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What Is the ISEE Admission Test? 15 Frequently Asked Questions

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We know that there's a lot for families to do as their student applies to independent schools, and certain schools of interest may require your student to take the [Independent School Entrance Exam \(ISEE\)](#).

The ISEE is an admission assessment taken by students around the world applying to select independent and private schools for entry in Grades 2-12. The ISEE provides admission teams with objective data points that can benefit both schools – by helping them make admission decisions – and families, by ensuring they find the right school fit for their student.

So, what is the ISEE, and what else do families need to know? Below are answers to some of the most common questions families ask about the ISEE. We hope these insights will help your family feel confident as you identify a good fit!

Everything You Need to Know About the ISEE Admission Test

Q: What is the ISEE?

A: The ISEE is a comprehensive admission test accepted by over 1,200 independent schools. Used for students entering Grades 2-12, the ISEE offers valuable insights to both schools and families. It stands out due to its rigorous and reliable nature, as well as its flexible testing options including a variety of in-person and [at-home](#) administrations.

At the Primary level – which encompasses applicants to Grades 2-4 – the ISEE assesses students on two categories: reading and mathematics.

At the Lower, Middle, and Upper levels for applicants to Grades 5-12, the ISEE assesses applicants on four interconnected categories: quantitative reasoning, mathematics achievement, verbal reasoning, and reading comprehension. The comprehension and achievement sections measure knowledge, or what students have learned. The reasoning sections measure students' logical thinking skills and their capacity to learn. There is also an essay component to the ISEE, which allows students to showcase their writing abilities.

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Download the ISEE Quick Facts Guide for students and their families, with details on registration, the types of questions on the exam, and preparing for test day.

[download](#)**Q: Who should take the ISEE?**

A: Any student seeking admission to an independent school that accepts the ISEE as part of their admission process should consider taking this exam. [Use this search tool](#) to check if a school your student is applying to accepts the ISEE for admission.

Q: How do I register my child for the ISEE?

A: The easiest way to register is online at iseeonline.erblearn.org, where you can create an account to manage multiple students and testing dates. Alternatively, registration is available by mail or by phone at (800) 446-0320 or (919) 956-8524.

Regardless of your registration method, you can send your child's results to up to six schools.

Q: Where is the ISEE administered?

A: The ISEE can be taken in several different formats: a paper-based or online test at a designated location – a member school campus, an online test at a Prometric testing center, or an online test from the comfort of your home. You can find available test dates [here](#).

To find your preferred testing method and location:

- For in-person tests, whether paper or online, select the grade your child is applying for, your country, and your state under "I'm looking for in-person tests."
- For [at-home online tests](#), select the grade your child is applying for and your time zone under "I'm looking for at-home tests."

1,200+

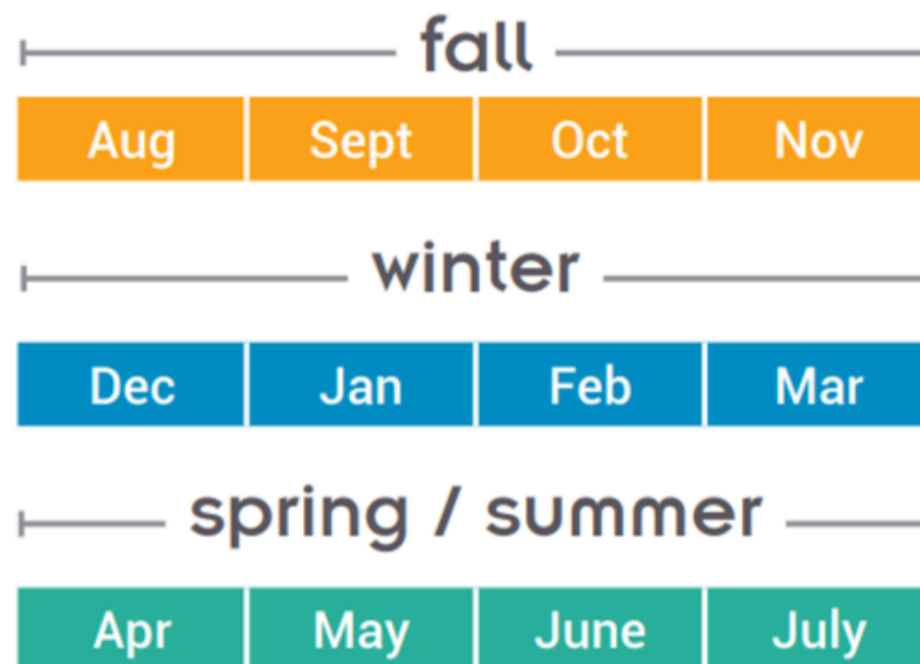
Number of independent schools that accept the ISEE as a comprehensive admission test, offering data insights to schools and families.

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The Primary level test encompasses Grades 2-4, while the Lower, Middle, and Upper levels assess applicants in Grades 5-12.

Q: How often can my child take the ISEE?

A: Your child can take the ISEE once per testing season, up to three times per school year. The seasons include Fall (August-November), Winter (December-March), and Spring/Summer (April-July).



We suggest students take the test twice if possible. Knowing they have a second chance can help reduce the pressure that comes with testing. If the first attempt goes well, there's no need for a retest.

