

HSPT Study Guide

170+ High-Yield Terms & Concepts for the High School
Placement Test

TemplateForge

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Price: \$15 | Format: Markdown + PDF Workbook

Category: High School Entrance / HSPT Test Prep

Design: Deep violet + gold

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How to Use This Guide

The HSPT (High School Placement Test) is the entrance exam many Catholic and private high schools use for 8th-grade applicants. It is a single paper-and-pencil battery of 298 multiple-choice questions across five subtests, taken once, in school, in about 2.5 hours. Each is scored 200-800 (mean 500); your Cognitive Skills Quotient (CSQ) is reported like an IQ score (mean 100). This guide organizes the high-yield terms and concepts tested on each subtest - one section per subtest - plus an exam overview, a final review, and a test-day strategy. Work through the sections in order; each concept gives you key facts, a high-yield HSPT tip, and where useful an example.

Exam Overview: The High School Placement Test

The HSPT is published by Scholastic Testing Service (STS) and given at the school. It is designed to be taken in its entirety: five subtests, one answer sheet, about 2.5 hours in one sitting. Eight-graders take it once for their admission cycle - there are NO retakes, so treat the real test as your one chance and prepare in advance. Students take it at the school they are applying to (or at a testing site the school designates).

The five subtests, in order: Verbal Skills (60 items, 16-18 min), Quantitative Skills (52 items, 30 min), Reading (62 items, 25 min), Mathematics (64 items, 45 min), and Language (60 items, 25 min). Calculators are NOT allowed on Quantitative Skills or Mathematics under standardized conditions. The first two subtests measure reasoning and are reported together as Cognitive Skills; the last three measure learned skills and are reported together as Basic Skills; the Composite averages all five into your overall score.

Scoring: each subtest and composite is reported on a standard score scale of 200-800 with a mean of 500. Your CSQ is a separate index based on your Verbal and Quantitative scores and your age; it is built to be read like an IQ score (mean 100, most students fall between 85-115). National and local percentile ranks plus stanines (1-9) show where you stand among other applicants. At the school's option, one additional 40-item test (Science or Catholic Religion) may be given after the battery; it is NOT counted in the Composite.

There is NO penalty for guessing - points are not subtracted for wrong answers - so answer every single question. Because the HSPT is one shot, the goal of this guide is simple: know the concepts and formats ahead of time, practice the pacing, and walk in calm.

Section 1: Verbal Skills - Synonyms & Antonyms (14 Concepts)

Verbal Skills is 60 items in 16-18 minutes. About half of the subtest asks you to pick the word closest in meaning (synonym) or most nearly opposite (antonym). No calculator, paper answer sheet.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Synonyms	A synonym is a word with the same or nearly the same meaning as another. The HSPT asks you to choose the answer word that is CLOSEST in meaning to the given word.	Do not pick a word that is merely related; the correct answer must be interchangeable in most sentences.	Rapid = quick. 'The rapid river' = 'the quick river'.
2	Antonyms	An antonym is a word most nearly OPPOSITE in meaning. The HSPT explicitly says 'most nearly opposite', so the best answer is the closest true opposite, not just 'not the same'.	Read the exact phrasing: 'opposite of' questions want the single strongest contrast.	Opposite of generous = stingy (not merely 'average').
3	Recognizing the Word Class	Identify the part of speech of the given word first (noun, verb, adjective, adverb). The correct synonym or antonym usually keeps the same word class.	If the given word is an adjective, the answer is an adjective - a noun answer is usually a decoy.	Opposite of 'ancient' (adjective) = 'modern' (adjective), not 'age' (noun).
4	Shades of Meaning	Synonyms are rarely identical: 'slim', 'thin', and 'scrawny' are close but carry different strength and tone. The HSPT wants the CLOSEST match in intensity.	Rank answer choices by how well they match both meaning and intensity - the best fit wins, not the first plausible one.	'Drenched' is closest to 'soaked'; 'moist' is too mild.

5	Prefixes That Make Opposites	Common opposite prefixes: un- (happy/unhappy), in-/im- (possible/impossible), dis- (agree/disagree), non- (sense/nonsense), mis- (lead/mislead). If you know the base word, the prefix flips it.	On an antonym question, look for the answer with an opposite-forming prefix of the same base.	Opposite of 'honest' = 'dishonest'.
6	Roots from Greek & Latin	Many HSPT words are built from common roots: dict (say), port (carry), scrib/script (write), spect (look), graph (write/draw), bio (life), geo (earth).	Learn the top 20 roots and you can decode unfamiliar answer words instead of guessing blindly.	'Telephone' (far + sound), 'geology' (earth + study) - roots reveal meaning.
7	Multiple-Meaning Words	A word can have several meanings; the HSPT tests the meaning that fits the word as used. Context decides which sense is correct.	Ask how the word is most commonly used in test vocabulary; the answer matches that primary sense.	'Bark' of a dog vs bark of a tree - only context tells you.
8	Degrees of Antonymy	Some opposites are exact (alive/dead), some are steps on a scale (hot/cold with warm/cool between). 'Most nearly opposite' prefers the strongest direct contrast on that scale.	If two answers both seem opposite, choose the one farthest from the given word on the meaning scale.	Opposite of 'always' = 'never' (stronger than 'sometimes').
9	Synonyms in the Answer Set	There are two decoys that repeat every HSPT form: an answer that is a		

synonym of one
of the OTHER
choices, and an
answer that
sounds like the
given word
(phonetic trap).

If two choices
mean the same
thing, usually
neither is right;
the test hides

one correct
answer among
unrelated words.

For 'brittle':
choices 'fragile',
'strong', 'flexible',
'icy' - 'fragile'
wins, 'icy' is the

phonetic trap.

10	Word Families & Scaled Intensity	Words come in intensity sets: cold -> cool -> warm -> hot, or small -> tiny -> minuscule. Know where the given word sits on its scale.	Pick the answer on the same side of the scale at roughly the same intensity.	If given 'huge', 'enormous' fits better than 'big'.
11	Guess Smart on Unknown Words	When you do not know the given word: eliminate answers you know are wrong, look for a familiar root or prefix, and take a 1-in-2 or 1-in-3 shot. There is no guessing penalty.	A word that looks like it belongs to a different subject (a science term for a verbal question) is a decoy - cut it.	Unknown 'lucid'? Root luc/light hints clear - choose 'clear' over 'dark' if forced.
12	Sentence Substitution Test	The fastest check: put each answer choice into a plain sentence in place of the given word. The choice that reads naturally is the synonym.	Substitution works for both synonyms (same sentence) and antonyms (negated sentence: 'not very X').	For 'candid', 'frank' reads naturally; 'candy-like' does not.
13	Common HSPT-Level Vocabulary	The Verbal subtest draws from everyday academic vocabulary: abundant, cautious, durable, evident, fragile, genuine, hostile, inevitable, lucid, modest, tedious, vivid.	Keep a running list of words you miss in practice; the test reuses a stable academic word pool.	'Inevitable' = unavoidable - a frequent correct answer.
14	Speed & Accuracy Balance	Verbal gives about 16-18 seconds per item (60 items, 16-18 min). Most synonyms/antonyms should take		

10 seconds;
save time by
answering
confident items
first.

Skip-and-return
works on paper:
mark your
answer sheet for
questions you
skipped and
return before the

subtest ends.

Answer the 40
you know in ~7
minutes, then
return to the 20
hard ones with
the remaining
~10 minutes.

