



TITANIUM

PRIVATE TUITION ACROSS THE UK

TUTORS

EASTER EXAM TIPS



## Have a Revision Revolution!

by Joe, Founding Director

We know exams can sometimes seem like a minefield, but we've always thought "who better to demystify the process than people who've come out the other side smiling?".

That's why, once a year, we ask our tutors and our office staff (all of whom have top degrees) to shed some light on the revision and exam process. It's our pleasure to provide you with this collected wisdom absolutely free of charge, so please dip in and enjoy!

This year our Easter brochure covers such topics as coping with exam stress, eating healthily to boost brain power, the Fibonacci sequence (and how it relates to bunnies!), and general exam technique tips.

I hope you find this useful. If you would like any help from one of our tutors with specific subjects or general revision strategies, please feel free to get in touch. You can contact William or Leticia on 07398 199 717, who head up our talented office team: their exam tips can be found overleaf.

# Wisdom from the TT Office...

## How to Cope with Exam Stress

by William

Exams are getting closer, and you're stressed out of your mind. You try not to think about it too much so you don't panic, but that just means you spend time distracting yourself on YouTube, social media or talking to your friends instead of taking time to learn, and deep down you're still worried. Or you're working desperately hard, but you still feel like you can't get your head around these history dates, this maths topic, this chemistry problem, and it's driving you up the wall. The more stressed you get, the more overwhelmed you feel, and the less confident you are in your ability to do well. Sound familiar?

The period leading up to exams can be very stressful, even for students who are doing very well. Regardless of how much you know about a particular subject, an exam is a situation in which you'll be marked – judged – for your ability. That's tough. Adults get stressed about this kind of thing, too – though they often try hard not to show it. The bad news is, you'll be assessed for your ability many times throughout your life. The good news is, there are many things you can do to cope with stress in those situations. Even better, those methods can help you later in life to deal with all sorts of stress outside of exams – job interviews, business meetings, even disagreements with your friends and family. But before we can talk about how to mitigate it, we need to understand it – as Master Sun (Sun Tzu, an ancient Chinese general who wrote 'The Art of War', a famous treatise on military strategy) said: 'Know thy enemy'. So:

### What is stress?

Stress isn't your enemy. In fact, for many hundreds of thousands of years, it was our friend, and indispensable for our survival. Stress is a state in which your body is primed for action – instinctive, nervous, impulsive action. When you're stressed, the body is ready to spend all its energy at the drop of a hat. This was a useful trait back when our ancestors were used to running away from things trying to eat them. In the savannah, where something a little like a saber-toothed tiger can jump on you at any moment, it's useful to be able to spend all your energy, all at once, to run for your life. These instinctive behaviours stick with us to this day. When we have the notion that something bad is imminently going to happen to us – for example when we worry about sitting down at an exam and not doing very well – our bodies still react in the same way, by tensing and using up all our energy very fast. This is why stress is exhausting – and why it leaves you feeling like you're half the person you normally are when you're confident and relaxed. When you're tired, it's more difficult to learn, and much more difficult to motivate yourself. So, what can you do to keep your stress levels in check?



William

William is the Assistant Manager at Titanium Tutors, running our Admin Team alongside Leticia. Originally from Switzerland, Will graduated from the University of York in 2007 with a Bachelor's degree in Historical Archaeology and went on to complete an MA in Archaeological Research with a focus on ancient Egypt, also at York. Since then Will has worked for large web firms as well as in the start-up sector, and has taken time off to travel within Europe as well as to visit Vietnam and Cambodia. He has a keen interest in languages (he's fluent in three to date), history, literature and ancient cultures. On a weekend, he can most often be found with his nose in a book or exploring the latest special exhibition at the British Museum. In his free time he also practises Japanese swordsmanship!

## Sleep – seriously, it’s important.

The most important thing you can do to relieve exam stress is to sleep – regularly, for long enough. Scientists now understand that sufficient sleep is vital for memory, the immune system, and general health and well-being. When you’re exhausted, you’re less alert, more prone to mood swings and depression, and much more vulnerable to stress – which, as discussed above, makes you even more tired. On the other hand, when you’re well rested, you have more energy, you learn faster, and you feel more confident. So, set yourself a routine – go to sleep, and wake up, at the same time every day. It will make a real difference!

