



# ASET Handbook

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This handbook may be useful to students and their parents who would like to know more about the Academic Selective Entrance Test (ASET). We recommend you go through this handbook with a parent so you can ask questions about any concepts you may not understand. Topics covered include:

- Test preparation
- Test rules and expected behaviour
- ASET components and timings
- The answer booklet and how to record your answers
- Overview of each test, including example questions and how they are scored
- Tips for the test and what to do if something goes wrong
- Frequently asked questions

## Test preparation

It may be useful to do a small amount of preparation for the test so that you know what to expect on the day and can feel comfortable and ready. The best way you can prepare for the ASET is to read carefully through this handbook and try the [Practice ASET](#). The ASET is not curriculum-based or an acquired learning test (i.e. testing things that are learned at school) so you don't need to do any extra study. It is designed to measure your natural potential and aptitude, so don't feel pressured to over-prepare as this can have the opposite effect.

The [Practice ASET](#) helps you understand the types of questions you can expect and gives you a chance to experience the timing of each test. It includes a [printable answer booklet](#) and an answer key to check your responses. You'll also find example questions and tips in this handbook to help you approach both the multiple-choice and written tests.

## Test rules and expected behaviour

You will need to listen carefully and follow all instructions you are given on the day of the test. Every ASET session will have a Lead Supervisor who will deliver a set script that is the same no matter which test site you are assigned to. Listening to and following these instructions not only helps you to do your best, it also makes sure the test is fair and consistent for all students. Students who don't follow the rules risk having their test cancelled, so you must take them seriously and commit to following them on the day.

You must:

- Listen carefully and follow all supervisor instructions.

- Not talk or attempt to communicate with other students in the test room.
- Keep your eyes on your own work. You are not allowed to view or copy answers from another student or allow another student to view or copy your work.
- Not bring, use or attempt to use any unauthorised material such as notes, study guides, connective devices such as smart watches/mobiles/tablets, digital glasses, hidden cameras or recording devices.
- Not open, read or write on any test question or answer booklet until you are told to do so.
- Record your answers to the test questions in your answer booklet as you go.
- Stop work immediately when any test time is up. You are not allowed to go back and work on any test, even if you finish another test early. This includes going back and modifying answers.
- Not call out, get out of your chair or leave the test room without permission unless it is a genuine emergency. If you have a question or need something, you must raise your hand and wait for a supervisor to come to you.
- Not take or attempt to take test papers or test information out of the test room. This includes sharing answers or test content with others (individuals and/or groups).
- Not engage in any disruptive or attention-seeking behaviours that may distract others.
- Always be respectful. Defiant, aggressive and/or abusive behaviours to staff or other students will not be tolerated.

### ASET components and timings

The ASET is made up of four tests and is designed to be challenging. Three tests are multiple choice and one asks you to handwrite a response to a prompt. The four tests aim to measure your aptitude for problem-solving, reasoning, creative thinking in writing, comprehension, interpretation and applying known concepts to new situations. These types of thinking skills - also known as higher-order thinking skills - are necessary to do well.

You will do the four tests in the following order and will receive a set amount of time for each.

<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	35 minutes	(multiple choice)
<b>Communicating Ideas in Writing</b>	25 minutes	(written test)
<b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>	35 minutes	(multiple choice)
<b>Abstract Reasoning</b>	20 minutes	(multiple choice)

When the time for a test ends, you must stop immediately. Your question booklet will be collected and instructions for the next test will begin. You will not be allowed to continue work on any test once the time is up.

There will be a 10-minute break between the Communicating Ideas in Writing and Quantitative Reasoning tests. During this break, you will leave the test room and have access to your bag. Supervisors will encourage you to use this time to have something to eat and use the toilet.

Note the above timings are relevant to standard conditions testing only. If you have been approved for adjusted conditions, these may vary.

## The answer booklet

You will be given one answer booklet to use for all tests. This book will remain on your desk until the final test is complete. Only your answer booklet will be scored, so it is important to record your answers to each question as you go.

