

King's Scholarship compulsory papers

Minor change of paper specification for 2021 onwards

In recent years, General 1 papers have contained a variety of interesting questions and elicited some wonderful responses from candidates. However, it has not been an entirely satisfactory paper in terms of identifying scholars. The reason behind this lies in the diversity of the style of questions: question 1, which has often focussed on critical response to a painting or other work of art, has favoured those candidates with a flair for the humanities and English; questions 2 and 3 have focussed on logical thinking which has favoured candidates strong at languages and/or the sciences. Overall, we have found that many candidates who have excelled on question 1 have done far less well on questions 2 and 3, and vice versa. As a result, the total scores on the paper have had a low spread and so the paper has not been entirely successful in finding the best candidates.

As a result, for 2021 we are making a change to the structure of some papers. Overall, this change should not affect the way that candidates need to prepare for the examinations – we are simply reallocating questions between papers so that trends can be more easily identified.

We are moving question 1 of General 1 into the English paper. The final question of the English paper which aims to identify creative writing skills will now form a new short paper. General 1 will also now be shorter in length. Below is a summary:

Paper	Prior to 2021	In 2021 and beyond
English	Two main sections: 1. Response to a passage 2. Creative writing	Two main sections: 1. Response to a passage 2. Formerly section 1 of General 1.
General 1	Three main sections. The first section usually concerned a work of art.	Two main sections – these were formerly the last two sections of General 1. These will test logical inference skills, and are likely to have either a linguistic, scientific or mathematical bent.
Creative writing	New in 2021	This will give boys the opportunity to show their creativity and flair with the English language. This used to be tested as the final question in English 1.

This change means that in 2021 there will be 5 compulsory papers. Candidates will receive a grade for each paper. However, the papers will not all be equally weighted– the weighting will be roughly proportional to the length of each paper. Overall, the weighting given to any individual elements will be the same as in previous years.