

11+ GENERAL INFO

What is the 11+ Exam?

The 11+ exam is an entrance exam for grammar schools (state-funded, academically selective secondary schools) taken by students at the beginning of Year 6. The exam is not nationally standardised: each school creates their own variant of the exam based on their individual entry requirements. Some schools work in a consortium, where multiple schools take the same exam. One example of this would be the Slough Consortium of Grammar Schools, which includes 4 different grammar schools. The exam may only be sat once.

When is the 11+ Exam?

The 11+ exam takes place every September. The exact date varies from school to school and year to year. If the student is applying to multiple schools, dates may clash. If this is the case, the schools may have a back-up date for students with clashes/students who are ill and miss the first date. However, this is not always the case, and the student may consequently have to drop one of the schools.

Alternatively, schools may have policies in place to give individuals with extenuating circumstances their own test dates. Always advise your students to get in touch with the relevant schools directly and as early as possible.

Does the 11+ exam cost anything?

Sitting the 11+ exam is entirely free.

How do I register my child for the 11+ exam?

Each school will have an online application form viewable on their website under the “Admissions” section. The opening and closing date for these applications will vary from school to school. Therefore, you should check the opening dates for the application form well in advance for each school that you wish to apply to. Applications usually open around the beginning of April or May and close around June or July, but it is **imperative** that you confirm the application window for your desired schools yourself.

Are there mock exams?

Mock exams are held privately at different registered test centres. Prices vary from company to company, but standard industry prices range from £60-80 per mock. These take place several months in advance up until a few weeks before the actual exams. To enquire about mock exams with Study Plus, please get in touch via phone/email.

What is the 11+ exam comprised of?

The 11+ exam covers Year 5 and 6 content. Contrary to popular belief, it does not cover secondary school content. The exact contents of the 11+ exam vary from school to school. The following are the most common sections that schools may include:

English – Reading Comprehension/SPaG

Maths

Non-verbal Reasoning

English – Creative Writing

Verbal Reasoning

Sporting Aptitude

Sporting aptitude is a rather niche assessment method. Reading Boys' includes this in their admission process. For them, roughly 10% of spaces are reserved for sporting aptitude places and are there for students who pass the minimum threshold of the academic exam but excel in physical activity. The sporting aptitude test takes place before the 11+ exam. **Please note that Reading Boys' has recently changed their exam structure somewhat radically; for more details on this, see the next section.**

While the method of assessment/marking will depend on the school, most of the paper will likely be multiple choice questions (MCQ); students will fill their answers on an answer sheet, which is marked electronically. The following is a section of an MCQ answer sheet:

The exam may also contain standard format questions where students write their answers in spaces provided on the exam paper. In these types of questions, it is essential that answers are legible and working out is shown. This style will be much more familiar to most students.

It is crucial that students fill their answers as per the instructions of the answer sheet, as doing so incorrectly will mean their answer will not be accepted by the marking software. Creative writing is marked by hand. Some schools may only mark the creative writing papers of candidates who obtain an eligible score on the multiple-choice sections for the sake of saving time.

Reading Boys' Entrance Exam

Reading Boys' has recently changed their exam provider, switching from GL Assessment to FSCE, a subsidiary of Reading Boys'. You can find the details of their exam below:

What subjects do we test

The test may include any of the following subjects you learn at school which shouldn't be anything new or extra:

Art & Design, Computing, Design & Technology, English, Geography, History, Languages, Maths,
Music, Physical Education, Science.

There are 4 different papers – which might be sat in any order:

Adventure Paper: any subject listed above, with Multiple Choice Answer options;

Beacon Paper: any subject listed above, where you respond with short written answers;

Compass Paper: any subject listed above, with Multiple Choice Answer options;

Discovery Paper: a paper which will require a Creative Response.

While other schools may test up to Year 6 level content, Reading Boys' has specifically reinvented their exam to create a more equal opportunity for all applicants and reduce the need for specialist tuition. As such, students sitting their exam will not be tested on anything beyond the Year 5 National Curriculum, and there will be no verbal reasoning or non-verbal reasoning.

In terms of how we at Study Plus would approach helping your child if they only plan on sitting the Reading Boys' exam, we would focus on developing their foundation and ensuring there are absolutely no weak points, placing emphasis on speed, accuracy, and adapting to different question styles and applied knowledge.

Total and Pass Marks

After papers are marked and moderated, raw marks will be standardised. Standardisation takes the candidate's age into account: older students with identical raw marks to younger students will have a lower standardised score.

It is up to each school to decide what their pass mark is each year. Consequently, pass marks will change from exam to exam. In areas where grammar school places are more competitive, pass marks will usually be higher and vice-versa. On average, however, the pass mark tends to hover around 80%. Broadly speaking, a score of at least 110 is required for a pass, but we recommend aiming significantly above that. It is worth noting that schools in the same consortium still decide their own pass marks individually, despite sitting the same exam.

Offers, Oversubscription and Appeal Processes

An eligible score does not guarantee a place, as the number of eligible scores may exceed the number of places available. Places will usually be offered in order of the highest scoring candidates. However, in the almost certain event that places are oversubscribed, other factors will likely be considered, such as but not limited to catchment area, low household income, or whether the candidate is/has been in the care of social services. Each school has their own oversubscription process, which can be found on their website.

All candidates refused a place have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals are made to an independent appeal panel, who will conduct a hearing wherein the candidate's guardian/s may question the admission board's decision and put forward their case for why they feel their child should be given admission. Details regarding how to apply for an appeal and the exact process (which varies slightly from school to school) can be found on each school's website.

Where can individual schools' admission processes be found?

Individual schools' admission processes/policies, exam structures, exam dates/locations, and further information and reasonable adjustments can usually be found on the relevant school's website under "Admissions". Parents should always look at the information the schools provide in addition to any guidance we give.

Final Notes:

There are many different 11+ exam providers, and schools may choose to use one of them or make their own independent assessment. Furthermore, schools may change their method of assessment whenever they see fit. As such, you should **regularly** check the websites of the schools you are applying to for exact information regarding how they will assess your child and tailor your approach to 11+ preparation accordingly.

The information provided thus far is general and intended to give you an overall understanding of the 11+ exam. It is not a substitute for independent, **specific** research.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Recommended reading frequency, volume, difficulty, and suggested texts for 11+ students:
Reading is vital to developing a child's comprehension skills, vocabulary, fluency, creativity, and writing speed. There is absolutely nothing that can make up for a lack of reading. We find that the students who do best both in the 11+ and in further examinations are the ones who are reading consistently and attentively.



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For more information and advice regarding the 11+ program, please book an assessment in-centre or enquire via phone/email. Details can be found at www.study-plus.co.uk



Book your free initial assessment!