



## KEYSTONE TUTORS TUTORING & EDUCATION ADVISORY

### What is the UKiset and how can you prepare?

The UK Independent Schools' Entry Test (UKiset) is a computerised assessment designed for overseas students aged between 9 and 18 years old. Many UK independent schools require overseas students to take this test as part of their admissions process, as it serves as a pre-test to help schools identify the most suitable candidates. Most schools use the UKiset to assess a student's level of English and academic potential, before asking you to sit their own entry papers, but some schools offer places based solely on the UKiset results and school reports.

The test has 3 distinct parts and takes 2-2.5 hours to complete. We have outlined the structure of the test below as well as some tips on preparing for each section of the test.

#### 1. Reasoning (45 minutes)

The reasoning section of the exam is a computerised multiple-choice test. The questions are adaptive; questions are age appropriate, then they will get harder if the candidate gets the answer correct, and easier if they get it wrong.

This reasoning section takes 45 minutes and is split up into three parts:

- Verbal Reasoning: The ability to work with words and language.
- Non-Verbal Reasoning: Solving problems with shapes, pictures, patterns, logic.
- Mathematical Reasoning: Working with numbers, value, sequences.

The candidate receives a standardised score for each section and then an average score. The average score is 100 and the average score for students in UK independent schools is 111. Different schools will expect different scores.

#### Preparation tips:

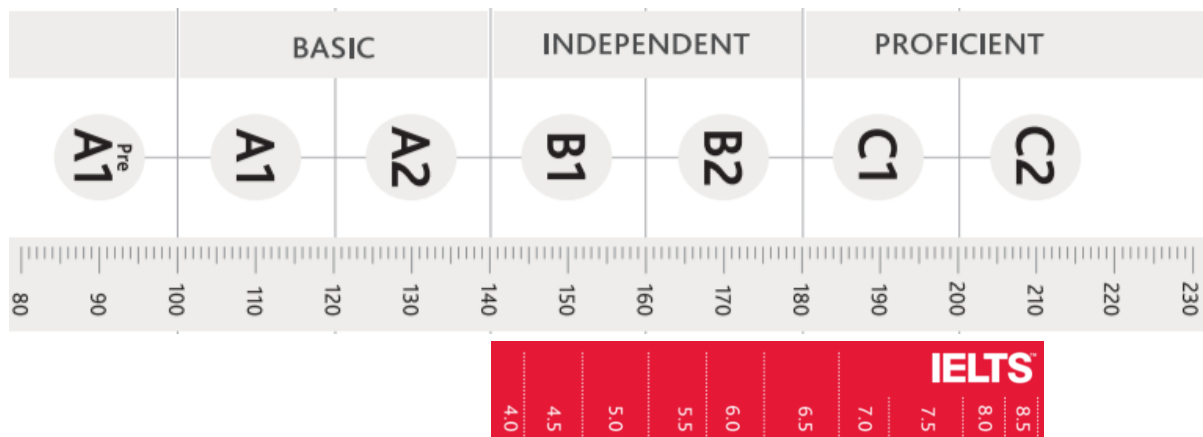
- *Online test practice:* Parents and students are often uncertain as to how to prepare for this section of the exam, as it assesses cognitive ability and logic rather than learned knowledge. It is most beneficial for students to familiarise themselves with the format of reasoning type questions. Although UKiset do not publish sample papers or past papers, there are many web-based tests which are available online, and we advise students to get to grips with it by undertaking a variety of computer-based practice tests. We recommend the following websites: [Keystone Tests](#), [Atom Learning](#), [Bofa](#) and [PreTest Plus](#).
- *Speed:* Students should answer questions as quickly as possible, and should practice working under time pressure to ensure they get through all of the questions.
- *Accuracy:* It is not possible to go back and review or change your answers for the computerised test, therefore it is important to not only be quick, but very careful when selecting the answer. Therefore, it is very helpful to practice as many question types as possible as familiarisation is key to understanding patterns and sequences more quickly. Keep practicing until you feel confident with all question types.



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### 2. Cambridge English Test (30 minutes)

The reading and listening section of the UKiset, which is based on the Cambridge English Test, and is an online multiple-choice test. The results of this section determine the student's English CEFR level, from A1 to C2 – an internationally recognised language level of academic English. The CEFR score is also aligned with the IELTS score as per the diagram below.



