

ISEB-Style Pre-Test Practice Questions

49 free ISEB-style questions with answers — English, Maths, VR & NVR

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How to use this pack

These are original Prep4All questions written in the style of the ISEB Common Pre-Tests: multiple choice, Maths to the end of Year 5 (the ceiling ISEB specifies) and English broadly national-curriculum based, and the formats reported on the on-screen test — reading comprehension, cloze and shuffled sentences, spot-the-mistake, letter/word verbal reasoning (including the reported two-answers-from-six format) and non-verbal reasoning including 3D/spatial items (reportedly cube counting).

Work through one section at a time, then mark with the answer key at the back and read the explanation for every question, right or wrong. The aim is that no question type is a surprise on test day.

The real test is adaptive and forward-only — there is no going back once an answer is submitted. Paper is fine for learning the formats; rehearse the on-screen, no-back habit at prep4all.co.uk/11-plus-iseb-hub/practice-questions, which marks these questions instantly and links to the adaptive ISEB-style mocks.

About ISEB past papers

There are no ISEB Pre-Test past papers: the tests are adaptive, so every child sees a different sequence of questions. ISEB provides a free official walkthrough (iseb.eva.tech/walkthrough) and endorses one practice platform, Bond Online Premium Plus. Prep4All is independent of ISEB; nothing in this pack is an ISEB question.

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English — questions 1–13 (real test: 40 minutes)

Mathematics — questions 14–28 (real test: 40 minutes)

Verbal Reasoning — questions 29–40 (real test: 25 minutes)

Non-Verbal Reasoning — questions 41–49 (real test: 30 minutes)

Answer key and explanations — at the back

English

Reading comprehension on a passage of 300–500 words, then spelling, punctuation and grammar in the formats reported on the on-screen test: cloze, shuffled sentences (our version adds an extra word to find) and spot-the-mistake.

Reading comprehension: “The Night the Lamp Went Out”

Read the passage, then answer the questions. In the real test the passage stays on screen beside every question.

Marin had lived in the lighthouse for all eleven years of her life, and in that time the great lamp had never once failed. Every evening at dusk her father climbed the one hundred and twelve iron steps, wound the clockwork that turned the lens, and lit the wick. Every evening the beam swept out across the bay, steady as a heartbeat, warning the fishing boats away from the Serpent Rocks.

So when Marin woke in the small hours to darkness — real darkness, not the soft flicker she was used to — she knew at once that something was wrong.

She pulled a coat over her nightdress and ran. The wind on the stairs tugged at her like a rude child. At the top, she found her father slumped against the wall, his face grey, one hand pressed to his chest. The lamp beside him was cold.

“Winter,” he whispered, meaning the fishing boat, the Winter Rose, that had gone out that afternoon. “She’ll be coming back in.”

Marin did not stop to think. She had watched her father a thousand times; her hands seemed to know the work without her. She trimmed the wick, struck a match on the third attempt because her fingers were shaking, and turned the heavy crank until the clockwork caught with a click and a groan. Slowly, unwillingly, the lens began to turn.

Out on the black water a small light was moving, straight towards the rocks. Marin held her breath. The beam swung round, dazzling, and found it. For a long moment nothing happened. Then, sluggishly, the little light swung away to the north — towards the harbour, and safety.

Only then did Marin sit down beside her father and let herself cry. He squeezed her hand, very weakly. “One hundred and twelve steps,” he said. “I counted you up every one.”

1 COMPREHENSION · RETRIEVAL

How many steps lead to the top of the lighthouse?

- A 102
- B 112
- C 121
- D 211
- E The passage does not say

2 COMPREHENSION · RETRIEVAL

How did Marin know at once that something was wrong when she woke?

- A The wind was louder than usual
- B Her father was calling for her
- C It was completely dark, which it never normally was
- D She could hear the fishing boat’s horn
- E The clockwork had stopped ticking

3 COMPREHENSION · LANGUAGE

"The wind on the stairs tugged at her like a rude child." Which technique is the writer using?

