

## 13+ PAST PAPER PACK

# Eton College 13+ General 2024

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# Eton College King's Scholarship Examination 2024

## GENERAL I

(One hour)

**Remember to write your candidate number on every sheet of answer paper used.**

***You must answer both questions.***

*Each question is worth the same number of marks.*

*You need not answer the questions in the order set, **but you must start each one on a separate piece of paper.***

*If you have not finished a question after 30 minutes, **you are strongly advised to leave it and go on to the other.** Return to any unfinished question if you have time left at the end of the paper.*

**Do not turn over until told to do so.**

GENERAL I

**Question 1: START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW.**

*If you have not finished this question after 30 minutes, you are strongly advised to leave it and go on to the other.*

- (a) The compressed nature of newspaper headlines can give rise to ambiguity. That ambiguity can in turn generate humour. Explain why the following real headlines are both ambiguous and amusing. Credit will be awarded for the clarity and concision of your explanation.

1. Foot Heads Arms Body
2. Queen Mary Has Bottom Scraped
3. British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands [8]

- (b) Consider the following ambiguous headlines. They can be split into groups according to their respective sources of ambiguity.

1. Enraged Cow Injures Farmer with Axe
2. Black Cab Drivers Banned from City Centre
3. Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim
4. Hospitals Sued by Seven Foot Doctors
5. Child's Stool Great for Use in Garden
6. Blind Bishop Appointed to See
7. Bar Trying to Help Alcoholic Lawyers
8. Belgian Ships Head to Libya

- (i) Without explaining each sentence, describe with concision how you might categorise these headlines into two equally-sized but distinct groups *based on their ambiguity* and indicate which headlines you would place in which group. [5]

- (ii) Suggest a different way you might categorise these headlines into two groups. [2]

- (c) The following sentence is grammatically correct. In each case give the simplest possible answer.

That alpaca that boy that strokes that llama thinks loves scratches bites.

- (i) Who/what bites whom/what? [2]
- (ii) Who/what scratches whom/what? [2]
- (iii) Who/what thinks what? [2]

- (d) Here is another grammatically correct sentence. Explain what it means and say whether you agree.

Boys boys boys bully bully bully. [4]

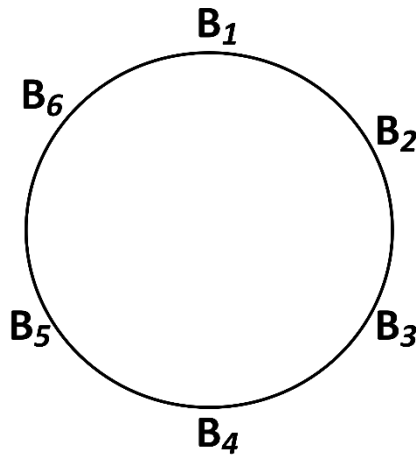
[Total mark for Question 1: 25]

**Question 2: START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW.**

*If you have not finished this question after 30 minutes, you are strongly advised to leave it and go back to the other.*

**Where there are multiple marks, most of the credit will be given for clear reasoning, rather than just the final answer.**

There are six boys sitting together at lunch on a circular table. They have been labelled accordingly, with B representing Boy and a different number indicating a different boy as per below:



In the following questions, the boys involved make statements about each other. Each boy is either reliably honest and always tells the truth or is reliably dishonest and always lies.

- Suppose all six boys say, "The boy directly opposite me is telling the truth." One possible scenario is that all boys are telling the truth. In total, how many different possible scenarios are there? Explain your answer. [2]
- Now suppose that all six boys say, "The boy to my left is lying." In total, how many different possible scenarios are there? Explain your answer. [4]

Now  $n$  people  $P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n$  sit in order around a circular table with  $P_1$  sitting to  $P_n$ 's left.

- Suppose that all  $n$  people make the statement "the person on my left is lying *and* the person on my right is telling the truth". Explain why everyone is lying. [4]

GENERAL I

Another six boys took part in an archery competition: Alex, Billy, Christopher, Dave, Eric, and Fasina. The tournament had three compulsory rounds: rounds 1 to 3. In each round every player shot one arrow at a target. Hitting the bull's eye fetched the highest score of 5. The only other possible scores that a player could achieve were 4, 3, 2 and 1; 0 was not a possible score. Every bull's eye scored in the first three rounds gave a player one additional chance to shoot in the bonus rounds: rounds 4 to 6. The *possible* scores in rounds 4 to 6 were identical to those in the first three rounds.