Section 2: Verbal Skills - Analogies (12 Concepts)

Analogy questions give a word pair and ask you to pick the pair with the same relationship. The relationship is the key, not the words.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	What an Analogy Is	An analogy is a comparison: A is to B as C is to D (A:B :: C:D). You read the given pair, name the relationship, and match the answer pair with that SAME relationship.	Translate the given pair into a sentence: 'a fish is to water as...' then test each answer pair with the same sentence.	Hand : glove :: foot : sock (both are body part + covering).
2	Name the Relationship First	Never jump to words - name the relationship in one phrase: synonym, antonym, part-whole, worker-tool, cause-effect, characteristic, category-member, degree.	If you cannot name the relationship, you cannot reliably pick the pair; force yourself to say it aloud.	Doctor : hospital :: teacher : school (worker + workplace).
3	Synonym & Antonym Analogies	The given pair may be two synonyms (happy : joyful) or two antonyms (hot : cold). The best answer pair must be the SAME type of relationship, not just any pair.	Check the relationship TYPE first, then check that the order matches (A:B like C:D, not reversed).	Begin : start :: cease : stop (synonym pair).
4	Part-to-Whole & Whole-to-Part	One word is a part of the other: wheel : car, or the reverse, car : wheel. Match the direction exactly.	Draw an arrow: part -> whole or whole -> part; the answer pair must point the same way.	Page : book :: key : piano? No - key is a part of a piano, but a better match: chapter : book.
5	Worker, Tool & Workplace	Common HSPT relationships: worker uses a tool, worker		

works in a place,
tool makes a
product.

Ask 'what does
each person use
/ where do they
work / what do

they make?'

Sculptor : chisel
:: painter : brush
(worker + tool).

6	Cause & Effect Analogies	One word causes the other: rain : flood, practice : skill. The answer pair must show the same causal direction.	Check the arrow of causation: does the first word cause the second (as in the given pair)?	Studying : passing :: training : strength.
7	Degree & Intensity Analogies	The pair shows a step in intensity: cool : freezing (mild to extreme). The answer must scale the same way.	Rank both pairs on the same scale and match the direction (low->high or high->low).	Whisper : shout :: drizzle : downpour.
8	Category & Member Analogies	One word is a category, the other is a member (or example): fruit : apple, or the reverse.	Match whether the pair is category->member or member->category - in the same order as the given pair.	Vehicle : car :: bird : robin (category + example).
9	Characteristic & Function	One word describes a quality of the other (lion : courageous) or what the other is used for (knife : cut).	Ask 'what is a defining trait or typical use of the second word?'	Kite : fly :: boat : sail (object + its function).
10	Sequential & Process Analogies	The pair shows stages in time or a process: seed : plant, morning : noon, or steps in an order.	Place both pairs on the same timeline and match which step comes first.	Knead : bake :: draft : publish (earlier step : later step).
11	Eliminate by Relationship Mismatch	Even when the words feel familiar, most answer pairs have the WRONG relationship. Eliminate every pair that does not share the exact relationship and order.	After eliminating, one pair remains - verify it once more with your sentence before bubbling.	Given 'wand : magician', accept 'stethoscope : doctor' (tool + user) and reject 'magic : spell' (no user).

12	Pacing & Batch Strategy	Analogies appear inside the same 60-item Verbal subtest; expect 10-12 of the items to be analogies. Do confident ones first, mark unsure ones, return later.	A 30-second timing rule: if a hard analogy is not solved in 30 seconds, guess and move on - every analogy is worth the same point.	Bank the 8 easy analogies in under 2 minutes, then return to the hard 4.
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Section 3: Verbal Skills - Classification & Logical Reasoning (12 Concepts)

Verbal classification asks which word does NOT belong with the group; logical reasoning asks you to pick the conclusion that must follow from the statements.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Verbal Classification	You get a set of words (usually four) and must pick the one that does NOT belong. The other three share a category; the odd one breaks the pattern.	Name the shared category of the three matching words before looking at the choices - then the odd one is obvious.	Apple, peach, carrot, plum - carrot is the odd one (not a fruit).
2	Find the Category First	The three correct words always share a clear category: fruits, tools, transportation, emotions, professions. Identify it explicitly.	If two categories fit (e.g., both red things and fruits), prefer the category that groups THREE words.	Hammer, saw, wrench, nail - the odd one is nail (not a tool).
3	Multiple Valid Categories	A word may belong to several categories; the test chooses the category that includes exactly three of the four words.	Test each candidate category: does it take exactly three words? If yes, the leftover is the answer.	Blue, green, square, red - the odd one is square (colors group the other three).
4	Logical Reasoning: Conclusions	You read a short set of statements (premises) and choose the conclusion that MUST follow from them - not from outside knowledge.	The right answer is forced by the statements: if you can deny it while keeping the premises true, it is not the answer.	All seniors have ID cards. Mia is a senior. -> Mia has an ID card.
5	Strongest vs Weakest Conclusion	There is exactly one conclusion that necessarily follows. The wrong answers either go beyond		

the premises or
repeat a premise
instead of
concluding.

Look for the answer that combines two premises to make a new true statement.	If all cats are mammals and all mammals are animals, cats are animals - combining, not
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repeating.

6	If-Then Statements	"If P, then Q" means: when P is true, Q must be true. It does NOT mean Q only happens when P happens (that is a common trap).	From 'if P then Q', you may conclude 'not P' only from 'not Q' (the contrapositive).	If it rains, the game is cancelled. The game is NOT cancelled -> it did not rain.
7	Necessary vs Sufficient	A sufficient condition guarantees an outcome; a necessary condition is required for it. 'If you study, you pass' makes studying sufficient, not necessary.	Know which direction the arrow points: sufficient -> guaranteed result; necessary <- required ingredient.	Being a teenager is necessary for driving alone in most states, but not sufficient (you need a license too).
8	Spotting the Formal Fallacy	The classic trap: 'All A are B, so all B are A' (converse error). The test loves this exact error.	Reverse-direction claims are almost always the wrong answer - keep the arrow pointing the same way as the premises.	All dogs are mammals -> does NOT mean all mammals are dogs.
9	Overgeneralization Trap	Answers that leap from a specific case to a broad rule ('one student passed so everyone will') go beyond the evidence and are wrong.	Preferred answers stay inside the exact scope of the statements - no bigger, no smaller.	One lawnmower is red -> does NOT mean all lawnmowers are red.
10	Ordering & Sequence Logic	Some logical reasoning items give positions or times (A sits left of B, B sits left of C) and ask what must be true.	Draw a quick line with names/positions - the diagram settles the ordering questions fast.	Amy is older than Ben; Ben is older than Cal -> Amy is oldest.
11	Venn-Style Category Logic	Overlapping categories (all, some, none) can be diagrammed as circles. 'All A are B, some B		

are C' lets you
know some C
may be A but not
for sure.

When 'some' appears, the safe conclusion is only what the 'some' explicitly asserts.	Some freshmen take art. No conclusion about 'all freshmen' can be drawn.
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12	Pacing & Process	Logical reasoning is the highest-yield Verbal skill: it is rule-based, so practice converts direct to correct answers. Spend more of your Verbal time here than on vocabulary you cannot cram.	Restate each premise in your own words; diagram when needed; pick the conclusion that cannot be false if the premises are true.	In practice, aim for 100% on logical reasoning - it is the most trainable Verbal item type.
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Section 4: Quantitative Skills - Number Series & Number Manipulation (14 Concepts)

Quantitative Skills is 52 items in 30 minutes - no calculator. Number series ask what comes next; number manipulation gives arithmetic directions to perform.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Number Series: The Pattern	A number series is a sequence with one missing term. The correct next term follows the pattern of the whole series - usually arithmetic (add), geometric (multiply), or a mix.	Look for the SIMPLEST pattern first; HSPT series are designed to have one clean rule.	2, 4, 6, 8, ____ -> 10 (add 2).
2	Constant Addition / Subtraction	The most common series: each term changes by the same amount (+3, -5, etc.).	Compute the difference between the first two terms, confirm it repeats, then apply it.	5, 9, 13, 17, ____ -> 21 (add 4).
3	Constant Multiplication / Division	Each term is multiplied (or divided) by the same amount: 3, 6, 12, 24, ____ -> 48 (x2).	Check the RATIO between terms when differences are not constant.	100, 50, 25, 12.5, ____ -> 6.25 (divide by 2).
4	Alternating Patterns	Two interleaved rules alternate: the odd positions follow one rule, the even positions another.	Split the series into odd-indexed and even-indexed subsequences, then solve each separately.	1, 10, 2, 9, 3, 8, ____ -> 4 (odds +1, evens -1).
5	Two-Step (Compound) Patterns	The change grows or shrinks: +1, +2, +3, +4... or x2 then +1, x2 then +1...	Test whether the differences themselves form a pattern (the differences are the real series).	1, 2, 4, 7, 11, ____ -> 16 (differences +1,+2,+3,+4).
6	Squares & Cubes Series	Terms may be squares (1, 4, 9, 16 = 1 ² , 2 ² , 3 ² , 4 ²) or cubes (1, 8, 27, 64).	Recognize perfect squares/cubes; the next term is often the next square/cube or a	

Shift of it.

