



**EXAM PAPERS PLUS**

**THE COMPLETE**  
**GUIDE TO CSSE 11+**  
**CONTINUOUS**  
**WRITING**



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# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

# ABOUT THIS STUDY GUIDE

This guide will help candidates taking the CSSE 11+ Selective Test to maximise their mark in the Continuous Writing section of the English paper. It covers the key points of successful creative writing and specifically considers what CSSE examiners will be looking for when marking papers. Key aspects of the mark scheme will be explained so that candidates will know how to improve their marks and impress the examiner. This guide will also benefit pupils in other aspects of their school work and will be useful preparation for Key Stage 3 English lessons at secondary school.

The Continuous Writing section of the CSSE test is worth 15 marks, which is a third of the total test mark for English. Although it is not worth as many marks as the two other sections combined, the Continuous Writing section of the question paper provides test-takers with a real opportunity to shine and stand out from the other candidates. Strong candidates will score full marks in the Applied Reasoning section of the paper, and it is probable, indeed likely, that many candidates will give identical or very similar answers in the Comprehension section. This means that securing a place at a selective school will hinge on the few sentences that the candidate writes for the Continuous Writing tasks. For this reason, it is worth treating the Continuous Writing section very seriously indeed.

There are two aspects to exam success, regardless of the exam and regardless of the subject. One is knowledge of the subject. In the context of the CSSE English test, this means being able to spell, form complex sentences, have mature ideas, etc. – an examiner will soon spot if a candidate is unequal to the task. However, knowledge of the subject is not necessarily enough to sail through exams, especially the 11+ exam, which attracts large numbers of very able candidates. The second aspect that plays a role is exam technique. Brainy people of all ages have failed exams because they misread or misinterpreted the question, wrote brilliant but irrelevant information, ran out of time or simply panicked.

This guide will cover both subject knowledge and exam technique. The information it provides will ensure that, regardless of the Continuous Writing task you are faced with on the day of the 11+ exam, you will be able to tackle it confidently. This section of the test can be prepared for in advance, and this guide will provide ideas, as well as key skills and techniques, thus giving you a head start.

## How can parents help?

The greatest gift you can give your children is to instil a love of reading in them. Quite apart from helping a child to pass exams, reading really does nourish a child's imagination and open up whole new worlds. From a more practical point of view, reading helps children to acquire new vocabulary and to recognise and produce correct spelling. One of the commonest complaints of educators is that children do not read enough – they are more likely to be familiar with the Disney version of fairy tales and children's classics, than with the vastly superior original versions.

So, the most useful thing you, as a parent, can do to help your child's studies is to encourage them to read. Don't treat reading as homework. Instead, treat it as a pleasurable activity that you can share with your child. Be a good role model – you can't expect your child to enjoy reading if they never see you enjoying a book.

What can you do to encourage your child to read?

- Talk about books at the dinner table or while in the car.
- Read books together, perhaps taking turns to read aloud. This is an ideal activity for grandparents and grandchildren to enjoy together; it's a rare adult who doesn't enjoy reading *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* or *The Wind in the Willows*.
- Borrow books regularly from libraries.
- Browse bookshops, including second-hand and charity bookshops where there are good bargains to be had.
- Give books as presents to your own children and to young relatives, and encourage other people to give books to your children as gifts.

There is a list of books worth reading on the Exam Papers Plus website:  
<https://exampapersplus.co.uk/reading-list-11-plus-english-exam/>

## **SECTION 1:**

# **THE CONTINUOUS** **WRITING TASKS**

### **Topics covered:**

Identify the type of question

Show, don't tell

Bring in all five senses

Set the tone.