



Prepped & Polished, LLC

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Hi. I'm Terri from Prepped and Polished in South Natick, Massachusetts. Today I'm going to share some tips with you on how to improve your reading comprehension score on the ISEE and the SSAT. Although both tests are very similar, there are some key differences on the reading comprehension component that could impact your score and perhaps influence which test you decide is best for you.

Let's talk about guessing. The ISEE has no penalty for guessing, which means that omitted questions and wrong answers are weighed the same. The number of correct answers becomes your raw score, and that's converted to your scaled score. So if a student has a strong inclination toward a certain answer, he or she can guess without fear. By contrast, the SSAT subtracts a quarter point for each incorrect answer. So a student has to be much more strategic about guessing.

Let's talk about the passages. The SSAT utilizes various passages from fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, whereas the ISEE, the reading's comprised of nonfiction only. So now I'm going to talk to you about your reading comprehension four-step strategy for success for either the ISEE or the SSAT. Step number one: Skim the questions first to focus on the information that you'll need. Step number two: Read the passages quickly to get the big picture. Why did the author write the passage? Be an active reader, and that means marking up the passage, making notes in the margin as you read, underlining main ideas, supporting ideas, word choices that are special, etc.

Step number three: Read the questions and answer choices. Do not spend more time on the passages than the questions. Spend about a minute per passage and a minute to a minute and a half per question. Focus on answering the questions, not studying or learning the text. Do not keep rereading portions that you don't understand.



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If you don't know the answer, go back to the passage. All the answers to reading questions can be found in or inferred from the passages. Use line references to help you locate information. All word-in-context questions send you back to line reference or a paragraph indicator. Cross out all the answers that you can eliminate. The answer choice must be both true and must be the best answer to that particular question.

Number four: Answer every question on the ISEE, even if you have to guess. On the SSAT, guess if you can eliminate one or two answer choices. Knowing what to expect on the ISEE and the SSAT is half the battle to gain confidence and get your best score possible.

One last tip: Familiarize yourself with the kind of questions that you'll find on either test, and it will make it much easier to handle the questions. Is it a main idea question? Is it a supporting idea or detail question? Is it an inference question? Is it a word context question? Does it have to do with tone or figurative language or maybe organization and logic? Knowing these different types of questions will help you to select the best answer. Well, I hope this information and tips will help you to get your best score possible. Good luck.