



TARA

Prep Guide

Mr Pearce



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Activity: Who gets the place?

- **Course:** BSc Global Social and Political Studies
- **University:** University of Many Red Bricks
- **Entry grades:** A*AA
- **Dilemma:** You have one place left to offer. Both candidates are predicted A*A*A. Review their profiles. Who gets the offer? **You have 60 seconds to choose.**



	Candidate A: Cassandra	Candidate B: Hans
School Type	High-achieving independent school	High-achieving state school
A-Levels	History (A*), Economics (A*), Maths (A)	Politics (A*), Economics (A*), Maths (A)
GCSEs	8 Grade 9s, 2 Grade 8s	8 Grade 9s, 2 Grade 8s
Super-curricular Activities	• Focus: Formal Achievement & Leadership • Work Experience: 1 week in local MP's office. • Debating/MUN: Head of Debating Society; won 'Distinguished Delegate' at an international Model UN conference. • Summer School: Attended selective LSE course on 'The Politics of Inequality'. • Reading: Focused on core academic texts directly related to the A-Level syllabus (Piketty, Why Nations Fail).	• Focus: Initiative & Grassroots Action • Digital Project: Founded and runs a political blog and podcast with 2,000 monthly listeners. • Community Organising: Led a successful local campaign for a new pedestrian crossing. • Volunteering: Weekly volunteer at a local charity for asylum seekers. • Reading: Focused on challenging, niche texts and critical theory (James C. Scott, Frantz Fanon).
Teacher's Reference Summary	"Exceptionally diligent and articulate. A natural leader in discussions and one of the most capable students I have taught in years. A safe bet for success."	"Outstanding intellectual curiosity and a genuine passion for the subject. A truly creative, independent thinker with a powerful commitment to social justice."

Why Admissions Tests?

- A crucial part of your application, alongside grades, references, and your personal statement.
- Provide a fair, level playing field for comparing excellent candidates from around the world.
- Universities often place significant weight on them as a standardized data point.



The Importance of Your Score

- For many universities using tests, the test score carries very significant weight in the offer-making process
- The difference between being in one decile or another may be less than a single percentage point.
- **So every small improvement in your performance matters significantly.**



It's About Skill, Not Talent

- Your performance is not predetermined by "innate talent" or genetics.
- These tests assess skills that can be developed and improved.
- **You can absolutely get better with focused practice and perseverance.**



Structure for this session



A general guide to test preparation



Meet the TARA – a basic intro



Guidance for each of the three modules, with a little practice (Critical thinking, Problem solving, The Writing task)



The basics of timing and registration, which you can read for yourself if we run out of time...

A general guide to test prep



A suggested timeline for summer prep

July (Weeks 1–4): Foundation & Diagnosis:

Build foundation, identify strengths/weaknesses

- Gather info: Download specs, papers, guidance for each test
- Take a full "cold" practice test for each
- Review content: Compare test vs. A-Level syllabus, start self-study on gaps
- Make a detailed study schedule for Aug–Sep

August (Weeks 5–8): Targeted Practice & Skill Building:

Systematically address weaknesses, build core skills

- Focused practice on weak areas & question types
- Use "Mistake Deconstruction" to learn from errors
- Practice timed sections to build speed

September (Weeks 9–12): Timed Mocks & Refinement:

Consolidate learning, perfect exam technique, build stamina

- Full-length mocks under exam conditions
- Refine strategies: pacing, guessing, essay planning
- Final weeks: review mistakes, consolidate, light practice

Dr Matt Williams' Three 'P's of Preparation

A holistic framework for success, focusing on:

Physiological: your physical well-being.

Psychological: your mental approach and resilience.

Practical: your direct engagement with the test material.

Pillar 1: Physiological Preparation

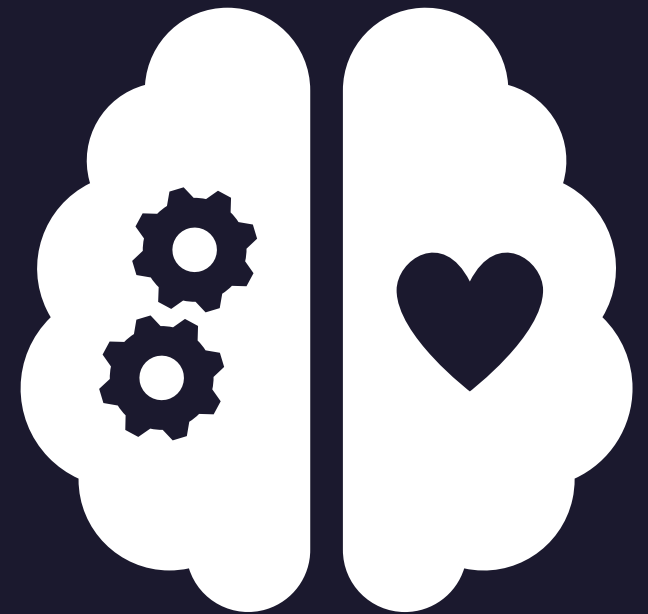
- Your mind works best when your body is cared for.
- **Sleep:** Ensure you are consistently well-slept. It's a vital form of preparation.
- **Nutrition:** Fuel your brain with nutritious food.
- **Hydration:** Stay well-hydrated to maintain brain function.
- **Warning:** Avoid energy drinks before the test. The initial boost can lead to an "epic crash."



