



**SKIPPERS HILL MANOR**

**SCHOOL**

**YEAR 8**

**COMMON ENTRANCE**

## **The Common Entrance Exams**

These are a set of exams taken by pupils at prep schools for entry into most senior independent schools.

The syllabuses are devised and regularly monitored by the Independent Schools Examinations Board, composed of representatives from the The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, the Girls' Schools Association and The Independent Association of Prep Schools. The papers are set by examiners appointed by the Board, but the **answers are marked by the senior school** for which a candidate is entered. Candidates may normally be entered only if they have been offered a place at a senior school subject to their passing the examination

The closing date for entries is **1 March** for the 13+ summer examinations.

Many pupils may already have taken other exams for their Senior Schools and will have been accepted on the basis of the results of these. These pupils will **still sit** Common Entrance papers at the same time as external candidates, but the papers will be marked internally.

A number of subjects are offered at more than one level and weaker candidates are not expected to tackle papers beyond their ability.

There is a **late penalty** (£50 per candidate) for new or amended entries received one week or more after the closing dates.

Schools do not see the papers until the day of the exam.

**The pass mark will vary** as some schools have higher entry criteria.

## **CANDIDATES WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

The needs of a candidate with any specific learning difficulty should be discussed with the relevant senior school. Computers may be used by candidates certified as having specific learning difficulties. In exceptional cases, a reader or an amanuensis may be used. For visually-impaired candidates, the Board will arrange for enlarged or Braille copies of the examination papers to be printed; a year's notice is required.

## **HEAD'S REPORT**

A Head's report is required. It will be sent to the senior school two weeks before the first day of the relevant examination session.

## TIMETABLE FOR SUMMER 2018

### LISTENING:

Mathematics: Monday 14th May

French: Tuesday 15th May

### SPEAKING:

French: 14th – 18th May

<b>TUESDAY 5th June</b>	<b>Wednesday 6th June</b>	<b>Thursday 7th June</b>	<b>Friday 8th June</b>
Biology 40 minutes	Chemistry 40 minutes	Geography 1 hour	Latin 1 hour
English Paper 1 1 hour 15 minutes	English Paper 2 1 hour 15 minutes	Level 1 Science 1 hour	
History 1 hour	French 1 hour	Physics 40 minutes	
Mathematics Non-calculator 1 hour	Mathematics Calculator 1 hour		

Exams are not necessarily in the above order each day.

## SUBJECTS

### THE FULL SYLLABUS FOR EACH SUBJECT CAN BE ACCESSED VIA THE ISEB WEBSITE:

<https://www.iseb.co.uk/Schools/Examination-syllabuses-specimen-papers/Common-Entrance-at-13>

Most of our pupils will take the following exams:

### ENGLISH

Candidates will be required to take **two papers**, both comprising a reading section and a writing section. The reading sections will be divided into two levels: Level 1 and Level 2. The passage and the poem will be the same for both levels, although the passage will sometimes be abridged for Level 1. For both the prose and poetry sections, questions will be easier on the Level 1 paper. The writing sections are common to both Level 1 and Level 2 candidates.

**PAPER 1** (50 marks; 1 hour 15 minutes which includes reading and note-making time)

The paper will be divided into two sections.

#### **Section A: Reading** (25 marks)

This section will contain a passage of literary prose followed by **about five questions** which seek to test understanding as well as powers of analysis and evaluation.

### **Section B: Writing** (25 marks)

Candidates will be asked to select one of **four essay titles**. Three essay titles will require the use of prose for a practical purpose; the fourth essay title will be a choice of literary topics. Their planning sheet will not be sent to the senior school.

**PAPER 2:** (50 marks; 1 hour 15 minutes which includes planning time)

The paper will be divided into two sections

### **Section A: Reading** (25 marks)

This section will comprise about **five questions** on an **unseen poem** to test both understanding of poetic technique and personal response.

### **Section B: Writing** (25 marks)

Candidates will be asked to choose **one of four essay titles** which provoke imaginative, descriptive or narrative responses. Their planning sheet will not be sent to the senior school.

## **MATHS**

There are **two Papers**, one **calculator** and one **non calculator**, each **60 minutes** and a **Mental Arithmetic** test of **30 minutes**. Non calculator and calculator papers are available at Level 1 and 2. **Level 1** is aimed at those candidates who would typically score **less than 40%** on Level 2 papers. **Level 2** will be taken by the majority of candidates. Level 3 will test the extended specification. The mental test will be **common** to all three levels. It will be recorded. SCHOLARSHIP The Common Academic

Scholarship Examination (90 minutes) will be based on the extended 13+ Common Entrance syllabus.

## **SCIENCE**

**Assessment** of the 13+ syllabus can occur at two levels: **Level 1** and **Level 2**. The syllabus is **common** for both levels. It is envisaged that candidates who are expected to achieve **less** than an average of **40%** on the three Level 2 papers should consider taking the Level 1 paper.

