

The six-week TARA plan

A diagnostic-first programme for argument structure, relevance, timing and a concise Writing Task.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Begin with evidence from all three modules. Train the seven official Critical Thinking types and three Problem Solving types separately, then mix them under 40-minute limits. Write every week. Save the Pearson-format practice test for a full rehearsal after your methods are stable. Six weeks rewards repeated correction, not passive reading.

Checked against the sources named in this guide, August 2026. British English. Free to share.

1 Week 1 begins with a map

TARA tests skills rather than a school subject syllabus, but “no subject-specific knowledge” does not mean “nothing to learn”. The official Question Guide names seven Critical Thinking types, three Problem Solving types and a three-part Writing Task. Those are your map.

Use the Question Guide examples, specimen material and an archive sample to build a baseline. For each scored item, record:

Code	What failed	First repair
S	Structure: conclusion, assumption or principle misidentified	Map reasons, conclusion and bridge before options
I	Inference: chose more than the passage established	Restate the option with its strength words exposed
R	Relevance: kept distraction or dropped a constraint	Mark data necessary, checking or irrelevant
P	Procedure: no executable route appeared	Compare two solutions and write the first decisive move
E	Execution: arithmetic, unit or transcription failed	Slow clean repetition, then a five-question clock
T	Time: method was sound but too expensive	Practise stopping rules and option elimination

For the Writing Task, use four different checks: prompt coverage, argument strength, organisation and sentence control. Do not reduce an essay to a guessed score that UAT-UK never issues.

1 The tell

“Practise Critical Thinking” is too large to schedule. “Five assumption questions; write the missing bridge before options” is a session with a visible finish line.

2 A sustainable weekly load

The default plan uses about seven focused hours: four 60-minute sessions, one 90-minute mixed session and one 90-minute review or Writing Task. If you have less time, shorten the question count rather than deleting marking. Unreviewed practice repeats your current method faithfully.

3 Weeks 2--4: build, connect, write

3.1 Week 2: Critical Thinking structure

Train main conclusions, drawn conclusions and assumptions first. Then add evidence impact, flaws, matching arguments and principles. For every miss, write the conclusion in twelve words or fewer and the missing bridge in one sentence.

Finish the week with one 22-question, 40-minute Critical Thinking set. Record accuracy by question type, the question reached at 38 minutes and every answer changed without a stated reason.

3.2 Week 3: Problem Solving selection and procedure

Audit the official arithmetic appendix once. Repair only actual gaps in fractions, percentages, means, time, money, measures, rectangles, boxes, tables and graphs. Spend the rest of the week on the three official problem types: Relevant Selection, Finding Procedures and Identifying Similarity.

Use two clocks: five questions in ten minutes for method pressure, then 22 in 40 for coverage. After each set, separate *kept* distraction from *discarded constraint*; they need opposite repairs.

Worked example Turn one assumption miss into a drill

A council argues: "The library should replace all printed notices with app notifications. Most residents own a smartphone, so everyone who needs council information will receive it more quickly."

Which assumption is required?

- A. Replacing printed notices would save the council a substantial amount of money.
- B. Everyone needing the information can and will receive app notifications promptly.
- C. Council information is generally more urgent than every other message residents receive.
- D. Smartphone ownership among local residents will continue increasing throughout the next year.
- E. Library staff would strongly prefer digital communication to maintaining printed notices.

Correct: B. The conclusion moves from most residents owning a device to everyone who needs the information receiving the message.

Trap: A, C and E might support a policy preference, but the conclusion does not depend on them. D predicts a trend irrelevant to the present claim.

Repair drill

Write three new arguments that move from "most" to "everyone". For each, state the access assumption before writing options. This trains the bridge, not the library story.

3.3 Week 4: Writing Task every other day

Alternate a seven-minute plan with a full 40-minute response. Every plan must contain: definition, strongest argument against, reply and qualified judgement. Every full response gets a four-minute edit for repetition, unsupported examples and claims stronger than their reasons.

4 Week 5: join the modules

Complete two full sittings on different days: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and the Writing Task in order, each separately timed for 40 minutes, with no break between modules. Use a desktop screen and a separate rough-work sheet.

After each sitting, record:

- scored-module accuracy, reach at 38 minutes and blanks at 40;
- the three longest multiple-choice attempts and whether staying was rational;
- error totals by S/I/R/P/E/T code;
- whether the Writing Task answered all three verbs and stayed within 750 words;
- one paragraph to cut and one counter-argument to strengthen.

Review for at least as long as the scored modules took. The repeated cause, not the most dramatic question, sets the next session.

5 Week 6: final rehearsal, then taper

Early in the week, use the Pearson-format practice test for navigation and delivery. Rehearse the full three-module sequence once more. Then narrow the work:

- two short mixed sets built from recurring errors;
- one final Writing Task plan and one edited full response;
- one pass through the official rules, ID and booking details;
- no new taxonomy, giant question bank or speculative score conversion in the final 48 hours.

2 Try it

Every Sunday, choose next week's top three repairs using frequency and recoverability. A flaw that cost four marks and can be fixed with a clear test outranks a unique puzzle that consumed half an hour.

6 The material order

Start with the TARA specification and Question Guide. Use the official TSA and BMAT Section 1 archive for volume because UAT-UK identifies the shared history. Use current specimen material to check TARA wording. Finish with the Pearson player to rehearse the screen.

Do not convert archive or specimen marks into a TARA scaled result. UAT-UK says its practice versions do not award scores and practice performance need not predict live performance.

7 Sources

UAT-UK, TARA Question Guide and Content Specification

The question-type map, Writing Task advice, assumed mathematics and three separately timed modules. [Question Guide; specification.](#)

UAT-UK, TARA Preparation Materials and Test Results

Official specimen/practice routing, the linked TSA/BMAT archive, and the limits of practice-score interpretation. [Preparation Materials; Test Results.](#)

The weekly hours, error codes and checkpoints are study recommendations, not official requirements or score guarantees. The worked item is original.