Take care of your answer booklet, avoid damage that could make your answers hard to read or cause them to be missed.

## Your answers to the multiple-choice tests

Your answers to the multiple-choice tests will need to go into the correct grid for each test. Answer grids are labelled with the name of the test for easy reference, and you will be directed to the appropriate grid by supervisors on the day. On the front cover (page 1) you will find the Reading Comprehension answer grid. The Quantitative Reasoning and Abstract Reasoning grids are on page 2. For each multiple-choice question there are four small ovals labelled A, B, C and D. You will need to use a pencil to colour the oval of your choice, depending on which answer you think is correct.

Example (Answer 'B' selected):



If you get the answer correct, you will score one point. There is no particular order of difficulty and all questions are worth a single point. If you do not know the answer, it is ok to guess. We do not deduct points for incorrect answers, only award a point if you get it right.

You must record your answers to each question on your answer booklet *as you go* and supervisors will be moving around the room to make sure this is done. You are allowed to use the question booklets to make notes or do rough working out, but your answers must go directly into your answer booklet.

All multiple-choice answer grids are marked by computer scanners that read pencil marks only. For this reason, you must use a pencil. The scanners are highly sensitive and will detect almost all markings, except very faint ones. If your answer is easily visible to the human eye, you can be confident it will be read by the scanner, so don't waste time overly shading your answers or trying to colour in each box perfectly. If you want to change your answer, carefully rub out the first answer and then mark your new choice. Remember, points will not be deducted for wrong answers, only awarded for right ones, so it is ok to guess if you are running out of time.

When answering multiple choice questions, take care to record each answer in the correct space in your answer booklet. You can answer the questions in any order you like, but you must check to make sure you are putting your answers in the right space. We recommend answering the questions in order from 1-35, as this reduces the risk of misaligning your answers.

On the back of your answer booklet you will also find a blank page that you can also use for any rough working out if you need to. Remember that markers will not see any of your rough working out and it will not contribute to your score.

## Your answer to the written test

From Page 3 onwards in your answer booklet, you'll find space for your Communicating Ideas in Writing response. There are plenty of lined pages, so you don't need to worry about running out of space. The top half of page 4 is blank for planning. This space will not be seen by the markers and will not contribute to your score, so only use it if it helps you plan your writing. Your writing will be hand-marked so you can choose to use either pen or pencil and print or handwrite. Choose whichever is most comfortable for you. The neatness of your writing won't affect your score if it is clear and readable.

## Reading Comprehension test overview and examples

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 reading 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 text.

You will be given a Reading Comprehension question booklet with instructions on the front. You will be given time to read these instructions before the test begins. Inside the book you will find 35 multiple choice questions. You will have a total of 35 minutes to answer all the questions before the time is up.

Remember, you can underline or highlight important words of pieces of text, but you must put your answers into your answer booklet as you go.

### 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.

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

Answers: 1. B 2. B 3. D

## Communicating Ideas in Writing test overview and examples

The Communicating Ideas in Writing (CIIW) test is a test of thinking in writing and is different to other tests you may have taken. Unlike tests like NAPLAN which try and measure your functional literacy skills such as spelling and punctuation, the CIIW measures how well you can come up with interesting ideas from a prompt and turn them into a piece of writing.

You will be given a writing sheet with instructions on the front and the prompt on the back. You will have time to read the instructions but you will not be allowed to turn over the page and see the prompt until the test time starts. The prompt will be an image, a piece of written text or a combination of the two. You can choose to write in any style, genre or text type that best allows you to showcase your ideas.

Your CIIW response must be original and impromptu, not rehashed, memorised or based on a known template or another person's work. Spelling, grammar and punctuation, etc, will have little impact providing your work is readable.

CIIW prompts are chosen for their ability to be broadly interpreted but your response must be clearly based on the prompt you are given.

