

HIGH STAKES FOR YOUNG TEST TAKERS

Entrance exams for private middle and high schools cause stress, especially for parents.

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On a recent Sunday morning, a determined Spencer Cutrow spent three hours hunched over an admission exam designed to test his reading, math and reasoning skills, with its outcome likely to help determine how he will spend the rest of his academic career.

But Spencer, 10, is anticipating middle school, not college. Although the test, the Independent School Entrance Exam, may not mean anything to most people, taking it is a rite of passage for thousands of students applying to private schools in Los Angeles and around the country.

Doing the math

Here are sample math questions from the Independent School Entrance Exam.

For fifth- and sixth-grade admission:

1. Which of the following is closest to 1?
- A) 1.5
 - B) 1.2
 - C) 0.9
 - D) 0.1

For seventh- and eighth-grade admission:

2. What are the two different prime factors of 45?
- A) 3 and 5
 - B) 3 and 9
 - C) 5 and 9
 - D) 3 and 15

For ninth- through 12th-grade admission:

3. Ben has 4 more marbles than Steve. Ann has twice as many marbles as Ben. If s is the number of marbles that Steve has, then in terms of s , how many marbles does Ann have?
- A) $2s$
 - B) $2s + 2$
 - C) $2s + 4$
 - D) $2s + 8$