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PEER TUTORING AT YALE-NUS COLLEGE

Yale-NUS Peer Tutors are available to consult with students who wish to enhance their academic capacity and deepen their conceptual knowledge in various areas of study. Peer tutors are students who have excelled in a particular class or discipline, been nominated by relevant faculty members for that subject, and who have the communication skills and patience to share their learning strategies with others. This program is run by the Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL) and the Writers’ Centre (WC), and is animated by the belief, supported by research, that with effort and assistance students can have breakthrough moments and transformative learning.

The peer tutoring program sits squarely within Yale-NUS College’s culture of peer-to-peer support. Academic peer tutors exist alongside suite-mates, big sibs, Residential College Advisors, PS We Care members, student government representatives, team captains, and many other examples of peer-to-peer support on campus. However, and unlike some other types of peer support in the college, the peer tutor program formalises and professionalises student-to-student academic support. Serving as a peer tutor creates opportunities to deepen one’s understanding of a particular subject and discipline, and develop communication and academic support skills.

Peer tutors are made available at no cost to students. Tutors can assist in academic achievement by meeting students in one-on-one consultations or in group sessions. Tutoring sessions are intended to provide a personalised, in-depth review of concepts in an environment in which the student can ask questions, discuss issues, clear doubts, and interact intensively with the course material. Peer tutors consult with faculty as needed to remain up-to-date on the subject matter and other course details.

Tutoring sessions supplement the many academic opportunities already available to students through their classes, professors, and course-work at the College, but in no way are intended to replace these learning opportunities or responsibilities. All students, regardless of their academic standing or motivation for seeking peer tutoring, should attend classes, and complete assigned readings and learning activities. We also encourage all students to meet with their professors during office hours as needed to discuss their academic progress, ask about additional resources, and identify areas for improvement.
JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Complying with the following responsibilities ensure the efficacy of peer tutoring, and protects peer tutors from over-stepping their professional and ethical bounds. Failure to uphold these responsibilities can lead to your removal from the program.

**Attend mandatory tutor training sessions.**

**Meet with students** individually or in small groups to give learning assistance on subject matter you have been approved to tutor.

**Maintain professionalism** and appropriate boundaries as articulated in this handbook and peer tutor training.

**Be vigilant** about issues of academic integrity.

**Contact course professors** to obtain necessary information and to share feedback on areas of student confusion. It is your job to approach faculty to get course syllabi, assignments, readings, lesson plans, and other relevant materials – don’t be shy and don’t wait passively for them to contact you.

**Support student learning, not faculty teaching.** You are not TAs! There are teaching assistants and learning assistants. You are learning assistants. You assist students in the process of learning material they may find challenging. You help them identify the strategies of learning that work for them. If a faculty member asks you to serve as a teaching assistant (e.g. lecturing, grading, making photocopies for class distribution, etc.) you can tell them we have explicitly said you cannot do this. If saying no to the course professor feels too uncomfortable, you can let us know and we’ll follow up with the relevant faculty member in a respectful manner.

**Perform a reasonable number of tutoring hours per week.** Your work as a peer tutor should not be a detriment to your own academic progress. For this reason, we do not encourage tutors to do more than 8-10 hours of tutoring per week, although during most weeks it is rarely the case that there is sufficient demand to fill that many hours. Local students can technically do as many hours as they want, unless they are on specific fellowships that prohibit working during the school year. International students can work up to 16 hours of paid work total per week. Note we will not be tracking if you are working more than 16 hours, and if you have another job it is entirely your responsibility to make sure your total hours across different jobs do not exceed 16 hours. If you surpass the 16 hour limit, Ministry of Manpower will get involved and potentially revoke your student pass. Note also that we cannot guarantee a certain number of hours of work for you each week, as it depends entirely on how many students book appointments. For many of you, there will only be 2-4 hours a week worth of booked appointments.

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1 Language tutors are assigned hours of tutoring responsibility depending on their level of language proficiency and the number of students enrolled in different language courses each semester. Additionally, whereas tutors in other disciplines should schedule meetings directly with tutees and can change meeting schedules based on mutual agreement, language tutors are expected to establish a set time and meet at this time on a regular basis throughout the semester.
EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Peer tutors must conduct themselves and perform their work in a professional manner befitting a paid academic position.