- A Metaphor
- B Simile
- C Alliteration
- D Onomatopoeia
- E Rhyme

4 COMPREHENSION · WORD MEANING

In the passage, what does "sluggishly" most nearly mean?

- A Quickly
- B Slowly
- C Angrily
- D Silently
- E Brightly

5 COMPREHENSION · RETRIEVAL

Why did it take Marin three attempts to strike the match?

- A The matches were damp
- B Her fingers were shaking
- C The wind kept blowing it out
- D She had never used a match before
- E She could not see the box in the dark

6 COMPREHENSION · SUMMARISING

Which statement best summarises the whole passage?

- A A girl learns how a lighthouse lamp works
- B A father teaches his daughter to be brave
- C When her father collapses, a girl lights the lamp herself and saves a boat
- D A fishing boat is wrecked on the Serpent Rocks
- E A storm damages a lighthouse on the coast

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

7 SPAG · CLOZE (VOCABULARY)

Choose the word that best completes the sentence: The explorers were ____ by the size of the cave; none of them had seen anything like it.

- A bored
- B astonished
- C comforted
- D punished
- E relieved

8 SPAG · CLOZE (GRAMMAR)

Choose the words that best complete the sentence: Although it was raining, ____ decided to walk to school.

- A him and me
- B me and him
- C he and I
- D him and I
- E I and him

9 SPAG · CLOZE (VOCABULARY)

Choose the word that best completes the sentence: The recipe says to add the flour ____, a spoonful at a time, so that no lumps form.

- A gradually
- B suddenly
- C rarely
- D roughly
- E finally

10 SPAG · SHUFFLED SENTENCE

The words of a sentence have been shuffled and one extra word added. Which word does NOT belong? — children the carefully on skated the was frozen river

- A children
- B carefully
- C was
- D frozen
- E river

11 SPAG · SHUFFLED SENTENCE

The words of a sentence have been shuffled and one extra word added. Which word does NOT belong? — before homework finished her Priya dinner under

- A before
- B finished
- C dinner
- D under
- E her

12 SPAG · SPOT THE MISTAKE

Which part of the sentence contains a mistake?

[A] The childrens' coats [B] were hanging [C] on the pegs [D] by the door.

- A The childrens' coats
- B were hanging
- C on the pegs
- D by the door.
- E No mistake

13 SPAG · SPOT THE MISTAKE

Which part of the sentence contains a mistake?

[A] We visited the museum [B] on Saturday and [C] then we eat [D] fish and chips by the sea.

- A We visited the museum
- B on Saturday and
- C then we eat
- D fish and chips by the sea.
- E No mistake

Mathematics

National curriculum to the end of Year 5. No calculator — rough paper is allowed in the real test.

14 MATHS · PLACE VALUE

What is the value of the digit 7 in the number 472,915?

- A 7
- B 700
- C 7,000
- D 70,000
- E 700,000

15 MATHS · MULTIPLICATION

Calculate 348×27 .

- A 8,396
- B 9,296
- C 9,396
- D 9,496
- E 10,396

16 MATHS · DIVISION WITH REMAINDERS

Eggs are packed in boxes of 24. A farm has 1,000 eggs. How many full boxes can be packed, and how many eggs are left over?

- A 41 boxes, 16 left over
- B 40 boxes, 40 left over
- C 42 boxes, 8 left over
- D 41 boxes, 6 left over
- E 45 boxes, 0 left over

17 MATHS · EQUIVALENT FRACTIONS

Which fraction is equivalent to $\frac{3}{4}$?

- A $\frac{6}{9}$
- B $\frac{9}{12}$
- C $\frac{12}{20}$
- D $\frac{15}{24}$
- E $\frac{4}{5}$

18 MATHS · FRACTIONS OF AMOUNTS

What is $\frac{3}{8}$ of 96?

- A 12
- B 24
- C 36
- D 48
- E 72

19 MATHS · DECIMALS

Which of these numbers is the largest?

- A 0.7
- B 0.65
- C 0.709
- D 0.71
- E 0.075

20 MATHS · PERCENTAGES

A coat costs £180. In a sale it is reduced by 25%. What is the sale price?

