

Gifted and Talented programs

ASET overview and tips

Overview

Use this document to help your child prepare for the Academic Selective Entrance Test (ASET). You will find information about:

- The four tests, along with some sample questions
- Tips about how to approach the tests
- How to do your best and manage stress

You will receive more information about your child's testing day after applications close in February.

The ASET (Academic Selective Entrance Test)

The ASET is made up of four tests. Three of them are multiple choice and one asks you to write a response.

Reading Comprehension Multiple Choice 35 minutes 35 questions	Communicating Ideas in Writing Written Response 25 minutes total time, including planning and editing
10-minute break	
Quantitative Reasoning Multiple Choice 35 minutes 35 questions	Abstract Reasoning Multiple Choice 20 minutes 35 questions

**Please note these refer to standard conditions timings*

The tests aim to measure a candidate's aptitude for problem- solving, reasoning, creative thinking, comprehension, interpretation and applying known concepts to new situations. These types of thinking skills - also known as higher-order thinking skills - are necessary in order to perform the sorts of tasks that will be expected of you in the tests.

Sample test

You can access the sample ASET and sample answer booklet [on our website](#).

The sample ASET is provided as a guide to help applicants feel more comfortable with the test process as well as:

- the format of the ASET
- the types of questions asked
- what the answer sheet looks like.

Results of the sample ASET do not show how an applicant will score in the actual ASET and consideration will not be given for scores on sample tests or any other practice tests.

Test 1: Reading Comprehension

This test assesses your ability to understand and interpret a range of texts, which may include fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama, together with diagrams, tables, charts or maps. The stimulus material may come from a range of subject areas though no special knowledge in these areas is needed. All the information you need to answer the questions is printed on the paper, so if you do not know or fully understand something you may be able to work out what it means from the stimulus material.

You will be given a Reading Comprehension question booklet, and there will be 35 multiple choice questions. Each question has four alternative answers marked **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**. You are to select the answer you think is most likely to be correct from the four alternatives.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following table contains information about two species of camel in existence today: the Arabian and the Bactrian.

Type of camel	Individual properties	Area where found	Properties in common
Arabian camel (Dromedary)	One hump. Thick, broad sole pads on feet. Thick padding on joints of the legs and chest. Nostrils can be closed against flying dust. Two rows of long eyelashes to shield eyes. Used as a saddle animal. Can cover more than 160 kilometres in a day. Has ability to bite off and chew thorny desert plants.	North- western India Afghanistan Arabian Peninsula Somalia Australia	Endurance. Strength. Humps are stores of flesh and fat; absorbed as nutrition when food is scarce. Can exist without water for several days. Flesh and milk of the camel used as food. Camel hide used for leather.
Bactrian camel	Two humps. Hard, cloven feet. Long, fine wool. Smaller, heavier build than Arabian camels. Can carry loads of up to 454 kilograms. Travels at 4 km/h and can travel up to 45 kilometres in a day. Can withstand extreme temperatures.	Central Asia South-western Mongolia North-western China	The hair, shed every summer, is made into cord, fine paint brushes and cloth. Can drink as much as 100 litres of water in 10 minutes.

- The humps of both types of camel are used to
 - store water.
 - aid in fat absorption.
 - enable them to carry heavy loads.
 - protect the camels from extreme temperatures.
- Which of the following makes the camel an excellent animal for enduring difficult conditions?
 - They are used to carrying heavy loads.
 - They can exist without water for several days.
 - They can drink as much as 100 litres of water in ten minutes.
 - Their hair is used to make cord, fine paint brushes and cloth.
- Bactrian camels are smaller and heavier because they
 - have two humps.
 - do not eat as much as Arabian camels.
 - cover more distance than Arabian camels.
 - have adapted to the demands of their environment.

Answers: 1.B 2. B 3.D

Test 2: Communicating Ideas in Writing

This test is to assess your ability to generate fresh and original ideas that show your creativity, and to communicate these ideas to a reader in a way that is convincing, clear, coherent and organised.

You will be given a writing prompt sheet. The prompt may be an image, a statement or a combination of the two. You are required to use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing. You do not have to write in a particular style or text type - that choice is entirely up to you.

The style(s) or text type(s) you choose should allow you to respond to the prompt in the way that is most creative and interesting to you, while also allowing you to demonstrate your ability. The prompt sheet might inspire you to write a story, describe a situation, incident or scene – real or imagined -, or express and/or discuss a point of view. Whichever way you choose to write, markers will be seeking original, creative, lively, vivid and interesting writing that is clearly linked to the prompt and is developed, coherent and organised.

