

NSW Selective High School Placement Test

Thinking Skills — Practice Paper

Questions: 40

Time allowed: 40 minutes

Calculator: not permitted

Instructions: Each question has four answer choices (A, B, C, D). Choose the one best answer.

Paper ID: ts-seed-10000

Figures are drawn for clarity; where a figure is marked “not to scale”, work from the labelled values.

1. Sam said: "Anyone who scored a hole-in-one wins a prize. So if one hole-in-one was scored this year, four players will get prizes — the three top finishers plus the hole-in-one scorer."

Which one of these sentences shows the mistake that has been made?

- (A)** Younger players might find it difficult to score a hole-in-one.
- (B)** We do not know the total number of players in the competition.
- (C)** The hole-in-one might have been scored by a player who finished first, second, or third.
- (D)** Some players might deserve a prize even if they didn't score a hole-in-one.

2. To qualify for the annual canoe race: finish first or second in a regional heat, OR last year's winning team (exact same members) qualifies automatically, OR one team is chosen at random as a 'wild card' from teams that failed to qualify otherwise.

Glen: "We came third in our regional heat. We won last year, but one teammate has left. Our only chance now is to get her back."

Hayden: "If we can get her back, it won't matter that we didn't do well enough in our regional heat."

If the information in the box is true, whose reasoning is correct?

- (A)** Glen only
- (B)** Hayden only
- (C)** Neither Glen nor Hayden
- (D)** Both Glen and Hayden

3. Matt and Yash play chess daily at lunch. Over the long run each has won about half.

Mr Stead: "I don't remember how many games they played last week, but Matt won 5, so they must have played about 10."

Which one of these sentences shows the mistake that has been made?

- (A)** Either Matt or Yash might have played unusually well last week.
- (B)** It doesn't matter who wins; what matters is that they both have fun.
- (C)** Matt and Yash may have had lots of homework last week.
- (D)** Matt and Yash always play a whole number of games each lunchtime.

4. Over a year, Ahmed and Melissa recorded every frog sighting at Quilpie Nature Reserve: 113 red sentinels and 15 speckled greenbacks.

Melissa: "That tells us red sentinels are much more common here, and speckled greenbacks are rare."

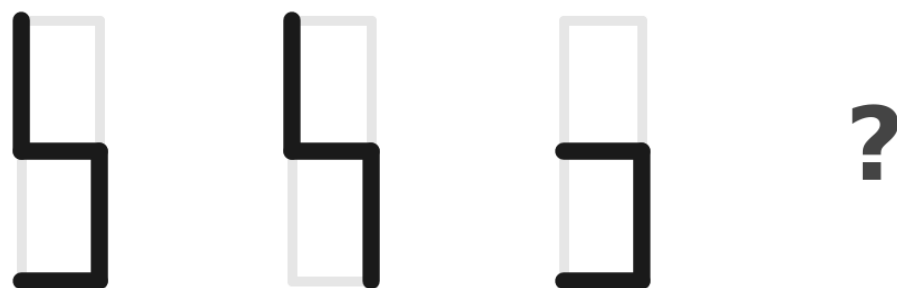
Which one of these sentences shows the mistake that has been made?

- (A)** Seasonal weather changes may affect the two species differently.
- (B)** Just because red sentinels are more common here does not mean they are common elsewhere.
- (C)** There may be other species of frog on the reserve not yet discovered.
- (D)** Red sentinels may be easier to spot than speckled greenbacks.

5. A 7-segment digital display has two segments that are broken — those segments never light up, regardless of which digit is being shown. The diagram below shows the first three digits of a counting sequence as they appear on this faulty display.

Four candidate displays are shown underneath, labelled A, B, C and D. Each one is a possible appearance for the next digit in the sequence on the same faulty display.

Which of A, B, C, D shows the next digit in the sequence as it would appear on the faulty display?



