

Sixth Form Entrance Tests Advice Sheet

The following information is designed to help you understand what is expected in the Entrance Tests for entrance to City of London School in September 2024. We hope you find the advice helpful.

Mathematics

There will be one examination paper lasting 45 minutes in which calculators are not allowed and no formula sheet is included. The exam will be based on the following topics:

- Percentages
- Indices and surds
- Manipulating algebraic expressions, including algebraic fractions and rearranging formulae
- Solving linear and quadratic equations
- Solving simultaneous linear and non-linear equations
- Co-ordinate geometry, the equations of linear graphs and circles, together with their tangent lines
- Pythagoras and trigonometry applied to right-angled triangles

English Literature

The examination consists of a comparison of two unseen poems. We are looking for applicants who can show the ability to read the poems closely and intelligently, who can provide a focused response to the set question. The response must reveal, through apt use of quotations and analysis thereof, close engagement with the poems. We set a high store on analytical ability, which a candidate will demonstrate by, of course, an awareness of theme and, above all, a sensitive response to nuance, subtext, perspective and authorial intention. You should guard against vague waffle with little reference to textual specifics.

Physics

Questions are GCSE based and cover a range of topics. You are not expected to achieve the maximum mark possible on the test paper, as it is possible that you may not have studied a topic yet, but to answer a fair number of questions correctly and logically. Candidates will not be given formula sheets.

Chemistry

Questions will be set on the following GCSE topics:

- Organic chemistry: alkanes and alkenes (chapters 22-25) NOT alcohols, carboxylic acids, esters or polymers.
- Energy changes in reactions (chapter 19).
- Atomic structure (chapters 3 and 4).
- Chemical bonding and structure (chapters 7-9).
- Formulae, equations and chemical calculations (chapters 5 and 6).
- Reactions of groups 1 and 7 (chapters 11 and 12).
- Rates of reaction (chapter 20).

Chapter numbers refer to the textbook 'Edexcel IGCSE (9-1) Chemistry' by Clark, Owen and Yu, ISBN 9780435185169, but any quality IGCSE/GCSE textbook should cover these topics

Biology

Questions which are designed to test a candidate's understanding of the practical aspects of the subject. Generally, candidates will be presented with data relating to a particular biological process (e.g. respiration or photosynthesis) and asked to use their knowledge to explain any apparent trends. The questions will often expect some data handling (e.g. calculating means and drawing a graph) and might also ask a candidate to describe limitations of and/or improvements to the experiment carried out to collect the data. Candidates may also be asked to design an experiment, having been given an observation or the outline of a problem to be investigated.

It is expected that the candidate will have a good working knowledge of the subject up to GCSE level, but questions which depend solely upon factual recall will not be in the majority.

French

The examination will require the candidates to write an essay or a letter or an article of around 150 words in French on one of the following topics from a choice of two:

- *La vie au collège*
- *Ma maison, la routine quotidienne et la vie en famille*
- *Ma ville et mon quartier*
- *Le temps libre*

Candidates should ensure that they are familiar with a wide range of topic vocabulary and the more complex grammatical structures encountered at IGCSE. This should include:

- present tense for habitual actions
- constructions with *depuis* or *ça fait... que*
- perfect tense of regular, irregular and reflexive verbs
- imperfect tense of regular and irregular verbs
- future tense (simple and near)
- conditional tense
- negatives (*ne... pas, ne... rien, ne... jamais, ne... plus*)
- comparatives
- 'si' clauses
- relative pronouns (*qui, que, ce qui, ce que*)
- *après avoir / être + past participle*
- *avant de + infinitive*
- connectors and personal opinion phrases

28 marks are available and will be awarded for:

- Completing all tasks
- Giving detailed information, opinions/reactions and explanations
- Focused and wholly relevant writing
- Extended, well-linked sentences used frequently
- A wide range of simple and complex structures used to produce sentences of varying length
- A wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the task
- Accurate spelling and grammar

German

The examination will consist of three questions. The first question is a grammar exercise on the use of the subordinate clause. This is followed by some sentences to translate from English into German and by a short essay (150 words).

Candidates should focus on the revision of the higher level of grammatical constructions and vocabulary needed at GCSE.

The exam will test the candidate's ability to manipulate word order in subordinate clauses, to translate from English into German and to write an essay in German which is accurate and covers the information asked for by the question.

Spanish

The examination will consist of 2 questions. The first will test the candidate's ability to write in continuous prose in Spanish on a topic commonly encountered at GCSE. The second will require a candidate to display his knowledge of a variety of grammatical constructions by translating sentences from English into Spanish.

For question one candidates are advised to revise a variety of common GCSE topics and to ensure that they use a variety of tenses and vocabulary in their answer. For question two candidates are advised to revise the

following grammatical points:

- *desde hace* constructions
- object pronouns
- comparatives
- the use of *gustar* and verbs like it
- use of the neuter pronoun *lo*
- the formation and use of the present, future, preterite, perfect and imperfect tenses.

The exam will test the candidate's ability to write accurate and varied Spanish and to manipulate more complex grammatical structures.

Mandarin

Mandarin follows the CIE IGCSE syllabus. For the reading and writing, the questions are in Chinese characters and requires candidates to write answers in Chinese characters. An English translation is not provided for the written questions.

Topics cover School and Shopping. Candidates are required to be familiar with the past and future tense and know how to create sentences. They should also be able to recognise question words written in Chinese characters (essential for the writing task).

