# What support is available during AEIS preparation in Singapore?

Preparing for the Admissions Exercise for International Students (AEIS) can feel daunting. The exam determines school placement for international students who want to join Singapore's mainstream primary or secondary schools. Students and their families often wonder what kind of help they can expect during the preparation period. The short answer is that a range of structured academic support, from diagnostic assessments to tailored revision plans, is available to help students build the skills and confidence they need. The type and depth of support depends on the programme a student chooses, but the common goal is to close any gaps in English and mathematics and to familiarise students with the exam format.

## Understanding the AEIS exam structure first

Before looking at support options, it helps to know what the AEIS covers. The exam tests English and mathematics at levels aligned with the Singapore curriculum. For primary levels, the English paper focuses on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing. For secondary levels, the paper includes comprehension and writing tasks, and the mathematics paper covers topics relevant to the student's intended entry level. There is no science paper. The exam is set based on what local students at that level have already learned. That means a student arriving from a different school system may encounter topics they have not seen before. Good preparation support addresses those gaps systematically.

## Initial assessment to identify gaps

Most preparation programmes begin with a diagnostic test. This is not the same as the AEIS itself, but it serves a practical purpose: it shows what the student already knows and where they need more work. For example, a student might be strong in arithmetic but weak in fractions or in word problems. Another might read well but struggle with writing a structured composition. A good initial assessment gives the tutor or programme a clear starting point. It also helps set a realistic timeline. If the student needs to cover a lot of ground before the next exam date, the preparation plan needs to be more intensive. Family planning around the application timeline becomes easier when the student's current level is clear.

## Structured curriculum and lesson plans

Once the gaps are identified, the support moves into structured lessons. These are not generic English or math classes. They are designed around the Singapore syllabus for the specific entry level the student aims for. A typical lesson might cover a mathematics topic such as ratio

and proportion, followed by practice questions in the AEIS style. English lessons often include vocabulary exercises, grammar drills, and guided writing practice. The idea is to build familiarity with the kinds of questions that appear on the exam. Many programmes also teach test-taking strategies: how to manage time, how to check answers, and how to approach questions they are unsure of. This kind of academic assessment and targeted teaching is what gives students the biggest boost.

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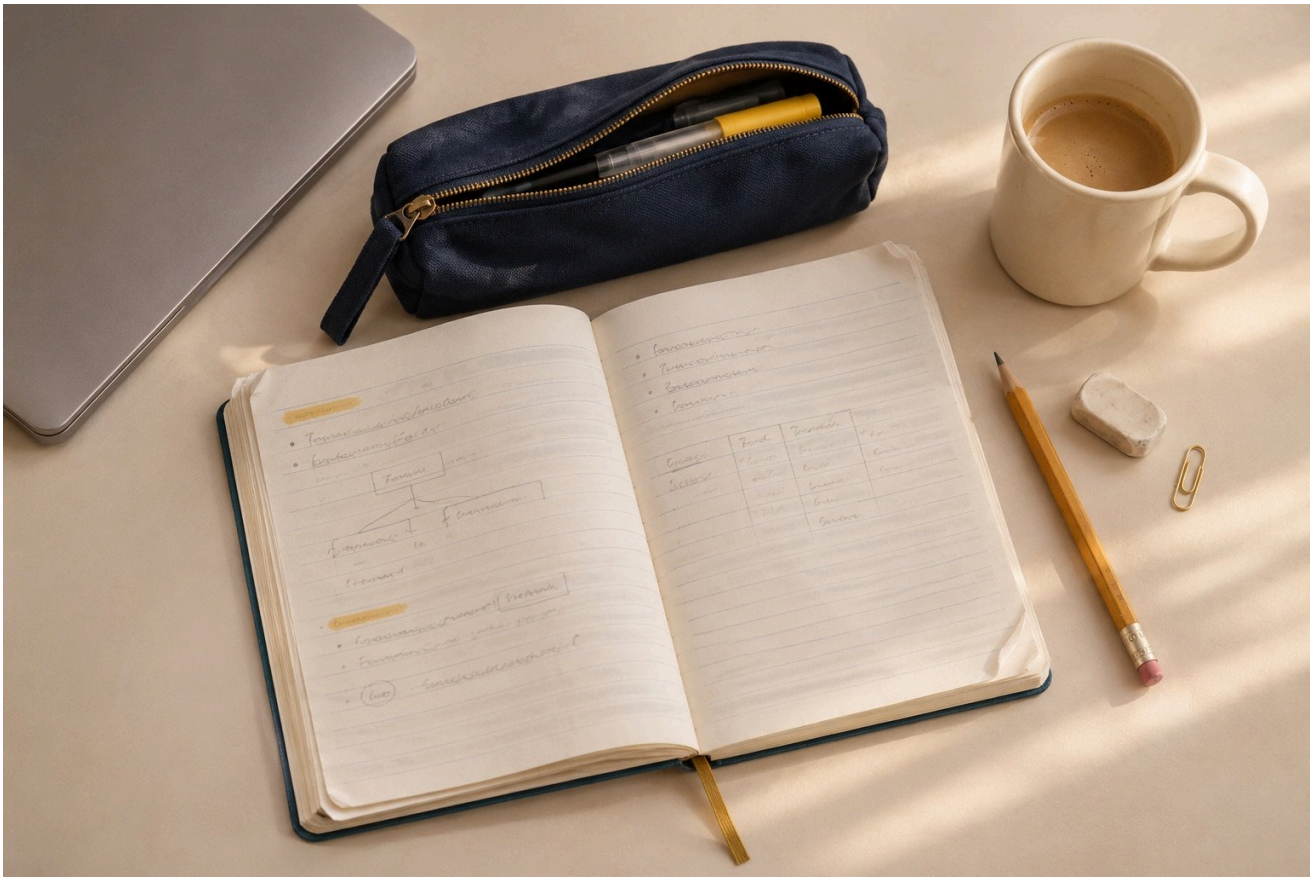
For students who need more flexibility, there are e-Learning options. These allow students to work through the material at their own pace, with recorded lessons and online exercises. Face-to-face classes, on the other hand, offer direct interaction with a tutor who can give immediate feedback. Both approaches have their merits. The best choice depends on the student's learning style, schedule, and how much structure they need.



