Future Stories

Familiarisation Guide

Information for Parents

Entrance Test for Entry into Year 7 (NH-CH)

This is the Familiarisation Guide for the Future Stories Community Enterprise (FSCE) Entrance Test for entry into Year 7. It is designed to help children, their parents and teachers understand the format of our test papers and their corresponding answer sheets.

FSCE's aim is to make Grammar School testing more accessible for all children: regardless of their background, their primary school, or any disability.

This section contains some background information for parents to help them reassure their child and encourage natural curiosity.

This guide is the only genuine resource produced for the FSCE Ltd Entrance Test
There is no charge for this Familiarisation Guide

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Guidance for Parents

FSCE and the Grammar Schools we work with are against any preparation that disrupts a child's usual schooling or creates unnecessary anxiety.

Surveys have shown that the word most commonly used by current children who received tutoring was 'stressful' - we desperately want to avoid this.

We also know that lots of tutors are expensive, of unreliable quality and over-teach unnecessary content.

Their claims about 'exam success rates' are often baseless too.

Instead, we encourage children to:

- Work well at primary school, with maximum attendance and engagement in all areas of school life;
- Develop strong reading habits by reading widely and deeply;
- Practise the fluency of their maths and problem-solving skills through real life day to day examples;
- Engage in imaginative and critical thinking discussions around the dinner table;
- Focus on calmness and confidence rather than pressure and stress;
- Enjoy a wide range of learning in primary school, and see learning as a lifelong adventure;
- Trust that they already have the knowledge required to access the questions.

What is the test like and why?

What is the test like?	Why is it like that?
It tests application of knowledge and skills from KS2 subjects taught up to and including the Year 5 programme of study	This is the national curriculum and therefore is the fairest way to assess the content which all children in all primary schools will be taught and have access to.
The test is extensively trialled and consulted upon with primary school children and teachers.	To ensure that all the content is accessible and most likely to have been encountered. Where content is less likely to have been encountered by all children, the necessary information will be given in the test paper and children will apply this information to a novel situation.
The type of questions, subjects, content and format will change from year to year.	This is so that no tutor, parent or company can claim to have any knowledge about what the FSCE entrance test will be like. Equally, we want to assess children's ability to think clearly in unexpected situations. The questions are not about remembering facts, it is therefore not necessary to memorise, for example, Kings and Queens of England.
In addition to English and Maths, the Test will explore imaginative flair through creativity (we define creativity as: *the ability to think of new and imaginative ideas, or to solve problems in original and unique ways*);	The KS2 National Curriculum mentions creativity numerous times, and we believe creativity to be an essential asset for flourishing.
There are NO past papers and NO practice papers that have been authorised by FSCE.	We do not want anybody to have to pay to prepare for the test, and the test format/content changes from year to year, so any material would be immediately out of date.
More focused on application than recall.	We want to assess resilient thinkers, not those who have been drilled by rote learning.
Unlike any other 11+ entrance test.	Grammar Schools are unique, and the test should reflect that.

CREATIVITY – what we are looking for

Children who write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. They should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas. Explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others.

The sorts of skills we will be testing for are:

In the test, your child will be asked to provide a written answer to a Creative Writing question. They will need the ability to think of new and imaginative ideas, or to solve problems in original and unique ways.

What you can do to help your child prepare for Creativity:

Encourage rich talk and clear thinking before writing
Help your child articulate ideas aloud—this makes their own thinking clearer and gives them language to use on the page.

Describe your world: Point to an object or scene ("Look at that rain-slick road," "Listen to the birds"). Ask your child to describe what they see, hear or feel in three vivid words or a short sentence.

Time-travel journaling: Prompt them to write one sentence about yesterday ("I discovered…"), today ("I notice…") and tomorrow ("I wonder…") to practise shifting tense and perspective.

Headline to story: Show a simple newspaper headline or photo caption. Ask: "What do you think happened next?" Have them jot three possible endings, building inference and imaginative extension.

Role-play and dialogue: Act out a short scene (e.g. arguing siblings, a shopkeeper and customer). Encourage your child to use different voices and note down any funny or strong phrases for later writing.

Vocabulary hunting: When reading together, pick out one interesting word per page. Ask your child to use it in a new sentence about something in your home or family.

Compare & contrast texts: Read two very different short texts (a fairy tale and a news report). Ask your child to list how the language and style change for each audience and purpose.

