FREE SAMPLE

Independent School 11+ Revision Handbook: revision handbook

A revision handbook for the Independent School 11+: 60 lessons teaching the methods for maths and English, with worked examples, practice questions, must-know lists and a 12-week plan.

In this sample

- The contents and how to use the handbook
- About the test, with the schools that use it
- The 12-week revision plan
- The first lessons of a subject chapter
- The first page of the answers

In the full handbook

- A lesson for every topic and question type in the test, with methods, worked examples and practice
- Test skills: timing, answer sheets, checking and test day
- Must-know lists, a 12-week plan and answers with explanations

Original practice material, written for NITU. Not an official paper and not produced by any school, council, consortium or test provider. Where the real test's details are not published, the papers say so and label our choice as an assumption. Practice cannot predict a result and does not guarantee a place.

You may print this sample for use in your own household.

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How to use this handbook

Each lesson teaches one topic or question type on one or two pages:

- **How to do it**: the method, step by step.
- **Worked example**: the method used on a real question, with every step shown.
- **Watch out**: the mistakes that cost the most marks.
- **Practice**: short questions to try, from easier to harder. Answers and explanations are at the back.

Follow the 12-week plan, or dip into the lessons your child finds hardest. Little and often works better than long sessions.

S1–S6	Test skills	6 lessons
M1–M28	Maths	28 lessons
E1–E26	English	26 lessons

Every question in this handbook is original. Answers were checked, but if you find a mistake please tell us and we will correct it.

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About the test

This handbook covers the skills tested in the **Independent School 11+**, based on the published format where details are published. Each row below says how sure we are: **Published** means the organisers publish it; **Reported** means it comes from other sources and should be checked; **Our assumption** means it is not published and we made a sensible choice.

Reported	In November 2026 we looked at the entrance tests of 100 large independent schools in England that take pupils at 11: 78 were reported to use papers they set themselves, usually English (comprehension and creative writing) and maths. About half also use an online first-round test.
Reported	School-set papers usually need written answers rather than multiple choice. Each school sets its own length, timing, marks and style, and some add reasoning tests or interviews.
Our assumption	English about 1 hour 10 minutes (40 marks reading, 20 marks writing); maths about 1 hour (60 marks); no calculator. These are typical, not standard, and are not based on any one school's paper.

Writing: Most school-set English papers are reported to include a creative writing task; each school sets its own marks, and our split of 20 marks for writing is an assumption.

Always check dates, registration and the latest format with each school's admissions page, and any sample papers the school publishes. Formats and providers change.

Independent schools that set their own 11+ English and maths papers: in our November 2026 research, 78 of 100 large independent schools in England that take pupils at 11 were reported to do so. St Anselm's College, Wirral, a Catholic grammar school, also sets its own written English and maths (plus verbal reasoning; use the verbal reasoning booklets from the own-test pack).

This handbook is independent. It is based on the published format of the test where details are published, and it is not an official publication. It is not produced by or endorsed by any school, council, consortium or test provider. Practice cannot predict a result and does not guarantee a place.

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Your 12-week revision plan

Aim for four or five short sessions a week of 20–30 minutes. In each session, read one lesson, do its worked examples together, then try the practice questions and mark them with the answers at the back. Tick the week off when it is done. Move faster or slower to suit your child; start with the test skills chapter in week 1.