Pillar 2: Psychological Preparation

These tests are hard. Your mindset is critical.

- **Manage Expectations:** Perfect scores are extremely rare. Don't aim for 100%.
- **Be Kind to Yourself:** Getting questions wrong is part of the learning process, not a sign of failure. Avoid self-defeating thoughts.
- **Reframe as Fun:** Treat your practice like a brain teaser (e.g., Sudoku). Enjoying the process improves performance and encourages consistency.



Pillar 3: Practical Preparation

- Engaging with the test material effectively.
- **Practice "Little and Often":** Aim for 15-20 minutes of focused practice daily. It's more effective than cramming.
- **Use Free Resources:** Leverage past papers, walk-throughs, and explanations provided.
- **Don't Fear Mistakes:** View every wrong answer as a valuable opportunity to learn.
- **Start Early:** The hardest part is getting started. Don't procrastinate.

The secret to getting ahead is getting started (Mark Twain)



Meet the TARA



What is the



TARA?

- **TARA:** Test of Academic Reasoning for Admissions.
- **Purpose:** Assesses a candidate's potential for academically demanding undergraduate courses.
- **Non-Subject Specific:** Used across a range of subject areas.
- **Key User:** Currently used by UCL.
- **Crucial Reminder:** You must check if your chosen course requires it. Failure to register and sit the test could invalidate your application.

Test Overview & Format

Format: Computer-based test delivered by PearsonVue

Duration: Three compulsory modules, each lasting 40 minutes.

3 Modules →

Critical
Thinking

Problem
Solving

The Writing
Task

Key Rules:

- Time is not carried over between modules. Time management is essential.
- No calculators or dictionaries are permitted.

Module-specific guidance



Module 1: Critical Thinking



Module 1: Critical Thinking - Content

- **Objective:** Assesses your ability to think critically using everyday written language.
- **Core Tasks:**
 - Evaluating arguments.
 - Understanding argument structure (reasons, conclusions, assumptions).
 - Assessing the strength of claims.
- **Format:** 22 multiple-choice questions (5 options each). 40 minutes.
- **Golden Rule:** Assume any reasons given in an argument are true for the sake of the question – i.e. your job is to assess reasoning, not factual correctness

Skills assessed

Identifying the Main Conclusion

What is the author's main point?

Drawing a Conclusion

What logically follows from the text?

Assessing Additional Evidence

How does new information strengthen or weaken the argument?

Identifying an Assumption

What unstated belief is the argument built on?

Detecting Reasoning Errors

Why does the conclusion not follow from the reasons?

Matching Arguments

Recognizing similar patterns of reasoning.

Applying Principles

Identifying a general rule and applying it to a new situation.



Section 1 Tactics: Finding the Argument

- Many questions ask you to identify the author's argument or conclusion.
- **Look for the radioactive sentence.**
- **The "Therefore" trick:** A sentence is likely the conclusion if you can logically place "therefore" at the start.
- Look for explicit conclusion words: "so," "thus," "it follows."
- ***This helps you filter out background information and focus on the core argument.***



Tips and tricks 1

- The #1 Time-Saving Trick: **READ THE QUESTION FIRST!** For long text passages, this tells you exactly what information to look for, preventing you from having to re-read.
- **Focus on Adjectives and Adverbs:** this keeps your brain actively engaged.
- **Identify Opinions:** adjectives and adverbs are clues to the author's perspective and analytical points—often the key to answering questions correctly.

Tips and tricks 2

- **Options for your approach:**
 - Try to determine the answer before looking at the options.
 - Or, eliminate the least viable options first. Use a mixture of both strategies.
- **Time management:** Once you are confident in an answer, select it and move on.
- **Key reminder:** No prior knowledge is required. All the information you need is in the text. Don't panic if you see an unfamiliar concept.