Top Tip: Mobile phone screens emit a lot of blue light, which disrupts the circadian rhythm (this is the inner clock of all the cells in your body, which operates on a 24 hour pattern). This can make it much harder to fall asleep in the evening, especially when you feel worried or anxious. Turning off your phone and avoiding looking at screens for an hour before bed helps. If you can’t do without your phone, almost all smartphones have a ‘Blue Light Filter’ which you can time to switch itself on in the evening. It’ll make your screen look orange at first, but you’ll soon get used to it, and it will help prevent the blue light from your phone keeping you feeling wide awake when it’s time to rest.

After having a good night’s sleep, having a big, hearty breakfast in the morning can also really help prevent your stress level from going through the roof during the day. This is because even if your body starts using up all its resources when you start worrying, you’ve given it a good stock of energy to draw from first thing in the morning.

## The miracle of good posture.

Try looking at yourself in the mirror and making a sad face. Feel that? Somewhere inside, a little part of you is starting to feel sad – just because you’ve told your facial muscles to make you look as if you’re unhappy. On the other hand, if you make yourself smile and keep it up for ten seconds or so, you’ll start feeling happier. This is partly because human beings interpret emotions by mimicking them (something which is now well-understood by scientists). The same applies to your posture. If you feel depressed or stressed, your shoulders will slump. You’ll shrink. You’ll make yourself small physically. But try standing up straight, with your legs braced firmly to each side and your hands on your hips in a ‘powerful’ pose, for two minutes. Your

shoulders start relaxing. You start feeling more confident, and your stress levels go down. This was demonstrated powerfully by a researcher at Harvard Business School called Amy Cuddy (look up her Ted Talk for more details – it’s fantastic!). Taking up a confident pose actually makes you more confident. This can be extremely useful just before an exam, if you’re prone to panicking in those situations. Just before the exam, find a quiet spot – in a lavatory, out on the yard, in a changing room – or in your room on the morning before leaving for school – and stand straight with your chin up, legs braced, and hands on your hips, in a power pose for just two minutes. This is all it takes to make the stress hormone levels in your body go down, and your confidence rise. Try it!

## A small note on sugar...

In the next article, my colleague Leticia will talk to you about general wellbeing – especially with regards to food. It’s no secret that what you eat has a huge impact on how you feel day-to-day, and so in my last tip on how to prevent yourself from becoming too stressed during revision and before exams, I want to tell you about a big culprit in that regard – sugar. Sugar gives you energy, and it can be tempting to eat lots of it when you revise, or at school during the day. Unfortunately, apart from the fact that it’s not healthy in itself, the energy hit sugar provides is very brief. You get a rush for a short time after eating it but because your body uses it up quickly, it’s gone in a flash and you start feeling down – which means you need more sugar to keep up your energy, and so on. Constant sugar highs and lows can make you very vulnerable to stress. Your mind gets agitated, confused and tired by all these rushes of energy followed by crashes followed by rushes, etc. It’s much better to eat a balanced, healthy diet – this will keep your energy levels up and your mood steady in the face of stressful situations. If you have a sweet tooth like me, fruit are much better than straight-up sugar as found in chocolate bars or sweet drinks – especially citrus fruit, since the Vitamin C they contain helps your body stay healthy and alert. Rather than grab a Mars Bar, grab an apple or an orange – you’ll find you won’t feel like eating the Mars Bar afterwards, and you’ll have done your body and your mood a real service!

## Have confidence in yourself!

Last, but not least – have confidence in yourself and your abilities, and don’t be put off by failure. Even failure is valuable, because it teaches what you need to do differently to succeed the next time. This is how human beings learn! I wish you the best of luck for your exams. Please be sure to read Leticia’s article for plenty of tips on how to keep healthy and manage your wellbeing!

## Eat Right by Leticia

I’m sure you’ve heard countless times about food’s benefits and dangers to the body. We study it in school: Biology, P.E., Food Tech, PSHE. The list goes on. Keep an eye out - ads promoting foods for weight loss / better skin / general health are bound to find their way into your week, if not your day! Do you blame these people though? Food’s great! So I’d like to jump on the bandwagon and talk about the benefits of food, too. But as it’s exam season, let’s make this about the driving force, the brain. You guessed it - we’re talking brain foods.

## Brain Foods

It’s in the name. Foods that your brain will love you for eating. William has already given you clues on what *not* to eat. Sugar crashes are very real, so don’t risk it before an exam. Energy drinks seem to be a favourite, but the wings they give are sadly temporary. Candy will only keep you sweet for a moment, and crisps may not help when it’s crunch time. “What should I eat, then?” you ask. Here are some suggestions.