Professional Obligations and Behaviours

Maintain academic integrity by helping students learn how to do the work, not doing their work for them. Specific tips on this later.

Accurately log your hours and take attendance at all open sessions. Misrepresenting how much you worked and getting paid for more than you did is stealing from the college. Under reporting your work is stealing from yourself. Students may receive up to two hours of Writers’ Centre tutoring each week. Subject specific tutoring will be available on a first come first serve basis, depending on the tutoring hours allocated to the class for the semester.

Check your Yale-NUS email account at least once daily, as this is the primary way CTL/WC will communicate with you.

Conduct tutoring sessions in a professional manner, showing up on time, being focused on the tutee, and not distracted by your phone or social media. Spend the time working on tutoring and avoid too much casual chatting.

Conduct tutoring during appropriate hours. Discipline-specific tutoring should be scheduled between 7am and 10pm. Individual Writers’ Centre consultations can only be scheduled between 10am and 6pm (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) and 10am and 10pm (Tuesday, Thursday) in the Writers’ Centre. Group writing sessions can be offered, with prior permission from WC staff, between 7am to midnight. These rules protects tutors’ time, and ensures that tutees are getting high quality tutoring. The booking system will only allow students to book appointments during this time.

Give your tutees at least 24 hours advanced notice if unable to keep your appointment. For WC tutors, inform the Centre Executive if you will be unable to keep your appointment. Arrive to appointments on time.

Wait at least 15 minutes for students to arrive for their appointment. If student does not appear for their appointment, tutors may elect to use the remaining session time to prepare for other sessions/ tutoring responsibilities, research tutoring strategies, or familiarise yourself with course material on which tutees are likely to seek assistance.

If a tutee cancels 6 hours or more before the appointment start time, it is considered a cancelled appointment with no payment to you. If a tutee is a no show, and has not cancelled via the online booking system, go in and mark the session as “Missed” and you will still get paid. A student marked as “Missed” three times gets locked out from the system and must come talk to a CTL or WC staff member to be reinstated. If a tutee has missed two tutoring appointments in a row, notify a CTL or WC staff member. If the tutee is missing language tutorials, let the course professor know as well.

Tutor in person only*. Do not provide tutoring via electronic communications or phone unless under special circumstances and with approval from the CTL, WC, Language Studies Deputy Director, course facilitator. You can schedule appointments via email/text but you should not be tutoring electronically. This rule exists for good practical as well as pedagogical reasons: 1) it is difficult to determine billable hours across a series of back-and-forth emails or text messages; 2)
it will be difficult to maintain professional boundaries and protect your time if your tutees expect quick email responses from you; 3) the risk of intentional and inadvertent academic integrity violations is greater if you tutor in writing; 4) electronic communication runs a higher risk of violations to student privacy; 5) electronic communication does not allow you to assess non-verbal cues about tutee's understanding and makes tutees more passive, dependent recipients of your expertise. This is contrary to the goal of tutoring, which is to help students learn, not to teach. If a student emails you with 'a quick question' explain that you are not permitted to provide tutoring assistance via electronic communications and invite them to schedule an in-person appointment.

**Take notes on what you have covered** and areas to cover in future sessions, as well as any insights about learning style and study strategies that work best for your tutee. This will help you and other tutors make cumulative gains with the tutee over time.

**Plan ahead for your own busy periods** and communicate your time limitations to tutees. If you know that a particular two week period will be very challenging for you, let your tutees know in advance that you will have limited hours then and that they therefore need to plan ahead.

**Maintain tutee’s privacy.** Never discuss your tutees’ academic situation, grades, or personal information with anyone beyond CTL and WC staff as necessary. We encourage you to support each other as tutors and help each other support tutees by discussing tricky cases, but leave out any identifying information. If you discuss your work in abstract terms with friends, never reveal identifying information and keep in mind this is a small campus – people will see you in tutoring sessions so it is important not to share information about your tutee with others (e.g. a comment like “this one guy I’m tutoring just had a huge fight with his suitemate” can be easily traced back). This will come up again when we introduce you to WC Online, the booking and record-keeping system. You are held to confidentiality to any information contained in that system.

