

Making Everything Easier!™

# SSAT® & ISEE® FOR DUMMIES®

## Learn to:

- Ace the math sections with ease
- Analyze reading passages using trusted tips and tricks
- Master the most common vocabulary words
- Prepare for the requirements of each test with problems, exercises, drills, and practice exams

**Vince Kotchian**

*Test-prep tutor and admissions consultant*

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Slow Down

Skip a Question

Stretch Your Neck

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Keep Everything in Perspective

Cheat Sheet

***SSAT® & ISEE® For Dummies®***

**by Vince Kotchian and Curt  
Simmons**



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**Curt Simmons** is a professional educator and freelance writer. Curt holds a master's degree in education and has taught 6th through 12th grade students as well as adult learners. He's the author of numerous books about computers and technology and several test-prep titles on a variety of topics, including many *For Dummies* titles. Curt has also developed iPhone applications and has written custom courseware for several U.S. companies. When Curt isn't teaching or writing, he spends his time with his wife and two daughters and is perpetually remodeling his 100-year-old Victorian home. He lives in Texas, loves hanging out at his family cabin in Arkansas, and visits Hawaii as often as possible.

# **Dedication**

Vince and Curt would like to dedicate this book to all the students who love learning and are constantly striving to do well in school. We're depending on you for the future!

# **Authors' Acknowledgments**

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# Introduction

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When you first heard you needed to take either the SSAT or ISEE in order to gain admission to a private school you want to attend, your first thought probably wasn't very enthusiastic. On the other hand, you're a student, so you know a thing or two about taking tests, and you may be thinking, "Just another day, another test — no big deal."

But hang on to that thought. The SSAT and ISEE aren't like exams you're used to. The SSAT and ISEE are designed to test your achievement in school thus far — they're not subject matter exams or simply exams where you can study a few pages of notes and then hit the test with your short-term knowledge. No, the SSAT and ISEE are exams that find out how much you know about reading, writing, and math. The content can span all kinds of subjects and questions, and the goal isn't to see whether you know a block of material; the goal is to see what potential you have for success at a private school.

The good news is the SSAT and ISEE don't test little details about little details. You won't find any direct questions about science, history, music, art, and a whole host of potential topics. But don't misunderstand; the SSAT and ISEE aren't easy tests. They determine how well you read and write and how well you can solve math problems based on your grade level.

The worst thing about all of this is that you're under stringent time limits on each test, so you need some specific skills and tactics to do well. That point brings us to why we wrote this book: to help you prepare to take the test so you can do as well as possible. After all, scoring well on the test isn't just about what you know; it's about what you know about taking a test like the SSAT and ISEE. The good news is you've come to the right place to prepare. With *SSAT & ISEE For Dummies*, you

discover how to tackle the test, manage your time, answer questions quickly and accurately, and get the best score possible. That, after all, is the goal.

## About This Book

The SSAT and ISEE are two different exams that basically do the same thing. They're created by different companies that provide these *standardized* tests to private schools all over the United States. The exams help school officials and admissions officers determine your current ability, as compared to other students your age around the country. They then use this information to determine your likelihood of success at their school.

So what's the difference between the SSAT and the ISEE? Which one should you take? Your school may require one test over the other, so you may not even have an option. Be sure to check out the admissions requirements at your school so you know for sure. If you can take either one, you'll find that the two exams are very similar because they cover the same basic type of content: math, reading, language comprehension, and writing. You can find out more about the content on each exam in Chapter 1. So if you're on the fence about which exam you should take, check out that chapter before you do anything else in this book.

The SSAT provides lower and upper level exams, and the ISEE provides lower, middle, and upper level exams. Which exam you take depends on what grade you're in because they're designed for different grade levels. (Check out Chapter 1 for more info about the different levels of the SSAT and ISEE.)

Because the SSAT and ISEE consist of the same basic content, covering both exams in one book makes sense. We've organized

this book to focus on different areas of the exam, such as reading, language, writing, and math. Throughout this book, you can find plenty of techniques, tools, and tips to help you get the best score in each section. We also include a bunch of practice questions and full-length practice exams because we believe that perfect practice makes perfect performance.

# Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate this book, we use the following conventions:

- ✓ We use *italics* to introduce new terms. We especially use this in math and language chapters.
- ✓ **Boldface** shows you the action part of a list of steps or is used to highlight a main point or idea.
- ✓ Monofont is used to indicate a web address. If a web address is long, it may wrap to the next line in your book, but we don't include any extra dashes or anything if it breaks to a new line. In other words, just type the web address as you see it in the book, and it'll take you where you need to go.
- ✓ Some words appear in ***this font***. These words are vocabulary words we've chosen to shine a spotlight on to help you prep for the exam.