

# CAT 4 Frequently Asked Questions

## What is CAT4?

CAT4 stands for Cognitive Abilities Tests. It is a series of short digital tests designed to help students and their teachers understand how students learn and what their academic potential might be. Each test “battery” will assess a student’s **reasoning (thinking) abilities** in four key areas that support students’ educational development and academic attainment;

- Verbal reasoning (*thinking with words*)
- Quantitative reasoning (*thinking with numbers*)
- Non-verbal reasoning (thinking with shapes and space)
- Spatial ability (thinking with visual images)

GL Assessment’s CAT4 is the UK’s most widely-used test of reasoning abilities. As the results are standardised against 25,000 students each year, they provide an accurate baseline against national benchmarks. They also provide reliable indicators for Key Stage 2 SATs and GCSEs.

## What is the purpose of CAT4?

CATs are not designed to test knowledge or fact retention, but children’s abilities to think in particular ways including understanding, memory, reasoning and decision-making. The tests assess how well children can think through certain problems, apply logic or connect basic facts to arrive at the correct solution without any prior knowledge implied by the questions. This helps teachers to see what each child’s academic potential might be, as well as to identify areas where they may need additional support.

## When do students sit CAT4?

In 2024, Year 7 students will sit the CAT4 Level D tests in a double lesson between Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November. Each of the 3 CAT4 assessments will take place within their timetabled lessons and will be supervised by the teachers who usually teach those lessons.

- Part 1 – figure classification and figure matrices – 40 minutes
- Part 2 – verbal classification, verbal analogies and number analogies – 41 minutes
- Part 3- number series, figure analysis and figure recognition – 41 minutes

## How are CAT4 results used?

CAT4 provides teachers with information that can form the basis for discussions about how best a student can learn and reach his or her potential in school. Teachers are provided with an individual profile of learning preference along with a range of indicators of likely future performance at Key Stage 4.

## Can students practice for CAT4?

Since the tests are based on reasoning rather than knowledge they do not require fact-based learning, revision or preparation. We strongly advise against any kind of practice ahead of a CAT4 test as this will alter the reliability of test scores. The point of CAT4 is that it is not a test of learnt knowledge and it needs to be as unaffected as possible by any external factors, such as practice. Think of it like an eye test; if you practice ahead of

an eye test and memorise the card, your diagnosis may not be correct and valuable information may be missed.

CAT4 is a timed assessment and is administered under formal conditions. The first part of each session includes guidance with practice examples, so students can familiarise themselves with the style and format of the questions before the assessment begins. These sections are not timed and may be repeated.

### **Is additional time allowed for children with SEND?**

CAT4 is a timed assessment and additional time is not permitted as this will affect the reliability of the results. CAT4 is not just about what and how it tests, but how the questions are answered within a set timeframe. The timed element makes it diagnostically very powerful.

Each test is generously timed and most students reach the final questions, however there may have been a minority of students during the standardisation process who would have obtained higher scores if they had been given more time. Therefore, giving extra time to a particular student could give an inflated view of their relative ability when comparing their results with the CAT4 norms.

Children who routinely have a reader (in a SATs Maths test, for example) may be supported by a reader through the introductory sections of the Verbal Reasoning, Non-Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative and Spatial Reasoning batteries, however students need to answer the timed sections independently. This means that students must also read the Verbal Reasoning section of the test by themselves without a reader.

We advise that any parents/carers who may have a concern, should discuss this with our SEND team.

### **Are CATs set by the government?**

No. The tests are created by GL Assessment and are entirely independent of the government. The tests are marked by GL Assessment.