Russian

The examination will consist of 2 parts. The first part will be a translation into Russian of short sentences in English. The level of vocabulary required will be no higher than that necessary to achieve a high grade at GCSE. Candidates will be expected, though, to have learnt basic verbs in all tenses, and to know basic case endings. The second part will be a translation into English of a short text in Russian. Again, the text will be comparable in difficulty to those used for the harder questions in a typical GCSE Reading Comprehension paper.

Candidates are advised to focus principally on revision of the higher level of grammatical constructions met at GCSE.

Geography

The geography assessment will compose of two parts. A point marked question assessing your ability to interpret data and a discursive essay assessing your quality of argument. This year's essay will consider the threat of climate change. It is anticipated that candidates will have sufficient knowledge from their own GCSE studies to be able to answer these questions.

History

The examination will consist of 2 questions. The first will test the candidate's ability to analyse a historical source. The second will require them to apply their knowledge of topics studied at GCSE to consider the causes or consequences of an event.

Candidates are advised to revise two or three of the major topics they have studied at GCSE. The questions are designed to allow them to draw on a wide variety of topics. This is an acknowledgement of wide variety of choices at GCSE.

The exam will test the candidate's ability to interpret sources, write with clarity and precision, provide substantiated analysis and handle historical concepts.

Politics

The examination requires no prior knowledge but an awareness of the current political climate and events might prove advantageous. Candidates should have good analytical skills and be prepared to take an interest in politics in the news and follow contemporary events prior to the course starting.

The exam will hinge around a politics related source.

Economics

The examination requires no specific prior knowledge or study of the subject. We expect candidates to have a good business awareness and logical thought together with an interest in business and economic news. There will be an economics-related data analysis question and a basic calculation question as the Economics A Level course does require logical thinking and some numerical calculations. A calculator is required.

Philosophy and Theology

The examination is designed to allow prospective students to demonstrate their knowledge of one religion or philosophical tradition they have studied and the responses of followers / adherents to contemporary issues. There is also the opportunity, via longer, more open questions, for candidates to demonstrate their ability to write essay-style answers in which they formulate an argument having examined different sides of a given problem or statement. The key skill for the essay is the ability to evaluate the logic of arguments given and raised. To prepare, students should look over the work that they have done for their Religious Studies GCSE, assuming they have taken the RS GCSE. Otherwise, students should read around philosophy and religion and be prepared to write about core existential and ethical arguments in an evaluative manner.

GCSE Religious Studies is not a requirement for the A level course. Candidates should think and read about some of the following topics and how religions and philosophical systems might respond to any issues which they raise: medical ethics, relationships between men and women, war and peace, racism, poverty, justice, human rights, humanist/atheistic arguments. In both sections of the paper, candidates are offered a choice of questions.

Drama

Candidates will be required to produce a written review of a piece of live OR digital/streamed theatre which they have seen in the last year. The review should highlight particular aspects of the production that they thought were effective and explain why. They should refer to as many elements of drama such as the acting, staging, lighting and costumes, as are relevant. Dramatic terminology learnt at GCSE level should be employed with confidence. References to contextual knowledge, the playwright's intentions, as well as the style and genre of the piece will be expected to be covered, as appropriate.

The examination will test the candidate's ability to analyse and evaluate live theatre, offering personal judgements, and to use subject specific dramatic terminology.

Classics

Latin

The examination has three questions. The first question will be based on a passage of Latin accompanied by a close translation. Candidates will be asked to answer questions on the style and content of the passage. Latin language skills will not be tested directly. The second question will be a language test. Candidates will be required to translate Latin sentences into English. The level of grammar and vocabulary will be appropriate for pupils who have just started the second year of the Latin GCSE course. The third question will require candidates to write a short essay on some aspect of Roman studies. The wording will be very broad, and no special preparation will be necessary. However, candidates would do well to review the work they have done for GCSE.

Classical Greek

The same as for Latin.

Classical Civilisation

The examination has three questions. The first question will be based on a passage of Latin or Greek literature in translation. Candidates will be required to answer questions on its style and content. The second question will be based on a material source. Candidates will be required to analyse the source for inferences on Classical life and culture. The third question will require candidates to write a short essay on some aspect of the study of the Classical world. The wording will be very broad, and no special preparation will be necessary. It is not necessary to have studied GCSE Classical Civilisation, although candidates who are sitting the examination can of course reflect upon the work they have done in Years 10 and 11.

Art

There will be one examination lasting approximately an hour and will require candidates to produce a large drawing on paper, based on a still life group consisting of a range of different objects and organised beforehand. Candidates will work in chalk and charcoal, and will be assessed on their ability to do the following:

- Create a unified drawing.
- Convey the characteristics of the various objects in terms of tone, surface pattern, shape, scale.
- Convey a sense of three-dimensional form.
- Show an understanding of the different positions in space of the various objects through overlapping, use of shadows, changes of scale.
- Make good/expressive use of the chalk and charcoal through blending/subtle gradation, contrasts of tone, varied use of line.

Candidates must bring a minimum of four pieces of work; this could include a sketchbook for us to look at. The work should demonstrate a range of skills and techniques.

Music

The examination will focus on their knowledge of musical historical periods as well as the repertoire they are currently learning/ playing. There will also be a traditional-style question testing their understanding of music theory.

At audition, candidates should be prepared to play two contrasting pieces on their first instrument and one on their second instrument or voice where appropriate. They will be given both sight-reading and aural tests and asked to talk about their contribution to musical activities in their current school and outside. They should also bring copies of the compositions they have produced in order to fulfil the GCSE course they are following. These should be presented in traditional music notation format.