#### Preparation tips:

- *Practice papers:* Students can familiarise themselves with the format and layout of the reading and listening test using the [free online practice tests](#) provided by Cambridge.
- *Reading practice:* We encourage students to cultivate a reading habit and to be exposed to all kinds of texts which will naturally expand their vocabulary and comprehension skills. Reading age-appropriate books, stories, news articles, blogs, can also help a student gain more insight into different writing styles.
- *Listening practice:* We recommend that students explore audiobooks, watch the news, educational documentaries, or age-appropriate [TED talks](#) which can help improve their listening and understanding of English.

### 3. English essay (30 minutes)

Students are required to write a short, hand-written essay for the final section of the UKiset. An essay question is provided to the student on the day of the exam – there are no options to choose from. The topic is age appropriate, and aims to assess the student's English proficiency, and their ability to express thoughts and language skills in written English. Usually, these topics are open ended and allow for discussion – they are looking for a well-reasoned response using opinion backed up with evidence. Students may be asked to describe an experience, a feeling or a person. They may be required to present an argument where they compare or contrast, and discuss. Based on what the question is asking, students must present their thoughts and ideas clearly.



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Sample essay titles:

- Describe your ideal weekend
- Describe your favourite place, why is it your favourite place
- Do you think mobile phones were a good invention?
- Schools shouldn't set homework. Do you think this is a fair statement?
- If you were the Head Teacher at your school, what would you change and why?
- "My worst day" – write about your worst day.
- If you suddenly had £1million, what would you do with it and why?
- Children should be allowed to choose their own bedtime. Do you agree?

Preparation tips:

- *Structure:* The first step to tackling the essay is to spend at least 5 minutes planning and brainstorming ideas, before putting pen to paper. This is usually done in bullet point form, listing points and ideas for each paragraph of the essay. An essay must have paragraphs and include an introduction, argument (2-3 paragraphs) and finally a conclusion.
- *Content:* Underline the key words in the question to ensure that you have understood what it is asking, and to check that the points and ideas you include in the essay are relevant to the topic. Marks are likely to be awarded for a clear and logical argument which is consistently relevant to the task and communicated with a wide range of vocabulary and expression.
- *Spelling and Grammar:* Be careful with spelling and grammar, as this is the easiest way to lose marks due to silly errors. Keep an eye on the clock and always leave at least 5 minutes to read through your work before submitting it!
- *Handwriting:* This part of the test is hand-written, therefore you must remember to keep your handwriting neat and tidy so that it is legible to the marker.

### UKiset FAQs

How do I register for the UKiset?

You need to register directly via the UKiset [website](#). You will be asked for your child's personal details and a photograph. You need to pay a one-off fee of £295 to successfully register, which includes registration, test date arrangement, invigilation, and sending of results.

Do I have to select schools during the UKiset registration?

No. You can leave the school selection empty and add up to 5 schools at a later date once the test has been taken. If you are unsure of which schools you are applying for, do leave it blank – if you list schools the test results are automatically sent to them.



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### Where can we take the UKiset?

There are many authorised test centres and when you register you can express an interest in a specific test centre, or you will be allocated one based on your location. Some schools will specify where the test should be taken so do check with them – this is often a British Council and as such, selecting a local British Council is often a good default choice. The Keystone offices in Hong Kong and Singapore are registered UKiset test centres.

### When and how will we receive the UKiset results?

The results are usually sent within 2-3 working days. A parent report is sent to the email address that was provided during registration. The report outlines the average scores and gives an overview of the performance. Schools receive a more detailed analysis of the results and there is more information [here](#).

### Can you re-take the UKiset?

Students can take the UKiset once every 6 months. Make sure you know when the results are required by the schools and plan well in advance.

### How can Keystone help?

We have a number of excellent, experienced tutors who can help with UKiset preparation. UKiset is one of several types of computerised pre-tests used by schools. You can read more about other computerised pre-tests [here](#). For more details, please call the office for a chat with one of our client managers, or contact us via [enquiries@keystonetutors.com](mailto:enquiries@keystonetutors.com).