The writing prompt must be the inspiration for your writing. You will be penalised if the markers cannot see a direct link between the prompt and your writing. You will also be penalised if the markers see evidence that your writing is not your own or has been prepared beforehand.

You will have 25 minutes to plan and write. It is not essential to plan, however it is important to spend some time thinking about the prompt. If you finish your writing before the time is up, use the rest of the time to go over your work and to make alterations which you feel would improve it.

Two markers will mark your writing. In assessing Communicating Ideas in Writing, they will consider the following:

THOUGHT and CONTENT

- the approach to the prompt and how this is developed
- the freshness and originality of ideas

STRUCTURE and ORGANISATION

- the shape of the writing and how this supports the thought and content
- the organisation and coherence of the writing

EXPRESSION and STYLE

- the effectiveness and appropriateness of the language
- the expressiveness and fluency of the language

EXAMPLE PROMPTS

Prompt 1:



Prompt 2:

It all turned out for the best ...

Test 3: Quantitative Reasoning

This test assesses quantitative reasoning ability, which is very different to a test of school achievement in mathematics or science. Consequently, the material used for the questions in this test is selected from a wide variety of sources and will differ from standard school-based curriculum materials.

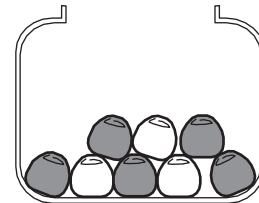
The test requires candidates to extract and interpret information, identify connections, relationships and patterns, solve problems and identify similarities and differences.

You will be given a Quantitative Reasoning question booklet, and there will be 35 multiple choice questions. Each question has four alternative answers marked **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**. You are to select the answer you think is most likely to be correct from the four alternatives.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

Questions 1 and 2

Dario has a jar containing three white chocolates and five brown chocolates.



1 Suppose Dario takes out and eats one of the white chocolates.

If he then takes out a second chocolate without looking, what is the chance that it will be brown?

- A** five chances in eight **B** five chances in seven
C four chances in eight **D** three chances in eight

2 Starting with the chocolates in the figure, suppose Dario takes out and eats two of the brown chocolates.

If he then takes out a third chocolate without looking, he has

- A** a much greater chance of picking a white chocolate than a brown chocolate.
B a slightly greater chance of picking a white chocolate than a brown chocolate.
C a slightly greater chance of picking a brown chocolate than a white chocolate.
D an equal chance of picking either a white or a brown chocolate.

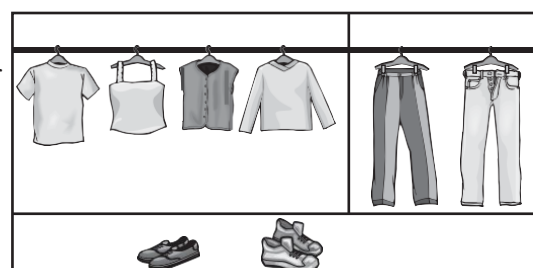
Question 3

3 Paula has these clothes in her wardrobe.

An outfit consists of one pair of shoes, one top and one pair of pants.

How many different outfits can Paula wear?

- A** 12
B 16
C 20
D 24



Answers: 1. B 2. D 3. B

Test 4: Abstract Reasoning

This test assesses the ability to use abstract reasoning skills, which includes the capacity to recognise relationships, hypothesise and evaluate.

You will be given an Abstract Reasoning question booklet, and there will be 35 multiple choice questions. Each question has four alternative answers marked **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**. You are to choose the answer you think is most likely to be correct from the four alternatives.

