

Gifted and Talented programs

ASET tips sheet

Overview

This document contains some useful tips for children sitting the Academic Selective Entrance Test (ASET). Please note these tips refer to standard conditions timings.

Multiple choice tests

Reading Comprehension and Quantitative Reasoning – 35 minutes, 35 questions (all years)

- 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 – you should be spending around a minute per question at a maximum.
- If you leave a question out, ensure you leave the matching space on the answer booklet unanswered – don't get answers out of alignment (see below).
- You can highlight or underline key words or phrases on the test booklet.

Abstract Reasoning – 20 minutes, 35 questions (Year 6); 20 minutes, 40 questions (Years 8-10)

- Speed, accuracy and attention to detail are part of what this test is about so be ready to work quickly, efficiently and carefully – ensure you correctly match your responses to questions in the answer booklet in the correct space – don't get answers out of alignment (see below).
- 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

Answers out of alignment – don't panic!

If you get to the end of a multiple choice test and realise your answers are partly, or all, out of alignment (e.g.: you finish Q35 and realise your answers are only up to Q34 because you left a question out) **DO NOT rub out all you answers**, especially if you are close to the end of the test.

What to do:

1. *If you have time* go back and try to find a place where you can check that your answers match and work your way forward.

2. *If there is no time*, leave the answers as they are – **DO NOT rub them all out**. Raise your hand and alert your test supervisor – they will not be able to help you align or fix your answers, but they will need to document the incident in the *Lead Supervisor's Report*.
3. **ALWAYS** tell your parents/carers when you leave the test room what has happened, and which test it happened in. Do not be embarrassed as this is a reasonably common error and can be fixed in the majority of cases. Your parents will need to contact GTSU as soon as possible (next business day) after the test to request an ***Illness, Incident or Misadventure Review Request form*** which they will need to complete and submit to GTSU. If you follow this process, the markers will be able to conduct a misalignment investigation and potentially re-align the string of "correct" answers so you can still get credit for them.

Communicating Ideas in Writing – 25 minutes (including planning and editing)

This is a creative writing task based upon a prompt which may be a picture, phrase or a combination of each.

- You must base your writing upon the prompt in a meaningful and recognisable way. There is an automatic very low score for writing that is deemed “off-topic” or not related to the prompt.
- 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 reflects the prompt clearly.
- It is marked differently from NAPLAN writing – there is no penalty for poor spelling, syntax, grammar etc. as long as the writing presents a clear and well-organised, original idea that is clearly inspired by the prompt provided.
- Avoid having a “pre-planned” story that you “bend” to fit the prompt – this will lack spontaneity, is unlikely to have a strong link to the prompt and may receive a very low score.
- If you feel like you can't write anything – don't leave the space blank. Try to just describe what you can see in the picture, talk about how you feel about it, describe whether the picture or phrase makes sense to you, or if you just don't like it – why? Write something – it is better to get 1 or 2 out of 10 than ZERO for a blank page.

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, try to see a beginning, middle and end – don't try to write the whole story – often getting started is the hardest part.
- Use the same prompt, but try to find a different/new idea and repeat the strategy above – 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 ‘outside the box’ response could have been.
- There is no maximum/minimum amount of writing that is required – it is normal for candidates to write between a page to one and a half 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.

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. Fitbits are allowed, providing they do not have Smart Watch capabilities such as the ability to access the internet and communicate with others.
- 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 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 than to 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.
- If you feel unwell in the test, alert a supervisor immediately. Don't persist with the test until you are too unwell to continue. Don't be embarrassed or feel that anyone will be disappointed with you. Your supervisor will arrange for your parents to collect you and document the incident in the *Lead Supervisor's Report*. Your parents will need to contact GTSU as soon as possible (next business day) after the test to request an ***Illness, Incident or Misadventure Review Request*** form which they will need to complete and submit to GTSU. If you follow this process, GTSU will be able to organise for you to finish the test on a day when you are well. **Continuing to work when unwell is the worst thing you can do**, as results can't be changed on the basis that you may not have done your best. Illness is common and we want you sitting the test when you are feeling well and can put your best foot forward.