Tips and tricks 3

- **Grand logic:** Understand the author's main, overarching argument.
- **Analytical reasoning:** Pinpoint specific details and understand how words are used (e.g., with a positive or negative tone).
- **Understanding nuances:** Identify subtleties in language, such as sarcasm or hidden meanings.

The "Final Two" Technique: When unsure, practice narrowing the options down to the two most likely answers to increase your odds to 50%.

Let's practice...



Contrary to what one might expect, sharp knives are actually safer to use than dull ones. A well-sharpened blade will 'bite' into the surface of a smooth, firm object such as an apple and cut it easily. A dull blade, on the other hand, will skid along the surface and therefore requires more pressure and finesse to cut effectively. Such a blade is harder to control, and this means that accidents are more common.

Which one of the following, if true, most weakens the argument?

- ☐ With the exception of professional chefs, most people do not tend to keep their kitchen knives very sharp.
- ☐ Blade-sharpening tools like whetstones, water stones and honing steels require training to use correctly.
- ☐ An accidental injury from a sharp blade will generally be much more serious than one from a dull blade.
- ☐ A sharp blade allows for faster and more precise food preparation, which can make cooking more enjoyable.
- ☐ High-quality knives of the kind that keep a sharp edge are expensive, as are blade-sharpening tools.

TARA

Critical Thinking Practice

An interactive tool to understand TARA-style questions.

Worked Example A: Sharp vs. Dull Knives



Worked Example B: Digital Age & Human Behaviour



Incorrect answers debunked

Most people don't keep knives sharp

- Doesn't weaken safety argument.

Sharpening tools need training:

- Doesn't weaken argument; safe knives can be maintained by pros.

Sharp blades = faster, more precise prep.

- Strengthens, not weakens, argument (even if only safety is considered).

High-quality/sharp knives & tools are expensive:

- Cost doesn't affect safety argument.

The correct answer explained

- **The correct answer is:** An accidental injury from a sharp blade will generally be much more serious than one from a dull blade.
- **Explanation:**
 - *The passage claims sharp knives are safer since dull blades are harder to control. However, if sharp knife injuries are more severe—even if less frequent—this weakens the argument that sharp knives are actually safer.*

The arrival of the digital age and the communication platforms and software advances underpinning it are significant for a much older pursuit: the study of human behaviour. Revolutionary 'big data' now exists in the form of the internet traffic created by users of various websites and social networking services and applications. The nature of the information shared by internet users tends to differ depending on the type of site or platform concerned. Messages and other content posted on Facebook, and other social media linked to people's 'real' identities, tend to be edited somewhat to present a more attractive or successful image. People's Google searches, and usage of other sites where their 'real' identities can remain more concealed, reveal more accurate information about their lives.

Which one of the following can be drawn as a conclusion from the passage?

- ☐ Traditional in-person data collection methods are no longer all that important to research into human behaviour.
- ☐ Content on Facebook may be useful for researchers interested in knowing how people wish to be perceived by others.
- ☐ Advances in computer software mean that today's social science researchers may require less expertise with respect to analysing data.
- ☐ No similarity exists between most individuals' Facebook content and what they post on sites where they can remain hidden.
- ☐ Data in the form of Google search topics lacks value for research purposes if the individuals behind the searches remain hidden.

Incorrect answers debunked

In-person data collection
not important?

- Not supported; passage only discusses new sources, not replacing old methods.

Software advances = less
expertise needed?

- Not supported; passage refers to platform operation, not data analysis skills.

No similarity between
Facebook & anonymous
posts?

- Not supported; passage gives no evidence for this strong claim.

Google searches useless if
users are hidden?

- Not supported; user identity may not always be relevant for research.

The correct answer explained

- **The correct answer is:** Content on Facebook may be useful for researchers interested in knowing how people wish to be perceived by others.
- **Explanation:**
 - *Information shared online varies by platform. On Facebook and similar sites linked to real identities, users often edit content to appear more attractive or successful. Therefore, Facebook is useful for researchers studying how people want to be perceived.*

But remember:
you only have
1 minute and 49
seconds per
question



Module 2: Problem solving



Problem solving: why oh why?!

- Novel, unfamiliar problems—you must go beyond memorized solution: ie you must **think**.
- Celebrates analytical potential, creativity, and cognitive agility over advanced training (only GCSE-level knowledge needed).
- Invites you to demonstrate logical and strategic thinking when faced with new quantitative info.
- Turns the presence of extra data into an opportunity to showcase your executive skills: distilling clarity from complexity, and thriving under pressure.