Week	Lessons	Done
1	**M1** Place value and rounding; **M2** Negative numbers; **M3** Adding and subtracting; **E1** How to read a passage in a test; **E2** Finding information (retrieval); **E3** Inference: reading between the lines	
2	**M4** Multiplying and dividing; **M5** Order of operations (BIDMAS); **M6** Factors, multiples, primes, squares and cubes; **E4** Vocabulary in context: word meanings; **E5** Figurative language and sound effects; **E6** Author's purpose, viewpoint and structure	
3	**M7** Fractions; **M8** Decimals; **M9** Percentages; **E7** Answering questions on a poem; **E8** Spelling rules and tricky words	
4	**M10** Fractions, decimals and percentages; **M11** Ratio and proportion; **M12** Money; **E9** Prefixes; **E10** Suffixes and spelling changes; **E11** Apostrophes	
5	**M13** Time and timetables; **M14** Measures and unit conversion; **E12** Capital letters and commas in lists; **E13** End punctuation and speech marks	
6	**M15** Perimeter and area; **M16** Volume and capacity; **M17** Angles; **E14** Verb tenses, irregular verbs and plurals; **E15** Word classes; **E16** Conjunctions and clauses	
7	**M18** Properties of 2D and 3D shapes; **M19** Coordinates, reflection and translation; **M20** Sequences; **E17** Homophones and confusing words; **E18** Building vocabulary and working out new words; **E19** Cloze: filling gaps in a passage	
8	**M21** Algebra: missing numbers, formulas and equations; **M22** Averages: mean, median, mode and range; **M23** Tables, bar charts, line graphs and pie charts; **E20** Written answers: full sentences and evidence; **E21** Planning a story in 5 minutes	
9	**M24** Probability language; **M25** Roman numerals; **M26** Multi-step word problems; **E22** Strong openings and endings; **E23** Describing settings and characters (show, don't tell); **E24** Non-fiction and persuasive writing	
10	**M27** Showing your working; **M28** Harder problem solving; **E25** Checking and improving your writing; **E26** Richer vocabulary and sentence variety	
11	Mixed practice: redo every practice question you got wrong. Sit a full timed mock test.	
12	Second timed mock test. Revisit the lessons for the question types that still cost marks. Read the test skills chapter again.	

For weeks 11 and 12 you need full mock tests set out like the real test, such as a Independent School 11+ four-test pack. Use raw mock scores to see progress over time; they cannot be converted into the standardised scores used in the real test.

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Maths

28 lessons: **M1** Place value and rounding; **M2** Negative numbers; **M3** Adding and subtracting; **M4** Multiplying and dividing; **M5** Order of operations (BIDMAS); **M6** Factors, multiples, primes, squares and cubes; **M7** Fractions; **M8** Decimals; **M9** Percentages; **M10** Fractions, decimals and percentages; **M11** Ratio and proportion; **M12** Money; **M13** Time and timetables; **M14** Measures and unit conversion; **M15** Perimeter and area; **M16** Volume and capacity; **M17** Angles; **M18** Properties of 2D and 3D shapes; **M19** Coordinates, reflection and translation; **M20** Sequences; **M21** Algebra: missing numbers, formulas and equations; **M22** Averages: mean, median, mode and range; **M23** Tables, bar charts, line graphs and pie charts; **M24** Probability language; **M25** Roman numerals; **M26** Multi-step word problems; **M27** Showing your working; **M28** Harder problem solving.

M1 Place value and rounding

Every digit in a number has a value that depends on its column. 11+ questions ask what a digit is worth and ask you to round numbers to the nearest 10, 100, 1,000 or to one decimal place.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Write the column headings above the number if it helps: hundred thousands, ten thousands, thousands, hundreds, tens, ones, then tenths and hundredths after the decimal point.
2. The value of a digit is the digit times its column, so the 4 in 34,170 is worth 4,000.
3. To round, find the column you are rounding to, then look only at the digit just to its right.
4. If that digit is 5 or more, round up. If it is 4 or less, round down and keep the column digit the same.
5. Everything to the right of the rounding column becomes zero (or disappears after a decimal point).

WORKED EXAMPLE

What is the value of the digit 7 in 372,815?

Answer: 70,000. The 7 is in the ten thousands column, so it is worth 7 × 10,000 = 70,000.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Round 46,382 to the nearest thousand.

Answer: 46,000. The thousands digit is 6. The digit to its right is 3, which is less than 5, so round down to 46,000.

WATCH OUT

- Look at only one digit to decide which way to round, the one just right of the rounding column.
- Keep the size of the number when rounding: 46,382 rounds to 46,000, not to 46.
- When rounding 3.97 to one decimal place, carry the 1 over: the answer is 4.0, not 3.10.

Quick tip: Underline the rounding digit and circle its right-hand neighbour before you decide.

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PRACTICE (6 QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AT THE BACK)

1. Round 3,251 to the nearest hundred.

Answer: _____

2. Round 7,519 to the nearest hundred.

Answer: _____

3. Round 527,163 to the nearest thousand.

Answer: _____

4. Round 680,904 to the nearest thousand.

Answer: _____

5. Round 85.64 to one decimal place.

Answer: _____

6. Round 60.66 to one decimal place.

Answer: _____

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M2 Negative numbers

Negative numbers are numbers below zero. In 11+ tests they usually appear as temperatures, or as sums that cross zero.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Picture a number line, or a thermometer standing upright, with zero in the middle.
2. Adding moves you up (to the right). Taking away moves you down (to the left).
3. To cross zero, split the jump into two parts: down to zero, then on past it.
4. To find the difference between a negative and a positive number, add the distance to zero on each side.