## Sardine Sarnies / Smoked Salmon (*& cream cheese*)

OK, so maybe not cream cheese - or maybe so! But the point is oily fish are great for you! They’re packed full of protein for growth and repair, as well as Omega-3 (found in concentrated quantities in the brain) which your brain says “Yes” to, and it’s reported to help with memory. You’ll also find Omega-3 in walnuts, flaxseeds and Brussels sprouts.

## Crab & Cottage Cheese

Weird combination, I know! Personally, I haven’t tried this combo but separately I know they’re both very good in their own rights. So what do these two have to do with each other, besides the alliteration? **B12**. This vitamin helps turn glucose (sugar) into energy, so you’ll feel energised for your exam. Not getting enough B12 can lead to cognitive decline, which means memory and thinking skills aren’t at their best, so next time you’re stocking up on pre-exam snacks, why not try foods rich with B12? It can also be found in mussels, shrimp and eggs.



## Green Tea

I’m aware you’re probably waiting for an alternative to the beloved energy drinks I mentioned earlier. Green tea is great because it does what energy drinks and coffee do - it gives you that caffeine boost. The great thing is that it also releases antioxidants into the blood. Antioxidants are naturally produced by the body to fight “free radicals” which cause something called oxidative stress. In short, free radicals can also lead to mental decline, so to keep your brain in tip-top shape, drink green tea, berries, leafy greens and dark chocolate (yep, chocolate) to get rid of those pesky radicals.



## Leticia

Leticia is the Company Manager at Titanium Tutors, running our Admin Team. She graduated from the University of Leicester with a degree in English Literature. During her first year, she completed the CELTA. She then continued her education studies in her final year, completing a placement in a secondary school as an English teaching assistant. From 2014 to 2017, Leticia taught English as a foreign language in summer schools, and was able to explore England and Wales. As a result of these excursions, Leticia developed an interest in touring and has visited Amsterdam, Paris, Lagos and Niagara Falls in Canada since. Her next stop is Dubai. Leticia loves singing and will almost always be seen making a beeline for the microphone at any karaoke night!



Sara

Subjects Taught: French, English

Background: Sara has been tutoring for five years, specialising in languages and performing arts. She studied French and Drama at the University of Birmingham and spent her year abroad teaching English and Theatre in a French secondary school. In England, Sara began tutoring French GCSE and A Level students, and French conversation skills for adults. Sara recently graduated with a Masters from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London and has extensive performing and workshop experience in the UK and internationally.

Teaching Approach: Sara believes that communication is key to successful learning. She listens to each student's needs and determines their learning methods, then designs structured sessions, covering regular grammar practice, vocabulary acquisition, writing, reading, speaking and listening practice. Sara also encourages students to enjoy language learning and embrace the culture too.

Fun Fact: Sara loves rock climbing and cake!

# 5 top ways to prepare for Language exams

by Sara

As with most exams, you really can't afford to wait until the last minute to prepare for a language exam. Cramming the night before is not an option! The skills required to understand and communicate in a foreign language are acquired and developed over time, and building up a good knowledge of grammar and a large bank of vocabulary takes regular, committed practice. However, language exam revision can seem a little daunting at first: you've got to prepare for speaking, reading, listening and writing questions, in addition to getting your head around the specific requirements your exam board demands, which can be confusing sometimes. Language exam preparation can feel overwhelming - there are so many topics, so many tenses, tricky rules and tonnes of exceptions! Where to start?

## Little and often

Because language acquisition takes place over a long period of time, it is really important to pace yourself. It is better to dedicate a set amount of time per day to look at something, even if it's as little as twenty minutes per day, rather than overloading and mentally exhausting yourself, and then forgetting to revise for a few weeks (and forgetting your learning in the process). You could complete a grammar exercise, read a short French article online, listen to some French radio, or meet up with a friend and agree only to communicate in the target language! Practising a little bit every day will ensure that your brain is constantly revisiting vocabulary and language skills you have previously learnt, in order to maintain your language fluency.

## Work with a friend

Some people work better alone, while others find that a second pair of eyes and an additional brain working on the same problem is preferable. If you fit into the latter category you could meet up with a friend and work on your 20-minute exercise or article together. Having a second person in the room means you can test each other on vocabulary and practise your oral questions and presentations together. If you can find a friend who is a native speaker of the language you are studying – even better! They can help you with pronunciation and improving your accent too, and might even be able to give you an insight into their culture, providing you with content for your writing and speaking exams.