Think

Apply

Filter signal
from noise

Module 2 specifics: Problem Solving

Objective:

Tests your ability to solve novel problems using numerical and logical skills.

Key Feature:

No advanced, subject-specific knowledge is required.

Format:

22 multiple-choice questions (5 options each). 40 minutes.

Focus:

Your ability to apply basic mathematical concepts to new situations.

Module 2: Basic Knowledge Needed

Numbers: Simple fractions, place value, percentages.

Operations:
 $+$ $-$ $\times$ $/$ $\%$
and calculating the mean (average).

Quantities: Time, calendar, money, and basic metric measures (km, m, cm, mm, kg, g).

Space: Area (rectangles), perimeter, and volume (boxes).

Data: Extracting information from tables, graphs, and charts.



Problem Solving - Question Types

Relevant Selection:

- Sifting through data to find only the information needed to solve the problem.
- Ignoring redundant or distracting details.

Finding Procedures:

- Devising a step-by-step method to find the solution when the path isn't obvious.

Identifying Similarity:

- Recognizing relationships in data presented in different forms (tables, charts).
- May involve spatial reasoning like rotations or reflections of 2D/3D objects.

The Two-Pass Strategy

The Goal: Actively manage your time to maximize your score. Don't just watch the clock; make the clock work for you.

Pass 1: The 'Low-Hanging Fruit'

- Quickly answer all easy questions you're confident about.
- Flag anything complex or that causes hesitation and MOVE ON.
- **Result:** Builds a bank of marks, reduces anxiety, and ensures you see every question.

Pass 2: The Focused Attack

- Return to the flagged questions.
- With time in hand and marks already secured, you can tackle these harder problems with less pressure.

Advanced Tactics 1: The 'Question-First' Protocol

The Common Mistake: Diving into the data before knowing what you're looking for.

The Expert Approach:

Read the QUESTION and the ANSWERS first.

Understand exactly what is being asked.
Underline key words and required units.

Create a mental 'shopping list' for the data you need.

Turns passive reading into a targeted, efficient search for specific information.

Advanced Tactics 2: The Twin Tools

1. Process of Elimination:

Look for 'distractor' answers (wrong scale, units, or common mistakes).

Mentally cross them out to narrow your choices.

2. Estimation & Sanity-Checking:

Make a rough mental estimate before calculating.

After solving, ask: 'Does this number make sense?' to catch errors.

Advanced Tactics 3: The 'Data Detective' Method

- **The Challenge:** The test is designed to overload you with unnecessary details.
- **Your Mission:** Act as a 'Data Detective'.
 - Use your 'shopping list' from the 'Question-First' protocol.
 - Scan the data with a specific target in mind.
 - Actively filter and discard irrelevant information.



Advanced Tactics 4: Systematic Deconstruction

The Principle: Complex problems are just a sequence of simple steps.



Frees your brain to focus on each small step.

- With practice, see how data sources connect.
- Visual / spatial questions: sketch / label / rotate to gain new perspectives

The Last-Ditch Golden Rule: Educated Guessing

Core Tactical Rule: There is **NO** negative marking. *Implication: NEVER leave an answer blank. A guess gives you a chance; a blank gives you zero.*

How to Guess Smart:

Eliminate: Use logic to cross out 1 or 2 clearly wrong answers. Boosts your odds (from 20% to 33%).

Final Moments: In the last minute, randomly fill in any remaining unanswered questions. A 20% chance is better than 0%.

Let's practice...



Problem Solving

⌚

Time Remaining 39:30

🔄

2 of 22

💡

Explain Answer

🚩

Flag for Review

🎨

Color Scheme

Tom is organising a 7-night tour holiday for his parents and himself.

The table below shows details of the five tour companies that Tom is considering.

<i>company</i>	<i>day tours</i>	<i>cost per person</i>	<i>single supplement per person per night</i>	<i>escorted travel</i>	<i>flights</i>
Alltravel	inclusive	€1100	€40	fully escorted	1 change
Beyond	inclusive	€1200	€10	fully escorted	direct
Cosmic	inclusive	€1150	€30	fully escorted	direct
Discreet	inclusive	€1100	€40	fully escorted	direct
Ecotravel	inclusive	€1000	€30	partly escorted	direct

Tom has a maximum budget of €3600. All three travellers will qualify for the quoted cost per person, but Tom will also have to pay the additional single supplement.

They will need direct flights. They will want fully escorted travel and inclusive day tours.

Which company should Tom choose for the holiday?

