

SPECIALIZED HIGH SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS TEST – UPDATE FOR FALL 2018 TEST

The Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) is the competitive, objective, and scholastic achievement examination used as the sole factor to determine admissions to New York City’s Specialized High Schools (with the exception of LaGuardia High School, for which admission is determined through audition). All current New York City residents in eighth grade or in ninth grade for the first time, and in public, private, and parochial schools who plan to apply to one of these Specialized High Schools must take the SHSAT. The SHSAT is administered in the fall for admission to Specialized High Schools in the following school year, so students seeking admission for September 2019 will take the test in fall 2018.¹

Test Design

In fall 2017, a variety of changes were introduced on the SHSAT in order to make it better aligned to the curriculum and instruction students experience in their classrooms on a daily basis. The overall design of the SHSAT will remain the same:

- Standard testing time of 180 minutes.²
- Two sections, English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, each composed of 57 items for a total of 114 items
 - 47 items in each section (94 total) are scored, with each question worth one raw score point
 - 10 items in each section are field test items, and are not used in determining a student’s score.
- ELA section is composed of all multiple-choice questions that, along with associated texts, assess revising/editing and reading comprehension skills.
- Mathematics section is composed of five grid-in questions and 52 multiple-choice questions that assess math skills in the domains of equations and expressions, geometry, number systems, ratio and proportional relationships, statistics and probability, and functions (ninth grade test only).
- SHSAT covers learning standards up through seventh grade for the eighth grade test, and up through eighth grade for the ninth grade test.
- Multiple-choice questions have 4 answer choices.

Updates to the English Language Arts Section

While the overall test design, including the types of test questions, remains the same as in 2017, two updates to the ELA section, which were previewed in last year’s [FAQ](#), will take effect beginning with the test to be administered in fall 2018 (there are no changes to the Mathematics section). Both of these updates are intended to strengthen the alignment of the SHSAT to the New York State learning standards that guide curriculum and instruction in New York City schools.

¹ Students who enter New York City after the fall 2018 SHSAT administration may take the test in August 2019 for September 2019 admission; this administration is only open to new entrants to the city.

² Students who have a testing accommodation of extended time through an IEP or 504 plan, and students who are English Language Learners, may receive up to double the standard testing time.

The two changes to the ELA section are as follows:

- Distribution of revising/editing items and reading comprehension items – there will be a shift in the distribution of the questions that assess these skills.

	Number of items in 2017	Number of items in 2018
Revising/Editing	20	9 to 11
Reading Comprehension	37	46 to 48

- Types of reading comprehension texts – in past years, all reading comprehension texts were informational texts. The fall 2018 test will include the following:
 - 3 to 4 informational texts that may include any of the subgenres³ students should have experience with in middle school; some of these texts may contain supporting visual and/or quantitative graphics
 - 1 to 2 literary prose texts, which may include any of the subgenres⁴ students should have experience with in middle school
 - 1 poem
 - Each text will have 6 to 10 questions associated with it.

Practice questions in both the [FAQ](#) from last year and the [2017-18 Specialized High Schools Student Handbook](#) are representative of the types that will be on the fall 2018 SHSAT, with the exception of literary text-based reading comprehension questions. The **2018-19 Specialized High Schools Student Handbook**, to be provided to schools and students in spring 2018, will contain two full length practice tests that will include literary texts. Prior to the publication of the new handbook, students can begin to prepare for these literary texts by diligently reading a wide range of grade-appropriate literary prose and poems both in and out of school and then reflecting upon the reading, discussing it with others, and/or writing about it.

Signing up for the Test

Students interested in learning more about taking the SHSAT should speak with their school counselor and be sure to pick up a *2018-19 Specialized High Schools Student Handbook* when it becomes available in the spring. In order to register for the test, students can speak to their counselor or a staff member at a Family Welcome Center during the registration period, which opens in September 2018 for next fall's test. Each student who registers for the SHSAT will be issued a Test Ticket, which will indicate the date, time, and location assigned to the student for testing. For more information about the Specialized High Schools, visit: schools.nyc.gov/SHS.

³ Informational text subgenres can include the following: exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts written for a broad audience.

⁴ Literary prose text subgenres can include the following: adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, or satire.