CAMBRIDGE

Presidential Schools Grade 5 Selection Test

Thinking Skills Test Specification

Transforming societies
through **education**

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1. Presidential Schools of Uzbekistan

The Agency for Presidential Educational Institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan (PIIMA) has established 14 Presidential Schools across Uzbekistan to provide young people with a world-class secondary education.

These Presidential Schools aim to “prepare the next generation of leaders to actively and positively contribute to the development of Uzbekistan”.

The PIIMA Presidential Schools programme aims to “support and encourage gifted youth” and produce an “intellectually-developed generation.”

The main priorities of Presidential Schools include:

- Selecting and educating gifted children, creating conditions for their full development
- Promoting in-depth study of sciences, foreign languages, engineering and information technologies
- Establishing modern methods of teaching and assessing students’ knowledge
- Developing students’ leadership, public speaking, critical thinking and analysis skills
- Ensuring student participation in international Olympiads and competitions
- Establishing cooperation with national and international education institutions

To support the aims of the Presidential Schools, a competitive admissions test has been designed by Cambridge University Press and Assessment.

2. Structure of the admissions test process

The admissions test comprises two stages. The pre-selection test of Mathematics and the main selection test of English Language, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking. Together, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking are referred to as “Thinking Skills”.

Candidates in each region who achieve the highest scores in the pre-selection test will progress to the main selection test. The tests of Mathematics and Thinking Skills are available in three languages: Uzbek, Karakalpak and English.

3. Purpose of the selection test

The purpose of the selection test is to allocate places in the Presidential Schools fairly, objectively and impartially to the most able candidates from each region. These candidates will be those who are most able to fulfil the aims of the Presidential Schools of Uzbekistan.

4. Benefits of Thinking Skills in admissions tests

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking are cross-discipline and subject-agnostic. Research has shown that performance in thinking skills assessments correlates with future academic success. Students who do well in effective thinking skills assessments are more likely to succeed in future academic study.

As there is no curriculum or subject content for thinking skills assessments, it is not possible to prepare for them through intensive study as with other assessments.

The skills tested in Problem Solving and Critical Thinking questions are skills that are beneficial across a range of subjects, from evaluating evidence in history, to finding the route to a solution in mathematics.

5. Structure of the Thinking Skills test

The Thinking Skills test consists of one 90-minute paper.

The paper contains 40 multiple-choice questions. All questions are worth one mark.

Each question has four options from which candidates select one option. Candidates record their answers on a separate answer sheet. After the test the answer sheet is scanned to enter the marks onto an electronic system.

There is no penalty for incorrect answers, so candidates are advised to answer all the questions in the paper.

The test comprises questions that assess **Problem Solving** and **Critical Thinking**. Problem Solving questions test candidates' ability to organise and evaluate information to find a solution to an unfamiliar problem. Critical Thinking questions test candidates' ability to evaluate arguments.

There are 24 Problem Solving questions and 16 Critical Thinking questions in each test. The categories of Problem Solving questions are:

- Identifying Similarity
- Finding Procedures
- Relevant Selection

The categories of Critical Thinking questions are:

- Evaluating Evidence
- Evaluating Reasoning
- Identifying Mistakes
- Logical Analysis

There is a similar proportion of each category of question for both Problem Solving and Critical Thinking in the test.

Examples of each of these question types are given in Sections 7 and 8.

6. Subject content

As previously stated, the Thinking Skills test is subject-agnostic. Therefore, there is no curriculum or subject content. This is by design and has wide benefits.

To help test-takers and other stakeholders understand the style of questions that will be in the test, we have included an example of each question type in this document.

