A Guide to 11+ and 13+
Common Entrance Examinations
and Senior Schools
The only thing we know about the future is that it will be different.

Peter F. Drucker (1909-2005)
American writer
11+ and 13+ Common Entrance Examinations

General Information
At Queen Anne’s School, we seek to assess each girl on an individual basis. We are looking for potential and to reward what has been done well, rather than identify mistakes and penalise errors.

Pre-Assessment
Our 11+ and 13+ Assessment Day takes place in October, prior to Common Entrance in January. Girls will take a short essay writing task together with online reasoning tests and will also be involved in a group interview. Fun activities take place during the day to enable the girls to get to know one another.

Here to help
We hope that the information within this publication is helpful to you. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us – we are happy to help!

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Revision and Preparation

Factors that affect examination performance are subject knowledge, examination preparation and practice, use of time, attitude and approach. In preparing for an examination, there is not a set amount of time that your daughter must spend on her revision. It is more a question of putting aside time, on a regular basis, to focus on the subjects in an active way. One of the best ways to prepare for examinations is to practise in conditions that are as near to the real event as possible. Although it is difficult to simulate conditions exactly, it is still valuable to go through the process. If your daughter is not used to examinations, or suffers from nerves, then it is all the more important to work under simulated conditions before the assessment.

Through practice your daughter will: gain a sense of how much she can write in a short period of time; learn to work quickly when planning, writing and checking answers; improve at becoming quickly focused; discover what she really knows and what she only half remembers. Your daughter’s brain cannot cope with revising everything at once. It may become confused with the different subjects. Therefore, she should stick to revising one subject at a time. At your daughter’s age her brain can concentrate for a maximum of 20 minutes. Therefore, she should revise for 20 minutes and then take a short five minute break. She should then continue.

In her brain, your daughter has two types of memory: short term and long term. Short term memory lasts for about 10 seconds. Long term memory lasts forever. If she just reads her notes she will only be using her short term memory, which only lasts for a few seconds. So, all she has read becomes lost and she will not be able to remember it in the examinations. To get the information into her long term memory, she has to work with it. Revision must be active. The easiest way of doing this is to create revision notes. Revision is actually about condensing and restructuring notes - this process transfers information into long term memory. It is active, effective and less boring!

Once your daughter has made her revision cards/notes the ‘look - cover - write - check’ technique is the best to check her memory. She should also practise answering examination style questions. For most girls, their visual memory is the most efficient, so your daughter could draw pictures on her revision notes and write in different colours and use boxes and underlining to highlight key words. In the assessments she will recall the pictures, shapes and colours first and these will act as a trigger for all the knowledge.

Research has shown that mnemonics and visual images improve memory recall significantly. If your daughter needs to remember how to spell a word such as ‘because’ then she could make up a sentence using the letters of the word (Big Elephants Cause Accidents Under Small Elephants). The more unusual the sentence the better your daughter will remember it. It also helps if she can visualise the sentence she has created.

When you panic most of your brain shuts down. So, if your daughter panics in the examination, she will not be able to remember all that she knows. To ‘switch her brain back on’ she needs to take away the panic by using relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing: your daughter should breathe in through her nose to a count of 1-2-3, hold for 1-2-3, and then breathe out through her mouth for 1-2-3. She should do this about 10 times and she will be relaxed enough for her brain to work. Please reassure your daughter that everyone panics! It is normal.
Common Entrance

The Common Entrance Examinations are used for assessing boys and girls who transfer to senior schools at the ages of 11+ and 13+. The syllabuses are devised and regularly monitored by the Independent Schools’ Examination Board (ISEB) composed of representatives of the Headmasters’ Conference (HMC), the Girls’ Schools Association (GSA) and the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS). 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.

Where the candidates are at schools which sit Common Entrance, they are entered by their school for the examination on a form provided automatically by the ISEB. Please check whether your daughter’s school will register her for the Common Entrance or whether you need to register her with the ISEB yourself. Where candidates are at schools which do not normally enter candidates for the examination, parents should contact the ISEB:

Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB)
Suite 3
Endeavour House
Crow Arch Lane
Ringwood BH24 1HP
www.iseb.co.uk

A candidate may be registered at a second senior school. It is important that the parents have previously obtained the agreement of that school to be second choice. If a candidate fails to gain entry to the first-choice school, the scripts will be forwarded by that senior school to the second-choice senior school.

