

13+ ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP SYLLABUS

For candidates entering in 2025



HARROW
SCHOOL

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

Analytical reasoning

This is a one-hour computer-based intelligence test, for which boys cannot prepare.

English

Boys will be asked to write an extended response (an essay, article, speech or letter) on a particular topic, as well as an extended analytical essay on a short reading passage (prose, poetry or drama). Spelling, grammar and punctuation will be assessed in both sections.

General linguistic skills

This is a 45-minute paper that tests the ability to analyse and use an unknown or invented language based on given underlying principles and rules. This paper does not require advance preparation, revision or a particular knowledge base. This will be a compulsory paper for all boys.

Mathematics

There are two papers, both set at Additional Level of the Common Entrance syllabus. Calculators are permitted in the first paper, which consists of straightforward questions designed to test a boy's general mathematical ability. The second paper contains less formulaic questions, with the emphasis being on problem-solving and the production of written solutions, rather than merely the completion of mathematical processes; calculators are not permitted in the second paper, which boys are not necessarily expected to complete.

Philosophy and applied ethics

This is designed to show the candidates' ability to analyse several articles on an issue with which they are not familiar and to construct a short written argument based on a question about it.

Science

The Science paper adopts a synoptic, problem-solving approach. It will consist of a single two-hour paper on all three sciences (Biology, Physics and Chemistry), based on the Common Entrance syllabus for these subjects and designed specifically to test a candidate's problem-solving ability. The paper will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice, short- and long-answer questions and some data analysis.

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

Candidates sit at least three of these.

Classical Greek

The paper contains differentiated questions set along the lines of the Common Entrance examination and ends with a harder piece of continuous Greek for translation.

French

This consists of a 60-minute written paper and an oral test. The written paper includes text-based activities, including vocabulary recognition and grammar manipulation. There will be short sentences to translate into French and a composition in French of approximately 130 words, based on an outline given in English. During the five-minute oral, boys will have the opportunity to talk about themselves and their interests, using different tenses.

Geography

The paper is based on the Common Entrance syllabus. Candidates will answer structured data-response questions making use of maps, graphs and/or photographs and must also select one essay from a broad range of topics. Candidates should also submit a fieldwork project following the guidelines set out in the Common Entrance syllabus, although this is not compulsory.

History

The paper consists of a document-response exercise based on one or two primary sources relating to a historical topic with which candidates will not be familiar, an essay from a choice of two (which can be answered using knowledge of any historical period from the Common Entrance syllabus) and a task designed to test general historical intelligence and reasoning. This requires no prior knowledge of the topic in question, but some imaginative and lateral thinking.

Latin

Boys answer comprehension questions on the narrative meaning and grammar of two Latin passages and translate another passage into English. The final part of the paper consists of two optional questions: one consisting of three sentences in English to be translated into Latin and one consisting of comprehension questions on harder, less adapted passages of Latin. The paper is based on the Common Entrance syllabus (scholarship level), but may contain additional vocabulary.

Spanish

The Spanish paper is aimed at non-native speakers of Spanish and consists of a 60-minute written paper and an oral test. The written paper includes text-based activities, including vocabulary recognition and grammar manipulation. There will be short sentences to translate into Spanish and a composition in Spanish of approximately 130 words, based on an outline given in English. During the five-minute oral, boys will have the opportunity to talk about themselves and their interests, using different tenses. Boys who choose to prioritise Spanish over French cannot choose French at Harrow unless they have at least Common Entrance level. Furthermore, there is no guarantee there will be a Spanish continuation class at Harrow and boys may end up studying Spanish alongside beginners.

The Admissions Office can provide copies of past Academic Scholarship papers, other than analytical reasoning and general linguistic skills. We provide feedback documents every year but do not, in general, provide mark schemes.