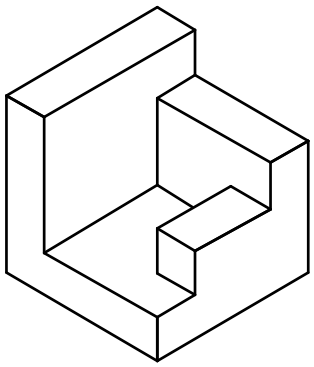
7. Sample questions – Problem Solving

Identifying similarity

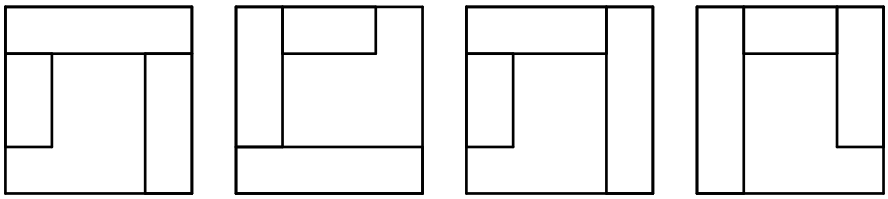
Information or data will be represented in more than one way (including charts, tables, rotations, reflections, etc.). Candidates will need to recognise logical relationships and identify any similarity in the data they represent.

Example

One piece of a toy is shown below.



Which one of the following shows a view of the piece from above?



Correct answer: **B**

Finding procedures

Candidates must use the information presented to find the method or procedure to reach the correct solution.

Example

Kumush has 5 hours of work to complete. She has decided she will take a 10-minute break every time she has worked continuously for 90 minutes. She will not take any other breaks. She starts work at 8:15 in the morning.

At what time does she finish her work?

A 13:15

B 13:25

C 13:35

D 13:45

Correct answer: **D**

Relevant Selection

Candidates are presented with information, often in the form of a table, graph, or chart, and must select the information relevant to solve the problem given.

Example

Five contestants took part in a quiz.

There were 3 rounds of questions, with 10 questions in each round.

In round 1, each correct answer scored 1 point.

In round 2, each correct answer scored 3 points.

In round 3, each correct answer scored 5 points.

Feruza was the winner with a total of 60 points, despite answering fewer questions correctly than any of the other contestants.

The results are shown in the table below.

	Points scored			Total score
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	
Feruza	5	15	40	60
Jasur	6	21	30	57
Nargiza	8	18	30	56
Sardor	6	24	25	55
Umid	8	15	30	53

Who answered the greatest number of questions correctly?

A Jasur

B Nargiza

C Sardor

D Umid

Correct answer: **B**

8. Sample questions – Critical Thinking

Evaluating evidence

A simple claim being made by a named character, which would be further supported by one of four pieces of information. Candidates must determine which one.

Example

Kamola is talking to a friend who is going on an activity holiday next week. She says: “If you get the opportunity, you should try playing a sport you have never played before.”

Which one of these statements, if true, best supports Kamola’s advice?

A Sports are a good way to develop fitness.

B Different people have different favourite sports.

C People on the activity holiday often choose a different activity each day.

D Playing new sports allows you to develop a wider range of skills.