☐

Alltravel

☐

Beyond

☐

Cosmic

☐

Discreet

☐

Ecotravel

Solution: the answer is “Discreet”

- Tools required:



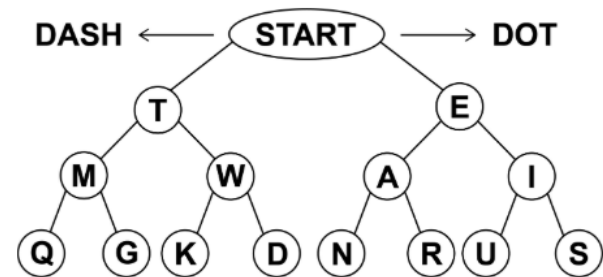
By correctly applying the requirements for no more than 2 hotels, direct flights and fully escorted, we are left with just two possible options: Cosmic and Discreet.

- Now consider the cost of the holiday with each of these two companies.
 - **Beyond** will be 3 passengers @ €1200 each plus the single supplement of $7 \times €10 = €3600 + €70 = €3670$. **Over budget.**
 - **Discreet** will be 3 passengers at €1100 each plus single supplement of $7 \times €40 = €3300 + €280 = €3580$. **Within budget.**

An early form of electronic communication is Morse code, which is used with a series of dots and dashes to send a message. The code is shown below, with dots and dashes indicating each letter of the alphabet.

A	● —	N	— ●
B	— ● ● ●	O	— — —
C	— ● — ●	P	● — — ●
D	— ● ●	Q	— — ● —
E	●	R	● — ●
F	● ● — ●	S	● ● ●
G	— — ●	T	—
H	● ● ● ●	U	● ● —
I	● ●	V	● ● ● —
J	● — — —	W	● — —
K	— ● —	X	— ● ● —
L	● — ● ●	Y	— ● — —
M	— —	Z	— — ● ●

To make it easier to learn Morse code a different display was configured and part of this display is shown below. Beginning from the START point, the letter 'A' would be determined by one right move which is a DOT, and one left move, which is a DASH. So A is a DOT DASH.



Some of the circles in the display above have been labelled with the wrong letter.

How many circles have been incorrectly labelled?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5

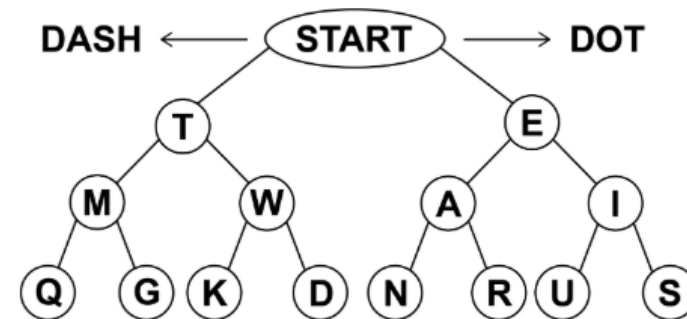
Solution: 3 letters

- Recall, left movements is a DASH and right moves a DOT.
- Cross reference the second diagram with the code above which **we know to be correct**.
- Checking systematically, we find that...
 - Q should be DASH DASH DOT DASH.
 - W and N are not in the correct place, they have been switched position.
 - Everything else is correct.
- Three letters have been incorrectly labelled in the diagram.

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A	● —	N	— ●
B	— ● ● ●	O	— — —
C	— ● — ●	P	● — — ●
D	— ● ●	Q	— — ● —
E	●	R	● — ●
F	● ● — ●	S	● ● ●
G	— — — ●	T	—
H	● ● ● ●	U	● ● —
I	● ●	V	● ● —
J	● — — —	W	● — —
K	— ● —	X	— ● ● —
L	● — ● ●	Y	— ● — —
M	— —	Z	— — ● ●

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Summary: Your Pre-Flight Checklist

Two-Pass Strategy:

Bank easy marks first,
then attack harder
questions.

Question-First:

Read the question
before the data to
create a 'shopping list.'

Estimate & Eliminate:

Make rough guesses and
cross out obviously
wrong answers.

Be a Data Detective:

Actively filter out
irrelevant information.

Break It Down:

Turn multi-step
problems into a simple,
written-down plan.