A player's total score in the tournament was the sum of his scores in all rounds played by him. The table below presents partial information on points scored by the boys after completion of the tournament. In the table, NP means that the player did not participate in that round, while a dash means that the player participated in that round and the score information is missing.

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6
<b>Alex</b>	—	4	—	5	NP	NP
<b>Billy</b>	—	—	—	1	2	NP
<b>Christopher</b>	—	4	—	NP	NP	NP
<b>Dave</b>	—	—	—	1	5	—
<b>Eric</b>	—	—	3	5	NP	NP
<b>Fasina</b>	—	—	—	5	5	NP

The following facts are also known:

Fact 1: Alex, Billy and Eric had the same total score.

Fact 2: The total scores for all players, except one, were multiples of three.

Fact 3: The highest total player score was one more than double of the lowest total player score.

Fact 4: The number of players hitting the bull's eye in round 2 was double of that in round 3.

Fact 5: Alex and Fasina had the same score in round 1 but different scores in round 3.

d) Giving clear reasoning, complete as much of the table as possible. You are welcome to copy out the grid as part of your response. [15]

[Total mark for Question 2: 25]

**END OF PAPER**

# Paper Notes: 13+ General Question Paper (13+ General Past Paper (2024))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is **Eton College's King's Scholarship Examination General I paper** from **2024**, designed for **13+ entry** to Year 9. The King's Scholarship is one of the most prestigious academic scholarships in the UK, and the General papers test candidates' lateral thinking, logical reasoning, and linguistic agility rather than curriculum knowledge.

The paper contains **two equally weighted questions** (25 marks each) to be completed in **one hour**. Question 1 focuses on **linguistic ambiguity and sentence parsing**, requiring candidates to explain humorous newspaper headlines, categorise sources of ambiguity, and decode complex grammatical structures. Question 2 tests **logical reasoning** through truth-teller and liar puzzles, then moves to a demanding **deductive reasoning puzzle** about an archery competition with multiple constraints.

Candidates are explicitly advised to spend **30 minutes per question** and to start each question on a new sheet. The paper rewards **clear reasoning and explanation** over simply finding correct answers. This is not a curriculum test but an assessment of raw intellectual capability, making it highly suitable for exceptionally able students preparing for scholarship or selective independent school entrance.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper is divided into **two questions of equal weight**, each worth **25 marks**, to be completed within **one hour**. Candidates are strongly advised to allocate 30 minutes per question and must start each on a separate sheet of answer paper.

Question 1 is subdivided into four parts (a to d) focusing on language and syntax. Part (a) asks for explanations of three ambiguous headlines (8 marks), part (b) requires categorisation of eight headlines in two different ways (5 marks plus 2 marks), part (c) demands parsing of a grammatically complex sentence with three sub-questions (6 marks total), and part (d) asks for interpretation of another unusual sentence (4 marks).

Question 2 contains four parts (a to d) exploring logical reasoning. Parts (a), (b), and (c) build complexity around truth-teller and liar puzzles at a circular table (2, 4, and 4 marks respectively). Part (d) is a substantial **15-mark deductive puzzle** about an archery competition, requiring candidates to complete a partially filled table using five stated facts and logical inference. Credit is given primarily for **clear reasoning** rather than final answers alone.

## Topics covered

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- Linguistic ambiguity: syntactic ambiguity, lexical ambiguity, and structural ambiguity in compressed newspaper headlines
- Categorisation and taxonomy: grouping ambiguous sentences according to their underlying sources of ambiguity
- Complex sentence parsing: decoding nested relative clauses with multiple embeddings (centre-embedded structures)
- Grammatical analysis: identifying subjects, objects, and verbs in syntactically unusual but grammatically correct sentences
- Logical reasoning with constraints: truth-teller and liar puzzles involving circular seating arrangements
- Proof and explanation: demonstrating why certain logical configurations are impossible given stated constraints
- Deductive reasoning with incomplete information: completing a table using multiple interrelated facts and numerical constraints
- Constraint satisfaction: solving multi-variable puzzles where each fact narrows the solution space
- Mathematical reasoning: working with multiples, ratios, and linear relationships between scores