1, 4, 9, 16, 25,
___-> 36 (6^2).

7	Working with Missing Middle Terms	Some series give the middle gap and both ends; the pattern must fit the terms on BOTH sides of the gap.	Find a rule that works for the adjacent pairs on each side of the gap at once.	3, 6, __, 18, 27 -> 12 (add 3, then +6... or x2 pattern: the clean rule is +3,+6,+9,+12? Actually 3,6,12,18 is not clean - use differences +3,+6,+6,+9...).
8	Number Manipulation: Mixed Operations	A manipulation item gives a starting number and a string of operations: 'Start with 8. Add 3, double it, subtract 5. What is the result?'	Follow the operations in EXACT order, one at a time - do not combine steps in your head.	$8 + 3 = 11$; double = 22; minus 5 = 17.
9	Reverse Operations (Undoing)	Working backward reverses each operation: add becomes subtract, multiply becomes divide.	When the question says 'what number was started with', reverse the operation ladder from the end.	Start unknown, times 3, minus 4 = 11. Backward: $11 + 4 = 15$, divide by 3 = 5.
10	Word Problems as Manipulations	Some items hide arithmetic in words: 'triple a number and add 7', 'take half of a number and subtract 3'.	Translate words to symbols before touching the numbers, then do one operation at a time.	Double a number, add 9: $2n + 9$. If result is 25, $2n = 16$, $n = 8$.
11	Order of Operations in Manipulations	Parentheses, then exponents, then multiply/divide left-to-right, then add/subtract left-to-right (PEMDAS).	When the item says ' $4 + 6 \times 3$ ', the correct order is $6 \times 3 = 18$, then $4 + 18 = 22$ - not $(4+6) \times 3$.	$2 + 8 / 2 = 2 + 4 = 6$.
12	Fractions & Percents in Manipulations	You may be asked to take a fraction or percent of a number and then continue operations. Convert: of = multiply.	Compute the fraction/percent step precisely first; rounding early causes wrong answers.	Take $1/4$ of 40 (=10), then add 5 = 15.

13	Estimate Before You Calculate	In a 52-item/30-minute subtest, quick estimation catches wild answers. If the choices are far apart, estimate instead of computing exactly.	Round to friendly numbers, compute the estimate, then pick the closest choice.	37×4.9 is about $40 \times 5 = 200$; pick the choice near 200.
14	Check With the Inverse	After solving a manipulation, quickly undo it to see if you land back at the start number.	One reverse pass takes 5 seconds and catches most arithmetic slips.	If the answer is 17, reverse: $17 + 5 = 22$, halve = 11, minus 8 = 3 - wait, expected 3? Verify original directions.

Section 5: Quantitative Skills - Geometric & Nongeometric Comparison (12)

Comparison items give two quantities (columns). Choose the larger, equal, or 'cannot be determined' - this is a reasoning format, not a calculation race.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Comparison Items: The Format	You are shown two quantities, usually labeled A and B (or Column A and Column B). Choose A if A is larger, B if B is larger, C if equal, D if it cannot be determined.	Read the direction line exactly as printed - the HSPT wording decides C vs D.	Column A: $5 + 3 = 8$; Column B: $9 - 1 = 8$ -> equal (C).
2	Compare Without Calculating	When both columns contain the same structure, compare parts directly: 7×8 vs 7×9 -> B is larger without any multiplication.	Cancel common factors (the same number on both sides) before computing anything.	15×4 vs 16×4 -> B is larger by exactly one 4.
3	The 'Cannot Be Determined' Choice	If a column contains a VARIABLE and different values of the variable change which side is larger, the answer is 'cannot be determined' (D).	Test two different values that keep the problem valid; if they flip the answer, it is D.	Column A: $x + 1$; Column B: 5. If $x = 1$, A is 2 (smaller); if $x = 6$, A is 7 (larger) -> cannot determine.
4	Equal Quantities Have One Look	Two expressions are equal when one is a rearrangement of the other: 2×6 vs 3×4 , or $(a+b)$ vs $(b+a)$.	Simplify or rearrange one column until it visibly matches the other.	$1/2$ of 10 vs $10/2$ -> both 5.

5	Equivalent Fractions & Decimals	Compare fractions/decimals by rewriting to a common denominator or common place value.	A eighth vs quarter confusion: $\frac{3}{8}$ (0.375) vs $\frac{3}{4}$ (0.75) - B clearly larger once converted.	$\frac{1}{4}$ vs 0.25 -> equal.
6	Powers & Roots Comparisons	Compare powers and roots by matching bases or exponents: 2^4 vs 4^2 (both 16) or 3^2 vs 2^3 (9 vs 8).	Expand small powers to compare exactly; guess-free.	$5^2 = 25$ vs $2^5 = 32$ -> B larger.
7	Signed Numbers & Absolute Value	Negatives flip comparisons: $-3 < -2$, but absolute value removes the sign: $\text{abs}(-3) = 3 > 2$.	Rewrite with signs carefully before comparing.	$\text{abs}(-6) = 6$ vs $\text{abs}(4) = 4$ -> A larger.
8	Geometric Comparisons: Dimensions	Compare perimeters, areas, or volumes of described shapes. Formula recall plus reasoning decides.	Sketch the shape and label the given dimensions; compare by formula, not intuition.	Square side 5 (area 25) vs triangle base 8 height 4 (area 16) -> square larger.
9	Comparisons With a Diagram	Some comparison items show a simple drawing (a line segment with a labeled midpoint, a rectangle with dimensions). The given measures are exact.	Trust the labeled numbers, not the drawing's proportions; the figure is schematic.	A rectangle labeled 3 by 7: area A vs perimeter B -> $A = 21$, $B = 20$ -> A larger.
10	The Equal-Value Fast Check	Before computing, check whether both columns equal the same simple value; HSPT includes a few 'both simplify to the same thing' items.	Simplify both to a single number or a single variable expression in 2 steps max.	$\frac{8}{2}$ vs $\frac{16}{4}$ -> both 4 -> equal.

11	Avoid Overthinking	Do NOT import hidden assumptions (like x being positive or shapes being to scale) unless stated. The item only gives you what is printed.	If the problem does not say x is positive, negative, or zero, that is exactly when 'cannot be determined' applies.	Column A: n; Column B: n^2 . With no info on n, values flip ($n=2$ -> B larger; $n=0.5$ -> A larger) -> D.
12	Pacing: 30 Minutes / 52 Items	Quantitative gives ~35 seconds per item. Comparison items are fastest when you compare structurally first and compute only when needed.	Do the number-series/manipulation items you know quickly, then use leftover time for the hardest comparisons.	Five comparison items at 15 seconds each = a 75-second block; bank that time for the long manipulations.

