

The following are hints or tips for sitting the scholarship test or entrance exam.

It should be pointed out that you should not be put off by first appearances, because although the tests are difficult - they are not as difficult as you might think! In fact a small improvement in your score can be obtained with practice and suitable technique. This may, of course, make the difference between getting your first choice of school or not. So best of luck to all...

Here are my tips:

1. Most important - READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY. Note, ACER does not highlight important words so underline these words yourself. Pay particular attention to connecting words as; and, or, both etc. and words that negate the meaning - e.g. not, no, neither etc.
2. Since the answer is given to you in the form of multiple choices A B C D, use this to help you to understand what they are asking you to do BUT do not rush and pick an answer BEFORE you fully understand the question!
3. I suggest that instead of checking or working through the possible answers from A to D, that you do it in reverse order i.e. D to A. Why?
 - a. This will slow you down and make you think more about the answer before selecting.
 - b. The most common mistake (e.g. subtracting rather than adding) is often placed as answer A. Note, watch out for these common mistakes or traps!
4. With multiple choice questions you can approach the problem many ways.
 - a. Work out the answer and then see if it is shown. Note, it occurs very rarely that the answer is 'none of the above' - if you think it is this then check the question again.
 - b. Work backwards using each answer to see if it fits the question.
 - c. Eliminate (cross out) any answer that is obviously wrong leaving the one answer that is correct.
 - d. Use estimation to get the answer which is the closest. e.g. $8.25 \times 9.75 =$ approximately $8 \times 10 = 80$ (80.4375 is the correct answer).
5. Write the question numbers down on a separate sheet of paper and put a question mark against any you are unsure of the answer to - BUT always answer (even make a guess) at ALL questions as you work through the paper. The reason is that it's too easy to get 'out of step' and start marking the answers to the wrong question on your answer sheet. ONLY when you get to the end of the paper do you then go back and look at the questions which you have placed a '?' against. After this is done, then you can go back to question 1 and double check all answers - if possible using different approaches given in 4 above.
6. Note any answer you wish to change must be rubbed out thoroughly and then your new answer marked.
7. If you make a guess, make sure it's random (remember two questions in a row often have the same answer).

8. Use all the tricks you can find. e.g. multiplying by 11. $45 \times 11 = 4(4+5)5 = 495$. Another interesting trick - which you can actually use on the ACER sample test - is that to find the remainder when a number is divided by 9 simply find it's 'digital root' by adding it's digits together, repeatedly, until it becomes a single digit - that number is the remainder (except 9 which means there is no remainder). e.g. 29456 . $2+9+4+5+6 = 26$, $2+6 = 8$. The number 29456 will have a remainder of 8 if divided by 9! Please note, it can be done quicker if you cross out any digits that are 9 or any combination of digits that add to 9, 18, 27 etc. So, crossing off the 9 and 4 and 5 leaves you with $2+6=8$ easy! Another 'trick' is to use AVERAGES to calculate answers quicker. e.g. What is $99 + 98 + 97 + \dots + 2 + 1 = ?$ Answer: the average number is 50 and the total numbers are 99, therefore $50 \times 99 = 4950$. NOTE: Always check your method using a simpler series of numbers (if you have time). e.g. For $9 + 8 + 7 \dots + 1 = 45$. Using average $5 \times 9 = 45$. Also, if the series had an even set of numbers e.g. $98 + 97 + \dots + 1$ then the average would be 49.5 - beware! For more maths tricks and tips - click here.
9. Use visual aids. Draw a diagram, map or a graph to help you work out the answer. Re-order things (numerical order) and see if that helps. Make sure you understand how to use fractions to work out ratios and you understand inverse-ratios. e.g. man-hours (no. of men x hours). Use ALL the tools available to you in the exam room. e.g. In questions 12-14 page 46 on the ACER sample test, use your pencil on the table with your hand on top! Wear an analogue watch and use it to help solve problems associated with clocks, time, angles, fractions etc.
10. Use your imagination to solve problems. e.g. picture yourself on top of the plank in ACER questions 12-14 page 46. How far would you move? In questions 8-9 page 28, imagine these are one-way roads and you are driving a car. Which roads could you drive down to get from P to W?
11. Questions may not be factually correct. Do not allow external information to influence your answer. Answer the question based only on the information given in the most 'obvious' or 'logical' way.
12. In the English paper, the answer may not be immediately obvious. Use the techniques given in 4. Try logic and deduction, but don't forget intuition - if you think it is right, then it probably is!
13. When it says that 'You may write in any way that you wish.' You could write a poem, song, newspaper article, TV news item etc. Beware; in general, quality is better than quantity. The writing could also be serious, humorous or satirical. If you draw upon experiences which may be alien or unfamiliar to an Australian reader, a few words of explanation may be required. Make your writing interesting, not only describe or explain what you see, say and emotionally feel but also hear, smell, touch and sense!
14. DO NOT write about the scholarship test! Often with topics like 'I succeeded - at last!' or '5 minutes to go', students will write about sitting the test. DON'T, everyone else will. Use your imagination and write about something else!