

The ISEE

Independent School Entrance Exam



WHO TAKES THE ISEE?

The ISEE is taken by students seeking entry to independent schools. There are 3 levels of the exam:

Lower Level for application to 5th and 6th grade

Middle Level for application to 7th and 8th grade

Upper Level for application to 9th through 12th grade

WHAT IS THE ISEE LIKE?

Section 1 | Verbal Reasoning

This section not only tests the vocabulary words that students know, but also what definitions they can figure out, using strategy and deductive reasoning skills.

Section 2 | Quantitative Reasoning

On the Lower Level, the QR is essentially a conventional math test. On the Middle/Upper Level tests, there are both straightforward math questions as well as questions that rely on a student's ability to deduce a relationship between two quantities.

Section 3 | Reading Comprehension

This section contains reading passages, followed by questions that combine careful reading skills with subjective inference abilities.

Section 4 | Math Achievement

This section is composed of traditional math questions and is often expected to be more challenging than the QR in terms of content.

Section 5 | Essay

Students are given grade-appropriate essay topics. The primary intent of this test section is to evaluate the ability of the students to compose a well-structured personal essay, with equal emphasis on content and mechanics.

WHEN IS THE ISEE?

Students may register to take the ISEE one time in any or all of three testing seasons. The ISEE testing seasons are defined as Fall (Aug–Nov), Winter (Dec–Mar), and Spring/Summer (Apr–July). Application deadlines for most independent schools are in late Jan. In order to meet these deadlines, students usually take their first ISEE in Nov, and can improve their scores by taking it a second time in Dec or Jan.

HOW IS THE ISEE SCORED?

Students receive a point for every question answered correctly. There is no wrong-answer penalty. A student's raw score is converted to a Stanine score (ranging from 1-9) for the first four sections of the ISEE. A Stanine score of 4-6 is considered average. The essay is not graded, but a copy of the student's essay is provided to schools along with the ISEE Score Report.

OUR PROCESS

Assessment

Set up a timetable

Overview of test logistics

Learn all necessary strategies

Test-specific executive functioning

Continuously enrich content gaps

Compile vocabulary / formula list

Ongoing sessions & homework

Monthly test simulations

Test-day preparation