Section 6: Reading - Main Idea, Details & Inferences (14 Concepts)

Reading is 62 items in 25 minutes on short passages. Most questions test main idea, significant details, and logical inferences.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Main Idea / Central Thought	The main idea is the single point the whole passage supports - the big picture. The HSPT calls it 'central thought' or 'purpose'.	The correct summary covers the ENTIRE passage; an option that covers only one paragraph is a detail trap.	A passage about recycling programs, bins, and pickup schedules supports the idea 'the town is expanding curbside recycling'.
2	Topic vs Main Idea	The topic is the subject (one word: 'recycling'); the main idea is the claim about it ('recycling reduces landfill waste').	If an answer names only the subject, it states the topic, not the main idea - keep looking.	Topic: school uniforms. Main idea: uniforms improve school climate.
3	Significant Details	Details are the specific facts, examples, and numbers that build the main idea. 'Significant' details are the ones that matter to the passage's point.	Match the detail to the question's claim term-by-term: if the claim names a group or year, the right detail mirrors it.	To support 'enrollment grew after the fee change', you need enrollment numbers before AND after the change.
4	Remembering vs Locating Details	Some reading items say 'according to the passage' - the answer restates a detail that is IN the text, in slightly different words.	Go back and FIND the sentence; do not answer from memory or outside knowledge.	'Leopards are solitary except during mating' - the restated detail is in the passage exactly.
5	Recognizing the Purpose	Purpose answers 'why does the passage exist': to inform, explain, persuade, entertain, or describe. The		

HSPT asks you
to name the
primary purpose.

Purpose = what
the author wants
the reader to
take away, not
just what the
passage is
about.

A passage
arguing for
longer library
hours has the
purpose 'to
persuade'.

6	Logical Inferences	An inference is a conclusion reasonably drawn from the text - not stated directly, but forced or strongly supported by the details.	The correct inference uses ONLY passage information plus one safe step of logic.	Text says a store 'has not restocked this brand since April' - you can infer the brand may be discontinued there.
7	Inference vs Assumption	An assumption imports outside beliefs; an inference stays inside the passage. Wrong answers are usually the assumptions.	Ask: 'could the author disagree with this?' If yes, it is an assumption, not an inference.	From 'the city cut the bus route', infer 'fewer people may ride that line' - but NOT 'the city hates buses'.
8	Drawing Conclusions Within Scope	A conclusion must be a logical extension of the evidence, not a leap to new groups or causes.	Choose the answer that stays within what the passage states plus one safe step.	A study shows a drug helps mice - support 'the drug affects mice', not 'the drug cures human disease'.
9	Sequencing Events	Ordering questions ask what happened first, next, or last, or which step precedes another.	Look for time markers: after, before, then, meanwhile, finally, subsequently.	She grabbed her keys, locked the door, then drove off - locking happened before driving.
10	Cause & Effect Relationships	The passage describes which event caused which. Questions ask you to identify the correct causal relationship.	Check the arrow: does the text say A caused B or B caused A? Correlations are not causes.	'The storm toppled the fence' - the storm came FIRST and caused the fall.
11	Compare & Contrast	Identify similarities and differences between two people, events, or passages.	Ask 'what is the same' and 'what is different' separately; a compare-contrast answer names both.	Two passages about the same law differ in tone and emphasis - one praises, one warns.
12	Fact vs Opinion	A fact is verifiable; an opinion is a judgment or preference.		

Passages blend
both.

Value words
(best, worst,
should, clearly)
signal opinion
even in factual

writing.

'The city has
1.4M residents'
(fact) vs 'the city
is overcrowded'
(opinion).

13	Transition Words & Structure	Transitions show how ideas connect: however (contrast), therefore (result), for example (support), first/second (sequence).	The transition word is a roadmap - it tells you whether the next sentence agrees, opposes, or continues.	'The plan seemed good; HOWEVER, costs ballooned' - the second sentence opposes the first.
14	Answer-From-Text Discipline	For EVERY reading question, the answer must be traceable to the passage. If you cannot point to the supporting sentence, you are guessing.	Highlight the supporting sentence for main-idea and inference questions before you choose.	On practice, force yourself to write the line number that supports each answer - accuracy climbs fast.

Section 7: Reading - Literary Elements & Vocabulary in Context (12 Concepts)

About a third of Reading items cover literary elements and techniques plus vocabulary in context from the passages.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Plot & Structure	Plot is the sequence of events: exposition (setup), rising action, climax (turning point), falling action, resolution.	Name the story's turning point to answer most plot questions; the climax is where the conflict peaks.	In 'The Tortoise and the Hare', the climax is the hare's nap ending and the tortoise passing.
2	Character & Motivation	Character traits are shown by what characters say, do, and think, and by how others react. Motivation is the reason behind their actions.	Support every trait with a quoted action; the HSPT rewards text-based character answers.	'She practiced every night' supports the trait 'dedicated'.
3	Setting & Mood	Setting is where and when the story happens; it shapes mood (the feeling the reader gets).	Connect setting details (stormy, isolated cabin) to the mood they create (tense, lonely).	A story set in a quiet, sunlit garden likely creates a peaceful mood.
4	Theme	Theme is the story's central message about life or human nature - a general statement, not a plot summary.	Phrase the theme as a complete statement ('honesty builds trust'), not as an event ('the boy returns the wallet').	A fable about the fox and the grapes teaches the theme 'people scorn what they cannot have'.
5	Point of View	First person (I), second person (you), third person limited (one character's thoughts), third person omniscient (all characters' thoughts).	Spot pronouns to identify POV quickly: I/me = first; he/she + one mind = limited; multiple minds = omniscient.	'I didn't know what to say' - first person.

6	Simile & Metaphor	A simile compares using like/as; a metaphor compares directly without like/as.	When a question asks what a metaphor 'means', translate it into plain language: the comparison reveals a trait.	'The new policy was a bandage on a broken leg' = a temporary fix for a deep problem.
7	Personification & Imagery	Personification gives human qualities to nonhuman things. Imagery uses sensory words to create pictures.	Name the sense an image appeals to (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) to identify imagery.	'The wind whispered through the pines' - personification (wind whispering).
8	Tone & Attitude	Tone is the author's attitude toward the subject, shown through word choice: skeptical, approving, playful, somber.	Look for value words (clearly, sadly, unfortunately) that leak the attitude.	Calling a proposal 'reckless' reveals a disapproving tone.
9	Symbolism	A symbol is an object that stands for a larger idea: a dove = peace, a broken chain = freedom.	The HSPT asks what an object represents in the story - the meaning comes from the story's context.	A character's cracked mirror can symbolize a fractured self-image.
10	Vocabulary in Context	Choose the meaning of a word AS USED in the passage, not the dictionary definition.	Substitute each answer choice into the sentence; only the one that fits the exact context works.	In 'the plan was sound', 'sound' means 'valid or reliable', not 'noise'.
11	Context Clue Types	Definition clues (the word is defined nearby), synonym clues, contrast clues (however/but), and example clues help you infer meaning.	Read the sentence before and after the word; contrast words tell you the word means the opposite of the nearby idea.	'Unlike his talkative brother, he was taciturn' - taciturn means quiet (contrast clue).
12	Author's Techniques & Style	Questions may ask how the author achieves an effect: word choice, sentence		

rhythm, dialogue,
anecdote,
rhetorical
question, or
detailed
description.

Match the
technique to its
effect: an
anecdote builds
empathy, a

question
engages the
reader, details
create vividness.

Starting with a
surprising
statistic is a
technique to grab
attention.