A

B

C

D

(A) A

(B) B

(C) C

(D) D

6. Sonny has five dominoes. He arranges them end-to-end so that the two numbers on touching faces of adjacent dominoes are the same. The first and last dominoes are:

First: [4:4]

Last: [5:2]

Which of the following could be the middle three dominoes, shown in order from left to right, with their orientations as drawn?

(A) [4:5] | [5:2] | [3:5]

(B) [4:6] | [5:2] | [2:5]

(C) [4:5] | [5:2] | [2:5]

(D) [4:5] | [6:2] | [2:5]

7. An advertisement claims: 'STAIN-GONE never fails to remove a stain.' Four stained items were washed. For each, two questions were asked: (i) Was STAIN-GONE used? (ii) Was the stain removed? The answers to some of the questions are below; the four unknown answers are labelled (a), (b), (c), and (d).

Item 1: STAIN-GONE used? YES Stain removed? (a)

Item 2: STAIN-GONE used? (b) Stain removed? YES

Item 3: STAIN-GONE used? NO Stain removed? (c)

Item 4: STAIN-GONE used? (d) Stain removed? NO

Which two of the missing answers must be known to test the truth of the claim?

(A) b and d

(B) a and b

(C) c and d

(D) a and d

8. In a survey of television viewers, the following was found:

- Everyone who liked volleyball liked swimming.
- Everyone who liked swimming liked tennis.
- No one who liked swimming liked cycling.

Priya, Sam, Amanda, Jess all took part in the survey. Based on the above, which one of the following must be true?

- (A)** If Priya liked tennis, she also liked swimming.
- (B)** If Sam did not like cycling, he did not like tennis.
- (C)** If Amanda did not like volleyball, she did not like swimming.
- (D)** If Jess liked volleyball, she did not like cycling.

9. To borrow a book from the senior section, a student must be in Year 5 or above OR have a permission slip from a teacher.

Arjun: "Priya just borrowed a senior-section book, so she must have a permission slip."

Lachlan: "Ollie is in Year 3 and just borrowed a senior-section book, so he must have a permission slip."

If the information in the box is true, whose reasoning is correct?

- (A)** Both Arjun and Lachlan
- (B)** Neither Arjun nor Lachlan
- (C)** Arjun only
- (D)** Lachlan only

10. Some sets of three-letter words can be arranged so that no two adjacent words share any letters in common.

The following words can be arranged into such a sequence together with one more word, but they are not given in the right order:

MUD, OXY, TOE, HEX

Which one of the following could be the missing word from this set?

- (A)** PIT
- (B)** JOB
- (C)** DOG
- (D)** RYE

11. Ben argued that playing chess improves children's maths marks, because students at his school's chess club get higher maths grades on average than students who don't attend the club.

Which one of these statements, if true, most weakens the argument?

- (A)** The chess club meets after school, which not all students can attend.
- (B)** Some students find chess games too slow and prefer faster board games.
- (C)** Chess has been played for well over a thousand years across many cultures.
- (D)** Students who already enjoy maths are far more likely to sign up for the chess club in the first place.

12. The string below contains only four symbols: \$, &, @ and #.

@\$\$\$\$\$\$&#@&#&\$@&&\$\$

Which one of these four symbols can be added to the right-hand side of the string so that no three-symbol pattern is repeated anywhere in the string?

- (A)** \$
- (B)** @
- (C)** #
- (D)** &

13. Ben, Fred, and Alice have 38 coins between them.

- Ben has twice as many coins as Fred.
- Fred has 2 more coins than Alice.

How many coins does Ben have?

- (A)** 20
- (B)** 10
- (C)** 18
- (D)** 8

14. A band is performing at the local park. The first performance is on Monday 1 June 2026 and the final performance is on June 30. There will be two performances on every Monday and every Tuesday, no performances on June 16 or June 18, and one performance on each of the other days.

How many performances will there be altogether?

