

TARA exam day

The Pearson VUE room, three separate clocks, an erasable-booklet system and the incident rule worth knowing before you need it.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Arrive **30 minutes early** with compliant original photo ID and your Pearson confirmation. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and the Writing Task each last 40 minutes; time does not carry over and there are no scheduled breaks. Your calculator, dictionary, watch, notes, phone, food and water stay outside unless specifically approved.

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

1 What happens at the centre

TARA is computer-based at a Pearson VUE test centre. Your booking name must exactly match your ID. UAT-UK says candidates may be refused entry if they arrive more than 15 minutes late, so plan to arrive 30 minutes before the appointment.

The published TARA fee is £78 in the UK and Republic of Ireland, or £133 elsewhere. Confirm the live booking details before paying, then treat the appointment confirmation as one of your required test-day documents.

At check-in, expect your ID to be checked, a photograph, test rules and a security process. Personal items go in the designated area outside the testing room. The desk provides a PC, keyboard, mouse, erasable notebook and pen.

Bring to check-in	Leave outside	At the desk
Original, unexpired, accepted government photo ID with a signature	Phone, watch, wallet, bag, books, notes, own paper and writing tools	PC, keyboard and mouse
Pearson appointment confirmation, printed or electronic	Calculator, dictionary, food and drink, including water	Erasable notebook and pen; fresh sheets on request
Approved access or comfort-aid arrangements shown on the booking	Anything not approved under the current policies	Invigilator help when you raise your hand

Test the pen before the timer starts. Ask for a replacement or fresh sheets by raising your hand. Do not wait until a failed pen has become a five-minute problem.

1 The tell

Your home setup is too friendly if you annotate the question, glance at a wall clock or use your own familiar stationery. Rehearse on a monitor with a separate erasable or plain sheet and no watch.

2 Three modules, three fresh clocks

The modules run in order: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, then the Writing Task. Each has its own 40 minutes. Finishing early does not transfer time to the next module, and once you move on you cannot return.

For each 22-question module, the average budget is:

$$\frac{40 \times 60}{22} = 109.1.$$

That figure is seconds per question, not a command to leave a nearly finished solution at 109 seconds. Use it to protect reach.

Clock	You should have seen	Decision
13:00	Questions 1–7; begin 8	Move if no executable route has appeared
27:00	Questions 8–15; begin 16	Keep the final seven protected
38:00	Questions 16–22	Fill every blank, then use a flag deliberately
40:00	All 22 answered	Wrong answers lose no marks; an empty response cannot help

These checkpoints are a strategy to test in practice, not an official timing rule. In Critical Thinking, leave a short return note such as “Q9: conclusion, not reason”. In Problem Solving, record the requested unit and the one constraint you had not resolved.

Worked example Compress the right structure onto the booklet

Printer A produces 6 pages per minute and Printer B produces 8. They work together for 5 minutes. Printer C, which produces 10 pages per minute, then joins them. How many further minutes are needed to reach 190 pages? The first five minutes produce:

$$(6 + 8) \times 5 = 70.$$

Pages remaining:

$$190 - 70 = 120.$$

The three-printer rate is:

$$6 + 8 + 10 = 24.$$

Further time:

$$\frac{120}{24} = \boxed{5}.$$

Correct: A compact booklet line is enough: “70 done; 120 left; rate 24; 5 min”.

Trap: Dividing 190 by 24 treats Printer C as though it worked during the first five minutes.

3 Give the Writing Task its own handover

Do not carry the last Problem Solving question into the essay. When the module changes, sit back, exhale once and start a fresh page.

Use 5–10 minutes to plan, as UAT-UK recommends. A practical split is seven minutes for definitions and argument structure, 29 minutes to write, and four minutes to edit. Answer one of the three prompts and all three parts of its instruction. Do not exceed 750 words. Dictionaries and electronic spell-checkers are not permitted.

The final edit has four jobs: remove repetition, repair any sentence whose subject is unclear, check that examples support a claim, and make the extent of agreement explicit.

4 Breaks and incidents

There are no breaks between modules. If you need an unscheduled toilet break, raise your hand; the clock does not pause unless pause-the-clock breaks were approved in advance.

If the screen freezes, the pen fails, noise becomes significant or illness affects you, raise your hand immediately. UAT-UK says a performance-affecting incident should be reported at the centre or, at the latest, within 24 hours. If you want Pearson to investigate, email within three days. Obtain an incident case number before leaving.

2 The tell

Do not leave with only “the invigilator saw it”. Ask whether the incident was recorded and write down the case number. A timely record gives the investigation evidence.

5 The night-before check

- Confirm the centre, route, appointment and a 30-minute-early arrival target.
- Check the booking name against the exact ID you will carry.
- Save the Pearson confirmation offline or print it.
- Confirm any access arrangements appear on the booking.
- Stop practising early enough to sleep; a fresh mock now creates work you cannot use well.

6 Sources

UAT-UK, Test Day

Arrival, ID, confirmation, prohibited items, centre equipment, breaks and incident reporting. [Read the current rules.](#)

UAT-UK, TARA overview and Content Specification

The current test fee, three 40-minute modules, 22 questions in each scored module, no negative marking, no calculator or dictionary, and the Writing Task limit. [TARA overview; specification.](#)

Rules can change. The live UAT-UK page, ID policy and booking confirmation override this August 2026 checklist. The pacing checkpoints and worked item are original.