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Hey everyone, Alexis Avila, Prepped & Polished, LLC here at South Natick, Massachusetts, and Happy New Year. It's 2013. There have been some changes to the SSAT, the private school admissions test as of late. I'm going to let you know about five of these changes.

The first change is the SSAT test now has the elementary level test for students currently in third and fourth grade. Basically, the elementary level test is an abbreviated version of the SSAT test. It has all the classic SSAT sections. You have the quantitative math section, verbal section, which consists of synonyms and analogies, the reading comprehension section, which is basically 7 passages each with 4 questions, and then you'll have a writing section, which is basically a 15 minute section of a student is shown a picture and then asked to tell a story with a beginning, a middle, and end about what happened in the picture. The writing section, of course, is not officially scored, but sent right to private schools.

Change number two is SSAT has officially renamed what was previously known as the Lower Level Test to the SSAT Middle Level Test. If you are currently in grades 5th, 6th, and 7th grade, you will take the SSAT Middle Level Test. If you are currently in grades 8th through 11th grade, you will take the SSAT Upper Level Test as always.

Change number 3 is now 100% of the test questions on the SSAT will be written by independent and private school teachers rather than the corporate test writing service to write the questions. The SSAT basically wants these questions to adequately depict the material found in independent and private schools.

Change number four to the SSAT is now the SSAT will incorporate an experimental section, but it does not count towards the student score. It's kind of similar to the SAT test that you find in high school, but in this case, you'll get 16 extra questions that the SSAT will analyze to determine if they're relevant for future tests.

Change number five to the SSAT is in the writing section for Middle Level and Upper Level test takers. So if you're taking the Middle Level SSAT test, you will be presented with two creative prompts, and you chose to write one. If you are going to take the Upper Level SSAT test, you will be presented with a creative prompt and an essay prompt and choose one. If you need some examples on types of creative prompts that they might present you, I highly encourage you to go to the SSAT.org website and order the official SSAT Study Guide. Just look around that website to see if you can get some free information.

If you have further questions, feel free to email me at alexis@preppedandpolished.com. I wish you good luck on the SSAT. I will talk to you soon.