- (A)** 39
- (B)** 33
- (C)** 34
- (D)** 37

15. A school measured fitness across divers, skaters, and gymnasts and found:

- The fittest divers were fitter than the fittest skaters.
- All the gymnasts were fitter than most of the divers.
- All the skaters were fitter than all the gymnasts.

Which one of these sentences can be concluded from the above information?

- (A)** The skaters' average fitness level was better than the other groups'.
- (B)** There was a smaller range of fitness amongst gymnasts than amongst skaters.
- (C)** Divers and skaters are generally fitter than gymnasts.
- (D)** The range of fitness levels was greatest amongst the divers.

16. At a fête, darts can land in the Blue zone (worth A points each) or the Red zone (worth B points each).

- Sam hit the Blue zone 4 times and the Red zone 2 times, scoring 28 points.
- Ruby hit the Blue zone 2 times and the Red zone 4 times, scoring 38 points.

How many points is one Blue-zone dart worth?

- (A)** 7
- (B)** 3
- (C)** 6
- (D)** 8

17. Every student on the debating team practises after school on Tuesdays.

Nadia: "Kai practises after school on Tuesdays, so he must be on the debating team."

Hemi: "Yarran doesn't practise after school on Tuesdays, so he can't be on the debating team."

If the information in the box is true, whose reasoning is correct?

- (A)** Both Nadia and Hemi
- (B)** Neither Nadia nor Hemi
- (C)** Nadia only
- (D)** Hemi only

18. To qualify for the County Trophy finals, teams must meet at least one of three conditions, any combination allowed.

Lucy: "There were 6 qualifying groups so 12 teams came first or second. 14 teams scored at least 15 match points, and 1 team won the Fair Play Award. So I should plan for 27 teams in the finals."

Which one of these sentences shows the mistake that has been made?

- (A) Some teams may have met more than one of the conditions, so there will be fewer than 27 teams.
- (B) Some teams may have scored a lot more than 15 match points.
- (C) Some teams may have met more than one of the conditions, so there will be more than 27 teams.
- (D) The winner of the Fair Play Award may have scored fewer than 15 match points.

19. Arjun told his class that planting native trees along the creek would help local wildlife more than planting ornamental species, because native trees support the food web better.

Which one of these statements, if true, most strengthens the argument?

- (A) Native trees host dozens of insect species that local birds and possums rely on for food, whereas ornamental species host almost none.
- (B) Native plant nurseries often sell trees more cheaply than nurseries that import ornamentals.
- (C) Trees of any kind provide valuable shade for people walking along the creek path.
- (D) Ornamental species sometimes spread into bushland and out-compete native seedlings.

20. Gabi and Luke send secret messages using a code where each letter of the alphabet is replaced by a single digit:

A=1 B=2 C=3 D=4 E=5 F=6 G=7 H=8 I=9 J=0 K=1 L=2 M=3 N=4 O=5 P=6 Q=7 R=8
S=9 T=0 U=1 V=2 W=3 X=4 Y=5 Z=6

Gabi sends Luke four coded messages, each a four-digit sequence. Luke decodes each sequence by picking a real English word whose letters give those digits. For three of the four words Luke's decoding is the only English word that fits the digits; for the fourth, a second English word ALSO fits the digits, and Luke cannot tell which Gabi meant.

The four decoded words Luke writes down are: TIME, SONG, GOAL, PAID. Which one is Luke unsure about?

- (A)** SONG
- (B)** GOAL
- (C)** PAID
- (D)** TIME

21. At a zoo there are snakes, horses, and eagles. Snakes have no legs, horses have 4 legs, and eagles have 2 legs. There are 9 of these animals altogether, with 10 legs in total.

What is the highest number of snakes that can be at the zoo?

- (A)** 16
- (B)** 8
- (C)** 13
- (D)** 6

22. Mr Chen gives each student a reading score and a writing score each term; the two are added for an English total. Last term Sara and Mila got the same overall.

Sara: "If our scores in writing were different, then our scores in reading must have been different too."