### The importance of the prompt

CIIW markers must be able to easily recognise the connection to the prompt in your work. The connection must make sense and be a necessary part of your writing. It shouldn't feel like you just

added a reference to the prompt into an unrelated story or idea to "tick the box." In a successful response, the prompt will be central. Relevance to the prompt, originality in approach, and good communication skills will determine your score.

Each response will be scored by a minimum of two independent markers who have been specially trained to score the piece of writing against the marking criteria. Their scores will be based on:

- **relevance to the prompt**
- the complexity, freshness and interest of the ideas
- the style and form and how these aspects of writing enhance the ideas
- the strength of the plot, message, issue or information
- the organisation and coherence of the writing
- the distinctiveness of voice and tone
- the appropriateness, expressiveness and fluency of the language

### Off-topic responses

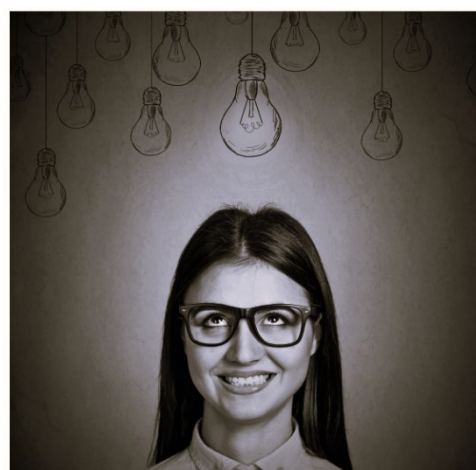
In fairness to all students, if your work bears little or no recognisable relevance to the prompt, it will be heavily penalised.

In cases where one or both markers consider your writing to be entirely unrelated to the prompt, it will be escalated to adjudication by a panel of senior markers. If the panel agrees that your work is off-topic, it will receive a zero score. Responses that are recognisably based on ideas or works that are pre-existing or not your own (e.g. plagiarised) will also receive zero scores.

Pieces of writing in which the connection to the prompt is vague, appears inserted after the fact or forced, and/or offers no benefit or meaning to the work other than to make a superficial link to the prompt, will be assigned very low scores. These works will also be referred to the senior marking panel prior to final scoring.

### Communicating Ideas in Writing prompt examples

**'Some rules are good. Some aren't.'**



**It was the best idea...**

There are many ways in which these prompts can be used as the springboard for an interesting piece of writing. You could choose to focus on a unique interpretation of the prompts to develop elements such as setting and character, relevant concept/s or viewpoint. Whichever approach you take, the connection to the prompt must be made apparent to readers and the writing must be clear, lively and original.

## Quantitative Reasoning test overview and examples

This test assesses quantitative reasoning ability, which is very different to a test of school achievement in mathematics or science. This test checks how well you can use your mathematical and scientific reasoning skills to solve problems. The content comes from many different sources and is very different to what is taught in school.

You'll need to look at information carefully, find patterns and relationships, solve problems, and spot similarities and differences.

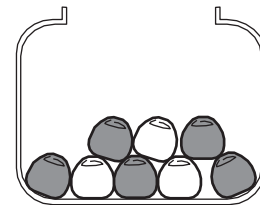
You will be given a Quantitative Reasoning question booklet with instructions on the front. You will be given time to read these instructions before the test begins. Inside the book you will find 35 multiple choice questions. You will have a total of 35 minutes to answer all the questions.

There is plenty of space in your question booklet to do rough working out and you can also use the blank back page of your answer booklet. But remember, markers won't see your rough working, only the answers you have shaded in your answer booklet. You can underline or highlight important words or pieces of text, but you must put your answers into your answer booklet as you go.

### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

#### Questions 1 and 2

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



- 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?
 