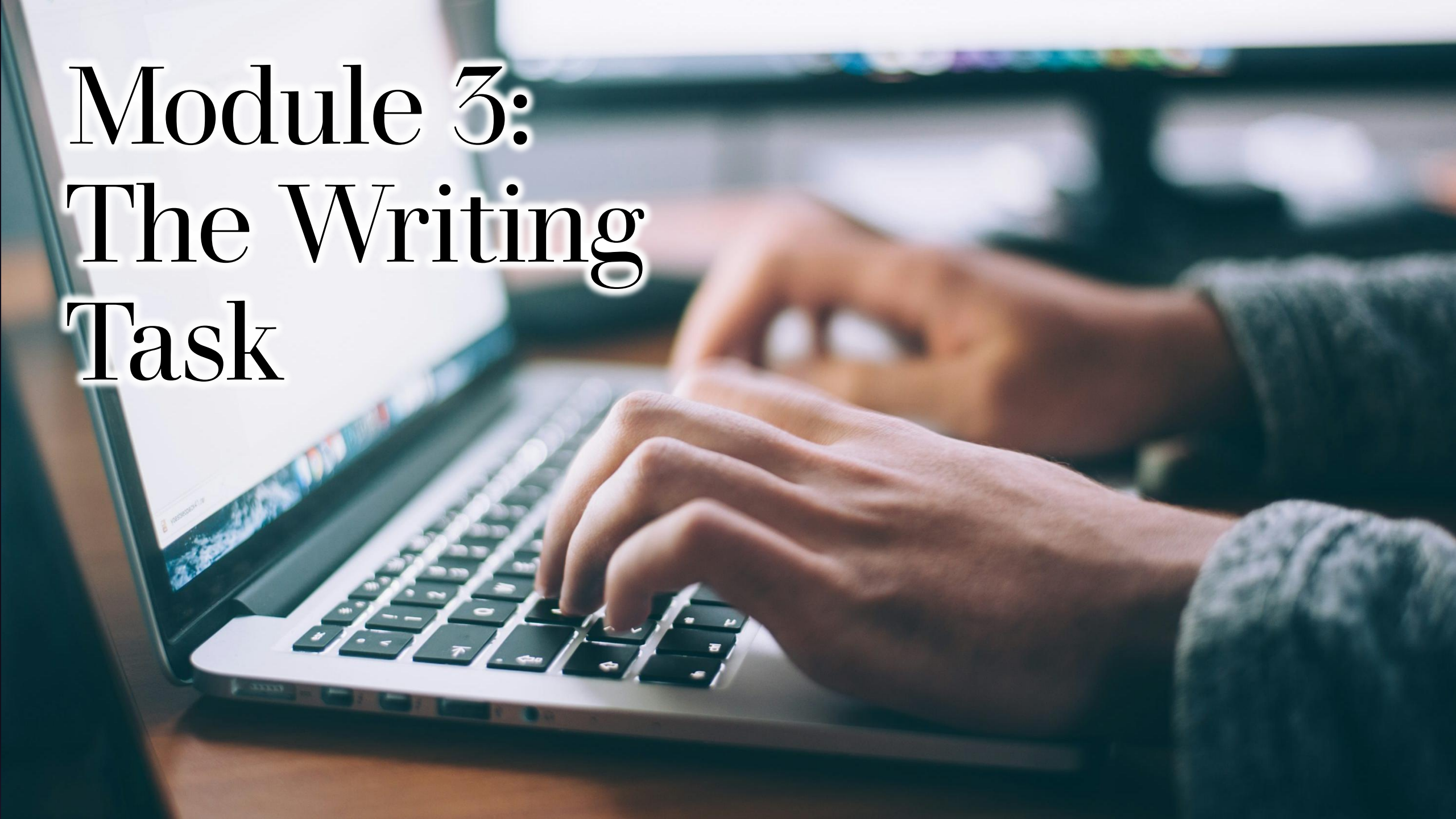
Always Guess:

Never leave a question
blank. Eliminate answers
first.

But again:
you only have
1 minute and 49
seconds per
question



Module 3: The Writing Task



Module 3: The Writing Task - Overview

- **Objective:** Assesses your ability to communicate effectively and consider different sides of a proposition.
- **Format:**
 - *Choose one of three essay-style questions.*
 - *Respond in writing within a 750-word limit.*
 - *No spell-checkers or dictionaries.*
- **Scoring:**
 - The task is not scored by the test provider (UAT-UK).
 - A copy of your essay is sent directly to the universities you have applied to.



The Writing Task - How to Approach It

- The typical question asks you to:
 1. Explain what a short statement means.
 2. Present a reasoned argument against the statement.
 3. Discuss the extent to which you agree with the statement.
- Key to Success:

Plan:

Spend 5-10 minutes structuring your thoughts.

Engage:

Address the specific wording of the statement directly.

Argue:

Explore both sides of the issue with concrete examples.

Conclude:

Ensure your view is clear and supported by your arguments.

