

communicate-ed



supporting special needs in education

## **Welcome to our online training course:**

### **Extra Time - *'Helping candidates to use their Extra Time'***

This course is run by '**Communicate-ed**' which is a company specialising in the training of education professionals who work in the area of special needs.

**This short video is accompanied by a PDF of course materials comprising the PowerPoint slides and handout 1 mentioned during the presentation.**

**The course tutor is Caroline Read.**

**Caroline** is a specialist teacher who has practical experience and trains professionals involved in all areas of the Access Arrangements process. Caroline's work has been published by GL Assessment, PATOSS & the JCQ, TES and the RNIB. She has worked with various publishers to develop tests. Caroline was part of the working party which set up 'Access Arrangements Online', and has been involved with other Ofqual and DfE training and policy projects.

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# Extra Time in Exams

## *'Helping candidates to use their Extra Time'*

**Extra Time in Exams**  
*'Helping candidates to use their Extra Time'*



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### **Session Outcomes**

**You will be able to:**

Help candidates to use their Extra Time

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### **Practising using Extra Time**

- Extra Time should be the candidate's normal way of working, but they often need help in planning how to use the time effectively
- **Consider underpinning difficulties and the reason for the Extra Time**

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# Extra Time in Exams

## 'Helping candidates to use their Extra Time'

### Practising using Extra Time for Reading

- Due to slow decoding?
- Re-reading needed to extract meaning from the rubric and question?
- Teach active reading strategies/skimming/scanning
- Understanding key verbs, contract words etc

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### Practising using Extra Time for Writing

#### Slow writing

- Due to slow thinking/processing?
- Slow handwriting?
- Poor handwriting which is hard to read?
- Proof reading difficulties?

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### Practising using Extra Time for Writing

- Teach ideas for improving processing speed e.g. using 'thought showers' to collect initial ideas
- Planning using a linear plan or mindmap/spidergram

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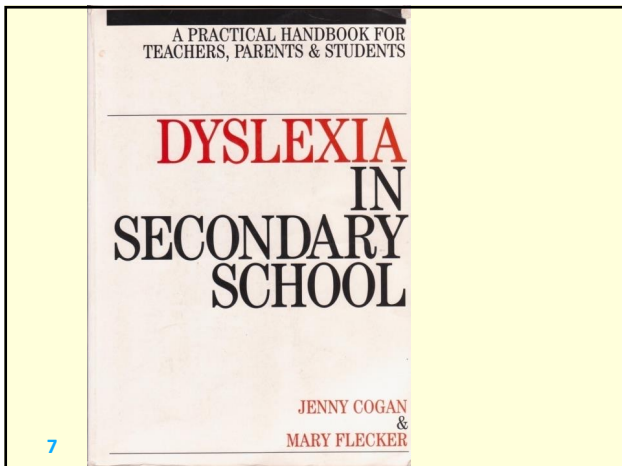
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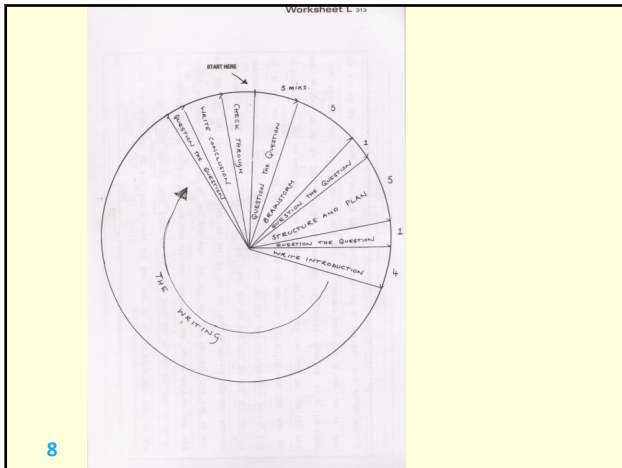
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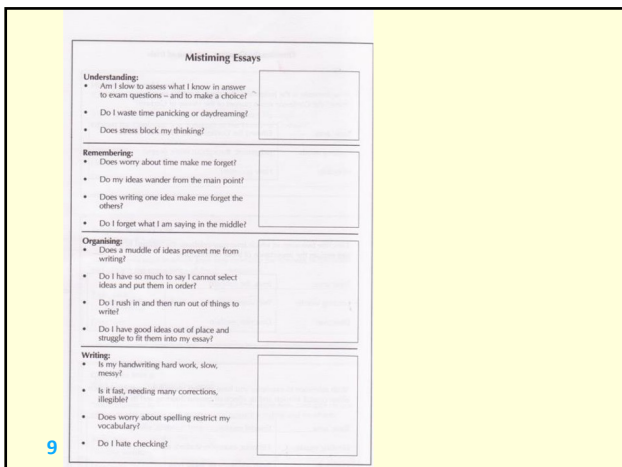
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# Extra Time in Exams