With the exception of language faculty, you should not communicate information about specific students to their professors, though you may feedback general sources of confusion or concern. If a faculty member asks for information on a specific student, you can explain that you are not permitted to share personal information and refer them to CTL or WC staff if needed. This operates differently in language tutoring, because tutors are tasked to specific students and faculty across the semester. However, you should explain to tutees that you may share information on their progress with the course professor.

One exception to this is **if a student discloses significant mental health or safety concerns to you during a session.** In this situation, you should walk them to the Counselling Centre or their Residential College office (if it is an urgent situation) and notify a Residential College Assistant Dean or a CTL or WC staff member immediately about your concerns.

*Tutoring is available in-person and online this semester. Please refer to the "Tutoring in the Times of a Pandemic" on the **CTL peer tutoring webpage** for the general expectation, details to consider when tutoring online.*
Negotiating Relationships and Boundaries within the Tutoring Context

As a peer tutor, you occupy multiple identities as a peer, a professional, and often a friend or close acquaintance of the students you are tutoring. Being self-reflective and open about these different identities and how they can co-exist within the tutoring context will help you do your work effectively and professionally. Here are some specific recommendations and guidelines to follow:

**Consider your relationship with the tutee** and whether it is appropriate to be tutoring them. Do not have the college pay you to casually help your best friend when you would be doing that anyway. But do make the college pay, and your friend formally book an appointment, if you are having an hour-long tutoring session on a regular basis.

**Consider how your relationship with the tutee might create conflicts of interest.** Conflicts of interest arise when you tutor a friend, suitemate, teammate, romantic interest, etc. Conflicts of interest might arise when the expectations of your tutoring role (e.g. only do tutoring during formally booked appointments between 7am and 10pm) come into conflict with the expectations of other roles you have with the tutee (e.g. your friend desperately comes to you for help at 2am). If you feel you must take on a friend as a tutee, anticipate possible conflicts of interest, and talk about them openly in the first tutoring session and as they arise. In general, it is better to simply avoid tutoring people with whom you have close relationships, and to refrain from starting such relationships with your tutees while you are still tutoring them. But given the realities of student life and our small student body, this may not be possible. So it is especially important to (a) be aware of the potential conflicts and (b) talk with your tutee and/or a CTL/WC staff member as soon as any complications arise.

**Protect your time.** Students will learn that you are a peer tutor and may approach you in the dining hall or come knocking on your door late at night for help. Make sure they are booking appointments through proper channels and respecting your time. Also, consider how you will monitor time. One option, especially if you know you are going to have a hard time telling the student ‘time’s up,’ is to set a timer to go off 5-10 minutes before each session ends.

**Place matters.** Think about where to tutor that helps you maintain your professional identity and boundaries. The library may be more conducive than the dining hall. Tutors should not offer consultations in their bedrooms or suites.

**Time matters.** Think about when to tutor that helps you maintain your professionalism. A session at 11pm might not be as appropriate or productive as one at 6pm. For this reason, you cannot book appointments between midnight and 7am.

**Avoid bad-mouthing professors:** Some tutees will want to unload their frustrations about a professor on you, and blame their poor performance on the professor’s ‘bad’ teaching. It can be tempting to build rapport and trust with the tutee by reciprocating negative talk, or you might genuinely agree that the professor is not very effective in certain ways. However, the best way to help the tutee learn and perform better in the class is to discuss course material. Negative talk can shift responsibility away from the student, and onto the professor, thereby diminishing the tutee’s motivation and investment in personal growth. You might want to respond with something more neutral like “I hear your concerns, but let’s focus on what we can control which is how you are going to approach this [essay, problem set, etc.]”. If the student has genuine concerns about the professor’s teaching style, you may want to talk to the student about what they can do to advocate for their needs within that learning environment, such as talking directly, and respectfully, to the professor about how their teaching style impacts the student’s learning.
If you get too close emotionally to maintain a professional relationship, OR your tutee makes you uncomfortable or is aggressive towards you, you can end the tutoring relationship immediately. Please let staff in the CTL, WC, or Languages know as soon as possible so we can advise you and/or arrange a new tutor/tutee match.