**Level 1** (80 marks; 60 minutes)

There will be **one paper** with approximately equal numbers of questions based on the 13+ biology, chemistry and physics syllabuses. The paper will consist of a mixture of closed items, e.g. multiple choice, matching pairs, completing sentences and some open questions. Open questions will have several parts, some of which will require answers of one or two sentences. These parts will carry a maximum of two marks. Up to **10%** of the marks on the paper will be available for **plotting graphs** or **making simple calculations**, such as calculating means from data or using a formula. There will be no choice of questions. The use of **calculators** and protractors will be allowed in the examination.

**Level 2** (60 marks per paper; 40 minutes per paper)

There will be **three papers**, one in each of biology, chemistry and physics. Some of the questions may be closed, although most will be open with several parts requiring candidates to answer in sentences. These parts will carry a maximum of three marks. In addition, one mark may be given for an acceptable standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar in one part of the paper. The maximum number of marks per question will be twelve.

At least **25%** of the paper will be testing how science works. There will be no choice of questions. The use of **calculators** and protractors will be allowed in the examination.

## **HISTORY**

There are two parts to the exam: **Evidence** (20 marks) and **Essay** (30 marks).

The paper is of 60 minutes' duration. Candidates attempt one evidence and one essay question.

### **Essay Question (30 marks)**

There will be **ten essay choices** from which candidates must **select one**. Each question will be generic and open-ended. Up to 50% of the marks may be awarded for a good narrative essay; able candidates will be expected, however, to express opinions and use their analytical skills.

### **The evidence question (20 marks)**

The evidence question will consist of two written sources (which may be contemporary, modern or a mix of both) and a third source that is pictorial. The question will always begin with the words: 'Using ALL the sources and your own knowledge ...' and will ask you to consider a viewpoint derived from the sources.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

**INDIVIDUAL FIELDWORK ENQUIRY** (20 marks) These will be sent to schools to be marked in March.

Marks will be awarded as follows:

- Introduction (4 marks) to include aims and hypotheses (key questions) and location map
- Methods of data presentation to include detailed descriptions of two techniques (8 marks)
- Results/presentation of data (8 marks) to include two different techniques
- Data analysis (12 marks) to include evaluations and final conclusions
- Fieldwork expertise (8 marks) to include individual initiative and/or team work plus overall effort in data collection and write-up

### **WRITTEN EXAMINATION** (80 marks; 60 minutes)

Each paper will contain an **Ordnance Survey map**. The format of the paper will be as follows:

#### **Section A:** Global location (10-15 marks)

The questions are to be answered with reference to a given map. The questions will be confined to the features and places listed in Appendix I. Outlines of mountain ranges, courses of rivers and dots to represent the locations of cities will be given.

### **Section B:** Ordnance Survey mapwork (10-15 marks)

This section will comprise Ordnance Survey mapwork questions. Ordnance Survey maps to the scale of 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 will be used and a key to conventional symbols will be provided.

### **Section C:** Thematic studies (10-15 marks for each of the five themes)

This section will comprise five questions on the five themes. Candidates will be required to answer all questions. Photographs, maps, diagrams, graphs and data tables may be used as stimulus material. Questions will include a mix of data response, multiple choice, short and more extended answers.

## **FRENCH**

### **LISTENING (25%; about 25 minutes)**

This will be based on a number of short passages recorded on a CD/MP3. Instructions will be given in English. There will be **25 questions** arranged in five sections in both **Level 1** and **Level 2**. There will be a range of test-types in English: these might include multiple choice, true/false, table/grid completion, putting symbols on a map/plan, box-ticking, matching the recording with visual/verbal options, linking opinions with speakers, choosing correct answers or answering questions in English.

Section 1 of the **Level 1** paper usually involves listening to and writing down words being spelled out in French, so it is important to know the letter sounds.

### **SPEAKING (25%; about 6 minutes)**

The teacher-examiner will assess the candidate's performance and will submit recordings of all candidates for moderation. Instructions will be printed in English.

#### **Level 1**

There will be discussion on **two prepared topics**.

#### **Level 2**

There will be a role-play situation and discussion on two prepared topics. A bilingual dictionary may be used by the candidate during the allowed preparation time for the speaking component only.

#### **Role-play situation (about 2 minutes; 9 marks)**

This exercise is not for Level 1 candidates.

The examiner will give each candidate, at random, one situation from the three which are set, ensuring that all the situations are used equally. The candidate will be required to carry out six tasks in the target language which have been given in English. Past tenses will not be required in this exercise. One of the tasks will be unpredictable and will require the candidate to respond, unprepared, to the examiner's question. The role plays may be based on any area of the syllabus. The examiner will give a mark (maximum of 6 marks) for completion of the tasks and a mark (out of 3) for quality of language

## **READING AND WRITING (50%; 60 minutes)**

### **Section A: Reading**

Instructions will be given in English. There will be 25 questions on a number of short passages, arranged in five sections. There will be several exercises of differing length, covering a range of different approaches to the development of reading skills, e.g. gap-filling, multiple choice, matching headlines to texts, matching pictures to descriptions, matching two halves of a sentence, matching questions and answers, matching people and opinions, choosing a number of correct answers.