- A £45
- B £135
- C £145
- D £155
- E £160

21 MATHS · MEASUREMENT

How many metres are there in 2.35 kilometres?

- A 235 m
- B 2,035 m
- C 2,305 m
- D 2,350 m
- E 23,500 m

22 MATHS · PERIMETER AND AREA

A rectangle is 12 cm long and has a perimeter of 38 cm. What is its area?

- A 42 cm²
- B 84 cm²
- C 91 cm²
- D 96 cm²
- E 456 cm²

23 MATHS · ANGLES

Two angles lie side by side on a straight line. One measures 37°. What is the other?

- A 53°
- B 133°
- C 143°
- D 153°
- E 323°

24 MATHS · TIME

A train leaves at 09:47 and arrives at 11:23. How long is the journey?

- A 1 hour 24 minutes
- B 1 hour 34 minutes
- C 1 hour 36 minutes
- D 1 hour 46 minutes
- E 2 hours 24 minutes

25 MATHS · MULTI-STEP PROBLEM

Sam buys 3 notebooks at £1.85 each and one pen. He pays with a £10 note and receives £2.05 change. How much does the pen cost?

- A £2.05
- B £2.40
- C £2.45
- D £2.60
- E £4.45

26 MATHS · NEGATIVE NUMBERS

At 6 am the temperature was -4°C . By noon it had risen by 9 degrees, and by midnight it had fallen by 12 degrees from its noon value. What was the temperature at midnight?

- A -7°C
- B -3°C
- C -1°C
- D 1°C
- E 7°C

27 MATHS · FACTORS AND PRIMES

Which of these numbers is a prime number?

- A 51
- B 57
- C 61
- D 63
- E 65

28 MATHS · ROMAN NUMERALS

What number is written as MCMXCIV?

- A 1,894
- B 1,904
- C 1,994
- D 1,996
- E 2,004

Verbal Reasoning

Letter, word and language items, as ISEB's framework describes the section. The last two use the reported two-from-six format: TWO answers, one word from each group.

29 VR · SYNONYMS

Which word is closest in meaning to RELUCTANT?

- A eager
- B unwilling
- C careless
- D silent
- E tired

30 VR · SYNONYMS

Which word is closest in meaning to ABUNDANT?

- A scarce
- B plentiful
- C ancient
- D ordinary
- E hidden

31 VR · ANTONYMS

Which word is most OPPOSITE in meaning to GENEROUS?

- A kind
- B wealthy
- C selfish
- D cheerful
- E honest

32 VR · ANALOGIES

Glove is to hand as sock is to ____

- A shoe
- B foot
- C leg
- D toe
- E wool

33 VR · ANALOGIES

Author is to book as composer is to ____

- A piano
- B orchestra
- C symphony
- D concert
- E singer

34 VR · COMPOUND WORDS

Which word can be placed in front of all three to make three new words? ____light ____flower ____burn

- A moon
- B sun
- C star
- D day
- E sea

35 VR · HIDDEN WORDS

A four-letter word is hidden across the end of one word and the start of the next. Find it: "We ate our lunch early."

- A hear
- B chew
- C lung
- D late
- E tour

36 VR · LETTER SEQUENCES

What comes next in the sequence? AZ BY CX DW ?

- A EV
- B EU
- C FV
- D EW
- E DV

37 VR · LETTER CODES

If BOAT is written in code as CPBU, how is SHIP written in the same code?

- A TIJQ
- B RGHO
- C TIJP
- D SIJQ
- E THIQ

38 VR · MOVE A LETTER

Move one letter from the first word to the second word so that both still make real words: BRIDGE OWN. Which letter moves?

- A the letter B
- B the letter R
- C the letter I
- D the letter D
- E the letter G

39 VR · TWO FROM SIX (CLOSEST IN MEANING)

Choose one word from each group so that the two words are closest in meaning.

Group 1: A brave B quiet C clever

Group 2: D hungry E courageous F tall

40 VR · TWO FROM SIX (OPPOSITE IN MEANING)

Choose one word from each group so that the two words are most OPPOSITE in meaning.