## 'Helping candidates to use their Extra Time'

### Practising using Extra Time for Writing

- Handwriting programme
- Strategies to develop proof reading e.g. **COPS**  
Capitals: Omissions: Punctuation:  
Spelling

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### Using Extra Time in exams

#### Extra Time needs to be used properly

Plan your time in an Exam

- Note the total number of minutes for the whole exam, including the Extra Time

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### Using Extra Time in exams

- Note when the exam is to start and when it is to finish, including Extra Time
- Note how many questions need to be answered and at what time you will be starting each question
- Try to prepare this in advance

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# Extra Time in Exams

## 'Helping candidates to use their Extra Time'

### Plan the time

For example:

- Exam time 2 hours, number of questions 4 of equal marks
- 25% Extra Time = 30 minutes
- Start time (e.g.) 1.30 Finish time with Extra Time 4.00

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### Plan the time

- Allow 10 minutes to read exam paper at the beginning and 10 minutes to check script at the end
- Total time is 150 minutes minus 20 minutes (for reading above) = 130 minutes
- Divided by 4 = approximately 30 minutes per question

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### Plan the time

- 1.30 Exam Starts – Read paper to select questions (10 minutes)
- 1.40 Question 1
- 2.10 Question 2
- 2.40 Question 3
- 3.10 Question 4
- 3.40 Read & check (also allows 10 minutes for contingencies)

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# Extra Time in Exams

## ‘Helping candidates to use their Extra Time’

### Pace the exam:

- Look back over your answer at the end of each question rather than leave it all to the end
- Take a few minutes break at the end of each question have a drink of water
- Stretch

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### Pace the exam:

- Completely clear your mind by focusing on something which makes you feel happy
- Breath in for five and out for five, five times with eyes closed
- Eat a piece of chocolate (if permitted)

With thanks to Brenda O'Brien  
[www.trainthebrain.co.uk](http://www.trainthebrain.co.uk)

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#### Tips for Students with Extra Time in Examinations

Handout 1

Extra time is an Access Arrangement which is approved by the JCC upon an application from the school with evidence of low, below average and/or low average score on a standardised test for cognitive functions related to speed of processing including writing speed, working memory or speed of information recall or fluency as well as a documented history of need and normal way of working.

The history should therefore start to be completed by the SEND department when difficulties are first noticed and teachers are responsible for putting in place the reasonable adjustment in class and for exams so that it becomes the student's normal way of working. The student may not need extra time in all subjects.

The JCC now encourages schools to properly consider whether a rest break may be more appropriate than extra time. The arrangement for a student to take a rest break does not need to be applied for through JCC and is sometimes a better option than extra time by giving the student a break in the exam to reorganise themselves. Time taken for rest breaks is added onto the exam time so in effect the student is still taking the same amount of time to complete the exam.

Extra time which is normally 25% and is additional to the time of the exams. It has to be applied for through the JCC. Having extra time can make exams quite long for student for example, extra time on a 2 hour A level exam is 45 minutes. If a student is unfortunate enough to have two such exams in one day (this does happen) they could be in the exam room for 7 hours 30 minutes!

If not used properly, extra time could make students even more tired. But used properly, it can help them to pace themselves as well as compensate for difficulties.

Students tend to need extra time for the following reasons:

- Slow handwriting
- Needing to re-read questions several times to understand what is being asked
- Working memory issues with the transfer of ideas to paper or planning is important to ensure that they stick to the question
- Proof reading
- Lack of automaticity in the recall of information from long term memory
- Time to reorganise themselves between questions (but rest breaks would be preferable)

Some guidelines to help students use the time effectively:

- Make sure that the student knows why they need extra time – see above
- Make sure that the student knows whether they are starting earlier than the other students or finishing later. The person organising the exams needs to coordinate these times otherwise students may end up finishing later and starting earlier without a good break in between exams that may fall on the same day.