## Take advantage of technology

There is an abundance of apps and websites available online that can help make language learning fun. While not an exam-focussed app, Duolingo is easy to use and allows you to set a daily goal for the amount of time you wish to spend revising, from 5-20 minutes per day. There are a variety of exercises and quizzes to help you regularly revise grammar points and vocabulary. I also always ensure my students have the Collins French-English dictionary website open during a tutoring session so they can quickly look up new words and record their definition and use. Finally, some of my students have reported having success with changing their phone language to French up to the day of their exam to help them maintain fluency...!

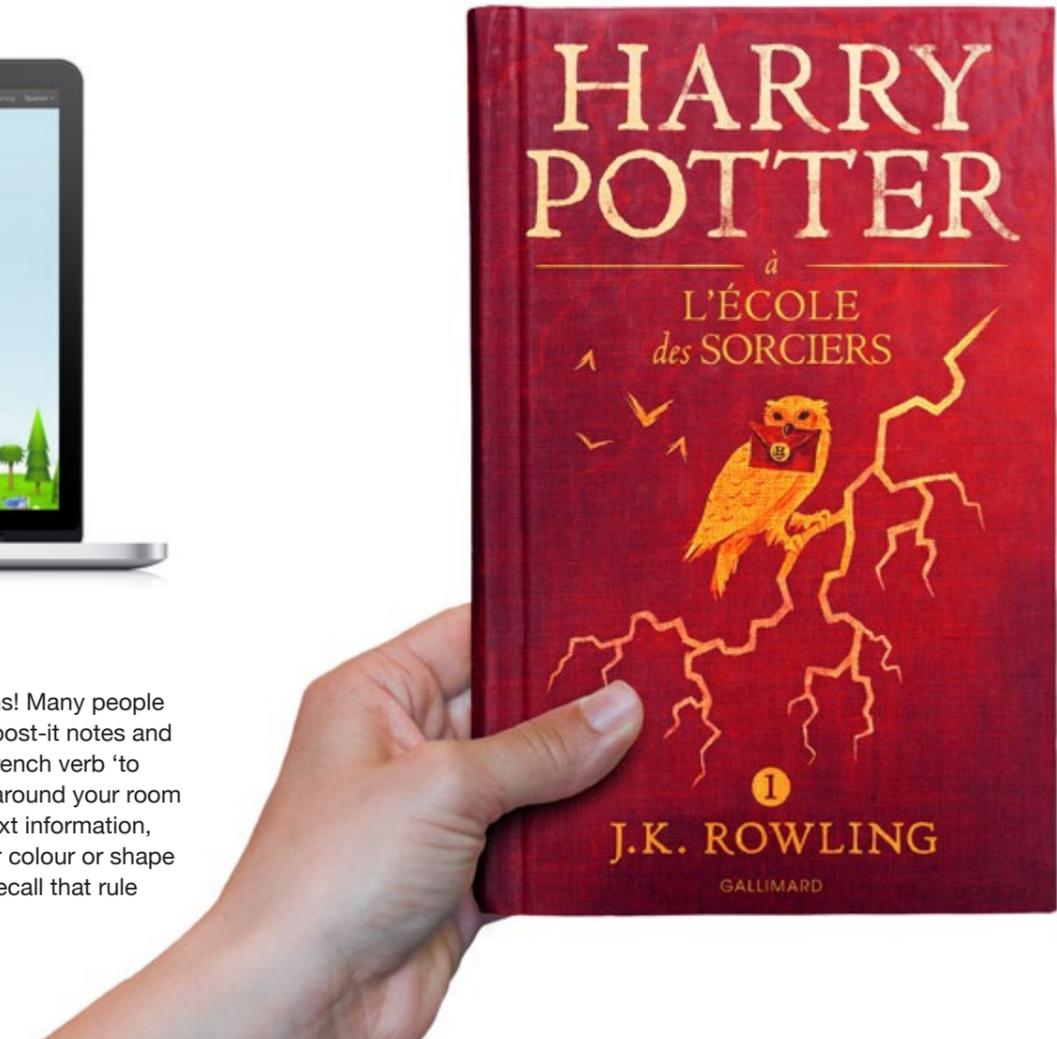


## Make it colourful!

Grammar rules are often complex, not to mention all those exceptions! Many people find they are visual learners, so writing grammar points on colourful post-it notes and making colour-coded charts (for example conjugations of être, the French verb 'to be', in blue, and avoir the verb 'to have' in red) and displaying them around your room can really help. Using colour creates visual information rather than text information, which can be easier for our brains to absorb. Associating a particular colour or shape of a Post-It Note with a specific grammar rule can make it easier to recall that rule when you're sitting in your exam.