WORKED EXAMPLE

The temperature is −6°C. It rises by 9 degrees. What is the new temperature?

Answer: 3°C. Count up 6 to reach 0, then 3 more to reach 3°C.

WORKED EXAMPLE

At night it was −4°C. By midday it was 7°C. How many degrees warmer was it at midday?

Answer: 11 degrees. From −4 up to 0 is 4. From 0 up to 7 is 7. 4 + 7 = 11.

WATCH OUT

- Remember that −8 is colder (smaller) than −3, even though 8 is bigger than 3.
- When finding a difference across zero, add the two distances; do not take one number from the other.
- Write the minus sign clearly in your answer so −5 is not marked as 5.

Quick tip: Draw a quick number line in the margin. It takes five seconds and stops sign slips.

PRACTICE (6 QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AT THE BACK)

1. The temperature is −8°C. It rises by 12 degrees. What is the new temperature? Answer: _____

2. The temperature is −2°C. It rises by 11 degrees. What is the new temperature? Answer: _____

3. At night it was −7°C. By midday it was 5°C. How many degrees warmer was it at midday? Answer: _____

4. At night it was −4°C. By midday it was 4°C. How many degrees warmer was it at midday? Answer: _____

5. −3 + 4 − 12 = ___ Answer: _____

6. −12 + 6 − 2 = ___ Answer: _____

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Answers and explanations

S1 · How to revise

1	**It is better to split it into short sessions of about 20 to 30 minutes across the week.** Little and often helps you remember for longer, and short sessions keep you fresh.
2	**Write it in her mistakes log with the correct method, then try a similar question a few days later.** Spotting a pattern in your mistakes shows you exactly what to practise next.
3	**Stop early, do something relaxing and get a good night's sleep.** Being rested helps you think clearly; last-minute cramming rarely helps.

S2 · Timing

1	**45 seconds**	30 minutes is 1,800 seconds, and 1,800 ÷ 40 = 45.
2	**Question 25**	Half the time has gone, so you should be about halfway through: 50 ÷ 2 = 25.
3	**Make his best guess, mark the question to come back to, and move on.** Getting stuck costs time that could earn marks on easier questions later.	

S3 · Written-answer papers

1	**Make about three points, or one point explained fully with evidence from the text.** The marks are a guide to how much the marker is looking for.
2	**The units, for example 24 cm.** A length without a unit is incomplete and may lose a mark.
3	**If the answer is wrong she gets no marks; written working could still earn method marks.** Markers often give marks for the correct method even when there is a slip at the end.

S4 · Checking

1	**50 × 20 = 1,000, which is close to 1,029, so the answer is sensible.** Rounding both numbers gives a quick rough answer to compare with.
2	**Work out 13 × 12, which is 156, so she is right.** Multiplication undoes division.
3	**She added instead of finding the difference. The answer is 15.** "How many more" means subtract: 34 − 19 = 15. Re-reading the question would have caught this.

S5 · Test day and nerves

1	**Take a slow breath, read it again, and if it is still hard, guess, mark it and move on.** Later questions may be easier, and she can come back with a calmer mind.
2	**Two sharp pencils, a rubber and anything else the letter asks for, such as a ruler or a water bottle; no calculator.** Calculators are not usually allowed (check the letter), and spare pencils mean a broken one is not a problem.
3	**A good breakfast, some slow breathing and reminding himself he has prepared.** Food, calm breathing and positive thoughts help settle nerves.

S6 · For parents

1	**No. It is a raw score; real results are usually standardised and depend on the whole group taking the test.** Use the paper to spot weak topics and track progress over time, not to predict a result.
2	**Stop for the day, reassure them and take a short break before starting again with something easier.** Confidence matters; pushing on when upset rarely helps learning.
3	**Not necessarily. Short, regular sessions that suit your child are usually more effective.** Every child is different, and too much practice can lead to tiredness and lost confidence.

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