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# Extra Time in Exams

## *'Helping candidates to use their Extra Time'*

**ACTION POINT**  
Read the Tips for Students  
with Extra Time in Exams  
sheets in your course  
materials. Handout 1

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## Tips for Students with Extra Time in Examinations

Extra time is an Access Arrangement which is approved by the JCQ upon an application from the school with evidence of one below average and one low average score on a standardized test for cognitive functions related to speed of processing including writing speed, working memory or speed of information recall or fluency as well as a documented history of need and normal way of working.

The history should therefore start to be compiled by the SEND department when difficulties are first noticed and teachers are responsible for putting in place the reasonable adjustment in class and for exams so that it becomes the student's normal way of working. The student may not need extra time in all subjects.

The JCQ now encourages schools to properly consider whether a rest break may be more appropriate than extra time. The arrangement for a student to take a rest break does not need to be applied for through JCQ and is sometimes a better option than extra time by giving the student a break in the exam to recompose themselves. Time taken for rest breaks is added onto the exam time so in effect the student is still taking the same amount of time to complete the exam.

Extra time which is normally 25% and is additional to the time of the exams. It has to be applied for through the JCQ. Having extra time can make exams quite long for student for example, extra time on a 3 hour A level exams is 45 minutes. If a student is unfortunate enough to have two such exams in one day (this does happen) they could be in the exam room for 7 hours 30 minutes!

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Students tend to need extra time for the following reasons:

- Slow handwriting
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- Working memory issues with the transfer of ideas to paper so planning is important to ensure that they stick to the question  
Proof reading
- Lack of automaticity in the recall of information from long term memory
- Time to recompose themselves between questions (but rest breaks would be preferable)

### **Some guidelines to help students use the time effectively:**

Make sure that the student knows why they need extra time – see above.

Make sure that the student knows whether they are starting earlier than the other students or finishing later. The person organising the exams needs to coordinate these times otherwise students may end up finishing later and starting earlier without a good break in between exams that may fall on the same day.

Make sure that the student knows how to plan the use of their extra time as time management is one of the issues that students find most difficult and why they tend to run out of time.

### 1. Plan your time in an Exam

- ✓ Note total the number of minutes for the whole exam (including the extra time)
- ✓ Note when the exam is to start and when it is to finish (including extra time)
- ✓ Note how many questions need to be answered
- ✓ Note what time you will start each question
- ✓ Try to prepare this in advance

For example:

- ✓ Exam time 2 hours , number of questions 4 of equal marks
- ✓ 25% extra time = 30 minutes
- ✓ Start time 1.30
- ✓ Finish time (with extra time) 4.00
- ✓ Allow:
  - 10 minutes to read exam paper at the beginning
  - 10 minutes to check script at the end
- ✓ Total time is 150 minutes minus 20 minutes (for reading as above) = 130 minutes, divided by 4 = approximately 30 minutes per question.

1.30 Exam Starts – Read paper to select questions (10 minutes)  
1.40 Question 1  
2.15 Question 2  
2.45 Question 3  
3.10 Question 4  
3.40 Read & check (also allows 10 minutes for contingencies)

Students often know how long a question *should* be, but they forget what time they started. This makes the above planning very important. If they start to run out of time, students should record their answers in note form and leave a space in case they are able to come back to it at the end. It is better to do 4 questions, some of which is in note (bullet point) form than 3 complete questions.

### 2. Pace the Exam:

- ✓ Look back over your answer at the end of each question rather than leave it all to the end
- ✓ Take a few minutes break at the end of each question to have a drink of water, stretch, completely clear your mind by focusing on something which makes you feel happy, breath in for five and out for five, five times with eyes closed, have a banana or piece of chocolate (if permitted)

### 3. Plan a Written Answer

Most marks are lost because the student has not understood the question or because they run out of time. Most students say they don't have time in an exam to plan their answers. We say that students, especially dyslexic students, cannot afford NOT to plan.

- Most students should think and plan for about 30% of the total exam time and write for the remaining 70%.

- A dyslexic student should plan for 40% of the time and write for 60% because answers have to be even more carefully thought out so that the information is presented in a succinct way.