### **Section B: Writing**

Instructions will be given in English.

#### **Level 1**

The format of Level 1 Writing has recently changed to mirror Level 2, allowing more scope for pupils to show their creativity. The first questions will still involve gap-filling exercises: this will involve copying and marks will be deducted if words have not been copied correctly. Later questions will have a number of sub-questions where candidates will be expected to produce basic language for themselves, based either on a picture stimulus or a topic (given in English).

#### **Level 2**

There will be **two** written exercises:

#### **Question 1 (8 marks)**

This question will require the writing of five simple sentences in the target language, each based on a visual or written stimulus. Candidates should write five to ten words on each stimulus. Marks will be awarded for content, accuracy and quality of language.

#### **Question 2 (17 marks)**

This question will require 80–130 words of continuous writing in the form of a letter based on a written stimulus in the target language. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the full range of their knowledge of the linguistic features contained in the syllabus. Marks will be awarded for content, accuracy and quality of language.

## **LATIN**

In Latin, there are three levels at Common Entrance, plus an additional scholarship level; Level 1 is intended for candidates who have studied Latin for 1 to 2 years. Level 2 is for candidates who have studied Latin for 2 to 3 years. Latin level 3 is for candidates who have a greater depth of learning.

## **EXAM (ALL LEVELS)**

#### **Question 1 (15 marks)**

Candidates will be asked a series of questions to test comprehension of the first paragraph (45 words or so) of a passage.

### Question 2 (30 marks)

Candidates will be asked to translate into good English the second paragraph (about 50 words) of the passage.

### Question 3 (20 marks)

Candidates will be asked a series of questions to test their knowledge of the grammar and their ability to give a simple English derivation based on the final paragraph (about 30 words) of the passage. They will also be asked to perform some simple manipulation of the language and some translation into Latin, using vocabulary provided.

### Question 4 (10 marks)

This section will offer a choice of eight questions on non-linguistic studies (two from each of the four topic areas). Candidates are to attempt one of these questions.

The prescribed vocabulary list can be found on the ISEB website.

## GENERAL REVISION TIPS

**Start revising early**— i.e. months, not days before the exam. Make a timetable to plan your revision and stick to it.

**Get the right balance of topics and subjects** – don't spend too much time on one topic or subject and don't waste time revising things you already know.

**Do lots of practice exam papers** but make sure you give them in to be marked or have the mark scheme

**Use all the material you have been given** - revision guides, notes in exercise books, past papers etc.

**Don't just read your notes** - you have to write things down. You should know what suits you best by now – bullet points of key facts/mind maps/flash cards, etc.

**Don't spend ages making your notes look pretty** - this is just wasting time. For diagrams, include all the details you need to learn, but don't try to produce a work of art. Limit yourself to 2 or 3 colours so you don't get carried away colouring things in.

**Stick revision notes in places around your house where you can look at them regularly**

**In holidays and at weekends start revising early** - i.e. 9am — that way you'll get your day's work done much quicker and will have time to relax later in the day.



**Get yourself drinks and snacks in advance** – so you don't make excuses to stop every 10 minutes...

**Sit at a proper desk**

**Find the right environment to revise** - NOT in front of the TV. NOT listening to the radio

**Take short breaks** - every 30 minutes, not every 10 minutes.

**Don't put it off** - "Procrastination" is the long word for it. And it means rearranging things on your desk, getting a sudden urge after 12 years to tidy your room, thinking about the weekend, writing notes to your friends, painting your toenails, etc, etc, etc,... Sit down at your desk and GET ON WITH IT.

**Don't turn yourself into a revision zombie** if you stop doing anything else but revision you'll turn into a zombie. Leave some time to have some fun!

## **PRIOR TO THE EXAM AND ON THE DAY**

- **Make sure you get plenty of sleep in the days leading up to the exam**
- **Make sure you eat breakfast**
- **Make sure you know the exam timetable**
- **Make sure you arrive promptly for each exam**
- **Make sure you have all equipment for each exam – pens, pencils, spare cartridges, rubber, ruler, calculator, protractor, compass**
- **Make sure you go to the toilet before the exam**
- **Make sure you read all instructions on the paper carefully**
- **Keep an eye on the time to check you are on schedule to finish and have allowed some time at the end to check your answers and proof read your work**
- **Do not talk or try to catch any else's attention during the exam**
- **Put your hand up if you need help or are unsure**
- **Write neatly**
- **Use pencils and rulers for diagrams**

**EMMA HARVEY  
JULY 2017**