Golden Rule 1: Answer the Question

- **Use the Exact Wording:** Frame your response using the language from the question to stay on topic.
- **Address All Parts:** If the question has multiple components, you must cover every single one.
- **Take a Stance:** You must reach a conclusion and make a case. The goal is to solve the puzzle presented, not just discuss it.



Golden Rule 2: Plan!

- **Plan Your Essay!** This is absolutely crucial.
- **Time:** Allocate ~10 minutes of your 40-minute window for planning.
- **Why?** Failure to plan is the #1 reason students fail to answer the question effectively. A plan ensures your essay is clear, logical, and on-topic.



Essay Pitfalls: Avoid the "Five I's"

Dr Matt Williams

Irresolute:

- Never say "I don't know." You must attempt to provide a precise, one-line answer.

Indecisive:

- Don't "sit on the fence." Acknowledge other views, but take a clear position and refute them.

Imprecise:

- Use the exact "hook words" from the question. Don't substitute synonyms.

Inconsistent:

- Your argument must be coherent from introduction to conclusion.

Indignant:

- Don't complain about the question. Your job is to answer it as posed.

The Essay: The Power of "Pivot Words"

- Identify Them: Find the central "pivot points" of the question (e.g., "exploit," "benefit," "offensive").
- Use Them:
 - Define these terms in your introduction.
 - Structure your paragraphs around analyzing different facets of these words.
- This ensures your analysis is deep and directly "laser targeted".

Is it ever right to sacrifice individual rights for the greater good?

Would a world in which no one ever experienced disappointment be better or worse than the world as it is?

Should political advertising and campaigning on social media be banned?

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Is it ever **right** to sacrifice individual rights for the greater good?

Would a world in which no one ever experienced disappointment be **better or worse** than the world as it is?

Should **political** advertising and campaigning on social media be **banned**?

A High-Scoring Essay Structure: Option A

Introduction (3-4 sentences):

- Line 1: Answer the question directly. Outline the main reasons for your stance.
- Defining Your Terms: interpret the key "hook words" from the question in your own words.

Main Argument (2 paragraphs):

- Dedicate each paragraph to a specific point supporting your assertion.
- Use persuasive reasons, examples, and rhetorical devices.

The Counter-Argument (1 paragraph):

- Acknowledge the strongest opposing viewpoint.
- Then, decisively rebut it to strengthen your own case.
- This shows you can see "both sides".

Conclusion (Synthesis):

- Sum up your argument and reiterate your answer.
- Re-acknowledge the counter-argument and offer a resolution or forward-looking position.
- Draw out the broader implications of your argument.

A High-Scoring Essay Structure: Option B

Introduction (3-4 sentences):

- Line 1: Answer the question directly. Outline the main reasons for your stance.
- Defining Your Terms: interpret the key "hook words" from the question in your own words.

The Counter-Argument (1 paragraph):

- Acknowledge the strongest opposing viewpoint.
- This shows you can see "both sides".

Main Argument (2 paragraphs):

- Dedicate each paragraph to a specific point supporting your assertion.
- Use persuasive reasons, examples, and rhetorical devices.

Conclusion (Synthesis):

- Sum up your argument and reiterate your answer.
- Re-acknowledge the counter-argument and offer a resolution or forward-looking position.
- Draw out the broader implications of your argument.

How to Stand Out with an Excellent Essay



- **Tackle Difficult Questions:** Don't shy away from a question that seems challenging. It's a chance to demonstrate your analytical skill.
- Argue the **counter-intuitive**:
 - Consider arguing for the less obvious or counter-intuitive position. This demonstrates "sophisticated thinking" and a superior ability to build a case, regardless of personal belief.
- You are being tested on **how you argue**, not what you believe.

It's a Test of SKILL, Not Knowledge

- You are not being tested on your knowledge of specific facts, laws, or historical events.
- You are being assessed on your ability to think clearly and construct a logical argument.
- The argument doesn't even need to be what you personally believe; it just needs to be well-defended.



It's the critical thinking task... in reverse!

Take all your critical analysis skills from the first module of the test, and now **use them to engineer your own brilliant arguments.**



**Avoid
unsupported
assumptions**

Avoid opinions

**Check for logical
fallacies**

**Address counter-
arguments**

**Define key terms
clearly**

**Avoid sweeping
generalisations**

**Focus on
analysis, not just
description**

**Explain how
evidence supports
your point**

**Assess strengths
and weaknesses
fairly**

**Organize
arguments
logically**

PRO TIP: Write some practice essays, then read back through applying your own critical thinking skills. That way, you're practising two modules at once!