Mila: "And if our reading scores were the same, then our writing scores must have been the same too."

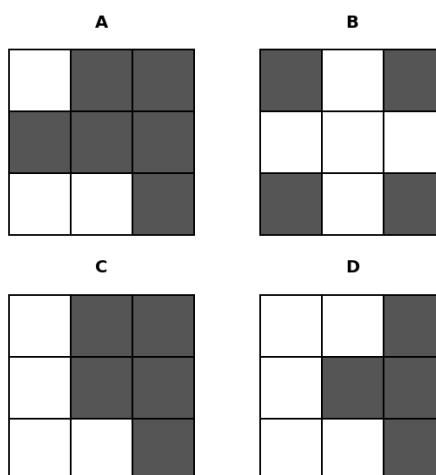
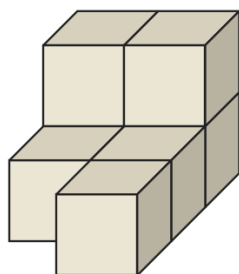
If the information in the box is true, whose reasoning is correct?

- (A)** Sara only
- (B)** Mila only
- (C)** Neither Sara nor Mila
- (D)** Both Sara and Mila

23. A shape is made from identical cubes arranged on a 3×3 grid. Some cells hold a single cube; others hold a stack of two cubes; some cells are empty. The drawing below shows the shape from in front and slightly above, so the back row sits higher on the page than the front row, and taller stacks rise further up the page.

Four 3×3 grids labelled A, B, C and D are also shown. Each shaded square in a grid represents a cell that contains at least one cube when the shape is viewed from directly above (stack height is ignored in the top view).

Which grid shows the view from directly above?



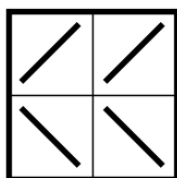
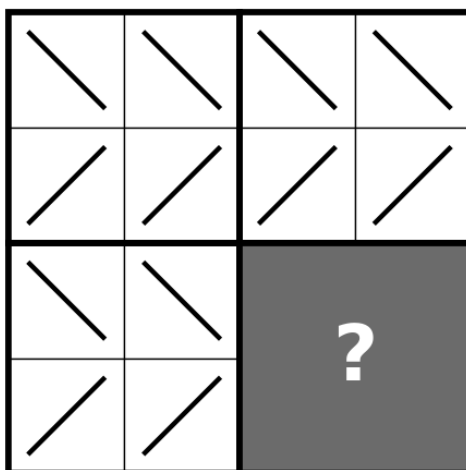
- (A)** Grid A
- (B)** Grid B
- (C)** Grid C
- (D)** Grid D

24. A floor is made by laying four identical square tiles in a 2-by-2 arrangement. One of the four tiles is covered by a grey square, hiding what is on it.

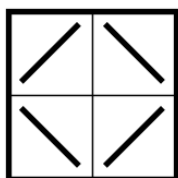
Four candidate tiles labelled A, B, C and D are shown underneath the floor. Only one of them matches the tile pattern used on the rest of the floor.

Which one of A, B, C, D shows the tile that is hidden under the grey square?

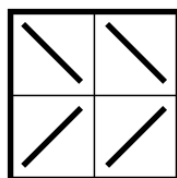
Floor (one tile covered)



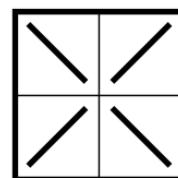
A



B



C



D

(A) A

(B) B

(C) C

(D) D

25. Zig picks a secret 5-letter word. Mei tries to guess it; after each guess Zig writes 5 symbols:

- + the letter is in the secret word, in the same place
- # the letter is in the secret word, in a different place
- the letter is not in the secret word

Mei's guesses and Zig's replies:

Guess Reply

Guess	Reply
COLOR	+ - # - +
LIGHT	# ----
SHINE	---- #

Which word did Zig pick?