Details of which papers your daughter is required to sit are detailed within this publication. The examinations will take place over two or three mornings in January. Copies of the syllabuses, past papers and other publications are available from CE Publications Limited at the same address. A wealth of helpful advice, information, syllabuses and the relevant past papers can also be found on the Independent Examination Board’s Common Entrance Examinations website www.iseb.co.uk.

Closing date for registering with the ISEB is 1 December of the year prior to entry. For any enquiries, please email enquiries@iseb.co.uk

Key Dates for 11+ Entry in 2016

Assessment Day
Results
October 2015
October 2015

Closing date for Scholarship and bursary applications
Closing date for registering with the ISEB
November 2015
December 2015

Scholarships (Art, Drama, Music and Sport)
ISEB Common Entrance Examinations
(English, Mathematics and Science)
January 2016
January 2016

Results
January 2016
II+ English

Reading Paper

For the reading paper, your daughter will be expected to read a passage that is approximately three quarters of an A4 page in length. She will then be required to answer a series of questions based on this passage. Line numbers are printed on the left hand side of the page and are often noted in the question.

Firstly, it is advisable to familiarise your daughter with the layout and overall content of the paper before Common Entrance. This familiarity will help to calm nerves and help her to feel that she knows what is expected of her on the day.

Your daughter should read the extract before answering the questions. Underlining important sentences and names often helps girls to focus their attention and calm their nerves. Girls should spend five minutes reading the passage. They may need to read it more than once.

Your daughter should read the questions with great care. It is often worth reading the questions twice for safe measure. She might wish to underline the key words of the question as she reads. For example, in the question ‘What are Torak’s two mistakes about the omen’, she might underline the words ‘two’ and ‘mistakes’. When a question refers to a key date or name, it is often most expedient to scan the passage with the date or name in mind.

It is also important to take note of the number of marks awarded for each question. Your daughter should allocate more time to questions that are worth a high number of marks. It is often the case that the final question on the paper is worth the most marks. Therefore, if your daughter feels that she is running out of time, she might need to prioritise this question over others worth fewer marks.

Writing Paper

The paper requires your daughter to write one extended piece. There will be approximately six options available to her and she should aim both to choose the question that most appeals to her and to play to her strengths. She should spend 5 minutes choosing a question and should always plan her response.

The options often offer girls the chance either to: write a story; write descriptively; write persuasively; offer her opinions on a given subject; write a book review.

If your daughter chooses to write creatively, she should aim to create an opening that is engaging. She may, for example, choose to begin mid-action or mid-dialogue. She should use DAD (Description, Action, Dialogue) to create believable characters, and she should endeavour to ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’. It is often advisable to avoid an excessive amount of dialogue as it is very difficult to do consistently well. Dialogue is also difficult to punctuate and it is therefore worth carefully revising this aspect of punctuation beforehand. If your daughter does use dialogue in her piece, she should avoid repetitive use of the word ‘said’ and should seek instead to use synonyms such as ‘muttered’ or ‘whispered’.

If your daughter chooses to tackle the book review, she should be careful to avoid simply summarising and retelling the story. Instead of this, she should consider where the book is set, the important characters, her favourite moment and whether or not she would recommend the book to others. Various templates for writing successful book reviews can be found on the internet.
II+ Mathematics

Topics are centred at National Curriculum levels 4 and 5, based on the yearly teaching programmes up to Year 6 of the National Numeracy Strategy, with particular reference to the Year 5 and Year 6 key objectives.

Girls will be required to work one paper of 60 minutes' duration. They should answer as many questions as possible. Calculators are not allowed in the examination.

Girls need to write their answers in the booklet provided and should, where possible, show their working-out. Girls should read the question carefully and may need to read complex or challenging questions a number of times. Your daughter should not be afraid to underline key words and numbers where appropriate.

It is advisable that girls familiarise themselves with key mathematical concepts and terminology before the assessment. It is also worth completing a number of past papers, which can be found on the Common Entrance Website, before the test as certain types of questions frequently appear.

In the past, Queen Anne's School has noticed that girls have experienced most difficulty when answering questions based on metric units, area/perimeter and transformation.