Group 1: A ancient B narrow C heavy

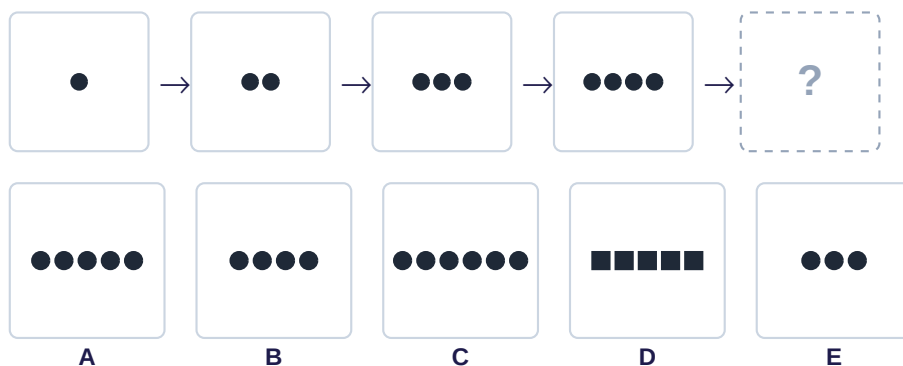
Group 2: D modern E tall F bright

Non-Verbal Reasoning

2D pattern items and the 3D/spatial strand in ISEB's framework, including the reported cube-counting format.

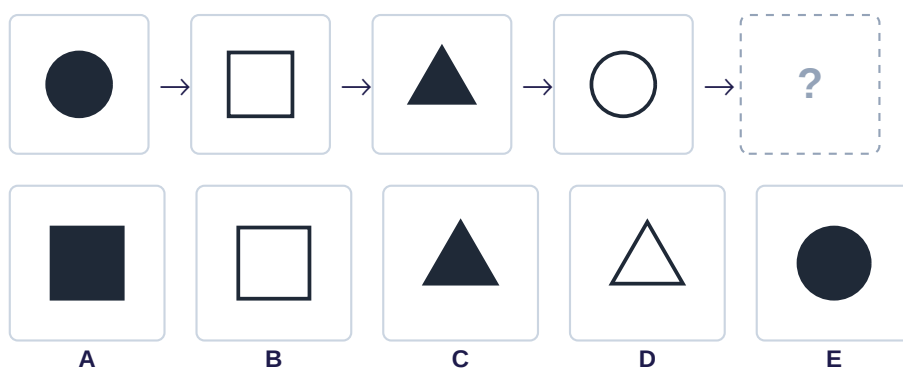
41 NVR · PATTERN SERIES

Which figure comes next in the series?



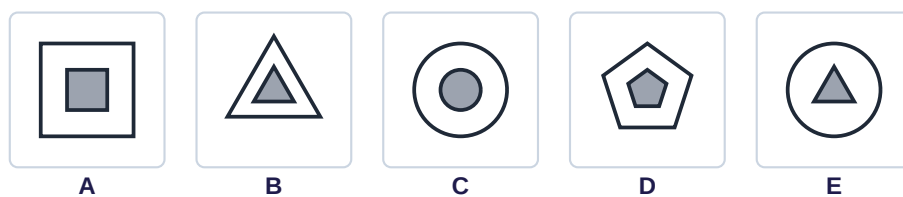
42 NVR · PATTERN SERIES

Which figure comes next in the series?



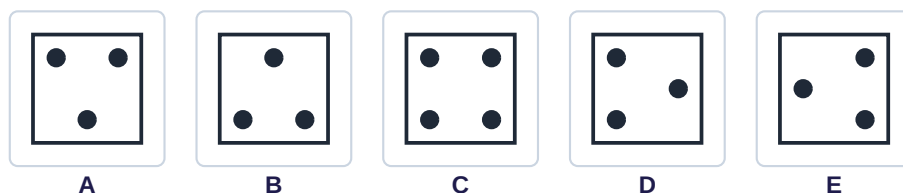
43 NVR · ODD ONE OUT

Four of these figures follow the same rule. Which one is the odd one out?