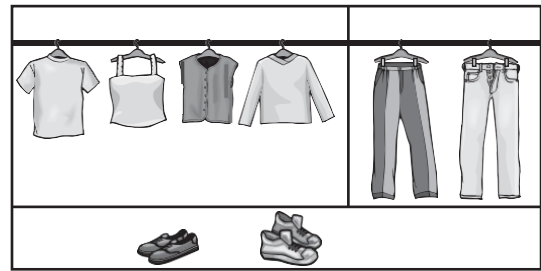
<b>A</b> five chances in eight	<b>B</b> five chances in seven
<b>C</b> four chances in eight	<b>D</b> three chances in eight
- Starting with the chocolates in the figure, suppose Dario takes out and eats two of the brown chocolates. If he then takes out a third chocolate without looking, he has
 

<b>A</b> a much greater chance of picking a white chocolate than a brown chocolate.
<b>B</b> a slightly greater chance of picking a white chocolate than a brown chocolate.
<b>C</b> a slightly greater chance of picking a brown chocolate than a white chocolate.
<b>D</b> an equal chance of picking either a white or a brown chocolate.

#### Question 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

### Abstract Reasoning test overview and examples

This test assesses your ability to use abstract reasoning skills, thinking about ideas and patterns that aren't always obvious. You'll need to recognise connections, make reasoned choices (hypotheses), and decide if they make sense (evaluate).

You will be given an Abstract Reasoning question booklet with instructions on the front. You will have time to read these instructions before the test begins. Inside the book you will find 35 multiple choice questions. You will have a total of 20 minutes to answer all the questions before time's up.

There is plenty of space in your question booklet to do rough working out and you can also use the blank back page of your answer booklet. But remember, markers won't see your rough working, only the answers you have shaded in your answer booklet. You can underline or highlight important parts, but you must put your answers into your answer booklet as you go.

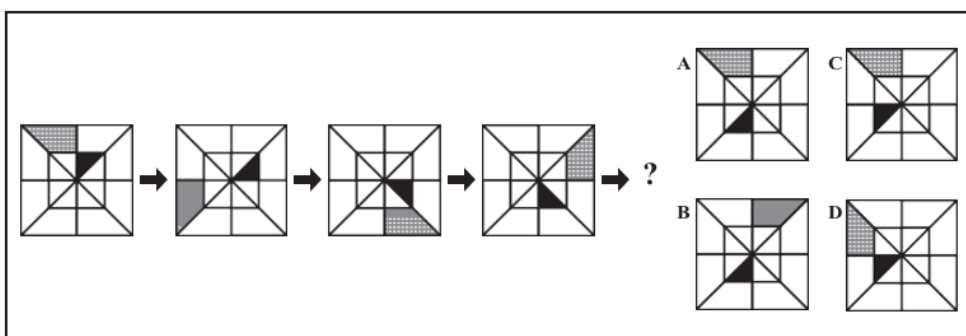
There are two question types:

#### 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



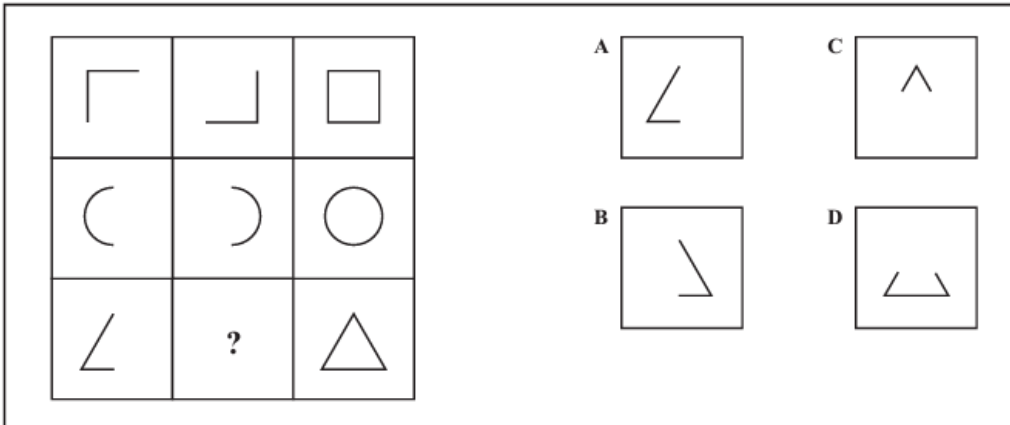
In the sequence above, the inner black triangle moves clockwise one space between one diagram and the next, while the spotted shape moves anticlockwise two spaces. Therefore, the answer is **A**.