Girls will often be expected to:
- Identify number patterns
- Use whole numbers
- Calculate decimals
- Use fractions and percentages
- Use frequency tables, graphs and grids
- Identify different shapes
- Identify transformations
- Calculate weight in grams and kilograms
- Calculate area, perimeter and volume
- Plot coordinates
- Chart direction using a compass
- Calculate probability
- Understand lines of symmetry
- Know the value of various coins and calculate costs

Whichever title your daughter chooses, she should strive to spell and punctuate her work as carefully and accurately as possible. Therefore, she should make sure that the spelling of homophones such as ‘their’, ‘there’ and ‘they’re’ and ‘two’, ‘too’ and ‘to’ are secure. Your daughter should also try to vary her sentence structures and openings. When writing under pressure, girls often begin their sentences with the same words. One way in which girls may consciously vary their sentence openings is by shifting the adverb to the front. For example: ‘She slowly made her way to the shop’ becomes ‘Slowly, she made her way to the shop’.

If your daughter experiences difficulties when spelling particular words, there are a number of useful strategies that she may find helpful. If she is a kinaesthetic learner, she should find ways to physically make words. For example, she could use ‘knex’ pieces or ‘plasticine’ to make the word. If she is a visual learner, she may benefit from drawing a word or colour coding tricky letters. Audio learners often benefit from making up rhymes or mnemonics. All learners benefit from repetition. Therefore, it is often helpful to display tricky words on walls of frequently used areas or to use them as screen savers.
II+ Science

The Common Entrance Science Paper is based upon the programmes of study for Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum for Science; therefore, girls may find KS2 science guides helpful for revision purposes. The examination paper will contain questions about practical techniques and scientific processes.

Girls should write their answers in the booklet provided. They should take care when reading the questions and should take into consideration the number of marks awarded for each task. If your daughter has not covered a particular topic on the paper, she should not panic (schools tend to cover topics at different times during the year and therefore it is possible that, because of this, there may be some gaps in your daughter’s knowledge). If this circumstance arises, you should encourage your daughter to have a go at answering the question and to alert the marker to the gap in knowledge by writing the words ‘this topic has not been covered’. This will be taken into consideration when the paper is marked. Even if the topic is unfamiliar, it is often possible to find the answer by reading the question with extra care, so always worth ‘having a go’!

Students are well advised to take note of whether the question asked requires them to ‘describe’ or ‘explain’ and they should learn to differentiate the terms. Girls should make sure that they fully understand the idea of ‘fair testing’. They should also take care to plot graphs accurately.

Girls will often be expected to:
- Identify key food groups and their functions
- Identify the organ system of flowers
- Understand photosynthesis
- Distinguish between man-made and natural substances
- Identify forces
- Understand Magnetism
- Understand the way in which the Earth rotates and the way in which it orbits and is orbited
- Correctly use circuit symbols
- Know about the heart, blood and circulation
- Understand fair testing
- Use sound and sound waves
- Consider the properties of materials
- Record results using tables and graphs
- Identify solutions
- Use food chains
- Understand variation
I3+ English (Level 2)

Assessment Objectives

Girls should be able to:

• read substantial passages unaided and give independent written responses to questions requiring a range of comprehension skills;
• show evidence of independent literary work both with an unprepared text and with one or more texts studied during their time in junior school;
• show evidence of original creative work in the form of their choice within the limitation of a timed examination.

Syllabus Content

READING

Non-fiction

Girls are given one or two passages from, for example, biography, travel writing or journalism. Questions seek to test understanding as well as powers of analysis and evaluation. Passages are selected at the setters’ discretion without any standard pattern, in order to encourage a variety of approaches to the reading of quality non-fiction. An introductory line of explanation may precede the extracts. Certain words may be glossed.

Skills to be tested at the appropriate level include the following:

• basic understanding and vocabulary
• use of text to illustrate answers
• drawing of inferences
• evaluation of style, language and purpose
• delivery of opinions / judgements / arguments based on given material
• awareness of how grammar, syntax and punctuation affect meaning
• capacity to make comparisons and evaluate contrasts

WRITING

Response to studied literature

Girls are encouraged to read widely, to acquire and develop the skills of discriminating reading and to express their responses to what they read. Girls are asked to write on one or more texts they have studied in class or read for themselves. Questions are general and not related to any specific text. They offer girls the opportunity to deal with moments of drama, transition, contrast and various other ideas in their chosen texts. Two out of four questions invite responses on a prescribed theme which runs for three academic years (see Appendix I). The other two questions are not thematically tied. The topics in this section are broad enough to give scope for opinions, comparisons and preferences. Girls are expected to express themselves clearly and accurately, using standard English spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax and appropriate vocabulary.