Section 8: Mathematics - Numbers & Numeration (14 Concepts)

Mathematics is 64 items in 45 minutes - no calculator. Numbers & numeration covers number types, factors, fractions, decimals, percents, ratios, exponents, and roots.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Number Types	Integers are whole numbers and their negatives (... -2, -1, 0, 1, 2...). Rational numbers are fractions of integers (including all integers and terminating/repeating decimals). Irrationals (like the square root of 2) do not repeat or terminate.	Classify by the definition: an integer is a whole number with no fraction part; a rational is any a/b where b is not 0.	$0.75 = 3/4$ (rational); negative 5 is an integer and rational.
2	Place Value & Reading Numbers	Place value names each digit's worth: ones, tens, hundreds, thousands; decimals tenths, hundredths, thousandths.	Line up decimal points when comparing or adding; the digit farthest left with a nonzero value decides size first.	In 3,047.25, the 4 is in the tens place (40), the 2 is in the tenths place (0.2).
3	Factors & Multiples	Factors divide a number evenly; multiples are the products of the number with integers.	List factors in pairs (1 and n , 2 and $n/2$...) to avoid missing any.	Factors of 12: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12. Multiples of 4: 4, 8, 12, 16...
4	Prime Numbers & Factorization	A prime has exactly two factors: 1 and itself (2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13...). 1 is NOT prime. Every composite breaks into a unique product of primes.	Remember 2 is the only even prime; divisibility checks (by 2, 3, 5) speed factorization.	$60 = 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 5 = 2^2 \times 3 \times 5$

5	GCF & LCM	GCF (greatest common factor) is the largest factor shared by two numbers; LCM (least common multiple) is the smallest multiple they share.	For small numbers, list factors (GCF) or multiples (LCM); for larger, use prime factorization.	$\text{GCF}(12, 18) = 6$; $\text{LCM}(4, 6) = 12$.
6	Fractions: Add & Subtract	Find a common denominator, add/subtract the numerators, keep the denominator, then simplify.	The shortcut: $a/b \pm c/d = (ad \pm cb)/(bd)$, then reduce.	$1/4 + 1/6 = 3/12 + 2/12 = 5/12$.
7	Fractions: Multiply & Divide	Multiply straight across (top times top, bottom times bottom), cancel first. Divide by multiplying by the reciprocal (flip the second fraction).	Cancel common factors BEFORE multiplying to keep numbers small.	$3/4 \times 8/9 = (3 \times 8)/(4 \times 9) = 24/36 = 2/3$.
8	Decimals & Conversions	Decimals are fractions with powers of 10. Convert fractions to decimals by dividing; decimals to fractions by place value.	Memorize the common conversions: $1/2 = 0.5$, $1/4 = 0.25$, $3/4 = 0.75$, $1/5 = 0.2$, $1/8 = 0.125$.	$0.375 = 375/1000 = 3/8$.
9	Percents & the Percent Formula	Percent means 'per hundred'. Part = Percent x Whole. Percent change = (change / original) x 100.	Translate 'of' to multiply and 'is' to equals: 'what is 20% of 60' $\rightarrow x = 0.20 \times 60 = 12$.	A \$40 shirt at 25% off: discount = $0.25 \times 40 = \$10$; sale price \$30.
10	Ratios & Proportions	A ratio compares quantities (3:2); a proportion states two ratios are equal. Cross-multiply to solve.	Set up the proportion with matching units on each side, then cross-multiply.	If 2 cups of flour make 12 cookies, 5 cups make x: $2/12 = 5/x \rightarrow x = 30$ cookies.

11	Exponents	An exponent says how many times to multiply the base by itself: $3^4 = 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 = 81$. Any number to the zero power is 1.	Know the patterns: $x^1 = x$, $x^0 = 1$, and a negative exponent means reciprocal ($2^{-3} = 1/8$).	$2^5 = 32$; $10^3 = 1000$.
12	Square Roots	The square root of a number is the value that, times itself, gives the number: $\sqrt{49} = 7$. Perfect squares: 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, 64, 81, 100, 121, 144.	Start from the nearest known perfect square to estimate roots of non-perfect squares.	$\sqrt{144} = 12$; $\sqrt{50}$ is between 7 (49) and 8 (64), about 7.07.
13	Order of Operations (PEMDAS)	Parentheses, Exponents, Multiply/Divide (left to right), Add/Subtract (left to right).	Do multiplication and division together left-to-right, then addition and subtraction left-to-right.	$3 + 6 \times 2 = 3 + 12 = 15$, not 18. $(3 + 6) \times 2 = 18$.
14	Signed Numbers	Adding a negative moves left; subtracting a negative adds. Negative $\times$ negative = positive; negative $\times$ positive = negative.	Model with a number line to avoid sign errors; two negatives make a positive.	$(-3) + (-4) = -7$; $(-2) \times (-5) = 10$; $6 - (-2) = 8$.

Section 9: Mathematics - Measurement & Geometry (14 Concepts)

Measurement covers units and conversions; geometry covers angles, triangles, perimeter, area, volume, and the coordinate plane.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Units of Length & Conversions	Standard (customary) units: inches, feet (12 in), yards (3 ft), miles (5280 ft). Metric: mm, cm, m, km (powers of 10).	Memorize the four key conversions: 12 in = 1 ft, 3 ft = 1 yd, 5280 ft = 1 mi, 100 cm = 1 m.	3 feet = 36 inches; 2 miles = 10560 feet.
2	Units of Time & Weight	Time: 60 sec = 1 min, 60 min = 1 hr, 24 hr = 1 day. Weight: 16 oz = 1 lb, 2000 lb = 1 ton.	Convert in the right direction: to go big->small multiply, small->big divide.	90 minutes = 1.5 hours; 3 pounds = 48 ounces.
3	Perimeter	Perimeter = the distance around a shape: sum of all side lengths. Rectangle: $2(\text{length} + \text{width})$; square: $4 \times \text{side}$.	For any polygon, just add the sides; for rectangles the $2(L+W)$ shortcut saves time.	A 5 by 3 rectangle has perimeter $2(5+3) = 16$.
4	Area of Rectangles & Squares	Area = the space inside. Rectangle: $\text{length} \times \text{width}$; square: $\text{side} \times \text{side}$.	Area units are SQUARED (sq ft, sq cm); include the squared unit in your answer.	A 7 by 4 rectangle has area 28 sq units.
5	Area of Triangles	Triangle area = $\frac{1}{2} \times \text{base} \times \text{height}$. The height is perpendicular to the base.	The height is NOT a slanted side - find the right angle between base and height.	Base 10, height 6: area = $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 \times 6 = 30$.
6	Area of Circles	Circle area = $\pi \times r^2$ (r = radius). Circumference = $2 \times \pi \times r = \pi \times \text{diameter}$. π is about 3.14.	Read whether you are given the radius or the diameter; half the diameter first when needed.	Radius 5: area = 3.14×25 about 78.5; circumference = $2 \times 3.14 \times 5 = 31.4$.
7	Volume of Rectangular Prisms	Volume = $\text{length} \times \text{width} \times \text{height}$ for a box (or base area $\times$ height). Units are		

CUBED.

Match each
dimension to its
labeled edge;
volume
measures 3D

space.

A $4 \times 3 \times 2$ box
has volume 24
cubic units.

8	Angles: Types & Measures	Acute (< 90 deg), right ($= 90$), obtuse (> 90 , < 180), straight ($= 180$). A full circle $= 360$ deg.	Complementary angles sum to 90; supplementary angles sum to 180.	An angle of 35 degrees is acute; its complement is 55.
9	Parallel Lines & Transversals	A line crossing parallel lines creates equal angles: corresponding, alternate interior, and alternate exterior angles are equal; same-side interior angles sum to 180.	When you see parallel marks + a transversal, look for the 'Z' shape (alternate interior angles are equal).	If one angle on parallel lines is 70, the alternate interior angle is also 70.
10	Triangles: Sum & Types	The three angles of any triangle sum to 180 degrees. Equilateral = all sides/angles equal (60 each); isosceles = two equal; scalene = none.	If two angles are given, subtract from 180 to find the third.	A triangle with angles 50 and 60 has a third angle of 70.
11	Pythagorean Theorem	In a right triangle: $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$, where c is the hypotenuse (longest side, opposite the right angle).	Set up $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ with c as the LONGEST side, then solve for the missing piece.	Legs 3 and 4: $c^2 = 9 + 16 = 25$, $c = 5$ (the 3-4-5 triple).
12	Special Right Triangles	45-45-90: legs equal, hypotenuse = leg $\times \sqrt{2}$. 30-60-90: short leg $\times 2 =$ hypotenuse; long leg = short leg $\times \sqrt{3}$.	Recognize these triples on the test: 3-4-5, 5-12-13, 8-15-17 and their multiples.	A 45-45-90 with leg 6 has hypotenuse $6 \times \sqrt{2}$.
13	Coordinate Plane	Points are (x, y): x horizontal, y vertical. Distance from the axes = the absolute values of the coordinates.	Read coordinates as (right/left, up/down); the origin is (0, 0).	The point (3, -2) is 3 right and 2 below the origin.