#### 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 the multiple-choice tests

- Don't be afraid to make any marks on your test question booklet that may help you decide on the correct answer, such as:
  - highlighting or underlining key words or phrases
  - doing rough working out
  - eliminating obviously incorrect answers
- 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 spend 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 the multiple-choice tests is worth a single point, so don't 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 most 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 thorough and markers are trained to analyse response patterns and find strings of misaligned responses. Where a misalignment is reported and found to have occurred, your responses will be corrected prior to the release of your ASET performance report.

## Tips for the Communicating Ideas in Writing test

### Things to consider:

- If you can't think of what to write, don't leave the space blank. Write something, even if you are just describing what you see, whether the phrase or visual image makes sense, or even if you like it or not. Writing a little may inspire you to write more and it is better to try, than give up.
- 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. It is usual for students 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 centred around the prompt. It doesn't matter if there is, or isn't, a title to your work.
- Don't waste time with a plan unnecessarily. Markers will not have access to your planning section so it will not contribute to your score. Only write a plan if it will help you create a better piece of writing, not because you think you have to.

### Some suggestions for preparation/practice:

- Use a prompt from a website or e-zine (find a picture of anything or an interesting line from an article) and spend *two minutes* jotting down ideas. From there, choose the most interesting idea and plan a beginning, middle and end. What style or text type would work best with this particular idea? How could the ideas be developed? Would everyone be able to see the clear relevance to the prompt? Often getting started is the most difficult part.
- Use a different prompt and do it again. Compare the ideas from the first prompt to the second. Is the prompt the focus of the writing? Remember, the ability to showcase the prompt in a unique and compelling way is key here. The more times this exercise is done, the more you will become used to quickly coming up with interesting ideas, regardless of the prompt that you get on the day.

- Choose another prompt, but this time actually write the full piece. Make sure that the writing time is set for 25 minutes and don't give yourself any extra time. Perhaps get someone else involved to do the same, like a parent or sibling. Consider not going with the first idea that comes to mind and think about how the response can be made distinctive and different from others. Compare your responses to the prompt afterwards and discuss what worked and what didn't. Consider what a more unique and original response could have been.

## Communicating Ideas in Writing FAQs

### How can I make sure the writing markers will see the relationship to the prompt?

Write based on what you see and/or read, **not** what you feel most comfortable with or what might have worked for you in other tests or assignments in the past. Ask yourself honestly: is your idea truly based on the prompt? If the answer is yes, you have nothing to worry about as there will be obvious connections throughout your work that are clear and credible to markers. If you are instead choosing to write on your own topic, or are trying to use a rehearsed piece that you may have had success with in the past, even if you do attempt to link it to the prompt, your efforts will appear forced. At worst, markers may not see any connection at all. Remember, the point of the prompts is to create a level playing field for all students so we can fairly assess their capacity to come up with original and interesting ideas and then communicate them effectively within a limited timeframe.

### Why can't I use a piece I've written on before?

The CIW test is a test of your ability to generate original, impromptu ideas based on a set prompt. While you are also assessed on the way you express those ideas, the emphasis is on the ideas themselves.

If you memorise a piece you have written before, and deliver it as your test response, you are not showing the markers your ability to generate good ideas related to the prompt. You are really only showing them your ability to memorise. If markers can't assess your genuine ability, then they can't score your response in a valid way.

### How important is the length of my response?

Length is not a criterion; however, short pieces may not offer markers enough to properly evaluate.