- (A)** CLEAR
- (B)** CLEAN
- (C)** CLOWN
- (D)** CREED

26. At Banksia Primary School, every Year 6 student signed up for at least one club, or sometimes none at all, at the start of term.

Altogether, 15 students were chess club members, 13 were art club members, and 13 were debating club members. 1 student was a chess club member, a art club member, and a debating club member. 5 were chess club members and art club members (some of whom may also have been debating club members), 3 were chess club members and debating club members (some of whom may also have been art club members), and 2 were art club members and debating club members (some of whom may also have been chess club members). 1 student fitted none of these three descriptions.

How many Year 6 students are there at Banksia Primary School?

- (A)** 33
- (B)** 37
- (C)** 29
- (D)** 35

27. A $2 \times 2 \times 2$ cube is made up of 8 smaller unit cubes (a 2×2 base layer with another 2×2 layer on top). Alex has a piece built from 4 of those unit cubes: three unit cubes forming an L-shape in the bottom layer (filling 3 of the 4 base cells), plus a fourth unit cube sitting on top of one of the END cubes of that L (not the bend).

Which one of the following single pieces, when combined with Alex's piece, would form a complete $2 \times 2 \times 2$ cube with no gaps and no overlaps?

- (A)** A $2 \times 2 \times 1$ flat slab (four cubes arranged as a square).
- (B)** A tripod piece: one centre cube with three other cubes attached to it, one in each of three perpendicular directions.
- (C)** A $1 \times 1 \times 4$ straight column of four cubes.
- (D)** A piece made of 4 unit cubes: three forming an L-shape in the TOP layer, plus a fourth cube hanging directly below one END of that L (in the bottom layer).

28. Each card in a set of 11 cards has one of three shapes on it — heart, spade, or club — with a single digit from 1 to 7 printed inside. No two cards are identical. The only digit that appears on both a club and a heart is 2.

Which one of the following statements must be true?

- (A)** Each shape appears on exactly 3 cards.
- (B)** There are at least 3 cards with hearts on them.
- (C)** There are at least 3 cards with spades on them.
- (D)** There are at least 3 cards with clubs on them.

29. Four students take tests in English, mathematics, science, history, and geography:

Student Eng Mat Sci His Geo

Andrew 32 58 28 24 28

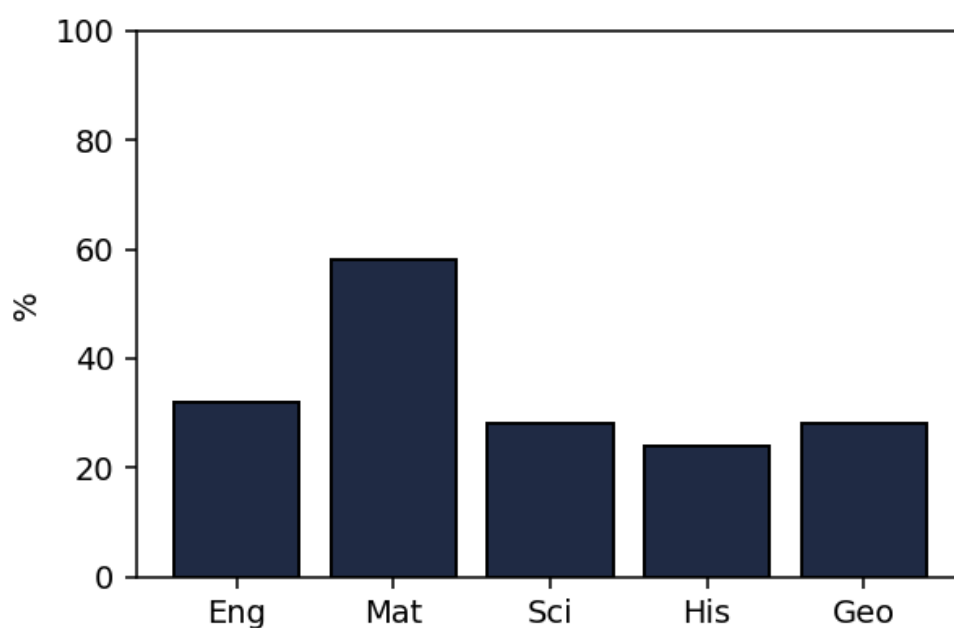
Bryony 45 61 48 38 38

Charlie 68 92 72 76 72

Daisy 56 82 65 52 65

The bar chart below shows one student's results.