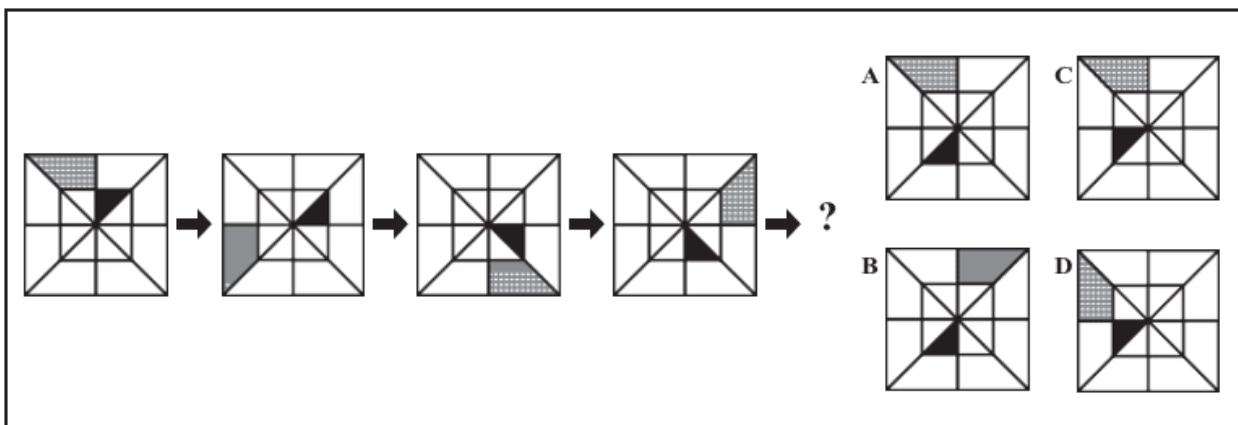
There are two question types:

1. Next in Sequence

In these items you need to identify the rule for the sequence given and choose the option that most logically and simply comes next.

In the following item, there are four shapes forming a sequence going from left to right. You are to choose from the alternatives at the right (**A**, **B**, **C** and **D**) the one which would most logically come next in the sequence.

EXAMPLE QUESTION

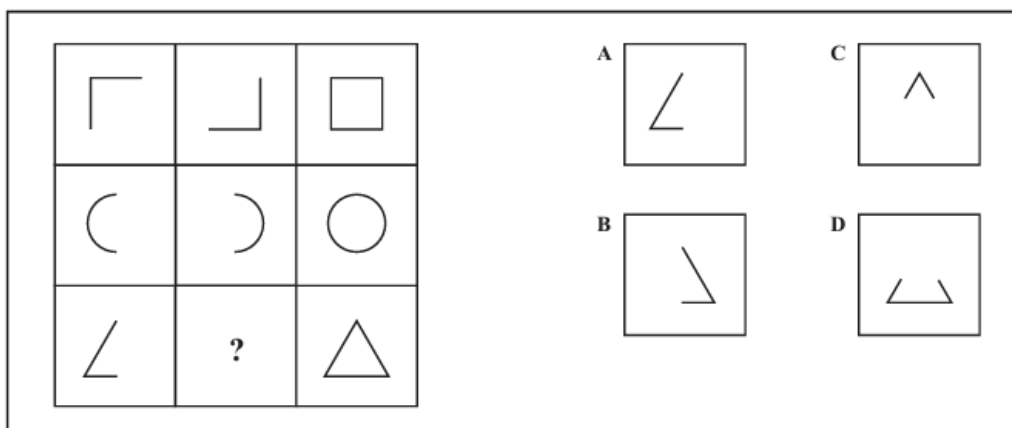


In the sequence above, the inner black triangle moves clockwise one space between one diagram and the next, while the spotted shape moves anticlockwise two spaces. Therefore, the answer is **A**.

2. Complete the Pattern

In these items you need to identify which option fits most logically and simply into the space marked with a '?'.

EXAMPLE QUESTION



In this example the shape in the box at the right of each row is made by combining the shapes in the first two boxes of the row, so the answer is **B**.

Tips for taking multiple choice tests

You will be given one answer booklet to record your answers for all four tests. On the back of the answer booklet is blank space that you can use for any rough working out. You can also use the space in your test question booklets – just make sure your answers always go in your answer booklet. All questions in the Reading Comprehension, Quantitative Reasoning and the Abstract Reasoning tests are multiple choice.

For each multiple-choice question there are four small ovals labelled **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**. Use a pencil to clearly mark the oval of your choice.

Example (Answer '**B**' selected)



If you wish to change your answer, carefully rub out the first mark and then mark your new choice.

Points will not be deducted for incorrect responses, only awarded for correct ones.