When scheduling test dates, be sure to consider the unique deadline for each school's application. Generally, scores are due in January or February, so you may want to plan for a test in the Fall and another in the Winter. We recommend the first test in October or November and the second in December or January, depending on school deadlines.

Q: How much does it cost to take the ISEE?

A: The cost to take the ISEE varies based on both the testing method and your student's grade level. Review full pricing details [here](#).

Q: Does the ISEE have a time limit? How long is the test?

A: Yes, the ISEE exam does have a time limit, which varies based on the level.

- For Primary 2, 3, and 4 levels (applicants to Grades 2, 3, and 4, respectively), the total test times are 53, 54, and 60 minutes respectively with one short break.
- For Lower Level applicants (Grades 5 and 6), the exam lasts 2 hours and 20 minutes with two breaks.

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paper, pencils, and/or pens available.

Items not allowed include books, rulers, calculators (unless ERB-approved), smartwatches, and mobile devices. Non-compliance may lead to test invalidation without a refund.

Q: What are ISEE fee waivers and how do I get one?

A: Admission test fee waivers are an equity measure removing the cost of ISEE registration and test prep as a potential obstacle for low-income families. These waivers allow students to access Test Innovators' top-tier test preparation package and take the exam at no cost.

There are two types of ISEE fee waivers:

1. **ISEE Universal Fee Waivers:** These cover the costs for testing at a school or at home.
2. **ISEE Prometric Fee Waivers:** These cover the testing fee for testing at a Prometric Testing Center.

To obtain a fee waiver, you should reach out directly to the schools to which you're applying. The ISEE Operations Office or ERB does not handle fee-waiver inquiries. Each school has its own process for distributing waivers, so make sure to ask about their specific requirements.

Q: How can I prepare for the ISEE? Where can I find sample test questions?

A: ERB provides free online sample tests to help students familiarize themselves with the exam portal and question types. ERB also partners with [Test Innovators](#) to provide personalized test prep that teaches test-taking strategies, offers time management feedback, and highlights areas for improvement. ERB strives to remove financial barriers to provide all families with equal access to the best educational opportunities, so free advanced test practice and the entire suite of resources are offered to ISEE fee waiver-eligible students.

More information on these resources can be found at www.iseepracticetest.org and [here](#).

Q: How is the ISEE scored? What does the score report include?

A: ISEE score reports, also known as [Individual Student Reports](#) (ISRs), are based solely on the number of questions your child answered correctly; incorrect answers do not deduct from their score. This scoring system encourages students to make educated guesses without fear of penalty.

The ISR provides an overview of your child's performance on each test section relative to their peers. It also offers a detailed breakdown by question type. ERB advises member schools to consider each section score separately to gain a nuanced understanding of a student's skills. Please note that the ISR does not indicate how many times a student has tested within a 12-month admission cycle nor does it list any score recipients other than the individual school receiving the report.

A copy of your student's unscored essay will be sent to the selected schools for applicants to Grades 5-12. Students applying to Grades 2-4 are not required to complete a writing sample. Families do not receive a copy of the essay for security purposes.

Video: Understanding Your ISEE Scores

ERB and EMA are approved to finalize their merger! Meet E3ⁿ[Read more](#)[Member School Login](#)**Q: When and where can I access my ISEE scores?**

A: Your child's ISEE scores will be available online at iseeonline.erblearn.org. You will receive an email notification when the Individual Student Report is posted to your account. The timeline for receiving score reports varies depending on the test modality and grade level:

- Students who took online exams will receive score reports within 3-5 days.
- Students applying to Grades 2-4 who took paper exams will receive score reports within 7-14 days.
- Students applying to Grades 5-12 who took paper exams will receive score reports within 5-10 days.

Q: How long are the breaks during the ISEE?

A: The length and number of breaks during the ISEE depends on the level of the test:

- **Primary Level ISEEs:** 1 break lasting 5-10 minutes
- **Lower, Middle, or Upper Level ISEEs:** Two breaks, each lasting 5-10 minutes

These breaks give students a chance to rest and recharge before continuing with the test.

Q: How is the writing sample of the ISEE scored?

A: The writing sample is not scored in the traditional sense. Instead, it's sent to the schools your child is applying to without a grade. Admission teams look at the essay to assess the student's ability to express their ideas clearly, their mastery of English grammar and spelling, and their personal thoughts and values. Additionally, since the ISEE essay was written under secure conditions, many schools compare it with other written works submitted as part of an application to help confirm that the student is the author of their application materials. This makes the essay a critical part of the ISEE test, and it's important to prepare thoroughly.

Q: What should I do if the school my child is applying to accepts both the SSAT and ISEE?

A: If the school your child is applying to accepts both the SSAT and ISEE, you have a couple of options:

1. **Contact the School:** You might want to reach out to the school's admission office directly and ask if they have a preference between the two exams. Some schools may not have a preference, but others might lean towards one over the other.

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ERB has created the ISEE to provide objective data points for assisting both schools and students in ensuring the right fit. We hope that answering these common questions contributes to a seamless and stress-free testing experience for you and your child. If you have any additional questions, feel free to [contact us](#) and we will be happy to answer them.

Get all of the information you need about the ISEE admission assessment, currently accepted by more than 1,200 independent schools – from registration to score reports to testing accommodations.

[learn more](#)

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