Know your limits. If a student seems to have needs that are beyond what you can reasonably address, you can help them by acknowledging their needs, accepting your limitations, and connecting them to appropriate resources. If the student seems to be struggling with time management, note-taking, keeping up with discussion in-class, or other academic/cognitive skills, encourage them to talk to their Assistant Dean and trusted faculty for advice. If they are experiencing intense anxiety, sadness, or self-doubt they may benefit from a visit to the Counseling Centre, PS We Care, or an RC staff member (DF, RCA, Assistant Dean, Rector). If you are unsure how to help them, you can reach out to a CTL or WC staff member, or your or the tutee’s Assistant Dean, for advice.
TUTORING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

Strategies for Individual Sessions

Use the first few minutes to get the big picture. Try to ask questions to get a sense of the student’s needs, and sources of struggle. You can also ask them directly what teaching techniques and styles have worked for them in the past. Students will often begin with vague statements of confusion, such as “I just can’t do it” or “I don’t get it.” Help the student identify the limits of their understanding and sources of confusion with greater specificity. For example, ask them what they have learned in class thus far, what readings they understood better or less well, when in the semester did they start to get confused, or to show you a specific example of a concept or problem which they have struggled to understand. Also see “Tips for the First Tutoring Session” below.

Be patient and encouraging. Students will come back, and learn more, if they feel secure in the tutoring environment and that they are being helped, not judged. When they get discouraged, remind them of what they do know and have accomplished so far.

Make sure students are putting in appropriate effort themselves and are using you efficiently. Students will sometimes come to you for help on a paper or assignment they themselves have not yet tried to tackle. Remind them of your role, which is to help them overcome obstacles to understanding, not to do the work for them. You can avoid this happening by making it clear in your first correspondence with a new tutee that you are excited to work with them, but you also expect them to have tried or at least started the assignment they want your help with prior to meeting with you. If this occurs nonetheless, you may want to use time during the session to guide the student to come up with an action plan of items to do before your next session so that they will be better prepared next time.

See One, Do One, Teach One. Use a similar problem as an example, and walk the tutee through the methods of solving that problem. Then have them do another, similar problem themselves more independently. Then have them explain to you (or another peer) their process and why they made the choices they did. Similarly, if you have been helping to explain a concept, make sure to ask them to paraphrase/restate or write it back to you in their own words.

Ask probing, open-ended questions about the material or assignment. (See below for specific questions that may be useful in different circumstances/disciplines.)

Break an assignment/question down into smaller parts and tackle them one by one. If a student seems very confused, try to isolate different sources or elements of their confusion to make tackling the problem more manageable.

Connect concepts or questions into a bigger whole. Have the tutee situate a particular problem, argument, or issue in a larger context. Prompt them to do this with questions such as “How does this fit into the class as a whole, into this week’s [reading assignments, the problem-set, etc.]?” Use analogies or hypotheticals to help them see how concepts relate to other themes. It can even be helpful to re-read the opening pages of the course syllabus, which often explains the overarching themes of the course and how different course components relate to those themes.

Try different modes of explanation. Generally you should be coaxing tutees to do their own explaining, rather than lecturing to the tutees. But when you are explaining material to them, experiment with different formats. Try to figure out what works best for your tutee and keep
in mind that your tutee may have a different learning style than your own. Try different modes of expression or problem solving, interacting with the material in many different ways. Some students learn best, for example, when they see/read the material, others when they hear the material, still others when they speak the material back to someone. A conversation about the tutee’s preferred learning styles might make for a more productive tutoring experience.

**Prompt them to try different modes of understanding and expression.** As a tutee is working through their thoughts, have them talk it out, write it out, graph it out, dance it out! If students seem more confident writing than talking, ask them to free write about the problem or question at hand. If a student seems more confident with verbal than written expression, have them ‘think out loud’ while you transcribe exactly what they say. Then have them read what you transcribed, and use that as the basis to move forward. They will likely be surprised to see what they have said, and identify salient clues or ways forward from what you’ve transcribed. The student can subsequently replicate that exercise for themselves using their phone/computer as a recorder, or borrowing a recorder from Library staff.