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Practise parsing newspaper headlines by identifying which words can function as nouns, verbs, or adjectives, and sketch out competing interpretations.
- Work through logic puzzles involving truth-tellers and liars, particularly those with circular or symmetrical arrangements where patterns emerge.
- Decode complex sentences by bracketing nested clauses one at a time, working from the innermost clause outward to identify who does what to whom.
- When tackling constraint-satisfaction puzzles, start by listing all facts, then look for the most restrictive constraint to establish a foothold.
- For the archery puzzle, calculate minimum and maximum possible totals for each player based on known scores and the bull's eye rule before applying the facts.
- Practise explaining your reasoning step by step in prose; the examiners reward clear justification as much as correct answers.
- Time yourself strictly on multi-part questions; if stuck on one sub-part, move on and return later rather than sacrificing the entire second question.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Failing to identify all possible interpretations of ambiguous headlines; students often spot one reading but miss the alternative that creates the humour.
- Confusing lexical ambiguity (a word with multiple meanings) with syntactic ambiguity (sentence structure allowing multiple parsings); these are distinct sources.
- In nested-clause sentences, losing track of which 'that' is a relative pronoun and which is a demonstrative, leading to incorrect subject-verb pairings.
- In truth-teller puzzles, assuming local consistency without checking that the pattern works all the way around the circle; solutions must be globally consistent.
- Jumping to conclusions in the archery puzzle without verifying that all five facts are satisfied; one overlooked constraint can invalidate an entire solution.
- Stating a final answer without showing working or reasoning; on this paper, an unexplained correct answer earns fewer marks than a well-reasoned near-miss.

## Exam technique

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Allocate **30 minutes per question** as the rubric advises. Start with whichever question you find more approachable, but commit fully to finishing one question before moving to the other. If you reach the 30-minute mark and are stuck on a sub-part, write a brief statement of your reasoning so far and move on; partial credit is available for clear thinking even without a complete answer.

For Question 1, write concisely but precisely. The rubric rewards **clarity and concision**, so aim for economical explanations that demonstrate you understand both interpretations of each ambiguous headline. In part (c), bracket the nested clauses on scrap paper before writing your final answers. For Question 2, show all reasoning step by step, especially in part (d); list what each fact tells you and how you narrow possibilities.

If time permits, return to any incomplete parts and add further reasoning or check your logic. In the archery puzzle, double-check that your completed table satisfies all five facts simultaneously. Remember that this is a **reasoning paper**, not a knowledge test, so clear explanation of your thought process is as valuable as arriving at the correct solution.

## What to revise alongside this paper

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To prepare for this type of paper, practise **lateral thinking puzzles** and **logic grid puzzles** found in books by Raymond Smullyan or in puzzle magazines. Work through problems involving knights and knaves, circular reasoning, and constraint satisfaction.

Strengthen your grammatical intuition by studying **complex sentence structures**, particularly relative clauses and embedding; resources on transformational grammar or syntax trees can help.

Explore **linguistic puzzles** from the UK Linguistics Olympiad or similar competitions, which test the ability to decode unfamiliar structures and spot patterns. Practise **formal logic** at an introductory level, including truth tables and proof techniques, as these underpin the reasoning required in Question 2. Finally, read about **ambiguity in natural language**, including garden-path sentences and structural ambiguity, to develop sensitivity to multiple interpretations.

For students aiming at the King's Scholarship, attempting past General papers from previous years is invaluable. The style is consistent, but each year brings fresh lateral challenges that cannot be crammed for, only trained for through broad intellectual curiosity and rigorous thinking practice.

## Key terms

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**Ambiguity, Syntactic ambiguity, Lexical ambiguity, Relative clause, Centre-embedding, Truth-teller and liar puzzles, Logical consistency, Constraint satisfaction, Deductive reasoning, Proof by contradiction, Multiple of three, Bull's eye, Nested clauses, Categorisation, Inference**

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# Eton College King's Scholarship Examination 2024

## GENERAL II

(One and a half hours)

**Remember to write your candidate number on every sheet of answer paper used.**

***You must answer both questions.***

*Each question is worth the same number of marks.*

*You need not answer the questions in the order set, but you must start each one on a separate piece of paper.*

*Spend about 45 minutes on each question.*

**Do not turn over until told to do so.**

**Question 1: START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW**

The extract below is from Chapter 2 of J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*. The chapter is entitled 'On the Liberty of Thought and Discussion'. Mill begins by laying out his argument for free discussion, before turning to consider extreme cases.