## Tips for stress and personal management

- Preparation in moderation. There are limits to the usefulness of most forms of preparation, so don't overdo it and risk unnecessary burn-out or exhaustion that may impact your performance on the day.
- Look after yourself by having a good sleep each night. Have a good breakfast on the morning of your test to help keep your energy levels up.
- Keep a healthy balance. Don't put your life on hold. Continue doing the things you normally do and enjoy, such as seeing your friends and participating in extra-curricular activities.
- Try not to fixate on any particular outcome, either positive or negative. Your results in the ASET will not make or break your future and you will have plenty of other opportunities.

- During the test, try to be mindful, but not hyper-focused, about time remaining, especially in multiple choice tests. If you have half the time left, you should be about halfway through the questions. Bring your own silent exam timer or 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 people are strong in all four tests. It is your overall score that counts, not doing well in all four. Some students have gained placement at the school of their choice even scoring below half marks on one test.
- 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 challenging. It is normal to find the questions difficult and you will not be the only one. It is normal to be anxious but remember that people show their emotions in different ways and you will not always see when others are struggling. Try not to compare yourself to the students around you and keep focused on your own work.
- The test supervisors are not just there to manage test procedures, they are also 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. The worst thing you can do is keep your troubles to yourself when there could be a solution to your problem or a way to help you. Each test centre will have a number of staff, so just raise your hand and someone will quickly come to you.

## General FAQs

### **Is there an option to do the test online at home?**

No. The ASET is a paper and pencil test that you must complete at your assigned testing centre. All the test papers will be provided on the day, you just need to have your writing materials.

Instructions for arrival, registration and what you will need to bring will be included in the *Test Day Information Sheet for Parents* that will be available on our [website](#) once applications close.

### **What happens if I finish a test early?**

You will need to sit quietly until time is called. You will not be able to leave the room early, start on another test or go back to work on an earlier test. The best thing you can do is go back and check your answers to make sure you are happy with them.

### **Can I ask a supervisor if I don't understand what one of the questions means?**

Being able to read and make meaning of the questions is part of the test. Unfortunately, supervisors will not be able to explain questions to you or tell you what a word means.

**How will I know how much time is left?**

All exam rooms will have a visible clock or electronic timer that you can use to manage your time. In addition, you will get a verbal five-minute time warning when there is five minutes left in any test. You are also allowed to bring a non-smart silent wristwatch or exam timer if you have one.

**What should I do if need to ask a question?**

Put your hand up and a supervisor will come to you. Please don't call out unless it is an emergency, as you will disturb other students who are working. Remember that supervisors will not be able to tell you what words mean or explain questions to you, so you will need to work this out for yourself.

**What should I do if I feel sick in the test?**

Put up your hand and let a supervisor know straight away. Don't think that you have to struggle through it because you are worried about disappointing someone or causing a fuss. If you let a supervisor know, they can arrange for you to come back on another day to finish any tests you haven't started. No-one will be angry with you, we just want you to be well enough to do your best.

**Can I go to the toilet during the test?**

Only one student at a time will be allowed to leave the room to go to the toilet, so you should make sure you go before you enter the test room, and then again during the halfway break. Try and limit your water intake so you aren't caught short. Remember, we can't delay the test for students needing to use the toilet, and you won't get any extra time.

**How do I avoid misaligning my answers**

Always take the time to check that the question you are answering on your answer booklet is the same number as the one you are up to in your question booklet. For example, if you are up to question 5 in your question booklet, make sure you shade your answer next to question 5 in your answer book. Some students circle their answers in their question booklet as well as shading them on your answer booklet. If a misalignment occurs, this allows you to quickly track where you went wrong. If you choose to do this, you won't get any extra time. You will have to also continue to mark your answers on your answer book as you go. Remember, misalignment can happen and the best thing to do is to not panic or rub anything out, and tell a supervisor straight away!

**When will I know how I did?**

Your parents or the person who lodged your application will receive an ASET Performance Report in early June. Offers will start going out at the end of June.

**Any questions? Contact the Gifted and Talented Selection Unit on 9264 4307 or [gtsu@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:gtsu@education.wa.edu.au)**