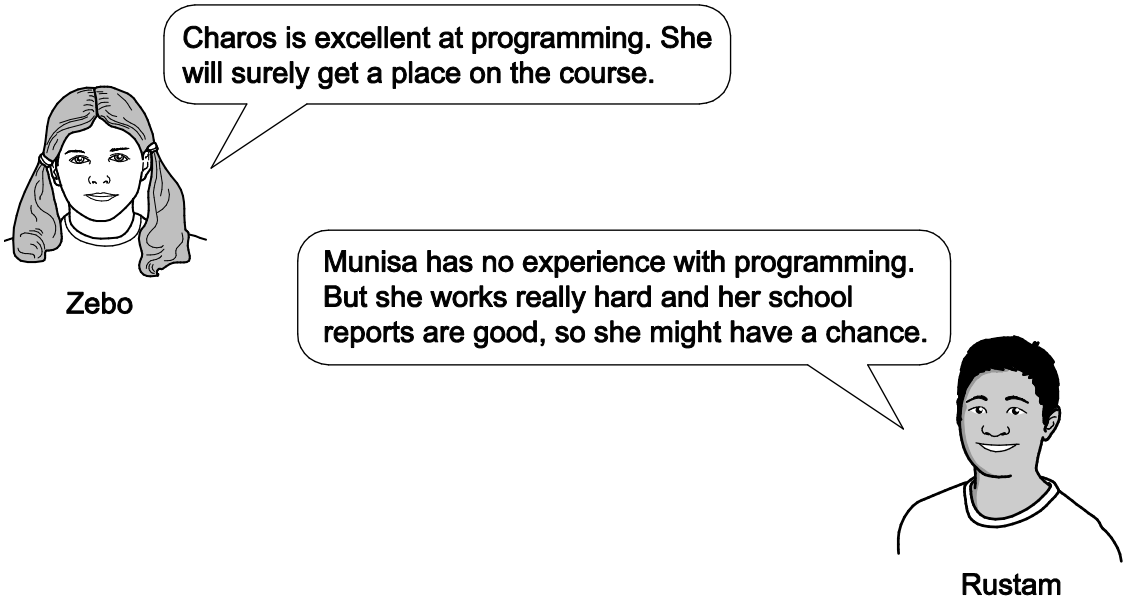
Correct answer: **D**

Evaluating reasoning

A short statement from which two named characters attempt to make valid deductions. Candidates must determine which of the inferences is valid.

Example

The new computer programming course at the university is very popular. They receive a lot of applications. As a result, only people who are already good at computer programming are considered for a place.



Who is right?

A Zebo only

B Rustam only

C Both Zebo and Rustam

D Neither Zebo nor Rustam

Correct answer: **D**

Identifying mistakes

One or two short statements, followed by a claim from a named character which includes or implies an invalid deduction from those statements. Candidates must choose the best description of the mistake the speaker has made from four options.

Example

Which one of the following statements shows the mistake that Said has made?

A Javlon's team may not contain many skilful players.

B Having a poor team spirit may be enough to cause a team to lose.

C The team Javlon's side are due to play against are the strongest in the league.

D The team which won the league last year had a poor team spirit.

Correct answer: **B**

Logical analysis

Logical puzzles, which require candidates to reason about the truth values of a small number of simple statements or make deductions from information presented.

Example

In a competition five people had to solve as many puzzles as they could in 30 minutes.

- Maftuna solved more puzzles than Azamat, but fewer puzzles than Dildora.
- Nozima solved more puzzles than Komil, but fewer puzzles than Dildora.
- Three people solved more puzzles than Nozima.
- No one solved the same number of puzzles as anyone else.

Who solved the third largest number of puzzles?

A Komil

B Azamat

C Dildora

D Maftuna

Correct answer: **B**

9. Rules for selecting candidates for admission

Scores in the Selection Test determine the 24 applicants in each region who will be admitted to a Presidential School.

The Selection Test consists of two papers: the test of Thinking Skills and the test of English. 40 questions assess candidates' thinking skills and 40 questions assess their English language skills. However, in view of the importance of well-developed thinking skills as a predictor of academic success, candidates' scores for the Thinking Skills paper are doubled to give a maximum possible of 80 marks.

Although 40 questions are likewise needed to reliably measure candidates' English language skills, this part of the test is less crucial as a predictor of academic success, so candidates' scores for English are halved to give a maximum possible of 20 marks.

The maximum 'weighted' scores of 80 for Thinking Skills and 20 for English combine to give a practical, easy to use maximum score of 100 for the Selection Test as a whole.

This score out of 100 is used to rank candidates in descending order. The top 24 candidates in each region are awarded a place in the Presidential School in their region. Where there are tied scores around 24th place in the rank order, preference is given to the candidate with the highest score for Thinking Skills and, if still tied, with the highest score on the following components in the following order of priority:

1. The score on the problem solving component in Thinking Skills.
2. (If still tied) the score on the critical thinking component in Thinking Skills.
3. (If still tied) the score on the reading component in English.
4. (If still tied) the score on the grammar component in English.

If candidates' scores are still tied, the younger candidate will be ranked higher.

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