*Strange it is, that men should admit the validity of the arguments for free discussion, but object to their being 'pushed to an extreme'; not seeing that unless the reasons are good for an extreme case, they are not good for any case. Strange that they should imagine that they are not assuming infallibility, when they acknowledge that there should be free discussion on all subjects which can possibly be doubtful, but think that some particular principle or doctrine should be forbidden to be questioned because it is so certain, that is, because they are certain that it is certain. To call any proposition certain, while there is any one who would deny its certainty if permitted, but who is not permitted, is to assume that we ourselves, and those who agree with us, are the judges of certainty, and judges without hearing the other side.*

- (a) Why does Mill think we should tolerate 'extreme' views? [3]
- (b) Why does Mill think we should discuss views which some deem to be 'certain'? [7]
- (c) Do you think there should be limits on free speech? If so, what should the limits be? [15]

[Total mark for Question 1: 25]

**Question 2: *START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW***

Write a response, in whatever form seems appropriate, to ONE of the following.  
It is recommended that you write no more than 700 words.

*EITHER*

- (a) To what extent do comparisons help us better understand certain ideas or experiences?

*OR*

- (b) Consider the following statement:

‘The confessions of evil works is the beginning of good works’ (i.e. we start to do good when we admit that we have done wrong).

To what extent do you agree ?

*OR*

- (c) What is the more influential on the experience of our lives: the circumstances that come our way or the mindset we have when facing those circumstances?

[Total mark for Question 2: 25]

END OF PAPER

# Paper Notes: 13+ General Question Paper (13+ General Past Paper (2024))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is the **General II paper** from **Eton College's King's Scholarship Examination 2024**, a prestigious assessment for candidates applying for the **King's Scholarship** at Eton. The paper runs for **one and a half hours** and comprises two compulsory questions, each worth 25 marks, with candidates advised to spend approximately 45 minutes on each.

Question 1 focuses on **J. S. Mill's On Liberty**, specifically an extract from the chapter on freedom of thought and discussion. Candidates must demonstrate comprehension of Mill's philosophical arguments, explain his reasoning about tolerating extreme views and debating supposedly certain propositions, and then formulate their own position on limits to free speech in a substantial 15-mark essay.

Question 2 offers a choice of three philosophical and reflective prompts: the role of comparisons in understanding, the relationship between confession and moral improvement, or the relative influence of circumstances versus mindset. Responses may take any appropriate form, with a recommended limit of 700 words. The paper tests intellectual maturity, philosophical reasoning, clarity of argument, and sophisticated written expression at a level expected of academically exceptional 13-year-old candidates competing for one of the most selective scholarships in British independent education.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper is divided into **two equally weighted questions**, each contributing 25 marks to the total of 50. Candidates must answer both questions, starting each on a separate sheet of paper, and are free to tackle them in any order.

Question 1 is subdivided into three parts: part (a) carries **3 marks** and requires a brief explanation of Mill's position on extreme views, part (b) is worth **7 marks** and asks for a fuller account of Mill's views on discussing 'certain' propositions, and part (c) accounts for **15 marks** and invites a developed personal argument about limits on free speech. The weighting clearly signals that the final essay component is the most significant element.

Question 2 presents **three alternative prompts** (a, b, or c), each philosophical or reflective in nature. Candidates choose one and write a response in whatever form they

judge appropriate, though a maximum of **700 words** is recommended. The format flexibility allows candidates to demonstrate creativity alongside rigorous argumentation, whether through essay, dialogue, letter, or another suitable structure.

## Topics covered

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- Comprehension and analysis of J. S. Mill's arguments for free discussion in *On Liberty*
- Understanding of Mill's concept of infallibility and the dangers of silencing dissent
- Evaluation of the limits of free speech and construction of reasoned arguments about censorship
- Extended philosophical essay writing with clear argumentation, structure, and evidence
- Reflective writing on abstract concepts such as comparison, confession, moral improvement, and agency
- Synthesis of ideas from philosophy, ethics, and personal experience to address open-ended questions
- Adaptation of written form and style to suit purpose (essay, dialogue, letter, or other appropriate formats)
- Critical thinking about the relationship between certainty, doubt, and the legitimacy of debate
- Analysis of the interplay between external circumstances and internal mindset in shaping human experience
- Articulation of nuanced positions on moral and philosophical questions with sophistication and maturity