## Books, films and TV

There is no reason why language revision should be dull! An additional way I learned French and Polish was by reading translations of *Harry Potter*, one of my favourite books! I encourage my students to read translations of books with which they are familiar and enjoy as it's a great way to learn new vocabulary. If you're a bit tired from reading all day for another exam, try watching a favourite film or TV programme that has the option to play foreign subtitles or dubbing instead.





Jese

Subjects Taught: Maths, 11+, Biology, Chemistry, English Language, English Literature, Physics, Science

Background: Jese studied at the University of Warwick, completing a degree in Mathematics, Operational Research, Statistics & Economics. She is one of our most experienced tutors, having clocked up thousands of hours' tutoring experience over the past eight years!

Teaching Approach: Jese likes to keep her lessons fun and engaging. The atmosphere is relaxed, with clear goals and deadlines in mind. Lessons are focused around student needs, including revision & exam technique.

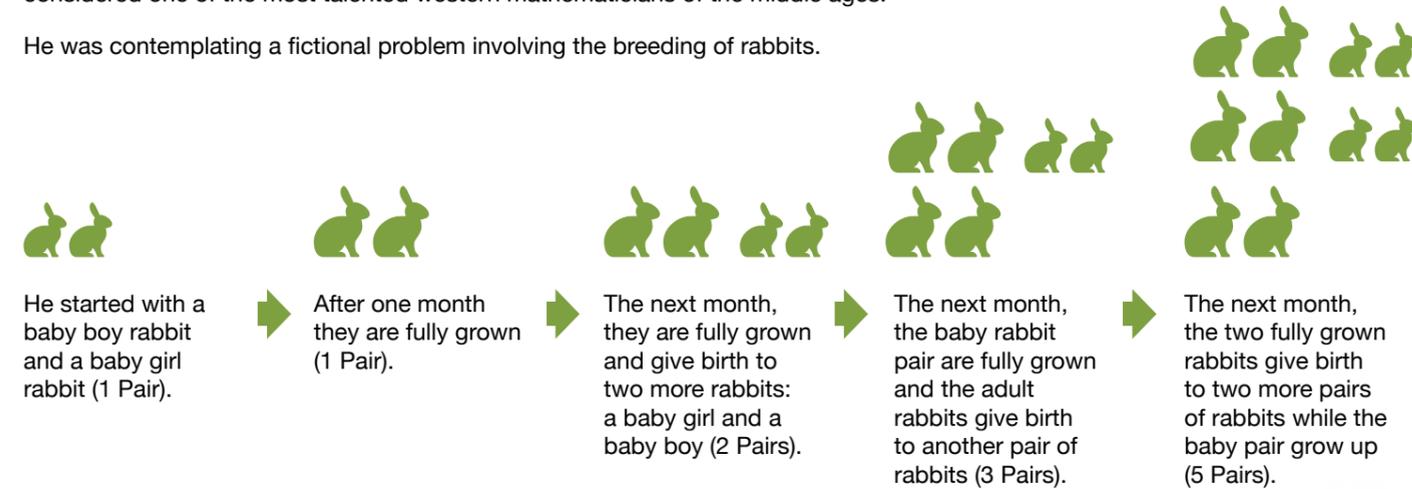
Fun Fact: Jese is a keen singer/guitarist, and can also teach the Japanese Abacus!

# Fibonacci Rabbits & The Golden Ratio

by Jese

The Fibonacci sequence is named after the Italian mathematician 'Fibonacci' who was considered one of the most talented western mathematicians of the middle ages.

He was contemplating a fictional problem involving the breeding of rabbits.



Let's assume this sequence continues: 1,1,2,3,5,8,13,21,34 and so on...

What do you notice about the sequence? Starting from the third term, each term is a sum of the previous two terms. I.e. 1+1=2, 1+2=3, 2+3=5, 3+5=8, 5+8=13, 8+13=21, 13+21=34 and so on. Magic!