**Phrase your own questions to invite further questions.** A question like “Did the way I explain that make sense to you or should we try another strategy to keep learning?” invites the tutee to say “yes, I get it” or “no, I still don’t get it.” This is more effective than a question like “I explained that X generates Y when Z, see?” Ending a question with “right” or “see” or “got it?” can shut down conversation. Instead, try “tell me what you are thinking now” or “that is how I’ve explained it to myself, does that work for you or should we keep unpacking?” Consider what other language can you use to keep the conversation open and honest.

**Keep the student writing.** Unless you are transcribing their vocalisations as an intentional tutoring strategy, make sure the tutee is the one taking notes, writing answers, or graphing on the board. This helps them maintain engagement and helps avoid academic integrity violations.

**Pay attention to non-verbal cues.** Some tutees will ask for help, sit and nod and smile while you talk, say thanks, and then leave. Did they learn a lot, or just learn how to look like they learned? It is important to read non-verbal cues and probe for verbal confirmation that a student is learning the material. Nodding and smiling is not necessarily a good sign if a student cannot articulate back to you what they have learned. If a student is not taking notes and cannot explain back to you what you’ve explained to them, they probably are still lost but embarrassed to admit it. Assure them it is alright to be confused, and that you are dedicated to continue working with them longer as needed.

**Sit with silence.** Give students the time to think, and to respond. They might be puzzling through your question or how to approach the problem at hand. Before you rush into rephrase your question or posit a possible way forward, give them a chance to come to an idea themselves. And give them a chance to correct themselves before you point out errors.

**Admit when you don’t know.** Being honest builds trust and ensures you do not lead a tutee in the wrong direction. You can also use these moments to model how to get answers to difficult questions or situations (go see the professor together, do some research, etc.).

**Don’t speculate on tutee’s grades.** At the end of the session, if a tutee asks what grade you think they will get on an assignment, avoid the temptation to speculate or reassure. Ask them about their confidence level and remind them that your job is to support them in learning, not to help faculty with grading. Many factors go into a grade and you cannot be expected to know with certainty what grades will be given. Encourage the student to focus on improving their own level
of understanding, rather than trying to predict grade outcomes. If they are very concerned about
their grades and academic standing, encourage them to talk to their professor or Assistant Dean.

**Foster independence not dependence**: A longer-term goal of tutoring is to help students to
ultimately do the work without your help. To do this, you want to model how you approach
the subject or assignments, and help the student learn how to learn. Therefore, it is important
that you have the tutee do their own work, and help them problem-solve, rather than solving
problems for them. You may want to prepare specific tasks that build independence, which a
student can work on with your guidance, including trying a problem or writing a paragraph
on their own, or outlining a plan of attack for an assignment or paper. You can then review
their work and ask probing questions about their thinking and process. Encourage the student to
identify their learning style and keep a running list of strategies for success. Some tools for this
include [The VARK Questionnaire](https://www.vark-learn.com) and [Learning styles inventory](https:)

**Finish sessions with tangibles and deliverables.** Summarise what has been accomplished at the
end of the session, especially highlighting any transferable skills and strategies that were used.
Ask the student to identify one or two deliverables to prepare for your next session, whether
it is going to faculty office hours, doing a particular reading, or making an initial attempt at a
particular assignment.

**Sharing is caring.** As you identify successful tutoring strategies, please share them so we can
circulate them among your fellow tutors.

There are additional resources on teaching and learning practices in the CTL office and website.

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2 These resources were found through the Reed College "Academic Support Tutoring Handbook" available from https://www.
reed.edu/academicsupport/pdfs/tutorhandbook.pdf
Tips for Running Open / Group Sessions

Let tutees teach each other. In group sessions peers can generate learning opportunities, and you do not need to be the one to respond first to every question. In this context, your role is to move things forward and intervene to make sure tutees stay on productive paths. Your goal is to foster discussion and learning, not provide answers. You can also break the group up, perhaps pairing people with complementary styles or skills.

