

[ATOM Learning FAQs](#)

Guidance for Parents (FAQs)

How do the online assessments work and what will be tested?

The assessments can be taken on any modern device (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet). It will cover the following subject components:

Adaptive assessment

- English - 20 minutes
- Verbal Reasoning - 10 minutes
- Maths - 20 minutes
- Non-Verbal Reasoning - 10 minutes

How long will the online assessments take and how will candidates manage their time?

The assessment itself will be sixty minutes long altogether - see the previous section for a breakdown. During the assessment, candidates will see a clock on their screen that will count down in minutes showing them how long they have left for each section. It will be visible but not so large as to distract them from their work.

Candidates will have a short break in the middle of the assessments.

What is the format of the online assessment? Is it adaptive or non-adaptive and what does this mean?

The majority of questions will be multiple choice with only a few questions requiring a pupil to type one word or number at most.

The assessment will be adaptive: this means questions will get harder or easier as a child moves through the assessment to ensure they are the right level for each individual. Therefore, pupils won't be able to skip or go back and change their answers to questions. **Please ensure your child understands that they won't be able to go back to previous questions, so that they shouldn't rush through too quickly and have too much time left at the end.** Adaptive assessment is a tried and tested method that yields reliable results.

Pupils will be permitted blank scrap paper and pencil in all subjects for any working out. All results will be age-standardised to ensure parity between candidates.

What about candidates eligible for extra time?

Parents are requested to send supporting documents for those candidates eligible for extra time. The additional time will automatically be added to the timer visible on their screen for each section of their assessment.

I would like to know more about the assessments. What can you tell me?

We recommend viewing the short familiarisation exercise to get a feel for the online format of the assessment:

<https://app.atomlearning.com/taster/mill-hill-school>

We hope the information below is helpful to learn a little more:

The tests assesses attainment against the taught English and Maths curriculum, but with opportunities to appropriately stretch and challenge through the style and depth of the questions asked. They also assesses potential ability through reasoning. These sections are adaptive - please see further above for an explanation.

Maths

Covers:

- Number and place value
- Addition and subtraction
- Multiplication and division
- Fractions, including decimals and percentages
- Properties of shape
- Measurement
- Statistics and data

In the first section of the maths paper, children will answer questions that assess their understanding of the concepts set out in the National Curriculum (as above). In the second section of the maths paper, children will answer 'Maths Challenge Style' questions. These questions assess their ability to reason and problem solve with curriculum concepts. They are more playful and capture a pupil's ability to adapt to the unexpected.

English

Covers:

- Comprehension
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar

Aligned with the National Curriculum, questions in the comprehension assessment focus on skills such as retrieval, drawing inferences and understanding the meaning of words in context. Your child will see a piece of text and be asked to answer questions about it. Candidates should not be thrown by vocabulary they do not know as one of the things we are assessing is the ability to infer meaning from context.

The Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar and Vocabulary questions assess a candidate's use and control of English, as outlined by the National Curriculum.

Non-Verbal Reasoning assesses your child's ability to identify patterns and think logically. This section is adaptive and will cover:

- Analysing visual information in order to problem solve
- Identifying and continuing patterns
- Visualising changes in 2D and 3D space

Verbal reasoning assesses your child's ability to reason and solve problems with written information. This section is adaptive and will cover:

- Advanced vocabulary and use of language
- Pattern spotting & making connections in order to identify rules
- Thinking critically and using logic to make high-level deductions

Why is the entry assessment going to be online? Will this not put candidates not used to typing at a disadvantage? What type of device will candidates use?

Many secondary schools are now running online assessments, which is becoming common practice. There is no extended typing exercise required so typing ability will not impact on results. Putting the assessment online significantly reduces the risk of human error, leading to results we can trust.

The entry assessment can be taken on many different types of devices including iPads, PCs, laptops and chrome books. The device used will not make any difference to a candidate's performance.

How much preparation does my child have to do for the entry assessment?

Candidates look at the familiarisation materials provided further above. Beyond that, our assessments will test knowledge based on the National Curriculum and candidates will need to know how to read an extended comprehension passage to answer questions on it. These are all skills that your child will be developing in school, so they will not need any special tuition or intensive practice. Instead, they are encouraged to read widely and engage in activities that inspire curiosity for the wider world.

Why is a new assessment process being introduced?

The new assessment is designed to discourage excessive tutoring and instead find a way to measure children's genuine intellectual curiosity, passion and enjoyment for learning. The assessment aims to go beyond testing cognitive ability by seeking to discover a child's potential in creative and critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and problem-solving. With this approach, we aim to create a more fair and holistic process that engages a wide range of learners.