Now let's consider the ratio of any two numbers in the sequence: 1/1 = 1, 2/1 = 2, 3/2 = 1.5, 5/3 = 1.666..., 8/5 = 1.6, 13/8 = 1.625, 21/13 = 1.61538..., 34/21 = 1.61904...

If we continue this, we will get closer and closer to the number: 1.61803398874989484820

This is the golden ratio (also known as **Phi**); the Fibonacci sequence is often called the **golden sequence** for this reason.



## So what's so special about the 'Golden Ratio'?

It can be derived using the following:  $(\sqrt{5} + 1)/2$  which makes it an irrational number, and appears in our world in a mysterious fashion.

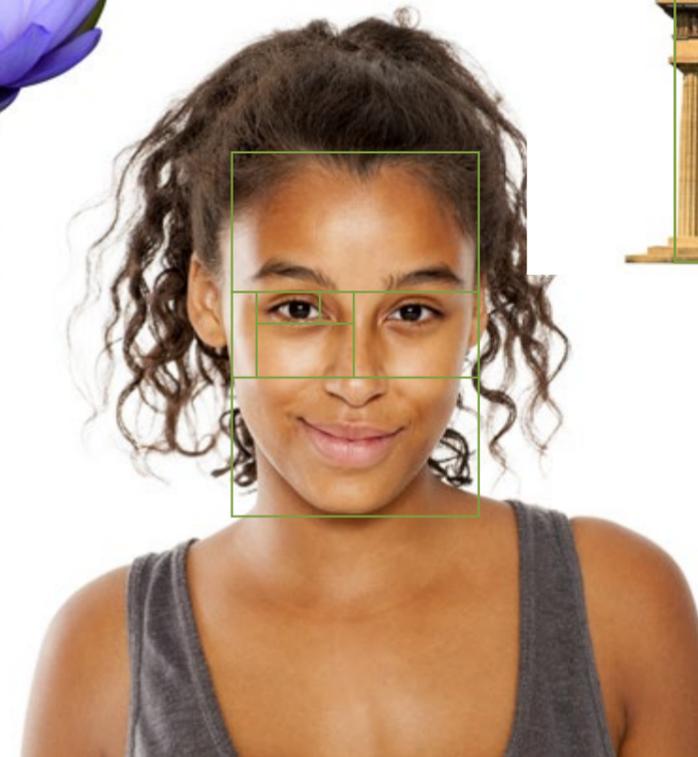
### In Nature

The number of petals in a flower consistently follow the Fibonacci sequence: a lily has 3 petals, a buttercup has 5 petals, a chicory has 21 petals, a daisy has 34 petals, etc.



### Human Body

Features of the face follow the golden ratio. The mouth and nose are positioned with the golden ratio of the distance between the eyes and the bottom of the chin.



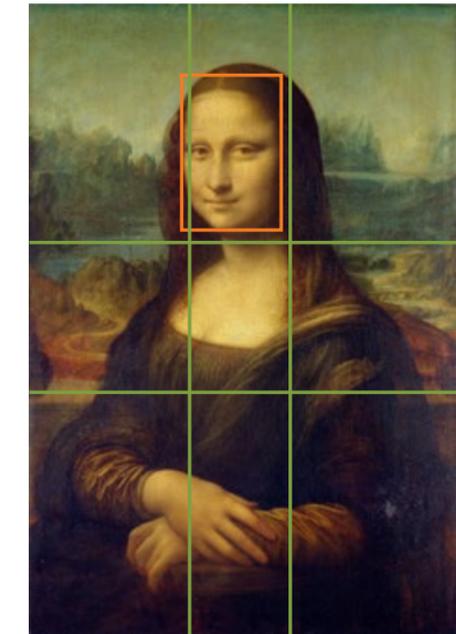
### Architecture

Many buildings have the golden ratio in their structure, such as the Parthenon in Greece.



### Art

Many artists used the golden ratio in their artwork, including the famous Mona Lisa.



### Activity:

See if you can research other instances of the golden ratio. And make a poster on the wonders of the golden ratio!



## Sebastian

Subjects Taught: Geography, German

Background: Sebastian was born in Regensburg, Germany and grew up in Penang, Malaysia. After completing high school (IGCSEs) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, he worked at North London Collegiate School Jeju, South Korea for six months as a teaching assistant. After this he attended the University of Melbourne in Australia for his three year undergraduate degree in Environments, majoring in Environmental Geographies, Politics and Cultures. He is bilingual, speaking English and German fluently, and he also speaks a bit of Malay, French and Mandarin.

