



## **WESTMINSTER ADMISSIONS JATP & SSAT GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

### **For Applications to the 2026-2027 School Year**

The JATP and SSAT are widely used assessments that help independent schools understand how students think, reason, and approach learning tasks at different developmental stages. These assessments offer a consistent look at how students engage with new challenges and are one part of Westminster's holistic admissions process. They do not define a child. Instead, they are reviewed alongside prior school reports, teacher evaluations when available, interviews or observations, and our broader understanding of a student's readiness and alignment with our community.

Both the [JATP](#) and the [SSAT](#) organizations maintain their own official websites, which provide complete explanations of test formats, timing, policies, and what families can expect. We encourage families to review those resources, as they are the most authoritative and detailed sources of information.

## **THE JATP**

### **About the JATP**

The JATP is designed for children applying to Kindergarten through Grade 5 and uses developmentally appropriate activities to measure verbal, visual, and visual motor abilities. The official JATP site explains how the assessment works, who administers it, what the session typically includes, and how families schedule an appointment.

Details such as evaluator lists, procedures, fees, and what to expect on the day of the appointment are all outlined on the official site.

### **Supportive Habits for Younger Children**

Young children do not need specialized preparation. Day-to-day experiences that build language, curiosity, and comfort with adults are the most helpful. Families often find that the following habits support young learners in general:

- Read together and talk about stories or pictures
- Build vocabulary through conversation
- Play simple matching, pattern, or reasoning games
- Practice following multi-step directions
- Help your child feel comfortable receiving guidance from adults

- Encourage calm, low-pressure separations in everyday situations

### **How Westminster Uses the JATP**

We use the JATP for applicants to pre-first through Grade 4. Applicants to Grade 5 take the SSAT instead. The JATP helps us:

- Understand early reasoning, language, and listening skills
- See how a child approaches new tasks in a one-on-one setting
- Consider developmental readiness for early elementary expectations
- Observe emerging learning behaviors such as attention, curiosity, and comfort with gentle problem-solving

The assessment does not measure academic achievement. It helps us understand developmental readiness within the normal range of early childhood growth.

## **THE SSAT**

### **About the SSAT**

The SSAT is used for older students and is offered at three levels. Families can find full explanations of grade bands, scoring, sections, timing, and policies on the official SSAT website.

At Westminster:

- Students applying to grade 5 take the Elementary Level SSAT
- Students applying to grades 6 through 8 take the Middle Level SSAT
- Students applying to grades 9 through 12 take the Upper Level SSAT
- Applicants to grades 11 to 12 may submit results from the Pre-ACT, PSAT, ACT, or SAT instead of the SSAT

The official guide describes the reading, verbal reasoning, and quantitative sections, along with the writing sample. It also outlines the registration process, fees, and any available fee waivers.

### **Supportive Habits for Older Students**

Healthy academic routines help students feel confident and grounded. These habits support both general learning and a smooth testing experience:

- Read regularly to build stamina
- Summarize chapters or articles in their own words
- Engage in vocabulary-rich conversation, logic games, or word puzzles
- Strengthen math habits through steady practice and explaining reasoning
- Practice focused work sessions with short breaks

- Review the general structure of the SSAT using official resources

### **Understanding Preparation Choices for the SSAT**

The SSAT organization notes that students do not need extensive preparation. Families in our applicant pool vary in their approach, and students may:

- Review the official SSAT guide or online tools
- Test more than once
- Work with a tutor
- Combine several approaches
- Do no additional preparation

Westminster super scores the SSAT, meaning we take the highest score in each section across all test attempts. This helps us see a student's strongest performance without requiring any particular preparation strategy.

We do not encourage or discourage specific methods. We aim to ensure families understand the range of choices others sometimes consider.

### **How Westminster Uses the SSAT**

Because the SSAT is nationally normed, it helps us:

- Understand reasoning and interpretation skills in comparison to a broad peer group
- Observe patterns in verbal, quantitative, and reading stamina
- Consider readiness for Westminster's academically forward, inquiry-driven program
- View performance within national norms and grade level ranges

The SSAT is never reviewed in isolation. It is one part of a broader profile that includes reports, evaluations, observations, and personal qualities.

### **Why Other Tests Cannot Be Submitted in Place of the SSAT**

With the exception of grades 11 to 12, where students may submit the Pre-ACT, PSAT, ACT, or SAT, applicants are asked to take the SSAT.

Families sometimes wonder whether assessments such as ERB, Milestones, MAP Growth, IOWA, CogAT, or the ISEE can be used instead. These tests each serve different instructional or diagnostic purposes and rely on distinct scoring systems.

Because the SSAT offers one common, nationally normed point of reference for all applicants, it allows for a more consistent and equitable review. Other assessments may be submitted as helpful supplemental information.