- You can highlight or underline key words or phrases on the test booklet.
- There is no penalty for guessing. If you only have a minute to go quickly fill in a response on the answer booklet for all remaining answers.
- If you are unsure of the answer, try to narrow it down to two out of four by eliminating obvious or likely distractors/incorrect answers.
- Don't spend too long on any one question or group of questions.
 - In the Reading Comprehension test and the Quantitative Reasoning test you should be spending about a minute per question.
 - The Abstract Reasoning test requires you to work even more quickly! Speed, accuracy, and attention to detail are part of what this test is about.
 - Each question in a test is of equal value, so it is unwise to spend too much time on any one question.
- If you choose to skip a question and come back later, make sure you leave the matching space on the answer booklet blank. Putting an asterisk next to the question number on your answer booklet can help you remember where to come back to.
- Take care not to get your answers out of alignment with the question you are answering. See below for more information about misalignment.

Misaligned answers in multiple choice tests

Answers are misaligned when your responses in the answer booklet don't match up with the question you are answering. For example, you have worked out the answer to Question 20, but when you go to mark it down on your answer booklet you realise you are only up to Q19.

Don't panic, and don't rub out your answers!

You have probably accidentally skipped a question earlier in the test. This is a reasonably common error which can be fixed in the majority of cases. Put your hand up to let a supervisor know right away. They will record the information necessary to ensure a misalignment review will occur during the marking process.

Misalignment reviews are comprehensive and markers are trained to analyse response patterns and find strings of misaligned responses. Where a misalignment is reported and found to have occurred, the responses will be corrected prior to the formal release of results.

Tips for the Communicating Ideas in Writing test

- Unlike NAPLAN writing tasks, there is no prescribed format or style (e.g.; narrative or persuasive text styles). You may write in any style, format or genre you wish, as long as your writing is clearly linked to the prompt.
- Avoid having a pre-planned story that you “bend” to fit the prompt. This is unlikely to have a strong link to the prompt and may receive a very low score.
- If you cannot think of what to write, don’t leave the space blank. Write something, even if you are describing what you see in the picture, whether the phrase makes sense to you, or even if you like it or not. It is better to score a 1 or 2 than score 0 for a blank page.
- It is marked differently from NAPLAN writing – there is no focus on handwriting, spelling, punctuation etc. as long as the writing is legible and presents a well-organised and original idea that is clearly inspired by the prompt.
- There is no maximum or minimum amount of writing that is required. Remember though, a very short piece might not give the markers enough to properly evaluate your ability. It is normal for candidates to write between one and two pages.
- It doesn’t matter if you don’t finish your piece of writing – as long as the idea is clear and relates to the prompt. It doesn’t matter if you have, or don’t have, a title to your writing.

Some suggestions for preparation/practice:

- Use a prompt from a newspaper or magazine (find a picture of anything) and spend *five minutes* planning what you might write about. Formulate an interesting idea with a beginning, middle and end. You don’t have to write the whole story; often getting started is the most difficult part.
- Use the same prompt and try to come up with a new, different idea. Try not to write about the first thing you think of related to the prompt; avoid the most obvious ideas to try to make your writing distinctive and different from other candidates.
- Choose another prompt and set your time for 25 minutes. Perhaps get someone else involved to do the same. Compare your responses to the prompt afterwards and discuss what you thought worked and what didn’t. If you wrote about similar things, consider what a more unique and original response could have been.

Stress and personal management

- Try to be mindful, not obsessive, about time remaining, especially in multiple choice tests – if you have half the time left, you should be about halfway through the questions. Wear your own watch if you have one – just not a Smart Watch as these are not permitted in the exam room.
- There are four tests – you don’t need to score well on all of them. If you feel like you are doing poorly in one, you can make up for it by doing well in one or more of the others. Very few candidates are very strong in all four tests. It is your overall score that counts, not doing well in all four. Candidates have sometimes gained placement at the school of their choice even scoring below half marks on one test.
- Do not “over-prepare” prior to the test – the tests are not curriculum-based or acquired learning tests (i.e. what is learned and remembered from school). They are tests of learning potential and aptitude – everything you need to know will be presented in the test question booklet. A candidate’s capacity to infer, hypothesise and generalise correctly from what is presented is what will be recognised and rewarded.
- If you become very anxious during a test it may be better to stop, close your eyes for 60 seconds and try to calm and relax yourself rather than push ahead and make yourself more stressed. Move ahead to a different set of questions you feel better about and come back if time permits. Remember that these tests are designed to be exceptionally challenging. It is normal to find the questions difficult and you will not be the only one. Try not to compare yourself to the students around you and keep focused on your own work.
- Remember that the test supervisors are there to help you! Don’t be scared to raise your hand and ask for help if you feel sick, don’t understand the instructions, or have a different problem.