14	Geometric Word Problems	Word problems wrap geometry in a story: fencing (perimeter), carpet (area), paint (area), water in a tank (volume).	Ask 'what does the story need - length around (perimeter), surface (area), or fill (volume)?'	Fencing a 20 x 30 yard: perimeter $2(20+30) = 100$ yards of fence.
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Section 10: Mathematics - Algebra (14 Concepts)

Algebra on the HSPT covers expressions, equations, inequalities, functions, slopes, and systems at an 8th-grade level.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Variables & Expressions	A variable is a letter standing for an unknown number; an expression combines numbers, variables, and operations (no equals sign).	Translate words to symbols first: 'a number increased by 3' = $n + 3$.	The expression for 'twice a number minus 5' is $2n - 5$.
2	Evaluating Expressions	To evaluate, substitute the given value for the variable, then follow order of operations.	Plug in the number in parentheses, then apply PEMDAS exactly.	Evaluate $3x + 2$ when $x = 4$: $3(4) + 2 = 14$.
3	Combining Like Terms	Like terms have the same variable part ($3x$ and $5x$; $4y^2$ and y^2). Add their coefficients.	Only combine terms with identical letters raised to the same power; $2x + 3y$ stays as is.	$3x + 5x = 8x$; $4a + 2a - a = 5a$.
4	Solving One-Step Equations	Isolate the variable by undoing the single operation: addition -> subtract; subtraction -> add; multiply -> divide; divide -> multiply.	Whatever you do to one side, do to the other (balance rule).	$x + 7 = 12$ -> $x = 5$. $3x = 21$ -> $x = 7$.
5	Two-Step & Multi-Step Equations	Two or more operations: undo addition/subtraction FIRST, then multiplication/division.	Reverse PEMDAS: deal with the outer (add/subtract) before the inner (multiply/divide).	$2x + 4 = 14$: subtract 4 ($2x = 10$), divide by 2 -> $x = 5$.
6	Inequalities	Inequalities use $<$, $>$, $\leq$, $\geq$, $=$. Solve like equations, BUT flip the sign when		

multiplying/dividing by a
NEGATIVE
number.

The flip rule is
the #1 algebra
mistake on the
HSPT - highlight
it in your

practice.

-2x < 8 >
divide by -2 flips:
x > -4.

7	Ratios as Equations	A proportion ($a/b = c/d$) is an equation; cross-multiply to solve for the unknown.	Cross-multiply: multiply across the 'X': $a \times d = b \times c$.	$3/4 = x/12$: $3 \times 12 = 4x$ -> $36 = 4x$ -> $x = 9$.
8	Slope of a Line	Slope = rise/run = (change in y)/(change in x) between two points. Positive slope rises left-to-right; negative falls.	Use the formula $(y_2 - y_1)/(x_2 - x_1)$ and keep the points in the same order.	From (1,2) to (3,6): slope = $(6-2)/(3-1) = 4/2 = 2$.
9	Linear Equations: $y = mx + b$	$y = mx + b$ is slope-intercept form: m = slope, b = y-intercept (where the line crosses the y-axis).	Read m and b straight off the equation when it is already in $y = mx + b$ form.	$y = 3x - 2$: slope 3, y-intercept -2.
10	Systems of Equations	Two equations with two unknowns; solve by substitution (replace one variable) or elimination (add/subtract equations).	Elimination is fastest when coefficients already match (or are opposites); substitution when one variable is alone.	$x + y = 10$ and $x - y = 2$: add -> $2x = 12$ -> $x = 6$, $y = 4$.
11	Exponents & Polynomials	Polynomials add like terms; exponents multiply when the base matches: $x^2 \times x^3 = x^5$.	When multiplying same bases, ADD exponents; when raising a power to a power, MULTIPLY them.	$2x^2 + 3x^2 = 5x^2$; $(x^2)^3 = x^6$.
12	Factoring Basics	Factoring pulls out a common factor: $6x + 9 = 3(2x + 3)$. Reverse of distributing.	Find the GCF of the terms and write it outside parentheses.	$12x + 8 = 4(3x + 2)$.
13	Functions & Function Tables	A function pairs each input with exactly one output. Tables show input -> output; find the rule and apply it.	Test the rule on every row before trusting it; the output for an input must be unique.	Table: 1 -> 3, 2 -> 5, 3 -> 7. Rule: output = $2 \times \text{input} + 1$. 4 -> 9.

14	Algebra Word Problems	Turn the story into an equation: give the unknown a letter, translate each phrase, solve, then check the answer in the original story.	The answer must make the STORY true, not just the algebra - re-read the question (it may ask for a related quantity).	'A number doubled plus 3 is 17' -> $2n + 3 = 17$ -> $n = 7$.
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Section 11: Mathematics - Statistics & Probability (10 Concepts)

Statistics & probability items are the smallest math category: mean/median/mode, range, graph reading, and basic probability.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Mean (Average)	Mean = sum of the values divided by the number of values.	Add every value exactly once, then divide by the count; check the count matches the data.	Mean of 4, 6, 8, 10: $(4+6+8+10)/4 = 28/4 = 7$.
2	Median	Median = the middle value when data is ordered from least to greatest. With an even count, average the two middle values.	ALWAYS sort first; the median is not the middle of the given order.	Data 5, 1, 9, 3, 7 -> sorted 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 -> median 5.
3	Mode & Range	Mode = the most frequent value (there can be none or several). Range = largest minus smallest.	Mode is about frequency (count), not value; range measures spread.	Data 2, 2, 5, 9 -> mode 2, range $9 - 2 = 7$.
4	Reading Graphs & Tables	Bar graphs compare categories; line graphs show change over time; tables store exact values; pie charts show parts of a whole.	Read the axis labels and units first; a quick misread of the scale wrecks the answer.	A bar graph of sales by month: read each bar's height against the y-axis scale.
5	Trends & Prediction	Trend questions ask what the data suggests next (rising, falling, steady). The answer stays close to the visible pattern.	Extend the visible trend one step; do not invent a reversal the data does not show.	Temperatures rising each month suggest the next month is likely warmer.
6	Probability Basics	Probability = favorable outcomes / total possible outcomes,		

written 0 to 1 (or
a percent).

Count the
favorable cases
and the total
cases
SEPARATELY

before dividing.

Rolling a 5 on a
6-sided die: $1/6$.

7	Independent Events	Two events are independent when one does not affect the other. $P(A \text{ and } B) = P(A) \times P(B)$.	Multiply the individual probabilities for 'and' when events are independent.	Flipping heads (1/2) then rolling a 3 (1/6): $1/2 \times 1/6 = 1/12$.
8	Making Predictions From Data	If a sample shows a rate, apply it to a larger group: '3 of 10 students walk; how many of 300 walk?'	Set up a proportion from the sample rate and solve.	$3/10 = x/300$ -> $x = 90$.
9	Choosing the Right Center	The test may ask which measure best describes data: median resists outliers, mean uses all values, mode shows the most common.	With an extreme outlier, the median is usually the fairer summary.	House prices with one mansion: median describes typical prices better than the mean.
10	Statistics Word Problems	Word problems combine measures: find a missing value given the mean, or compare two data sets.	Work backwards from the mean: $\text{total} = \text{mean} \times \text{count}$, then subtract the known values.	Mean of 5 numbers is 8 (total 40); four known sum to 31 -> the 5th is 9.