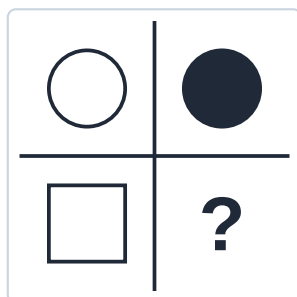
44 NVR · ODD ONE OUT

Four of these figures follow the same rule. Which one is the odd one out?

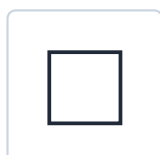


45 NVR · MATRICES

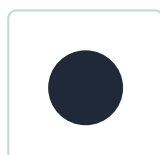
Which figure completes the grid so that each row and each column follows the same rule?



A



B



C



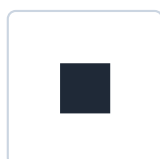
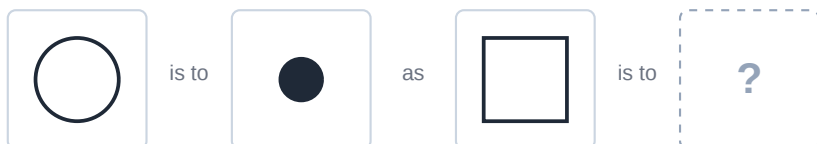
D



E

46 NVR · ANALOGIES

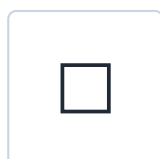
The first figure changes into the second in a certain way. Which option changes the third figure in the same way?



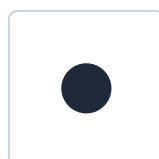
A



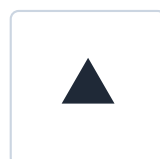
B



C



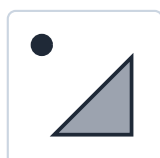
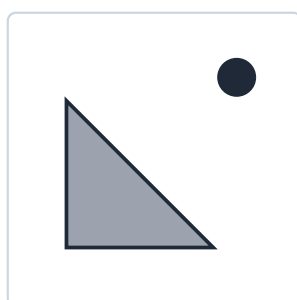
D



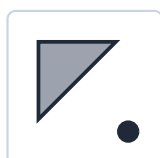
E

47 NVR · REFLECTION

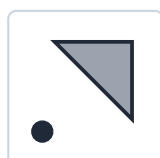
Which option shows the figure reflected in a vertical mirror line?



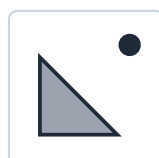
A



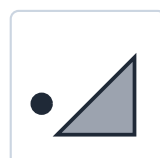
B



C



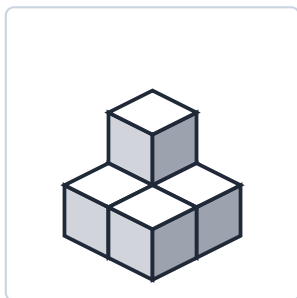
D



E

48 NVR · CUBE COUNTING

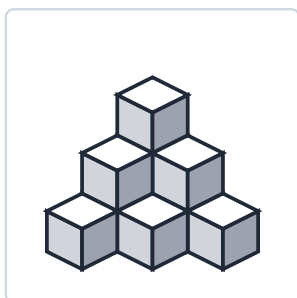
How many cubes are needed to build this solid? (Every column is solid from the floor up, with no hidden gaps.)



- A 4
- B 5
- C 6
- D 7
- E 8

49 NVR · CUBE COUNTING

How many cubes are needed to build this solid? (Every column is solid from the floor up, with no hidden gaps.)



- A 6
- B 8
- C 9
- D 10
- E 12

Answer key & explanations

Read the working even for questions answered correctly — it is where the method lives.

English

1. B

Paragraph 1: her father “climbed the one hundred and twelve iron steps” — and the number is repeated in the final line.

2. C

She wakes “to darkness — real darkness, not the soft flicker she was used to”. The lamp had “never once failed”, so darkness itself is the alarm.