Teaching Approach: Sebastian believes that building a strong working relationship of trust between the tutor and student is very important, and that being easily approachable is vital.

Fun Fact: Sebastian enjoys exploring new places and cultures, and is fascinated by languages. He has visited 67 countries!

# 5 Steps to Effective Exam Technique

by Sebastian

## Reading and understanding the question.

- Take your time to read the question properly.
- Read it several times if you have to.
- Underline the command words.
- Underline the key terms.

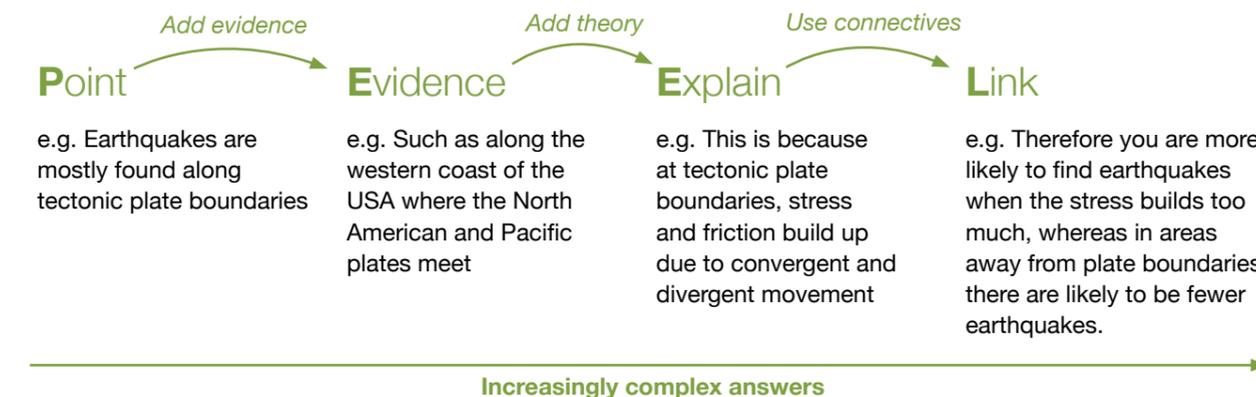
## Planning your answer.

- Make a short plan for essays - this will really help your essay have good structure.
- Your plan should indicate the main point for each main body paragraph and the order of your main body paragraphs.
- It should also include any case study examples.



## Answering the question - structure.

- You absolutely have to use paragraphs - if you don't, you may significantly hinder your mark.
- All essays should have the following general structure:  
**Introduction** - the aim of an introduction is to define any key terms in the essay question and to introduce the question. If it is a case study specific question, background info about the case study can also be given in the introduction.  
**Main body** - your main body paragraphs should follow the PEEL structure:



- **Conclusion** - your conclusion should just summarise your main points in each main body paragraph.
- 8 to 10 mark questions should have an introductory sentence at the least, but a conclusion may not be necessary.



## Answering the question - language

- You should always use academic language throughout your essay or answer.
- In my subject (Geography), you should be using as many Geography terms as possible.
- You need to watch your SPAG at all times.
- You should have legible handwriting, not too small and also not too big.

## Checking your work

- If you have time left at the end of an exam, always check over your answers. Trust me, you will find SPAG errors at the very least.



### Tife

Subjects Taught: Economics, Mathematics, Statistics, Econometrics

Background: Tife studied at the University of Manchester, majoring in a Bachelors of Science in Economics. In her second and third years she held lessons/workshops for first year student in Econometrics. After graduating she interned at an investment banking firm for 6 months and went on to Imperial College London to study for a Masters of Science in Economics and Strategy for Business. She is a highly dedicated tutor, with over 350 hours of teaching experience.

Teaching Approach: Tife aims to make sessions practical, using current economic topics to better drive the objective of all economic topics. She finds it easier for students to grasp topics when they can see the effects in day to day activities. She also regularly tests her students on topics covered using both past papers and mental questions.

Fun Fact: Tife also currently works at a one of the leading management consulting firms globally; however, she cannot swim and doesn't like chocolates.