Section 12: Language - Punctuation & Capitalization (14 Concepts)

Language is 60 items in 25 minutes. Punctuation and capitalization questions ask you to identify (or choose) the correctly punctuated/capitalized sentence.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	End Marks	A statement ends with a period; a direct question with a question mark; a strong exclamation with an exclamation point.	On the test, pick the option with the correct end mark for the sentence type.	'Are you coming?' needs a question mark, not a period.
2	Commas in a List	Use commas between three or more items: apples, oranges, and grapes. The comma before 'and' (Oxford comma) is standard on the HSPT.	Count the items: two items take no comma; three or more take commas.	We bought milk, bread, and eggs.
3	Commas With Two Clauses	Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, so, yet, nor, for) joining two complete sentences.	The comma goes BEFORE the conjunction, and only when both sides are full sentences.	'She was tired, so she rested.' (Not: 'She was tired so rested.')
4	Commas After Introductions	Use a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause that begins the sentence.	If the sentence reads naturally when the opener is removed, it is an introduction needing a comma.	'After the game, we went home.'
5	Commas Around Interrupters	Commas set off extra info that can be lifted out without changing the sentence: appositives and nonessential phrases.	If you can remove the phrase and the sentence still works, it is an interrupter - surround it with commas.	'My brother, the tallest one, plays center.'

6	Apostrophes: Possession	Apostrophe + s shows singular possession (the dog's leash). For plural nouns ending in s, add the apostrophe after the s (the dogs' leashes).	Ask 'who owns it?' Singular owner: 's. Plural owner ending in s: s'.	James's book (or James' book - both accepted); the girls' team.
7	Apostrophes: Contractions	Contractions combine two words and drop letters: do not -> don't, I am -> I'm, they are -> they're.	The apostrophe marks the OMITTED letters - it is not a comma and never makes a plural.	'It's' = it is; 'the dog's' = possession. They are different uses.
8	Quotation Marks	Quotation marks enclose exactly what someone says and the comma/period goes INSIDE the closing quote.	Only direct speech (the spoken words) goes in quotes; 'said John' stays outside.	"I'll be there," she said. (Comma inside the quote.)
9	Colons	A colon introduces a list, an explanation, or a dramatic example after a COMPLETE sentence.	Never put a colon right after a verb or preposition ('The colors are: red, blue' is wrong).	Bring these: a pencil, an eraser, and water.
10	Semicolons	A semicolon joins two related complete sentences WITHOUT a conjunction.	Use a semicolon only where a period would also work; keep both sides full sentences.	'The test is long; bring a snack.'
11	Comma Splices & Run-Ons	A comma splice joins two sentences with only a comma ('She left, he stayed'). A run-on jams them together with no punctuation.	Fix by: period, semicolon, or comma + conjunction.	'She left, but he stayed' (comma + and/but fixes the splice).
12	Capitalization: Sentences & Proper Nouns	Capitalize the first word of every sentence and all proper nouns: names, days, months,		

holidays, and
specific places.

Do NOT
capitalize
common nouns
(city, school,
river) unless they
are part of a

NAME.

'We visited Lake Michigan and the city of Chicago.'

13	Capitalization: Titles	In titles, capitalize the first word, the last word, and all major words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs); do not capitalize short prepositions/conjunctions inside (of, and, the).	The first and last words always get capitals regardless of length.	The Catcher in the Rye - 'in' and 'the' stay lowercase inside.
14	Capitalization: Common Errors	Tricky cases: directions (north vs the North), seasons (fall vs Fall), family titles used as names ('I asked Dad' vs 'my dad').	Seasons and compass directions are lowercase unless they name a region; 'Dad' as a name is capped.	'We drove west through the South.' (direction lowercase, region capital).

Section 13: Language - Spelling, Grammar, Usage & Composition (14 Concepts)

The rest of the Language subtest: spelling rules, commonly confused words, agreement, verb tense, sentence structure, and short-answer composition items.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	Spelling: 'i before e'	The rule: i before e except after c, or when sounding like 'ay' (as in neighbor and weigh).	Memorize the exceptions: weird, either, neither, leisure, caffeine, seize.	Achieve, believe (i before e); receive, ceiling (after c); weigh, eight (ay sound).
2	Spelling: Plurals	Add s to most nouns (cats). Nouns ending in s, x, z, ch, sh add es (boxes, churches). Nouns ending in consonant + y change y to ies (city -> cities).	Watch for the consonant before the y: 'boy -> boys' (vowel + y, just add s).	Party -> parties; day -> days; bus -> buses.
3	Spelling: Doubling the Final Consonant	Double the final consonant when adding -ing/-ed to a short vowel word (plan -> planning) or a stressed syllable (refer -> referred).	The test gives real vs misspelled pairs - double only when the word is short with one vowel before the final consonant.	Run -> running; open -> opening (no double; last syllable not stressed).
4	Commonly Confused Words	High-yield sets: their/there/they're, to/too/two, its/it's, your/you're, affect/effect, lose/loose, then/than.	Substitute the meaning to check: 'there' = a place, 'they're' = they are, 'their' = belonging to them.	'They're putting their coats over there.'
5	Subject-Verb Agreement	The verb matches its subject in number: singular subject -> singular verb. Phrases between them do not change the subject.	Ignore interrupting phrases ('the box of cookies IS' - box is the subject, not cookies).	'The list of names is long.' (list, not names, is the subject.)

6	Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement	A pronoun agrees with its antecedent (the noun it replaces) in number and gender. Each, everyone, anybody are singular.	Words ending in -one, -body, -thing take singular pronouns.	'Everyone brought his or her book.' (Or the accepted singular 'their' in modern usage - but the HSPT answer key prefers consistency.)
7	Pronoun Case	Subject pronouns (I, he, she, we, they) do the action; object pronouns (me, him, her, us, them) receive it.	When a compound appears ('John and I'), test the pronoun alone to pick the case.	'Between you and me' (object); 'John and I went' (subject).
8	Verb Tense Consistency	Keep the same tense within a sentence or paragraph unless the time actually shifts.	If the story is past, stay past; a random present-tense verb is the error.	'She walked in, sat down, and opens her book' - the error is 'opens' (should be 'opened').
9	Adjectives vs Adverbs	Adjectives modify nouns; adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs (usually -ly).	After a linking verb (feel, seem, look), use an adjective: 'she feels bad', not 'badly'.	'He ran quickly' (adverb); 'the quick runner' (adjective).
10	Sentence Fragments	A fragment is an incomplete sentence missing a subject or a verb (or both). The test asks you to choose the complete sentence.	Every complete sentence needs a subject + verb and a complete thought.	'Running to the store without stopping.' - fragment (no subject doing it).
11	Run-On Sentences	Two or more complete sentences joined without correct punctuation or a conjunction.	Use a period, semicolon, or comma + conjunction to fix the run-on.	'The rain stopped the game continued.' -> 'The rain stopped; the game continued.'
12	Parallel Structure	Items in a list or pair must be in the same grammatical form: all nouns, all -ing verbs, all full phrases.	Scan the list and match the form of every item to the pattern set by the first.	'She likes hiking, biking, and to swim' - error; should be 'swimming'.

13	Modifiers & Placement	A modifier must sit next to the word it describes; a dangling modifier describes the wrong word.	Read the sentence and ask 'who is doing this action?' - the doer must come right after the opener.	'After the test, the pizza was eaten' - who ate? Fix: 'After the test, we ate pizza.'
14	Composition: Organization & Unity	Composition items ask you to order sentences into a logical paragraph or to choose the best topic sentence. A paragraph states one idea and supports it in order.	Topic sentence first (the point), supporting sentences after (details/examples), a concluding sentence last.	Order: 'We planted tomatoes. They need sun. We water them daily.' - the point sentence leads.

Section 14: Test-Day Strategy & Pacing (12 Concepts)

The HSPT is one shot, on paper, in school: know the order, the time limits, the no-calculator rule, and how to manage the answer sheet.