Which student has the results shown?



- (A)** Charlie
- (B)** Andrew
- (C)** Daisy
- (D)** Bryony

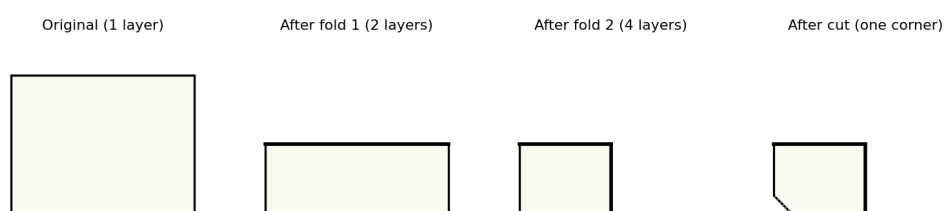
30. If Mia practises every day, she will reach the required standard for the band. If she reaches the required standard, she will impress the music teacher at the audition. If she impresses the music teacher at the audition, she will be offered a place in the band.

Which one of the following is not possible?

- (A)** Mia practises every day but Mia is not offered a place in the band.
- (B)** Mia does not practise every day and Mia is not offered a place in the band.
- (C)** Mia does not practise every day but Mia reaches the required standard.
- (D)** Mia impresses the music teacher but Mia does not practise every day.

31. A piece of rectangular paper is folded in half, then in half again (the second fold is at right-angles to the first), so the paper is now in four layers. A corner is cut off the folded paper. The paper is then unfolded.

Which one of the following shapes is NOT a possible appearance of the unfolded paper?



- (A)** A rectangle with a small diamond-shaped hole exactly in the centre.
- (B)** A rectangle with two notches on the horizontal centre-line, one to the left and one to the right of the middle.
- (C)** A rectangle with a single off-centre cut-out (no mirror copies anywhere else).
- (D)** A rectangle with four small cut-out notches, one at each corner.

32. The Railway employs ticket inspectors to catch fare-evaders; each caught is fined \$500. In the last five years, not a single person has been caught.

Linda: "That shows the inspectors are a waste of time and money. The Railway should save it or put them to work on something more useful."

Which one of these sentences shows the mistake that has been made?

- (A) The Railway may not have anything more useful to spend the money on.
- (B) Just because the inspectors have not caught anyone does not mean that nobody has travelled without a ticket.
- (C) Just because nobody has been caught in the last five years does not mean they will not be in future.
- (D) It might be hard for the Railway to find people willing to work as ticket inspectors.

33. Five houses stand in a line on a street, each with a differently-coloured front door: blue, green, orange, red, yellow. A student standing across the road records, for each coloured door, which other colours are to its left and which are to its right:

blue: left-of = [red]; right-of = [green, orange, yellow]
green: left-of = [blue, red]; right-of = [orange, yellow]
orange: left-of = [blue, green, red, yellow]; right-of = [(none)]
red: left-of = [(none)]; right-of = [blue, green, orange, yellow]
yellow: left-of = [blue, green, red]; right-of = [orange]

Which two doors are next to the green door?

- (A) orange and yellow
- (B) blue and yellow
- (C) blue and red
- (D) orange and red

34. A group of 60 students were asked to name their favourite game. Games were classified as card, board, computer, or other.

- 15 students named a card game.
- Twice as many students chose a computer game as chose a board game.

Which of the following pie-chart proportions could correctly represent the data?

