

TARA module strategy: three clocks, three jobs

Build a separate plan for Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and the Writing Task from the published format and timing evidence.

THE SHORT ANSWER

TARA has 22 Critical Thinking questions, 22 Problem Solving questions and one Writing Task. Each module is listed at 40 minutes. Train the operation that belongs to that clock.

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

1 Put the format on one page

Module	Public format	Route card
Critical Thinking	22 five-option multiple-choice questions, 40 minutes	Conclusion, reasons, bridge, question job
Problem Solving	22 five-option multiple-choice questions, 40 minutes	Target, constraints, route, check
Writing Task	Choose 1 of 3 prompts, 40 minutes, maximum 750 words	Proposition, selected ideas, organised expression

$$\frac{40 \times 60}{22} = 109.1 \text{ seconds per scored-module question on average.}$$

The average is a planning reference, not an official rule for every question. The modules are separate in the public format, so measure reach and accuracy separately.

2 Critical Thinking: protect the bridge

Critical Thinking is reasoning using everyday written language. Before the options pull you towards a topic opinion, write three short notes: the conclusion, the stated reasons and the bridge the argument needs.

1. Name the official question job: conclusion, evidence, assumption, error, matching or principle.
2. Keep the subject matter still. Test the relationship between reasons and claim.
3. Choose the answer that performs the named job, not a nearby true statement.
4. If the route is not clear, leave a short note and protect later questions.

1 Try it

For an Assumption item, finish this sentence before reading options: the conclusion fails unless... The best answer should make that bridge necessary.

3 Problem Solving: make the model visible

The specification assumes basic fractions, percentages, the four rules, averages, everyday quantities, area, perimeter, volume, tables and graphs. The challenge is selecting a route when the setting is unfamiliar.

1. Write the requested quantity and unit.
2. Mark the constraints that can change the route.
3. Choose the operation or sequence that moves towards the target.
4. Check the result against the wording and any boundary.

Question kind	First question to ask
Relevant Selection	Which facts can change the output?
Finding Procedures	What state do I start with, and what changes it?
Identifying Similarity	Which relationship survives the new wrapper?

4 Writing Task: select before you polish

The Writing Task is unscored by UAT-UK, but a copy goes to the participating university where the course requires TARA. The specification asks you to consider different aspects of a proposition and communicate them effectively.

1. Read the proposition until its terms are clear.
2. Choose the points that answer the proposition rather than every thought you have.
3. Organise the points so each paragraph moves the argument forward.
4. Use the remaining time to make the expression concise, accurate and effective within 750 words.

Dictionaries and electronic spell-checkers are not permitted. Treat the word limit and the permitted tools as part of the task boundary.

5 Measure reach as well as accuracy

The technical report gives a reason to log reach. Approximately 1% of Critical Thinking candidates and 8% of Problem Solving candidates had unreached items. Responses left blank or answered in under five seconds affected 4% of Critical Thinking responses and 28% of Problem Solving responses.

Those figures describe two administrations, not a personal quota. In your own practice log, keep correct, incorrect and unseen separate. A strategy is working only when the route becomes both more accurate and more reachable.

Worked example Choose the right route card

You have ten minutes left in a 22-question Problem Solving module. One item asks you to select only the information needed for a quantity. Another asks you to write a position on a proposition. Which route card belongs to each?

- A. Critical Thinking for both.
- B. Relevant Selection for the quantity, Writing Task for the proposition.
- C. Writing Task for the quantity, Finding Procedures for the proposition.
- D. The same route for both because the clock is shared.

Correct: B keeps the operations separate. A shared test name does not make the modules interchangeable.

Trap: The other options either confuse the module or treat the clock as more important than the task.

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he route cards and practice decisions are original study advice. They do not certify readiness or predict an admissions decision.

6 Sources

- [UAT-UK current TARA Content Specification](#): module boundaries, basic mathematical assumptions and Writing Task conditions.
- [UAT-UK current TARA Question Guide](#): current question-type map and public examples.
- [UAT-UK TARA Technical Report 2025-26](#): published timing and reach evidence.