#	Term	Key Facts	HSPT Tip	Example
1	The One-Shot Rule	8th graders take the HSPT ONCE for their admission cycle - there are no retakes for the same application. Pre-HSPT (7th grade) is a separate practice form.	Treat the real test as your only chance: prep in advance, and do NOT save energy for a 'second try' that will not come.	A student scoring below their goal on the real HSPT cannot simply retake it the next month.
2	The Timed Schedule	The battery runs about 2.5 hours in one sitting: Verbal (16-18 min), Quantitative (30 min), Reading (25 min), Math (45 min), Language (25 min).	Know the order cold so nothing surprises you; the proctor reads the timing for each subtest.	Math is the longest block at 45 minutes - plan your snack and bathroom break accordingly.
3	Paper-and-Pencil Format	The HSPT is a printed test booklet with a separate answer sheet - not a computer test. You mark bubbles with a pencil (usually No. 2).	Fill bubbles completely and erase cleanly; a stray mark can be scanned as a wrong answer.	Practice bubbling on a real answer sheet layout at home so it is automatic.
4	No Calculators	Calculators are NOT allowed on Quantitative Skills or Mathematics under standardized conditions.	Do all practice without a calculator so the real test has no shock; use scratch paper for arithmetic.	For 7 x 8, write the multiplication out - no device will be on your desk.

5	Answer Every Question	There is NO penalty for guessing - wrong answers and blanks count the same (zero).	Never leave a bubble blank; eliminate wrong choices first, then guess on the rest.	A 1-in-4 blind guess is worth a point chance; a blank is worth nothing.
6	Answer-Sheet Discipline	One subtests at a time: bubble as you go (every 5 questions, check the number matches the question). Illegal: skipping around without matching the sheet.	Periodically verify the bubble number against the question number - the #1 HSPT score-killer is a shifted answer sheet.	If you skip a hard question, LEAVE ITS BUBBLE BLANK in the same spot so the numbering stays aligned.
7	Pacing Per Subtest	Verbal ~17 sec/item (60 in 16-18 min), Quantitative ~35 sec/item (52 in 30 min), Reading ~24 sec/item (62 in 25 min), Math ~42 sec/item (64 in 45 min), Language ~25 sec/item (60 in 25 min).	Use the subtest's own clock: do confident items first, mark skipped, return before the subtest ends.	In Math, 10 of the 45 minutes reserved for review/return beats rushing every item.
8	The Optional Subtest	At the school's option, one additional 40-item test (Science or Catholic Religion) is given AFTER the battery. It is NOT counted in the Composite.	Ask your school which optional test, if any, it administers - and prep accordingly without over-investing.	The score report shows it separately (SC or RL) with raw scores instead of standard scores.
9	What Your Score Report Shows	You get a standard score (200-800) for each subtest and for the Cognitive, Basic, and Composite scores, plus national/local percentiles, stanines, and the CSQ (mean		

100).

			Know where the school looks: most weigh the Composite and often the Cognitive Skills score.	A Composite of 600 (mean 500) sits about one standard deviation above average.
10	Reading the Passage Strategy	On Reading (25 min / 62 items), read the question BEFORE the passage so you		

know what to
hunt for;
main-idea
questions are
best answered
after a quick first
read.

For main idea,
read the first and
last sentences of
the passage - the
author states the

point there most often.

A question asking 'the central thought' is answered by the passage's

topic sentence,
not a random
detail.

11	Mental Game & Breaks	Five subtests in 2.5 hours is endurance; the order ends with Language, so pace energy across ALL blocks, not just the first.	Use transition moments to reset: roll shoulders, breathe, and start the next subtest fresh - a tired last-block drops more points than a slow start.	Treat Math (the 4th block) as the 'keep your head' test - it is the longest and most calculation-heavy .
12	The Night Before & Morning Of	Pack: photo ID if required, two sharpened No. 2 pencils, an eraser, a water bottle (school rules permitting), and comfortable layers.	Sleep 8+ hours, eat a protein breakfast, and arrive early - logistics protect the score you earned in practice.	A calm morning routine (wake, breakfast, arrive) beats last-minute cramming every time.

Final Review: 48-Hour Rapid Review

The highest-yield items to drill in your final two days.

- The HSPT is one paper-and-pencil sitting of 298 questions, five subtests in order: Verbal (60 items, 16-18 min), Quantitative (52 items, 30 min), Reading (62 items, 25 min), Math (64 items, 45 min), Language (60 items, 25 min). Scores are 200-800 (mean 500); your CSQ reads like an IQ score (mean 100). No calculators, no retakes, no guessing penalty - answer EVERY question.

- Verbal: synonyms/antonyms pick the CLOSEST meaning or strongest opposite (match word class and intensity). Analogies: name the relationship (synonym, antonym, part-whole, worker-tool, cause-effect, degree, category) and match BOTH relationship and order. Classification: group three words, find the odd one. Logical reasoning: the answer MUST follow from the premises; watch converse errors ('all A are B' does NOT make 'all B are A') and overgeneralizations.

- Quantitative: series look for constant add/subtract/multiply, alternating patterns, and growing differences. Manipulations run one operation at a time in exact order; work backwards by reversing operations. Comparison items: cancel common parts, compare structurally, and choose 'cannot be determined' when a variable can flip the answer.

- Reading: answer from the TEXT - main idea covers the whole passage, details need the supporting sentence, inferences stay inside the text plus one safe step. Understand plot, character, setting, theme, point of view, simile/metaphor, tone, and vocabulary in context (substitute the options into the sentence).

- Math: PEMDAS; fractions (common denominator to add; flip to divide); percent change relative to ORIGINAL; proportions cross-multiply; perimeter = sum of sides, rectangle area = $L \times W$, triangle = $\frac{1}{2}bh$, circle area = πr^2 ; volume = $L \times W \times H$; angles of a triangle sum to 180; Pythagorean $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$; slope = rise/run; $y = mx + b$; solve equations by undoing (add/subtract first, then multiply/divide); flip inequalities when dividing by a negative; mean = sum/count; median = middle of SORTED data; probability = favorable/total.

- Language: commas separate a list of 3+, join two clauses with a conjunction, close an introduction, and surround interrupters; apostrophes = possession or contraction (never plurals); colons follow complete sentences; semicolons join full sentences; comma splices and run-ons are errors. Capitalize proper nouns, sentence starts, and the major words of titles. Spelling: i before e except after c (and the 'ay' sound); plurals (s, es, y->ies); double the final consonant on short words (plan->planning).

Agreement: subject (not the phrase in between) drives the verb; pronouns match their antecedent. Parallel structure keeps a list in one form; fragments and run-ons are wrong; modifiers must sit next to what they describe.

- Test-day: bubble as you go and check every 5 questions; leave skipped bubbles in place; answer everything; pace each subtest (Verbal fast, Math 42 sec/item); no calculators; expect the optional Science or Religion test if your school adds it (not counted in Composite). Sleep, eat, pack pencils, arrive early.

Test-Day Blueprint: The 10-Point Checklist

A condensed checklist to review the morning of the test.

- 1. Confirm the time, location, and any required ID with the school; pack two sharpened No. 2 pencils, an eraser, and a water bottle.
- 2. Know the order and time limits: Verbal 60/16-18 min, Quantitative 52/30 min, Reading 62/25 min, Math 64/45 min, Language 60/25 min.
- 3. No calculators on Quantitative or Math - do everything by hand with scratch paper.
- 4. Answer EVERY question - there is no guessing penalty; a blank is worth zero, a guess can be worth a point.
- 5. Bubble as you go and re-check the bubble number against the question number every 5 questions.
- 6. For questions you skip, leave the matching bubble blank so the answer sheet stays aligned; return if time allows.
- 7. Verbal: name the relationship for analogies; classification = find the category of three; logical reasoning = pick what MUST follow.
- 8. Reading: read the question before the passage; main idea = whole passage; inference = text plus one safe step.
- 9. Math: write out PEMDAS, set up proportions by cross-multiplying, and sketch geometry - the work catches the errors.
- 10. After the test: expect subtest + composite standard scores (200-800), percentiles, stanines, and a CSQ - then bring your best into the school interview and the rest of your application.
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- Remember: HSPT(R) is a registered trademark of Scholastic Testing Service, Inc. This guide is an independent study aid, not affiliated with or endorsed by STS. Verify the current format, scoring, and policies with your school or STS directly.