Problem-solving prompt: Give a simple scenario ("Your cat is stuck in a tree"). Ask your child to think of two creative solutions, then write one as a mini-paragraph beginning with "I would…because…".

"Explain to a friend" exercise: After reading a book or watching a clip, have your child teach you the main idea in their own words. Encourage them to use clear linking words ("first," "then," "finally").

Mind-map your ideas: For any writing task, draw a central circle (topic) and branch out key words or quick sketches. Let your child talk through the map before they start writing to organise thoughts.

ENGLISH – what we are looking for

Remember: English can be used across all KS2 Curriculum subjects.

Children with a strong command of the written word, who can read easily, fluently and with good understanding.

Through an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage, children have:

- a wide vocabulary that enables them to understand sophisticated nuance and depth of meaning in texts;
- an explicit understanding of grammar that gives them more conscious control and choice when interpreting complex language;
- knowledge of linguistic conventions that ensures clarity and understanding of reading.

<u>The sorts of skills we will be testing for are:</u>

Correct choice and consistent use of present and past tense ensures clarity in time references, helping readers follow events in a logical sequence and avoid confusion/misinterpretation of actions.
*Example: "He **walked** to school yesterday" (past) vs. "He **walks** to school every day" (present).*

Understanding of the progressive form of verbs (present/past) to mark actions in progress to see depth and detail in storytelling by emphasising duration.
*Example: "She **was running** across the field" (past action happening over time) vs. "She **ran** across the field" (just says it happened).*

Identify similar or opposite word families to demonstrate broad vocabulary and understand the relationships between words that aid comprehension.
Example: "Happy" (similar: joyful, cheerful; opposite: sad).

Recognition of how inverted commas and punctuation help to correctly interpret meaning, emphasis, tone and speaker intention.
*Example: He said, "**I'm excited!**" shows he's really happy. Without the speech marks, it's hard to know who said it.*

Identifying the difference between apostrophes used to mark plural and possession so as to avoid ambiguity in ownership.
*Example: "The **girl's** book" means one girl owns it. "The **girls'** book" means a group of girls own it.*

Identification of commas after fronted adverbials improves sentence clarity by signalling introductory phrases that help readers pause appropriately.
*Example: "**Before lunch,** we went to the park." The comma shows when the action happened.*

Appreciation of the use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme that enhances readability by structuring information logically and helps convey shifts in ideas or arguments effectively.

Identifying how sentences or paragraphs have been linked together (for example with adverbials of time, place and number) in a logical flow with devices that build cohesion.
*Example: "**First**, we packed our bags. **Then**, we went to the beach. **After that**, we had ice cream."*

Spot appropriate choice of pronoun or noun for cohesion, clarity of subject and avoiding repetition.
*Example: "Lucy was tired. **She** went to bed early." We use "she" instead of repeating "Lucy".*

Understanding of how noun phrases expanded with adjectives, nouns, and prepositional phrases enhance imagery and detail in writing.
*Example: "The **small, fluffy puppy** with a red collar" paints a clearer picture than just "puppy".*

How nouns and verbs use prefixes (dis-, de-, mis-, over-, re-/ super-, anti-, auto-) and how nouns and adjectives have been converted into verbs using suffixes (-ate, -ise, -ify) to allow for comprehension of more expressive, altered or opposite language meaning.
Example: "Disagree" means not agree. "Beautify" means to make something beautiful.

How relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that add extra detail that enhances sentence complexity and fluency without needing a new sentence.
*Example: "The boy **who won the race** is my friend." The extra part tells us more about the boy.*

Comprehend how adverbs or modal verbs indicate degrees of possibility, uncertainty, probability or obligation.
*Example: "He **might** come to the party" (maybe). "You **must** do your homework" (you have to).*

How ideas of time, place, and cause are logically connected using conjunctions, adverbs, or prepositions.
*Example: "We stayed inside **because** it was raining." "We'll go swimming **after** lunch."*

Distinguishing between homophones/near-homophones to prevent confusion and understand a text correctly.
Example: "There," "their," and "they're" sound the same but mean different things.