3. B

The comparison uses “like”, which makes it a simile. A metaphor would say the wind WAS a rude child.

4. B

The light turns away “sluggishly” after “a long moment” in which “nothing happened” — the context signals slow, reluctant movement.

5. B

The text says she “struck a match on the third attempt because her fingers were shaking”. The other options are plausible but not in the passage.

6. C

A summary must cover the main events: the failure, Marin lighting the lamp, and the boat turning to safety. Options A, B and E describe only a detail or something that does not happen; D contradicts the ending.

7. B

The second half of the sentence (“none of them had seen anything like it”) tells you the feeling is amazement, so “astonished” fits. Cloze items are solved from the clues around the gap.

8. C

The missing words are the people doing the deciding, so use “he and I”. Test each word on its own: “he decided” and “I decided” sound right; “him decided” and “me decided” do not.

9. A

“A spoonful at a time” restates the missing word — adding something bit by bit is adding it gradually.

10. C

Unscrambled: “The children skated carefully on the frozen river.” Every word is used except “was” — and “was” cannot fit anywhere, because “the children was” breaks the agreement between “children” and its verb.

11. D

Unscrambled: “Priya finished her homework before dinner.” The word left over is “under” — try it in any position and the sentence stops making sense.

12. A

“Children” is already plural, so the possessive is “children’s” — the apostrophe goes before the s. Parts B, C and D are correct.

13. C

The sentence is in the past tense (“visited”), so it should be “then we ate”. Mixed tenses are a favourite error-spotting trap.

Mathematics

14. D

Reading from the right: 5 ones, 1 ten, 9 hundreds, 2 thousands, 7 ten-thousands, 4 hundred-thousands. So the 7 is worth 70,000.

15. C

$348 \times 20 = 6,960$ and $348 \times 7 = 2,436$. Added together: $6,960 + 2,436 = 9,396$.

16. A

$24 \times 40 = 960$ and $24 \times 41 = 984$. $1,000 - 984 = 16$, and 16 is less than 24, so 41 full boxes with 16 left over.

17. B

Multiply top and bottom of $\frac{3}{4}$ by 3: $\frac{9}{12}$. The others are different amounts: $\frac{6}{9} = \frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{12}{20} = \frac{3}{5}$, $\frac{15}{24} = \frac{5}{8}$, and $\frac{4}{5} = \frac{16}{20}$, which is bigger than $\frac{3}{4} = \frac{15}{20}$.

18. C

One eighth of 96 is $96 \div 8 = 12$, so three eighths is $3 \times 12 = 36$.

19. D

Write every number with the same number of decimal places: 0.700, 0.650, 0.709, 0.710, 0.075. Now compare them like whole numbers of thousandths — 710 is the biggest, so 0.71 is the largest. More digits does not mean a bigger number.

20. B

25% is a quarter. A quarter of £180 is £45, so the sale price is $£180 - £45 = £135$. (£45 is the discount, not the price.)

21. D

1 km = 1,000 m, so $2.35 \text{ km} = 2.35 \times 1,000 = 2,350 \text{ m}$.

22. B

Two lengths make 24 cm, so the two widths make $38 - 24 = 14 \text{ cm}$ and each width is 7 cm. Area = $12 \times 7 = 84 \text{ cm}^2$.

23. C

Angles on a straight line add up to 180° , so $180^\circ - 37^\circ = 143^\circ$. (53° is what you get if you subtract from 90° instead of 180° .)

24. C

09:47 to 10:47 is 1 hour; 10:47 to 11:23 is another 36 minutes. Total 1 hour 36 minutes.

25. B

Sam spent $£10 - £2.05 = £7.95$. The notebooks cost $3 \times £1.85 = £5.55$. The pen is $£7.95 - £5.55 = £2.40$.

26. A

$-4 + 9 = 5^\circ\text{C}$ at noon. $5 - 12 = -7^\circ\text{C}$ at midnight. Counting through zero is the skill being tested.