## Practice papers and mock exams

Practice is central to AEIS preparation. Most programmes provide past exam papers or specially written mock tests. These serve several purposes. They help students get used to the exam format, time pressure, and the style of questions. They also give tutors a way to track progress. After a mock test, a good tutor will go through every wrong answer and explain the

reasoning. This feedback loop is where real learning happens. The student does not just get a score; they understand why they made a mistake and how to avoid it next time.

Mock exams also help with confidence. A student who has sat through a timed practice paper under exam conditions is less likely to freeze on the actual day. Many programmes schedule several mock exams over the preparation period, so students can see their own improvement. This is especially helpful for students who are nervous about the exam or who have never taken a high-stakes test before.

## Application and registration guidance

AEIS preparation is not just about academic content. The registration process itself can be confusing for families new to Singapore's school system. There are specific windows for application, documents to submit, and a registration fee to pay. The exam dates are set by the Ministry of Education and only happen twice a year (usually in February and September or October for the supplementary intake). Missing the deadline means waiting for the next cycle. Some preparation centres offer guidance on the application timeline, helping families understand what to do and when. They may also explain how school placement works after the exam, including how the student's results and available vacancies affect which school they are offered. This kind of family planning support can reduce a lot of stress.

One institution that provides such integrated support is United Ceres College. It offers preparatory programmes for AEIS along with other examinations, and prospective students can send an enquiry through the website or contact the college directly to learn more about the specific support available.

## Supplementary support for English language learners

For many international students, English is the biggest hurdle. Even if they have studied English in their home country, the level required for the AEIS can be higher than expected. Some preparation programmes include dedicated English classes that focus on the skills tested in the exam: grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing. These classes often run alongside the main AEIS preparation, or they can be taken separately. The goal is to build the student's English proficiency to the point where they can understand the exam questions and express their answers clearly. For students who need intensive help, some programmes offer additional hours of English tuition each week. This is especially common for students aiming for secondary school entry, where the writing component is more demanding.



## Support for parents and families

AEIS preparation is not just for the student. Parents also have questions. How do I help my child at home? What if my child does not pass? How do I choose between different preparation options? Some programmes offer consultation sessions for parents, either in person or through online channels. These sessions explain the exam process, what to expect on the day, and how parents can provide a supportive learning environment. They also cover logistics: where the exam is held, what to bring, and what happens after results are released. Knowing these details helps families plan ahead and reduces anxiety for everyone involved.

It is worth noting that the level of support varies widely between programmes. Some offer only a few hours of group classes each week, while others provide one-on-one tutoring, progress reports, and personalised study plans. When choosing a programme, it makes sense to ask about the specific support included: Is there an initial assessment? How many mock tests are given? Is there individual feedback? Can parents get updates on progress? The answers will tell you a lot about how thorough the programme is.

## What to look for in a preparation programme

If you are considering AEIS preparation for your child, here are a few things to check:

- Does the programme assess the student's current level before starting?
- Are the lessons based on the Singapore syllabus for the target entry level?
- How many practice papers or mock exams are included?
- Is there individual feedback on mistakes and weak areas?
- Does the programme offer guidance on the application and registration process?

These factors make a real difference. A programme that simply goes through general English and math exercises is less effective than one that is tightly aligned with the AEIS exam. The best support is targeted, structured, and responsive to the student's needs.

## Final practical advice

Start preparation early. The AEIS covers a lot of material, and rushing only adds stress. Ideally, give yourself at least three to six months before the exam date. Use the initial assessment to set a baseline, then work through the syllabus methodically. Mix independent study with guided lessons. And do not neglect test-taking practice. Even a strong student can falter on exam day if they are not used to the format or the time pressure.



Remember that passing the AEIS does not guarantee placement in any specific school. The Ministry of Education assigns students based on exam results and available vacancies. So the

goal of preparation is not just to pass, but to perform well enough to have a good chance at a suitable school placement. That is why focused, quality support matters.

For more information on AEIS preparation programmes and other educational offerings, you can contact **United Ceres College** at 37 Middle Rd, #05-00, Singapore 188946, or call +65 8699 3609.

United Ceres College is also on Facebook.