Typical dyslexic characteristics are a weakness with sequencing and working memory and therefore, without planning they can easily diverge from the point because they have “lost their way”. Planning also helps dyslexic students recall facts and dates which should be noted in the plan. Retrieval of facts can become more difficult when they also have to structure sentences and process other information at the same time.

Writing an answer requires the skills of the author (ideas and information) and the secretary (spelling, syntax, grammar, sentences). The dyslexic student will find difficulty with carrying out these two distinct operations simultaneously. Either the ideas or the presentation and spelling will be compromised. Therefore they need to approach each answer in stages.

### 1. Generate Ideas:

- ✓ Read the question carefully and highlight “contract words” (compare, contrast, describe outline). What am I being asked?
- ✓ Highlight key or topic words (Romans, Shakespearean characters)
- ✓ Visualise your brain-frame to find the information you need

### 2. Note your ideas in a plan.

Planning not only ensures that all the necessary information is retrieved appropriately and sequenced in the right order, it also helps the student manage their time and rest. For example if there are 4 "boxes" or ideas to address in 24 minutes, then each will take about 6 minutes. It is even more helpful if the student can equate the number of lines they would normally write in that time – e.g. 6 minutes means approximately four lines. They will then be visually able to see how much they have to write.

There are various different types of plans.

#### *Story Board plan.*

Used for descriptive or narrative answers.

*Divide a sheet of paper into vertically down the middle, and horizontally across to make boxes. Each box represents a paragraph.*

*Note ideas in each box with the first box being the introduction and the last being the conclusion. This is very useful for the dyslexic student who may tend to work backwards from the end or generate ideas in a random order*

#### *PMI Plan.*

Used for argumentative or discursive answers.

*Divide page into columns representing positive and negative views and evidence or ideas*

#### *Brainstorm Plan.*

*Put the main idea in the middle and other ideas around.*

*Number the ideas in sequence*

### *Flow Plan.*

Used for writing up experiments or a specific sequence of events.

#### 4. Control Stress, Panic and Tiredness.

- ✓ Rest between written answers
- ✓ Drink water - a dehydrated brain will work more slowly and you will feel more tired
- ✓ Ask if you can take a banana or piece of chocolate into the exam
- ✓ Avoid fizzy drinks, crisps and other types of fatty foods before an exam. (They will make you sleepy). Eat protein, cereals, fruit
- ✓ Ask not to sit by a window - it can be hot: bright light tends to make dyslexic students more tired
- ✓ Between questions do a few exercises such as rotating your shoulders, neck and ankles, arching your back and deep breathing. Sitting in the same position for a long time can restrict oxygen intake and make you tired. Be careful that they do not distract other students
- ✓ Before writing anything down, close your eyes and visualise the answer. You will retrieve information more easily if you are relaxed. Try to visualise your books and notes as well as the room where you revised
- ✓ If you start to panic because you don't know the answer, start to breathe for 5 counts in and 5 counts out; close your eyes and find your positive experience \* or take yourself into an imaginary "safe place" – a beautiful beach for example. Once you start to relax your thinking processes will start to work again. The more you force yourself to remember something, the more stressed you will become and the less you will remember. Try holding the back of your neck with one hand and massage your forehead with the other – it will help anchor your thoughts
- ✓ If you start to fall behind your time plan, record your answers in note form or leave some space to come back to
- ✓ Don't engage in post mortems. It is not helpful - what is done is done, move on to the next exam

This information sheet is prepared by Brenda Ferrie. [brenda@trainthebrain.co.uk](mailto:brenda@trainthebrain.co.uk)

\*The Power of Visualisation When you become stressed, adrenaline is released into the body, the higher thinking brain closes down and you go into "fight or flight" mood and you cannot think properly. This perpetuates the feeling of panic. To 'reverse' this automatic reaction, you need to generate a 'positive thought' which becomes a feeling (e.g. recalling a time when you won a competition, when you were given a present you really wanted or being given a puppy, when you succeeded in a certain sport....anything that makes you relive that wonderful, "WOW" feeling). This releases DHEA, "the happy hormone" into your system and causes certain physiological changes in the body. Your higher thinking brain will start to work again and you will start to feel calm and positive. Practice thinking your special thought, visualise it, feel it so that you can "switch it on" at anytime when you are under pressure. Breathe 5 counts in and 5 counts out at the same time.