POETRY

Girls are given one piece of unseen poetry which may be an entire poem or an extract. This is followed by questions – a literary comprehension, in effect. Candidates are expected to show awareness of how language is used and to support opinion by reference to the text. Questions ask for girls’ responses to literature via an understanding of how writers achieve their effects, reveal their feelings and make readers more aware. This assumes knowledge of metaphor, simile, personification, symbol, irony, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, rhythm and metre.

Note: Texts studied should range across genre and period. Girls should be encouraged and helped to discuss their reading and analyse their ideas closely.
I3+ Mathematics (Level 2)

Assessment Objectives

Girls should be familiar with most of the skills and knowledge of Key Stage 3. Topics are centred at National Curriculum levels 4 and 5 with some elements of level 6 for lower-level girls, National Curriculum levels 5 and 6 with some elements of level 7 for standard level girls and years 7, 8 and 9 of the National Numeracy Strategy.

Syllabus Content

During Key Stage 2, girls build on the skills which they developed in Key Stage 1. They extend their competence and confidence with number so that they move from security in counting to security in calculating with all four operations. Girls explore features of shape and space and develop their measuring skills in a range of contexts. They discuss and present their methods and reasoning, using a wider range of mathematical language, diagrams and charts.

During Key Stage 3, girls build on the skills which they developed in Key Stage 2 and increasingly make connections between different aspects of mathematics. They extend their calculating skills to fractions, percentages and decimals. They begin to understand the importance of reasoning about proportion. They start to develop facility in the use of algebraic techniques and symbols. They study linear functions and their corresponding graphs. Girls progress from a simple understanding of the features of shape and space to using definitions and reasoning to understand geometrical objects. They undertake practical data handling work, introducing a quantitative approach to probability. Girls should work with increasing confidence and flexibility to solve unfamiliar problems, including word problems, and develop a positive attitude towards mathematics.

Scheme of Assessment

Girls will be required to work two papers, one non-calculator and one calculator, each of 60 minutes’ duration, and a mental test lasting up to 30 minutes.
13+ Biology, Chemistry and Physics (Level 1)

Assessment Objectives
Girls should develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in the four attainment targets:
How science works;
• Biology, including organisms, their behaviour and the environment;
• Chemistry, including materials, their properties and the Earth;
• Physics, including energy, forces and space.

Syllabus Content

ENERGY, ELECTRICITY AND FORCES
• energy can be transferred usefully, stored, or dissipated, but cannot be created or destroyed
• forces are interactions between objects and can affect their shape and motion
• electric current in circuits can produce a variety of effects

CHEMICAL AND MATERIAL BEHAVIOUR
• the particle model provides explanations for the different physical properties and behaviour of matter
• elements consist of atoms which combine together in chemical reactions to form compounds
• elements and compounds show characteristic chemical properties and patterns in their behaviour

ORGANISMS, BEHAVIOUR AND HEALTH
• life processes are supported by the organisation of cells into tissues, organs and body systems
• the human reproductive cycle includes adolescence, fertilisation and fetal development
• conception, growth, development, behaviour and health can be affected by diet, drugs and disease
• all living things show variation, can be classified and are interdependent, interacting with each other and their environment
• behaviour is influenced by internal and external factors and can be investigated and measured

THE ENVIRONMENT, EARTH AND UNIVERSE
• geological activity is caused by chemical and physical processes
• astronomy and space science provide insight into the nature and observed motions of the Sun, Moon, stars, planets and other celestial bodies
• human activity and natural processes can lead to changes in the environment

Scheme of Assessment
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 girls 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.

Key Dates for 13+ Entry in 2016
Assessment Day Results
October 2015 October 2015
Closing date for Scholarship and bursary applications
November 2015
Closing date for registering with the ISEB
December 2015
ISEB Common Entrance Examinations (English, Mathematics and Science) January 2016
Scholarships (Art, Drama, Music and Sport) January 2016
Results January 2016
Choosing a School

QUEEN ANNE’S SCHOOL WISHES YOUR DAUGHTER EVERY SUCCESS IN THE COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION
Choosing a School

ADVICE FROM THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

What is your child really like?

This is your starting point for finding a school to suit him/her rather than you. Having decided what your child is really like, ask yourself: What do you want for your child? What do you want from a school? Will it be a good school for a child like yours?

What do you want for your child? State school or fee-paying? Day or boarding school? Single sex or co-education? It helps to have a game plan, even if you change it at a later date. What do you want from the school? Undoubtedly you want to find a great school, one that’s ideal for your child, with great teaching and possibly good facilities to match. It is crucial you decide what is really important to you and your child.

Make an honest list for yourself of everything that you want for your child, however ambitious, frivolous or peripheral it may seem.