- (A)** card 20%, board 25%, computer 30%, other 25%
- (B)** card 25%, board 20%, computer 30%, other 25%
- (C)** card 25%, board 10%, computer 40%, other 25%
- (D)** card 25%, board 20%, computer 40%, other 15%

35. Most of the children in Zoe's class are going to the party.

Zoe: "I will know most of the people at the party because they're in my class."

Which one of these sentences shows the mistake that has been made?

- (A)** Most of the people in the class are going to the party because they know each other.
- (B)** Zoe might spend her time at the party getting to know new people.
- (C)** Zoe might know some of the people at the party who aren't in her class.
- (D)** A large number of people might have been invited to the party.

36. To be nominated for school captain, a student must have been a class representative this year OR have received a teacher's written recommendation.

Priya: "We had 15 class reps this year and 20 teacher recommendations, so 35 students are eligible."

Lachlan: "Aisha wasn't a class rep this year, so if she's eligible, she must have a teacher's recommendation."

If the information in the box is true, whose reasoning is correct?

- (A)** Priya only
- (B)** Lachlan only
- (C)** Both Priya and Lachlan
- (D)** Neither Priya nor Lachlan

37. Jun's school is choosing students for a programming course. If a student has at least some programming knowledge, they only need to pass the maths test. If they have none, they must either get an excellent maths score or do well in both maths and chess. Jun is an experienced programmer but did not get a place. What must the reason have been?

- (A)** He did badly in both maths and chess.
- (B)** He did not get an excellent score in maths.
- (C)** He did badly in the chess challenge.
- (D)** He failed his maths test.

38. The code to open a door is a sequence of four pictures in a row. You know:

- The bell is next to the book.
- The apple is somewhere between the bell and the cat.
- The book is somewhere to the right of the cat.

You are allowed to ask one yes/no question. Whichever answer you receive, you must be able to deduce the exact code.

Which question would let you deduce the code?

- (A)** Is the book next to the cat?
- (B)** Is the cat next to the apple?
- (C)** Is the apple next to the book?
- (D)** Is the bell next to the cat?

39. I have 4 cards. Each card has a letter on each side; no letter appears twice across all cards. The 4 cards can be arranged to spell these four words:

COAT LACK BOAT SOCK

Which one of the following words could also be made from the cards?

- (A)** COST
- (B)** BLOT
- (C)** BATS
- (D)** CABS

40. Horses' eyes are on the sides of their heads, giving them a wide field of view. This trait likely evolved because they are prey animals — a wide view makes it harder for predators to sneak up on them.

Lana: "Chameleons also have eyes on the sides of their head, so they must be prey too."

Which one of these sentences shows the mistake that has been made?

- (A)** There may be predators that succeed in hunting horses despite their wide field of view.
- (B)** There may also be reasons for non-prey animals to have eyes on the sides of their heads.
- (C)** There may be some prey animals that have very weak eyesight.
- (D)** There may be other ways horses evolved to avoid predators, like quick reaction times.

Where the answers are

There is no answer key in this file, and that is deliberate. The real NSW Selective Test is sat on a computer, and marking a paper by hand tells you a score but not much else. The same Thinking Skills paper — the same questions, in the same order — can be sat online in a player built to mirror the test-day screen. It marks every question the moment the test ends and shows the working behind every answer, right and wrong.

<https://www.selectivepapersnsw.com/papers/ts-seed-10000>

That is free for 24 hours and takes no card. It does ask for an email address, because the link has to go somewhere — unlike this PDF, which asks for nothing.

How we would use this paper

Read it first yourself. Seeing the questions at your own pace, on paper, is the fastest way to understand what the test actually asks of a ten- or eleven-year-old — and it is much easier to do that here than over your child's shoulder during a timed sitting.

Then have your child sit it on a screen, under the clock. Practising on paper for a computer-based test builds the wrong habits: no scribbling in margins, no scanning a whole page at once, and a countdown running in the corner. The format should not be the surprise on the day.

Whose paper this is

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