Structuring a tutorial

We suggest the following tutorial structure of a starter activity, main activity, and summary activity. This is not the only way to structure a tutorial, but this works well!

Objective setting

Setting a clear and focused objective at the start of your tutorial will enable you to check that your student has made progress and understands the topic.

Starter activity

The starter activity is a good opportunity for you to check your student's retention from the last session. When introducing the topic of the session, a good starter activity will allow you to check your student's confidence level and highlight any areas of weakness to be worked on.
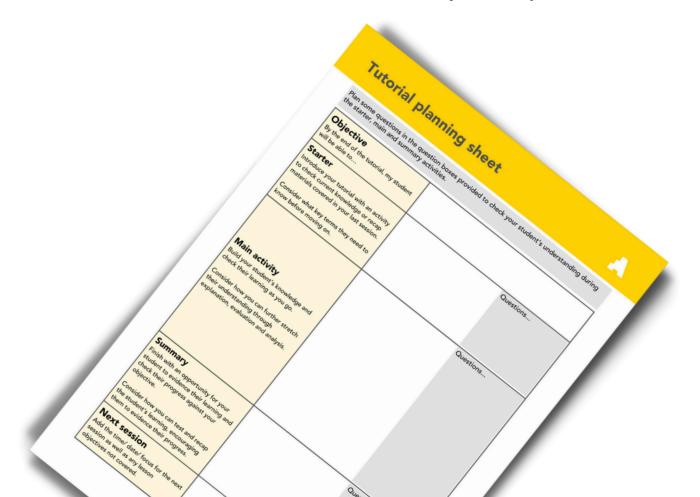
Main activity

The main activity leads students through content and should include activities to meet objectives. There may include direct instruction and expertise from you as the tutor, but it is a good idea to include a combination of tutor and student-led work. Don't be afraid to set independent work for your student and provide feedback to them afterwards.

Summary activity

The summary activity is a good time for ensuring that objectives have been met. You might decide to use the summary portion of your tutorial to ask your student to reflect on their progress and identify areas to work in the next session. At the end of your tutorial, you can also highlight some takeaways for revision.

Next session

Add the time/ date/ focus for the next session as well as any lesson objectives not covered.

Tutorial activities

When choosing activities for your tutorial plan, ask yourself how each activity is building towards your objective for that session. Try different things and find what works for you!

What elements of tutorials do students value the most?

Our students told us that the following have had the biggest impact on their progress:
- Opportunities to practice exam-style questions
- Interactivity and taking an active role in their tutorials
- One-to-one guidance, particularly how content is tailored to their specific needs.

Starter activities

- Red, amber, green: rate all the parts of a topic to assess what your student needs help with. Review at the end of the topic to check progress
- Articulate: Give your student keywords from the topic you're working on. They have two minutes to describe as many as possible or put them into sentences
- Word of the day: Choose a keyword from the topic and ask your student to define and explain it. Revisit at the beginning of the next tutorial
- Nine box squares: Write nine key words, used in the previous tutorial, in boxes. Challenge your student to make a sentence of at least three words.

Main or summary activities

- Past paper questions: Ask your student to attempt one or two past paper questions on the topic you are covering. They can do this independently, or in discussion with you so you can follow their thought processes. This will help you check their understanding and help you plan what to cover next
- Unseen text: Ask your student to read a text they don't know (such as a subject relevant article). Once they've read it, ask questions to check their understanding. You might ask about the meaning or the literary techniques the writer has used
- Categorisation: Prepare a collection of things (for instance shapes in Maths) and ask your student to categorise them as they wish (such as separating by lines of symmetry)
- Organising: Give your student a section of an essay or steps in a solution and order them. This will help them consider the importance of structure in their writing and can provide support if they are struggling with a particular process or method
- Use the mark scheme: Your student marks their work and highlights areas where they lost marks. You could ask them to mark some example answers (found on the exam board website)
- Glossary: Build a bank of key terms and definitions for a topic.

Where to find tuition resources

Resource	Great for...
Times Educational Supplement (TES)	The website offers an extensive collection of resources made and shared by teachers, many of which are free. • Find worksheets, questions, slide decks, lesson plans and more tailored to your subject and level. • Register for free to access and download resources.
BBC Bitesize	Focused on GCSE level, the website is designed for students to work through independently so can be a useful resource to make a complex idea simple to understand. • Breaks ideas down and takes students through topics in smaller steps.
Exam board websites	These websites are a great place to find out what your student is expected to know. • Look for the specification (summary of knowledge and skills your student will need) and specimen papers which will show exam questions • If you're unsure of your student's exam board, ask them or your UAO • You'll find relevant exam board links on your subject specific page (available on the G Drive).
Videos (such as Khan Academy and YouTube)	Videos can be a great way to demonstrate key principles or bring variety to a lesson. Ask your student to summarise key points after watching. • Recommended channels include Primrose Kitten for GCSE Science, Mr Bruff for GCSE English, or Crash Course for videos ranging from the humanities to the sciences.
Memrise and Duolingo	Ideal for those tutoring French and Spanish. • Help students learn vocabulary and hone their skills between sessions.
PhysicsandMathstutor.com	Ideal for STEM tutors (but also useful for Geography, Economics and even English!) • Provides revision materials and past paper questions by topic.

Frequently asked questions

What if I can't make a tutorial?

- If you can't attend your tutorial, please ensure you give your student 24 hours' notice where possible and make every attempt to reschedule for another day in the same week
- If you can't get hold of your student and you need to urgently cancel on the day of the tutorial, contact your UAO as well as your student to make sure the message reaches them.

How should I communicate with my student?

- Be proactive in contacting your tutee and avoid leaving it to the student to make the first move
- Sometimes it might take a few messages before you receive a response - please don't give up! A reminder message the day before the tutorial might help with attendance too
- Please remember to contact your student via our online tuition platform. This is the only way you should contact your student if they are studying for their GCSEs. If they are an A level student, you may be able to contact them via email or text message if we share those contact details with you.

Where can I get ideas for tutorial content?

- Ask your student to see if there are any topics they'd like to cover. You will be advised on topics from their subject teacher twice a year where possible, but it's best to remember that your student is the best resource for topic setting!
- Ask your fellow tutors! Log on to the Volunteer Portal for advice and recommendations from other volunteers like yourself.
- If you feel a small amount of homework would be beneficial to your student, you are welcome to set some. We suggest no more than 20 to 30 minutes of work in total. Please bear in mind that students will already have homework assigned by their subject teachers.