- happiness
- safety
- a nurturing environment
- social status
- very local - very convenient
- before and after school care
- a traditional approach or a relaxed outlook
- beauty of architecture
- state of the art facilities
- a stepping stone to a top-notch senior school or university
- curriculum flexibility
- offers Japanese
- choirs, orchestras and ensembles
- sport for all
- help with learning difficulties
- support for gifted, talented and able
- awards and scholarships/bursaries (for independent schools)
- religious outlook
- parental involvement

Boarding:

- full or flexi-boarding
- exeats/holidays that fit in with your career
- all in fees or flexible extras?
- environment - bustling town or away from it all
country setting
- care and support
- contact - how much, how often and how?
- Saturday school

The list is endless, so where do you begin? Look at the end product. Beware the danger of judging a school exclusively by the bottom end because your child is young. Choosing a school is a process of elimination. It is vital you see several schools, even if the first school you visit feels right, you should visit others to confirm or counter this instinct.

Consider:

- How, and where, you want your child to end up.
- Your gut reaction - the atmosphere should be tangible and excite you.
- The head - is he/she impressive? You don’t have to like him/her but it helps; the head really does make or break a school.
- Staff - is there a member of staff at the school who is on the same wavelength as you? If your child is boarding there must be someone you can turn to and feel in tune with.
- The pupils - do you see your child sat amongst them?

Do be prepared to revisit, refine and re-prioritise your wish list.

Importantly:

Did you walk into the school and feel at home; did you come out from a school visit feeling good? If it doesn’t feel right, it isn’t right.
Admissions Process

While the admissions criteria (selective vs. non-selective) vary from school to school, in general, the application process for most independent schools would be along the following lines:

**SPRING/SUMMER TERM (OR EARLIER) TWO YEARS PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER START DATE:**

**Visit**

At either an open day or book an individual tour of your short list of schools, or both. The more you visit, the better able you will be to judge whether this is the right school for your daughter. Transport links to and from the school are likely to be an important consideration.

**Register**

Your daughter at your preferred schools as soon as possible.

**SPRING/SUMMER TERM PRIOR TO THE YEAR IN WHICH YOUR DAUGHTER WILL SIT HER ENTRANCE EXAMINATION:**

**Taster Days and Stays**

These are offered by most schools and are a great opportunity to familiarise your daughter with her new school and for you to find out more about whether the school is a ‘good fit’.

**AUTUMN TERM PRIOR TO YEAR OF ENTRY:**

**Pre-Assessment**

Many schools will test VR (verbal reasoning) and non-VR alongside ‘core’ subject papers. These assessments usually take place in October or November.

**Scholarship Applications**

Find out when and how applications should be made. Are ‘pre-auditions’ offered?

**Register**

Sign your daughter up with the ISEB (Independent Schools’ Examination Board) for Common Entrance by 1 December if she is applying to a school that uses CE as their entry procedure. Each candidate has to nominate one school only for the CE applications. The papers are set by the ISEB but marked by the candidate’s chosen school.

**JANUARY PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER ENTRY**

**Entrance Examinations**

Not all schools use Common Entrance (CE) examinations but use their own internal examinations instead. However, most schools follow entrance examination procedures in January of the year of entry.

**Scholarships**

These are arranged by individual schools according to their own timetable and processes.

**MARCH**

**Offers**

All GSA (Girls’ Schools Association) schools require firm acceptance by the first Monday in March.

**SEPTEMBER**

**Start new School**
Common Entrance Examinations

Pre-Assessment
Many schools will do some form of pre-testing prior to Common Entrance so that provisional offers can be made and to provide you with feedback should there be some areas that could benefit from improvement before Common Entrance.

Common Entrance Examination
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A few tips courtesy of the Good Schools Guide

Talk to as many pupils as you can. Ask them which subjects are best, what they do during breaks and what they would change about the school if they had a magic wand.

And what about those other parents? Would you be happy for your children to mix with theirs?

Seek out the noticeboards. Is there loads going on?
Are they up to date?
What instruments are being taught? Sports matches?
Happiness lessons?
Number for ChildLine?

If your child will be boarding, take a close look at the sleeping accommodation.

Don’t judge the school by its open day alone.
You’ll find out more in a personal visit or one-to-one chat.
But not all parents want to do a Jeremy Paxman with the head of every school their child may or may not attend.

Remember an open day is the time for first contact, it gives you a feel for the school.
Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)
Former President of South Africa