### Steve

Subjects Taught: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Art, English for Business Purposes, Chess, History, History of Art, Interview Skills, Life Coaching, Teacher Training, 11+, Business Studies, Linguistics

Background: Steve is a teacher with 35 years' experience. He has lived and taught in Sweden, Italy, Germany and France for much of his career, as well as taking time off to teach on projects in Turkey and Sri Lanka in his summers off in the past! He comes from Birmingham, but lives in Rutland. He has strong Norfolk roots as well as a love of all things Cambridge!

Teaching Approach: Steve likes to draw his students into a subject by using information they already know as a way into exploring the unknown. For him the most rewarding moments in teaching are the "Aha" moments when the pennies begin to drop!

Fun Fact: Steve is also the trainer for Scudamores Punting company, training up newbie punt tour guides ("Chauffeurs") to master the arts of punting unsuspecting visitors up and down the River Cam in Cambridge, whilst cunningly divulging information concerning the history of the University and the town!



### Henry

Subjects Taught: Philosophy, Physics, Maths

Background: After he graduated from high school in Norway, Henry went on to study Physics and Philosophy at UC Berkeley. He is presently continuing his studies at King's College London, where he will graduate with an MSci in 2020. He is currently training with the Philosophy Foundation to be a Specialist Philosopher.

Teaching Approach: Henry teaches *how* to think, not *what* to think. As the saying goes: teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime. Instead of getting bogged down in particulars, he focuses on understanding the underlying patterns and principles. With a solid foundation in place, true understanding will follow — and in its wake there will be excellent test scores.

Fun Fact: Henry has so deeply committed himself to philosophical thinking that the only fun fact he could think of was that his first inclination, upon seeing this section, was to ask: what is a fun fact?



### Henri

Subjects Taught: Ancient Greek, Ancient History, Classical Civilisation, Latin

Background: Henri studied Classics at the University of Oxford and recently graduated in June 2017. She fell in love with the subject after taking Classical Civilisation for A Level and subsequently studied Latin and Ancient Greek to a high level. Whilst at university, she taught on the 'Literacy through Latin' programme in local primary schools, and also began tutoring privately. Since graduating, she has continued to tutor Classical languages, literature and history alongside working at various museums and galleries in London. She has taught Latin and Greek to a wide variety of levels including GCSE, A Level and beginners.

Teaching Approach: Henri focuses her teaching on the thorough understanding of grammar and language structure, reinforced by the process of active translation, rather than limited to verb tables. She believes that the excitement of ancient literature should not be left as an afterthought and so uses original texts as a starting point.

Fun Fact: Henri used to be in a Blondie cover band called Peroxide!



### Trevor

Subjects Taught: Business Studies, Economics, Accounting

Background: Trevor graduated with a BA (Hons) in Business (2:1), and has worked for a number of large organisations offering a variety of depth and experience. Trevor gained his QTS status in 2005 and has extensive experience in teaching in both the private, state and FE sectors. He has taught across syllabuses and key stages, including GCSE and A Level. Trevor has been an examiner for a range of awarding bodies, and has experience working with exam boards to support both teachers and students. Along with teaching, Trevor has privately tutored for the past 10 years.

Teaching Approach: Trevor passionately believes in students achieving their potential. He likes to arrange an initial meeting to understand the needs and objectives of the student before developing a detailed plan of the outline of personal tutoring support.

Fun Fact: Trevor is the descendant of a notable Victorian millionaire industrialist (who unfortunately lost all his money!)



### Alex

Subjects Taught: History, Art and Design, Creative Writing, Economics, English Literature, Essay Skills, Homework help, Interview Skills, Politics, University Applications

Background: Alexander graduated with a First in History from Warwick, and now has over three years of experience tutoring at 11+, 13+, GCSE, A-Level and IB. He also tutors interview technique, personal statement writing and essay writing. He has successfully prepared pupils for entry to Senior School, Sixth-Form and University. His experiences of studying make him familiar with exam technique and study methods. He is a qualified barrister and has just been accepted to study a Masters at Cambridge. Alexander's hobbies include creative writing, theatre visits and gallery visits.

Teaching Approach: Alexander is enthusiastic and patient and he helps his pupils become independent learners.

Fun Fact: Alexander once met Pavarotti on a beach as a child — and sang to him!



## Gives us a shout!

If you'd like any help from our tutors, please find our contact details below. Our tutors can help with revision for specific subjects, or can even give more general support, helping with revision/exam technique, memory skills, performance coaching, and stress management.

### William Stonborough

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### Leticia Debola

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