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Read the Mill extract carefully at least twice, annotating key phrases such as 'assuming infallibility' and 'judges without hearing the other side', as these anchor the argument.
- Practise constructing three-part arguments for Question 1(c): state a clear thesis, develop two or three supporting points with examples, and address a counterargument before concluding.
- For Question 2, brainstorm examples from literature, history, or personal observation that illustrate your chosen prompt before you begin writing; concrete examples strengthen abstract arguments.
- Allocate your time strictly: 45 minutes per question means roughly 10 minutes for reading and planning Question 1, 30 minutes writing, and 5 minutes checking, then repeat for Question 2.
- Familiarise yourself with Mill's broader arguments in *On Liberty* (the harm principle, the marketplace of ideas) so you can contextualise the extract and demonstrate deeper understanding.
- Practise writing philosophical essays under timed conditions, focusing on clarity, logical flow, and the ability to sustain an argument over 400 to 700 words without repetition or digression.
- Review model answers or past candidates' work (if available) to see how examiners reward originality, intellectual engagement, and stylistic maturity in open-ended philosophical questions.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Failing to distinguish between explaining Mill's view (Question 1a and 1b) and presenting your own argument (Question 1c), leading to confusion about whose position is being discussed.
- Writing an unbalanced response to Question 1 by spending too long on parts (a) and (b), leaving insufficient time to develop the 15-mark essay in part (c).
- Producing vague or overly generalised answers to Question 1(c) without concrete examples or consideration of competing views (e.g. 'free speech should be limited when it hurts people' without defining harm or acknowledging Mill's harm principle).
- Choosing a Question 2 prompt impulsively without considering which allows the most substantive argument or which plays to the candidate's strengths in illustrative examples.
- Exceeding the 700-word recommendation for Question 2 significantly, which can result in rambling, loss of focus, and failure to leave time for proofreading.
- Neglecting to proofread answers for clarity, spelling, and punctuation, particularly under time pressure; errors undermine the impression of intellectual maturity that the paper rewards.

## Exam technique

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Begin by reading both questions and the Mill extract thoroughly before you write anything. Underline or highlight key phrases in the passage that will support your answers to parts (a) and (b), and jot brief margin notes if permitted. Plan your response to Question 1(c) on scrap paper: decide your thesis, list two or three supporting arguments, and note a counterargument you will address. This five-minute investment prevents mid-answer confusion and ensures a coherent structure.

For Question 2, read all three prompts carefully and select the one that immediately suggests rich examples or a clear line of argument. Spend five minutes drafting a brief outline: introduction, two or three body paragraphs, and conclusion. Decide on your form (essay is safest, but a well-executed dialogue or letter can impress if it genuinely suits the material). Write steadily, aiming for depth over breadth; two well-developed points with specific examples outweigh four superficial ones.

Leave the final five minutes of the exam to reread both answers. Check that you have answered the question asked, not the question you wished had been asked. Look for unclear phrasing, missing words, or arguments that trail off without conclusion. Ensure your handwriting is legible and that you have written your candidate number on every

sheet. Small corrections in these final minutes can make a significant difference to clarity and overall impression.

## What to revise alongside this paper

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Students preparing for this paper should revise core texts and concepts in **political philosophy**, particularly Mill's *On Liberty*, Locke's theories of toleration, and contemporary debates about hate speech and cancel culture. Familiarity with classical rhetorical structures (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) and the conventions of philosophical essay writing will strengthen performance on both questions.

Broader reading in **ethics and moral philosophy** is invaluable: explore utilitarianism (Mill's own framework), deontological ethics (Kant), and virtue ethics (Aristotle) to deepen your ability to construct and critique arguments. Practice analysing quotations and prompts from thinkers such as Augustine, Nietzsche, or contemporary philosophers to build confidence in tackling unfamiliar material under timed conditions.

Develop skills in **close reading and textual analysis** by studying challenging prose extracts from philosophy, political theory, and literature. Work on articulating complex ideas clearly and concisely, as the ability to distil a philosopher's argument or construct a nuanced position in limited words is central to success. Finally, write regularly on open-ended philosophical questions to build stamina, fluency, and the confidence to engage with abstract concepts at the level of intellectual sophistication this scholarship demands.

## Key terms

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**Infallibility, Free discussion, Censorship, Harm principle, Liberty of thought, Philosophical argument, Thesis and counterargument, Abstract reasoning, Reflective writing, J. S. Mill, On Liberty, Certainty and doubt, Moral philosophy, Agency and circumstance, Extended essay writing**

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