What you can do to help your child prepare for English:

Develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment;

Read from a variety of genres to enable transferability;

Read actively to identify how authors use grammar, vocabulary and punctuation purposefully;

Play fun free language games such as Taboo, Word Association, 20 questions, categories or story chains;

Keep a diary, with an aim to use certain devices each time;

Expose children to **high quality and wide variety** of spoken and written language at home;

Learn and apply grammar through reading, writing and speaking rather than separately from it;

Apply the more complex language used already in speech into writing.

MATHS – what we are looking for

Children whose fluency in the fundamentals of mathematics means that they are able to focus on grappling effectively with increasingly complex problems in context and with increasingly large integers. They will therefore be able to:

- solve problems by efficiently applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.
- make rich connections across mathematical ideas to develop mathematical reasoning and competence in solving increasingly sophisticated problems through written and mental methods of calculation (no calculators). They should also apply their mathematical knowledge to science and other subjects.

<u>The sorts of skills we will be testing for are:</u>

Solve number problems and practical problems that require reading, writing, ordering, rounding and comparing numbers (including negative numbers) up to and over 1,000,000.
Example: Is -5 colder than 3 degrees? Yes! Or: Which is bigger—1,234,567 or 1,234,765?

Solve addition and subtraction multi-step problems in contexts with increasingly large numbers, deciding which operations and methods to use and why, including rounding to check/determine accuracy.
Example: If a zoo had 345,217 visitors last year and 289,128 this year, how many fewer visitors came this year? Round the numbers to check: 345,000 – 289,000 = ?

Solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and a combination of these. Use multiples and (prime) factors, (non)prime numbers, square and cube numbers. Use long multiplication and short division, including remainders. Multiply and divide both whole numbers and those with decimals, including scaling by simple fractions and problems involving simple rates.
Example: Sofia has 96 sweets and 12 small boxes. She wants to divide the sweets equally among the boxes. How many sweets go into each box? 96 ÷12 = 8 sweets per box; Sofia notices that 96 is a multiple of 12. List all the prime factors of 96: Start by dividing: 96 ÷ 2 = 48, 48 ÷ 2 = 24, 24 ÷ 2 = 12, 12 ÷ 2 = 6, 6 ÷ 2 = 3, 3 ÷ 3 = 1. The prime factors are: ***2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3.*** *That means the prime factorisation is:* $2^5 \times 3$

Solve problems involving fractions, decimals and percentages. Be able to convert, order, round, add, subtract and multiply equivalent fractions, (im)proper fractions, mixed numbers, decimal numbers and percentages.
Example: What's bigger, ¾ or 0.6? (Hint: ¾ = 0.75). Or: What's 25% of 40? That's 10!

Use all four operations to solve problems involving measure, including converting between different units and using approximate equivalences. Measure, calculate, estimate and compare perimeters, volumes, areas and capacity of (ir)regular shapes.
Example: A rectangle is 4m long and 3m wide. What is its area? 4 × 3 = 12m².

Solve geometry problems in degrees that include 2D/3D cubes and other cuboids. Estimate, measure and compare acute, obtuse and reflex angles at a point and at other multiples of 90 degrees. Use the properties of rectangles to deduce related facts and find missing lengths and angles. Use reasoning to distinguish between (ir)regular polygons.
Example: A cuboid has a length of 10 cm, width of 4 cm, and height of 6 cm. How many faces does a cuboid have? A cuboid has 6 faces. What is the total surface area of the cuboid? Use the formula: 2 × (length × width + length × height + width × height) = 2 × (10×4 + 10×6 + 4×6) = 2 × (40 + 60 + 24) = 2 × 124 = 248 cm²

Solve comparison, sum and difference statistical problems using information presented in a line graph. Complete, read and interpret information in tables, including timetables.
Example: If a train leaves at 10:15 and arrives at 11:45, how long was the trip? 1 hour 30 minutes

What you can do to help your child prepare for Maths:

- Ensure you have a strong grasp of basic concepts, such as algebra, geometry, and arithmetic.
- Practice with real-world scenarios (e.g., budgeting, measurements).
- Engage in logic puzzles, games, and competitions.
- Trial and Error: Test different approaches if stuck.
- Working Backward: Start from the desired answer and trace the steps back.
- Pattern Recognition: Look for recurring sequences or structures.
- Logical Deduction: Use step-by-step reasoning to eliminate wrong answers.
- Break complex problems into smaller, manageable steps.
- Use diagrams, charts, or visual aids to simplify understanding.
- Think of multiple approaches to the same problem.