Identify participants who may need individual attention and offer to meet with them during a separate individual session or off to the side of the group. You should not force the students to work in a group if that is not what a specific student needs. Be flexible and ready to operate in multiple contexts of tutoring at once.

Avoid allowing a single student to dominate the session, and invite quieter students to participate, voice questions and ideas. If some students are dominating the conversation, and they refuse to make room for new voices, consider breaking the session into smaller groups and then moving around the room to check in with individuals. Give space for quieter or more apprehensive students to ask questions and be involved in the process.

Pay equal attention to each student in the session. It can be tempting to work with the most challenging questions or outspoken students, but try to provide equal attention to the various participants.

If there is big turnout, group people by shared questions or problems. If there is a crowd, ask tutees to share why they have come in and try to group them around shared topics or concerns. Then move among the groups offering guidance and encouraging them to work together on their shared goals. Remind them to share ideas and strategies, but to do their own work.

When hosting open sessions, consider inviting another peer tutor to join you so that you can work with different sub-groups or individuals simultaneously during the session.
Tips for the First Tutoring Session³

The first tutoring session is an opportunity to build rapport and establish expectations with your tutee. Some students will be accustomed to seeking out academic support, but for many of your peers asking for help and admitting to uncertainty can be scary or embarrassing. You can use the first session to ease their transition and build a foundation for the tutoring relationship.

Before the first session:

Agree upon a time and location, and make it clear that they need to arrive on time.⁴

Ask them to bring a specific question, issue, concept, or assignment they want to work on. Ask them to take a try at the item before the meeting.

Remind them to bring any relevant materials such as class notes, readings, calculator, past and current assignments, etc.

Some topics you might want to cover in the first session:

Get a sense of your tutee’s academic background, interests, areas of understanding, and areas of confusion. Ask about what has been working well and less well in their class thus far.

Share a bit about your own academic interests and background to build rapport and trust.

Ask the tutee about their hopes and expectations from tutoring. Are they looking for help on a specific kind of assignment, or more generally to unpack core concepts and deepen their learning in the course?

Talk with the tutee about how they can make the best use of your tutoring hours. Encourage them to work independently before sessions, e.g. trying a problem set, doing class reading, writing a summary of the assignment or the concept they want help with, or developing a list of questions for you to go through together.

Review basic policies and procedures. Be sure you both understand how your hours together will get reported and billed, how to book appointments, cancellation and no-show policies, and confidentiality.

Review academic integrity policies together.

Remind them that tutoring is not a substitute for attending class, doing readings and assignments on their own, and attending faculty office hours. Encourage them to put in effort in these areas while also availing themselves of tutoring support.

Invite any questions they may have about the tutoring process or relationship.

As the session ends, decide if you will meet again and how often, and what you will work on in subsequent sessions.

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⁴ For WC tutors, meetings are already scheduled in WCOnline. If a student would like to book an appointment with you and you have the time to do so, contact the WC Executive to add a meeting to the schedule.
Sample Questions to Use During Tutoring Sessions:

Posing questions can help the tutee identify areas of knowledge and confusion and ensure that they stay actively engaged in their own learning. Here are some sample questions for different situations, taken from the Pace University Peer Tutor Handbook.5

To determine the student’s needs and reasons for coming:

- What have you covered in class so far?
- Was there a point in the course when you were finding the material easier?
- When did the course start getting difficult?
- Can you show me a specific example of a problem or assignment you don’t understand or can’t do?
- What was the last type of problem you could do before you got confused?

To gather information about the student’s study habits and skills:

- Did the professor go over this kind of problem/this concept in class?
- May I see your notes from class?
- Did you read the section in your textbook that explains the concept?
- How many problems did you do to practice this concept?
- Do you ever ask the professor questions in class?
- Did you miss class that day?

To encourage the tutee to start thinking:

- Where do you think we should start?
- What are the steps involved in working this problem?
- What is the definition?