'In science, there are no universal truths, just views of the world that have yet to be shown to be false.'

(Brian Cox and Jeff Forshaw)

Explain what you think is meant by the statement.

Give a reasoned argument against the statement.

To what extent do you agree with the statement?

 Cut  Copy  Paste  Undo  Redo

- Explain the meaning of a short statement.
- Present a reasoned argument against the statement.
- Discuss the extent to which you agree with the statement.

How to Do Well: Success in this task hinges on a clear understanding of the prompt, the ability to present a balanced and well-supported argument, and strong, concise writing. Study the two examples below, both answering the same question but with different levels of success.

Interactive TARA Essay Analysis

Essay Question

"A society that values comfort over challenge is a society in decline."

— To what extent do you agree with this statement? In your response, you should consider the arguments for and against the proposition.

Read through each essay and decide for yourself which one is a stronger

TARA's own top tips (1)

There is no single correct way to approach the writing task, but you should consider these recommendations:

General

Ensure that all three parts of the question are clearly and fully addressed.

Make points as precisely as possible and avoid repetition.

Group similar points together, rather than splitting them across your answer.

Planning

It is a good idea to plan your answer for 5 to 10 minutes before starting to write.

In your plan, group your ideas around the three different parts of the task.

Use your plan to ensure you express your ideas as persuasively and concisely as possible.

Engaging with the statement

Engage closely with the wording of the statement and the question.

Take a broad and nuanced view of any general or abstract terms.

Avoid discussing the topic area in an unfocused or overly general way.

There is no single correct way to approach the writing task, but you should consider these recommendations:

TARA's own top tips (2)

Arguing effectively

Always try to see both sides of the argument.

Use targeted, concrete examples to support your arguments.

Avoid arguments that rest solely on examples – examples should not be overly general or given without context.

The counter-argument

Strengthen the counter-argument by including a range of points.

Cover different aspects of the same argument from different angles, where possible.

Avoid the inclusion of irrelevant background information.

Expressing your view

Make sure that your view is clearly expressed and in enough depth.

Support your view by reference to your arguments in the rest of your answer.

Do not simply summarise what you have already said.

Coming in to land...



Other helpful guidance and practice material: the TSA and the LNAT

- **TSA and LNAT both have some similar question types / skills:**
- Tune into videos by Dr Matt Williams, like this one on the TSA [#OXFORD tutor takes TSA test \(Thinking Skills Assessment\)!](#), this one on the TSA [TSA \(Thinking Skills Assessment\) Tips and Tricks](#) and this one on the LNAT or [How to ACE the LNAT \(law admissions test\)!!!](#) and this one on the LNAT [How to SMASH the LNAT!!](#)
- Visit the websites themselves, which have great guidance and practice material:
 - [TSA \(Thinking Skills Assessment\) | University of Oxford](#)
 - [How to prepare | LNAT](#)

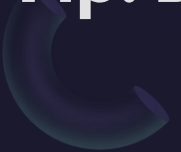


The basics

BASICS: How to Register

1. **Create Account:** Register for a UAT-UK account.
2. **Apply for Support (if needed):** Request bursaries or access arrangements from your dashboard before booking.
3. **Book Your Test:** Follow the instructions to select a date and a Pearson VUE Test Centre.

Tip: Book early to get your preferred time and location.



How to Prepare: The Official Advice

- **Focus on Skills:** TARA tests generic skills, not specific subject knowledge.
- **Use Free Materials:** You do not need expensive courses or additional resources.
- **Recommended Steps:**
 1. Read the official Test Specification document thoroughly.
 2. Complete the Specimen Test under timed conditions to simulate the real experience.

Candidate Support

- **Bursary Scheme:** Available for eligible UK candidates to cover the full test fee. You must apply and be approved for the bursary before you book and pay. Reimbursements are not possible.
- **Access Arrangements:**
 - Available for candidates with disabilities or special requirements.
 - You must apply with supporting evidence before you book your test.

On the Test Day

Be Prepared:

Read all Test Day information from UAT-UK and watch the Pearson VUE Centre video.

Be Punctual:

Arrive on time to allow for the check-in process.

Bring ID:

You must present a valid photographic ID that meets the official ID Policy.

After the Test

- **Results:**

- Available approximately four weeks after your test.
- You will be notified via your UAT-UK account.

- **Distribution:** Results are sent automatically to the relevant universities.

- **Final Thought:** There is no "pass" or "fail" for the TARA.
Your goal is simply to perform at your best on the day.

Thanks for coming
along... hope it
helped. Happy
prepping, and good
luck!



TARA

Prep Guide

Mr Pearce