27. C

To test a number under 100, try dividing by 2, 3, 5 and 7. $51 = 3 \times 17$, $57 = 3 \times 19$, $63 = 7 \times 9$, $65 = 5 \times 13$. Only 61 survives every test, so it is the prime.

28. C

Split it into groups: M = 1,000; CM = 900; XC = 90; IV = 4. A smaller numeral written before a larger one is subtracted (CM = $1,000 - 100$). Added together: 1,994.

Verbal Reasoning

29. B

Reluctant means unwilling or hesitant. "Eager" is its opposite — a classic distractor.

30. B

Abundant means existing in large quantities — plentiful. "Scarce" is the opposite.

31. C

Generous people give freely; selfish people keep things for themselves. "Kind" is a near-synonym, so it cannot be the opposite.

32. B

A glove is worn on a hand; a sock is worn on a foot. The relationship is "item of clothing → the body part it covers".

33. C

An author creates a book; a composer creates a symphony. The others are things a composer might use or hear, not what they create.

34. B

Sunlight, sunflower and sunburn are all real words. Several options fit the first two gaps — moonlight and moonflower, starlight and starflower, daylight and dayflower are all real — but only "sun" also makes ___ burn, and "sea" fails at the first gap. Always test every option against every word.

35. A

lunc-H EAR-ly hides HEAR. Check every join in turn — "we ate", "ate our", "our lunch", "lunch early" — reading the last letters of one word into the first letters of the next. Only the last join produces a real four-letter word.

36. A

The first letters move forward one place (A, B, C, D, E) and the second letters move backward one place (Z, Y, X, W, V): EV.

37. A

B→C, O→P, A→B, T→U: every letter moves forward one place. So S→T, H→I, I→J, P→Q gives TIJQ.

38. E

Take each letter out in turn and see whether both words survive. Removing G leaves BRIDE, and G in front of OWN makes GOWN — both real words. Removing B gives RIDGE but “BOWN”; removing R, I or D leaves a non-word. So the answer is G.

39. A & E (brave, courageous)

Test each group 1 word against each group 2 word. Brave and courageous mean the same thing; quiet and clever have no partner in group 2, and hungry and tall have none in group 1.

40. A & D (ancient, modern)

Ancient (very old) and modern (new) are opposites. Narrow, heavy, tall and bright have no opposite in the other group.

Non-Verbal Reasoning

41. A

One dot is added each time (1, 2, 3, 4), so the next figure has 5 dots — and they must stay circles, so the row of 5 squares is a distractor.

42. A

Two rules run at once: the shape cycles circle → square → triangle → circle → SQUARE, and the shading alternates black, white, black, white → BLACK. Only the black square satisfies both.

43. E

Look for the property four figures share: in A, B, C and D the inner shape is the same shape as the outer one. E is a circle containing a triangle, so it breaks the rule. Shading and size are the same everywhere, so they cannot be the rule.

44. C

Count the dots. A, B, D and E are the same three-dot pattern — two corners and the middle of the opposite side — turned round each time; C is the only figure with four dots, so C is the odd one out.

45. A

Across each row the shape stays the same; down each column the shading stays the same (left white, right black). Bottom-right must be a black square. E is a black diamond — a square turned through 45° — but the row rule keeps the shape exactly as drawn, so it is rejected.

46. A

The big white circle becomes a small black circle: it shrinks AND is shaded. Apply both changes to the big white square: a small black square.

47. A

In a vertical mirror, left and right swap but top and bottom stay put: the right angle moves to the bottom-right and the dot to the top-left. Option B is a horizontal reflection and option C is a 180° rotation.

48. B

You can see 4 cubes, but the raised cube at the back cannot float: every column is solid from the floor up, so there must be a cube underneath it that you cannot see. Count column by column: back column 2, the other three columns 1 each. $2 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 5$.

49. D

Work in layers. Bottom layer: 6 cubes (one under every column you can see). Middle layer: 3 (the columns that are 2 or 3 high). Top layer: 1. Total $6 + 3 + 1 = 10$. Four of those cubes are completely hidden — three on the floor under the raised columns and one in the middle layer under the top cube — and they are the ones most children miss.