To determine how fully the student understands your explanation:

- Can you solve this other similar problem?
- Can you paraphrase what I just explained?
- Why did you solve the problem that way?
- What will happen if what you said is true?
- What made you think that?
- You’re correct. The answer to this question is false. What would be needed to make it true?

To invite the student to think or make connections between problems or examples:

- How is this problem like the other ones you could do?
- How does this problem build on the ones you did before?
- What is the opposite of this position?
- What’s the new concept/skill in this problem?
- Can you see how solving this problem depends upon your ability to solve the earlier ones?

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To ask the student to recall information that can be used as a tool:

- What do you know that might help you solve this problem?
- What is always true about the square root of a number?
- What do you need to know to solve this equilibrium equation?
- What is the key thing to remember about this kind of problem?

To help the student become aware of his/her process:

- How are you solving this problem? What strategy are you employing?
- Did reading that section in the reading help you understand how to solve the problem?
- Do you think you stopped trying too soon on this problem?
- What do you need to remember when solving this kind of problem?
- What helps you memorise this information?
SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR LANGUAGE PEER TUTORS

Language Peer Tutors in modern and classical languages assist students taking Yale-NUS language modules with grammatical concepts, vocabulary development, and listening and speaking skills. Language tutors meet with a language student one-on-one for 20 minutes a week. This tutoring session is part of the syllabus and it is compulsory for students to attend on a weekly basis. In addition to the Yale-NUS College Peer Tutoring responsibilities, language peer tutors will have the following duties:

- Besides the CTL workshops for Peer Tutors, you will be required to attend a workshop with the tutee’s instructor in order to become familiar with the textbook, learn about the syllabus and strategies to prepare your language tutoring sessions.
- Attend bi-weekly sessions with the other language tutors to discuss common issues and strategies.
- You might be asked to introduce yourself to the class during the first week of the semester.
- In order to prepare individual support for the students, language tutors may have to read short writing pieces or watch short videos that students create on each unit. It is important to keep updated with this task in order to address students’ difficulties with grammar points or vocabulary development early.
- Make a weekly appointment with your students at a fixed time for tutoring. Sessions for the whole semester. This will reinforce the idea that it is part of the course.
- Peer Tutoring sessions will start on the second week of the semester and go until the end of the semester.
- Be professional, punctual and ready for each session and focus on your student during that time. Do not be distracted in any way. Each session is 20 minutes and you have to maximise that time.
- You are responsible for submitting progress reports and inform the instructor of the students’ weekly attendance.

Language peer tutors should not:

- Proofread. Tutors should not accept compositions, videos or similar work for the purpose of editing. For example, do not correct any script for class projects or any graded work.
- Mark errors in compositions.
- Review homework prior to submission.
- Supervise tutee in correcting their compositions.

For any issues related to language peer tutoring, please contact: languages@yale-nus.edu.sg.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN THE PEER TUTORING CONTEXT

Yale-NUS College upholds the highest standards of integrity common to the academy. Honesty and academic integrity are foundational to our intellectual mission. Yale-NUS College students are expected to act ethically at all times, especially in the conduct of their academic work and in the exercise of their responsibilities towards other members of our learning community. Key principles of ethical student conduct include the obligation to:

1. do one's own work,
2. not interfere with the work of others, and
3. accurately and honestly represent the content of one's own work while making proper attribution of the work of others.

Students should never represent the ideas or language of others as their own – if another person's ideas, words or work product are used by a student in a paper, in homework or in any other way, the original author must be properly acknowledged.

Students should never give or receive assistance on examinations unless explicitly authorised in advance by the instructor. Students should never represent work completed for one course as original work prepared ‘new’ for another course. A student has the obligation never to leave his or her readers with the impression that someone else’s ideas are due to the student, through failure to disclose sources carefully and honestly. You can learn more about Yale-NUS’ academic integrity policy and procedures at [here](#).

As a tutor, maintaining academic integrity in your work is of the utmost importance, both for you to maintain in good standing at the college and for your tutee to learn how to do this work themselves. Tutors help tutees by applying strategies for solving a problem or developing an argument, but tutors should never solve the problem for a tutee, or write their thesis/argumentation for them. Tutors are responsible for modeling strategies and methods of studying and problem-solving, but they are not there to solve the problem for the student.

