

**Other useful resources:**

Table-Top Tips 1, 2 and 3

Genre Leaflets for KS2

Writing Prompts and Targets to Support Independent Writing

Prompts for Responding to Text

[www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/nationalstrategy/literacy](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/nationalstrategy/literacy)



# Top Tips for Tests Or Survival Strategies for the English SATs



# How to Tackle Tests

What are your English SATs for?

Well... your teacher might tell you that they are to see what level you are, or so that people can see what a good school you go to.

**WRONG!!**

**The SATs are for SHOWING OFF!**

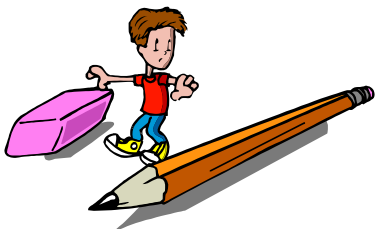
Yes, yes, we all know that teachers and parents are forever telling you to stop showing off - but this is the one occasion when you can...

**SHOW OFF** what a good reader you are!

**SHOW OFF** what a good writer you are!

## General tips:

- Stay calm. You and your teachers already know what you're good at and the teachers at your new school will soon know, too. The test results add to that information—they do not replace it.
- Read all the questions carefully and ask yourself, *'What exactly is it they want me to do?'*
- Imagine someone you would really like to impress. Answer the questions in the reading test and write something in the writing test to impress that person!
- Have you got your lucky pencil, pen, ruler and eraser?



# Tips for the Writing Test

Narrative writing: Give clues to character through:

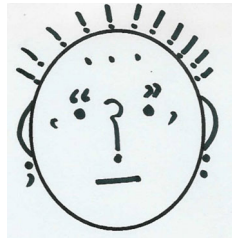
**Action:** *'Sam slammed his school bag on the floor.'*

**Dialogue:** *'I hate Mondays!' bellowed the head teacher.*

**Description:** *'Wiping a grubby hand across his flushed pink cheeks, ...'*

- Plan how, and where, your story will end so that you can work the plot towards this.
- Weave the setting through the action:  
*'A twig snapped, an owl hooted and the moon cast eerie shadows on the frightened children.  
'Billy's mum was clattering about in her messy kitchen as he crept silently through the front door.'*
- Non-fiction: Use the prompts on the paper to help you organise your paragraphs.
- Quickly jot down the main idea of each paragraph, e.g. general introduction; appearance; characteristics; habitat; diet; behaviour or what ever is appropriate for the subject.
- Don't agonise over spelling—so long as the marker can read what you have written. It's much better to have a go at a really good word than to play safe with a boring one.
- Don't be afraid to edit—add in a good adjective or adverb, change a noun or verb to make it more precise or powerful.
- In all types of writing, vary your sentence types—simple, compound and complex. e.g. *'The door creaked open. A cold draught and a whisp of mist slid into the room. Shivering with fright, Rosie huddled beneath her duvet.'*

## Tips for the Writing Test



- Design your own 'Punctuation Face'. Using all of the punctuation marks, practise drawing a face until you can do it in 20 seconds. Quickly sketch your face before you write and think of ways in which you can use each type of punctuation effectively.
- Plan. Use the back of the sheet to draw your own planning framework: e.g. Story Mountain, Spidergram; Flowchart etc. Note down the main events or ideas on your framework.
- Get stuck in! Don't spend too much time on the opening. Get into the main section/s and remember that these should form the biggest part of your piece of writing.
- Prompts. Use the advice provided on the planning sheet provided. Could each bullet point or question provide the main idea for each paragraph?
- Vary your sentence openers:  
*'ed' words—'Exhausted from the race, ...*  
*'ing' words—'Smiling to herself, she ...*  
*simile—'As quick as a flash, the strange man ...*
- If you get to the 'I don't know what to write next' stage,



- read aloud (under your breath) your writing so far;
- look back at your plan and tick off the sections you have already done.
- imagine it as the next scene in a film or ask yourself, 'What else would someone like to know about ...?'
- Read what you have written under your breath. It's easier to spot missing words and punctuation that way.

## Other Helpful Hints

### Sleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeep!

Going to bed late makes you dozy. Dozy pupils find tests extra difficult because they keep nodding off—and the snoring is very irritating for other pupils! For the week or two before your SATs, go to bed . . . . .

**BEFORE YOUR PARENTS!!!**



**Eat!** Everyone thought Granny was daft when she said some foods were good for the brain. Well, don't tell anyone, but she was right. (Shhhh!) Breakfast *is* especially good for the brain—Weetypops and a banana won't need much chewing — go on, you can do it!



**Fresh air!** If you are allowed to walk to school, do it. Go out at playtime and have a run around. Silly fact: Filling your brain with air makes it work better!



**Water.** You know what happens to a pot plant when it's not watered, don't you? Well, if you don't keep your liquid levels up, you will get all floppy and limp too! Get into the habit of sipping water throughout the day. Water helps to keep you alert and bright. But . . don't wait until SAT's week to start drinking more water as your body will not be used to it and . . . well . . . let's just say you'll know the route to the school loo like the back of your hand!



## Tips for the Reading test

- RELAX. Pretend you are reading for fun. If you try to remember everything, nothing will go in.
- Skim quickly over the reading booklet to get the gist of what topics are covered.
- Read through each section—if you want to, you could underline any key words, facts and figures to help you find them quickly if needed. BUT, don't interrupt the flow of reading to do this.
- Use all the reading time available to really know your way around the booklet. That way, you can go straight to the appropriate part when you are answering the questions.
- You will need an imaginary friend for this! Sit back, close your eyes and in your mind quickly tell your imaginary friend what you have read. 'The first text was about .... who.....when.....then.....in the end.' 'The second text was all about ...' etc. Do not spend more than a minute doing this.
- You will notice that each question is worth either 1, 2 or 3 marks.
- **Short answers:** Some questions are followed by a short line or box. You need only write a word or phrase as your answer.
- **Answers on a few lines:** This means you are expected to write more words or one or two sentences.
- **Answers in a large box:** This is space for you to give a more detailed answer and room to explain your answer. You can write in full sentences if you want to.
- **Answers with no writing:** Some answers just need you to tick, draw lines or draw a circle around one option.



## Tips for the Reading Test

The **PEE** prompt can help you answer the 2 and 3 mark questions.

1. **P**—make your **P**oint.
2. **E**—find **E**vidence in the text to support your answer.
3. **E**—**E**xplain or **E**laborate upon your answer.

Reading response stems for:

### Text structure:

*The author has organised the text so that . . .*

*The bullet points make it easy to . . .*

*The diagrams make the text easier to understand because . . .*

### Viewpoint:

*The author wants me to think/feel . . .*

*I think the author believes . . .*

### Author intent:

*The author uses this phrase to give the impression that . . .*

*The author wants me to think that . . .*

### Language effects:

*The effect of the phrase is to make the reader feel . . .*

*It makes me imagine . . .*

*The words sound like . . .*

- Work as quickly as you can through the easier, 1 mark questions, leaving more time for the challenging ones.

