary-based puzzles commonly found in local newspapers; games like Scrabble or word jumbles are great for building familiarity with vocabulary while still having fun. And, don’t forget about TV game shows like “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” or “Wheel of Fortune” that offer vocabulary-based questions in addition to their more trivia-based questions. Incorporating tricky ways to study verbal skills, therefore, can be accomplished. For fun yet useful mathematics skills, try logic puzzles and lots of word problems, brain teasers, and number games.

Standardized test takers can also check the SSAT website (www.ssat.org). Among other informative details, this page offers an SSAT question of the day. You read and answer the question, and immediately a computer scores your answer. This is a quick and easy way to see whether you’re getting the hang of the test. Because the website does not track whether you are actually registered for the SSAT exam, ISEE test takers can use this resource, too. A vocabulary test is a vocabulary test, no matter who writes it. Take practice opportunities when you can get them.

Probably the second best way to prepare for an exam is to allow yourself sufficient time to review specific details such as how the exam is designed and the topics covered by the exam. We suggest that you maximize your chance of success by following the suggestions made in our chart *Acing the Exam: Option A*; in this chart we outline a thorough but comfortably paced course of study.

Following *Option A* requires that you devote a month’s preparation to your task. It may be that devoting four weeks of preparation to a project is simply not an affordable luxury for you. Relax; just because it is difficult to master an exam by cramming does not mean that it cannot be done. *Acing the Exam: Option B*, offers a more streamlined but more challenging “quick study” program. You will need to have both the time and the drive to really focus your studying energies; you will be working “on deadline.” However, either *Option A* or *Option B* should assist you greatly in your quest for a high exam score.

Regardless of the time you have available for studying, remember: Any study is better than no study at all.

ACING THE EXAM WITH 1 MONTH TO GO

4 WEEKS AND COUNTING . . .

- Reread the introduction for ISEE, pages 2–6; for SSAT, pages 6–9. These sections will give you a sense of the kinds of questions you face, and the strategy you should use.
- Take a practice exam and score yourself.
- Note particularly troublesome topics.
- Identify questions that most troubled you; use the answer key explanation section to help you pinpoint these questions.
- Study your weak areas.
- Be sure to work through all of the practice sessions.
- Read through the answer key explanations; we present them to help you understand the logic behind the question.
- *Hey, SSAT takers!* Check out the SSAT Question of the Day located at www.ssat.org on a daily basis—these are actual questions modeled on the test that you may use as a practice tool.
- Ask for help when you need it—your parents may know the answers and, if they don't, ask your teacher(s) at school. That's what they're there for!

3 WEEKS TO GO . . .

- Study the chapters that discuss topics that *least* troubled you.
- Be sure to work through all of the practice sessions.
- Read through the answer key explanations; we present them to help you understand the logic behind the question.
- Ask for help when you need it! (We really can't stress this advice enough.)

2 WEEKS LEFT . . .

- Go back and review once more the material that *really* troubled you.
- Retake your first practice exam, focusing on the questions you missed.

1 WEEK . . .

- Take a second practice exam and compare your results. You will see improvement, provided you have stuck to your program!
- Review any areas that remain weak.
- Read through the answer key explanations.
- Ask for help when you need it—especially from your teachers!

TIME OUT!

- Give yourself a break. Do not study. Do something relaxing, like watching a movie, reading for pleasure, eating out with friends.
- Make sure you get to bed at a reasonable hour; no amount of preparation can help if you are exhausted and nervous.

ACING THE EXAM WITH 1 WEEK TO GO**7 DAYS**

- Reread the introduction. For ISEE, pages 2–6; SSAT, pages 6–9. These sections will give you a sense of the kinds of questions you face, as well as a sense of the strategy you should use.
- Take a practice exam and score yourself.
- Note particularly troublesome topics.
- *Hey, SSAT takers!* Check out the SSAT Question of the Day located at www.ssat.org on a daily basis—these are actual questions modeled on the test that you may use as a practice tool.

6 DAYS

- Identify the types of questions that confused you most; use the answer key explanation section to help you identify these questions.
- Study the information regarding the topics that *most* troubled you.
- Be sure to work through all of the practice sessions.
- Read through the answer key explanations; we present them to help you understand the logic behind the question.

5 DAYS

- Study the chapters that discuss topics that *least* troubled you.
- Be sure to work through all of the practice sessions.
- Read through the answer key explanations; we present them to help you understand the logic behind the question.

4 DAYS

- Talk with your teacher(s) at school if you need help; they are your most efficient help resource.

3 DAYS

- Review any stubborn trouble spots; extra work can't hurt.

2 DAYS

- Take a second practice exam and compare your results. You will see improvement, provided you have stuck to your program!
- Review any areas that remain weak.
- Read through the answer key explanations.

TIME OUT!

- Give yourself a break. Do not study. Do something relaxing, like watching a movie, reading for pleasure, eating out with friends.
- Make sure you get to bed at a reasonable hour; no amount of preparation can help if you are exhausted and nervous.

REALITY CHECK

No matter your level of test preparation, you may experience test-taking anxieties prior to the exam. We offer in this section a series of anxiety-reducing tips that we hope will help you do your best on the exam. Some of the tips we promote require long-term practice before you can see results; however, all are good advice.

GET FIT

- People who exercise handle stress better than people who do not. Get in the habit of following a reasonable, sustainable exercise regimen.

GET REST

- Recent studies show that people, especially men, who do not get regular, adequate sleep run a greater risk of developing psychoses than those who do. Your brain and body need sleep; give them adequate rest.

GET PACKED

- Gather together all items you will need prior to testing day so that they are ready to bring on testing day. We suggest you bring the following: Admission Ticket, three or four No. 2 (or equivalent) lead pencils, an eraser, two black or blue ink pens, a sweater or light jacket (in case of a cold room).

Do NOT bring any of the following: books, papers, calculators, beepers, phones, or watches with activated alarm functions.

GET FED

- Taking tests on an empty stomach—or fueled by the empty carbohydrates in a donut or candy bar—is a sure-fire mistake. Your body needs a constant source of energy—not the roller coaster ride such foods contain. At the very least, drink a big glass of milk.

GET THERE

- Make sure you know where your testing site is and how long it takes to get there. Arrive at your testing site between 15 and 30 minutes early. Late arrivals will not be admitted.

GET PSYCHED!

- Remind yourself that you are prepared for your exam. Relax. Breathe. Concentrate.

GET FOCUSED

- Follow the directions exactly as they are asked. Record your answers clearly and accurately, filling in the circles on the answer grid completely. Erase any changes completely (or else the answering machine may score your erasures as answers). Pace yourself. If in doubt, guess strategically.