

Study tips and resources list for competitive middle and high school admissions

Best study materials for SHSAT

- Official DOE practice tests and information about the changes in 2017:

Note: Some of these test booklets, though labelled for different years, contain the same practice tests:

2008-2009 = 2009-2010 = 2010-2011

2011-2012 = 2012-2013

2013-2014 = 2014-2015 = 2015-2016

2016-2017 is mostly recycled material with only 2 new reading passages and 1 new math question out of 190 questions.

- Argo Brothers SHSAT
- [Violetta Dubinana's "Practice Math Tests for New York City SHSAT Vol 1 and 2](#)
- Barron's SHSAT
- Cracking the New York City SHSAT (3rd Edition) from The Princeton Review (expected date of publication May 2018)

SHSAT strategy observations

Best study materials for ISEE

- What to Expect on the ISEE - guide to the ISEE with 1 full practice test + a few pages of sample questions for each section of exam. Free to download, or purchase as a booklet \$20 [here](#)

- The Princeton Review Cracking the ISEE and SSAT - for math basics, excellent Verbal chapter for both ISEE and SSAT
- Ivy Global ISEE Guides: ISEE English, ISEE Math, ISEE ML Tests, ISEE UL Tests
- Barron's SSAT/ISEE - good for math chapter

Best study materials for SSAT

- General information about the SSAT
- Official SSAT Test Guide (with 2 practice tests + sample questions) \$35
- Official SSAT online practice test and drills
- The Princeton Review Cracking the ISEE and SSAT - for math basics, excellent Verbal chapter for both ISEE and SSAT
- Ivy Global SSAT Guides: SSAT English, SSAT Math, SSAT Practice Tests
- Barron's SSAT/ISEE - good for math chapter

Other admissions-test-score dependent public middle and high schools in NYC

- **Hunter College High School** Admissions info
- **The Anderson School 6th Grade** Admissions info
- **NEST+M Middle School** Admissions info
- **LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts** Auditions information

Best study materials for COOP, HSPT, TACHS (Catholic school entrance exams)

- Barron's COOP/HSPT/TACHS - has lessons and 2 practice tests/exam type
- Peterson's Master the Catholic High School Entrance Exams

- RedwoodPrep's HSPT Preparation Manual - has 3 practice exams, lots of drills, all HSPT

Best study materials for NYS ELA and Math tests

- Official NYS released questions and scored answers: start here
- Practice tests published by the same test makers, available on Amazon from 3rd party sellers or create an account and order directly from Curriculum Associates

engageny.org

This is the official site for published materials from previous tests. It is a little confusing to navigate, as much of the site is geared to educators. But here are some useful links within it:

- Released 2016 grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics State Test Questions
- Released 2015 grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics State Test Questions
- Annotated gr 3-8 ELA and Mathematics State Test questions 2013-2014

test prep books and study materials:

Common Core Math Workbook: Grade 4: Multiple Choice, Daily Math Practice by Argo Brothers

How to build vocabulary and reading comprehension skills:

Why? Vocabulary is not specifically tested on the SHSAT or NYS ELA tests as it is on ISEE and SSAT, but knowledge informs Reading Comprehension and ELA questions. Students cannot cram, so make this a long-term project:

- Read [challenging and diverse materials](#), starting with [The New York Times daily](#) (front page and a variety of articles every day, 10 minutes daily) for older students, easier newspapers for younger ones. Look up a few words that are new each time and start a [Quizlet.com folder](#) to review and practice them.
- Put your own, simplified definitions into your [Quizlet.com](#) cards and include a sentence that uses the word in a way that gives you an indication of the meaning. Do not bother with writing parts of speech or tertiary, archaic definitions. Use [oxforddictionaries.com](#) for your dictionary; many others are funky.
- Supplement with reading of other online publications (online because its most convenient and easier to look up new vocabulary): [Vanity Fair](#), [New Yorker Magazine](#), [National Geographic](#), [Smithsonian](#), [Wired](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#) for older students. For less advanced readers, try USA Today. For younger students, Time for Kids, Ranger Rick and popular newspapers such as [Metro](#) are good places to start.
- Download the vocabulary app [Visual Vocab](#) and master the 50 word starter set. Then buy the next set and work on those words in free time in between classes, at the bus stop, etc. Aim to master 2 words/day every day!

Links to aids for building vocabulary and critical reading skills for all these tests:

- Visual Vocab app - terrific tool! Use it on the go, in-between times, really helps solidify vocabulary learning with audiovisual components, quizzes, lists. First 50 word app is free.

Additional extension apps for ISEE, SSAT, SAT-Pro, SAT-Epic (\$5 each - totally worth it!)

- Quizlet.com - free app that every student MUST have on his or her cellphone and computer. Set up own folders and make flashcards or use sets from class or others.
- Oxford Dictionaries - the best online dictionary, imo, with solid, clear and concise definitions and useful examples of the words in a phrase or sentence. No weird, sketchy definitions like on dictionary.com. Pronunciation feature is a plus, too.
- Sadlier Vocabulary Workshop series - terrific classic vocabulary workbook series for all grades, incorporating fiction, history, assorted drills and extras that make vocabulary learning engaging.

Great challenging periodicals for middle school students and above:

New York Times (20 articles free/month with registration, otherwise \$15/month to subscribe)

The New York Times for students (The Learning Network)

Smithsonian Magazine (free)

National Geographic Magazine (one free article /month or \$12/year to subscribe)

Time Magazine

Popular Mechanics