Here are some strategies for maintaining academic integrity during a tutoring session:⁶

- Have the tutee do all the writing, typing, calculating, and graphing during a session. This will ensure the tutee is using their own words and solutions, not yours. Additionally, the more the tutee is taking independent ownership over the writing or problem set, the more they will learn. An exception to this might exist if the tutor is transcribing a tutee’s ‘thinking out loud’ for the purposes of helping the tutee unpack their initial thoughts.

- Focus on asking questions and listening to answers, rather than providing answers.

- If you offer an explanation or description of a concept, make sure the tutee can explain it back to you in their own words, and writes it down in their own words.

- Never share your own work product with the tutee. Instead, ask the course professor if they have sample problems/answers you can use to demonstrate to the tutee what they should be striving for, or see if there are resources in the course readings that might serve as an example of effective work.

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⁶ Adapted from the “Handbook for Peer Tutors” Center for Academic and Personal Development, Harvard University, 2017-2018.
• Academic integrity guidelines apply during group sessions as well. If you observe students in a group session starting to share their answers for homework with each other, intervene immediately and remind them of their obligations regarding academic integrity. If they persist, you should discuss the matter with a CTL or WC staff member.

• When in doubt, ask the course professor or a CTL or WC staff member for guidance.
MENTAL HEALTH IN THE PEER TUTORING CONTEXT

Sometimes, students will seek out peer tutoring when they are also experiencing significant anxiety, self-doubt, or depression. The root causes of these emotions may be academic or non-academic in nature. Experiencing and vocalising stress over a particular assignment or subject is not necessarily a cause for alarm. However, if a student seems very distressed (crying; rapid/anxious talking; difficulty breathing) or is emotionally very vacant or flat in a worrisome way (unable to think clearly, extremely lethargic or tired, unable to maintain focus), that could indicate a more significant underlying mental health issue. If a student seems to have needs that are beyond what you can reasonably address, you can help them by acknowledging their needs and accepting your own limitations. In your professional capacity of peer tutor, you need to connect them to appropriate resources.

If the student seems to be struggling with time management, note-taking, keeping up with discussion in-class, or other academic/cognitive skills, encourage them to talk to their Assistant Dean and trusted faculty for advice.

If a tutee is experiencing anxiety, sadness, or self-doubt, you should recommend they visit with the Counseling Centre, PS We Care, or an RC staff member (DF, RCA, Assistant Dean, Rector), friends, suitemates, or family. Help them make a specific self-help plan – e.g. “After you leave here today, who will you talk to?” You are not responsible or trained to counsel them, but you can help get them to appropriate resources.

If a student is very emotionally disturbed or upset during a tutoring session, gently stop the session and give them an opportunity to calm down. Then offer to walk them to the Counseling Centre, to their RC office, or call their RC On Call Number if it is after hours. You may feel uncomfortable doing this, but you can explain it is a part of your training and job expectations, and you need to err on the side of caution. If the student refuses to use these resources, and you are concerned for their well being, you should reach out immediately to an Assistant Dean (via the RC On Call Number) and notify a CTL or WC staff member.

If you ever feel uncertain or uncomfortable in your work, come talk to a CTL or WC staff member for advice. And if you feel disturbed during a tutoring session, stop the session and contact a staff member for support.

See below under “Other College Resources” for relevant contact information for mental health resources on and off campus.
SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS AND MANAGING DATA

Registration

1. Go the WCOnline website - https://yалenus.mywconline.com
2. Click “Register for an account”
3. Fill out the registration form, using a Yale-NUS official email address.
4. Click “Register” at the bottom of the form.
Making Your Schedule

WCOnline operates using a “blackout” system. This means that rather than scheduling hours that you are available, you schedule the hours that you are unavailable as a default. Though it can be counterintuitive at first, once you do it a couple of times, it is easy to use.

At the beginning the semester, your schedule will be all “blacked out” by CTL. [Note for writing tutors: your fixed schedule will be input by the Writers’ Centre and all other hours will be “blacked out”] That means to schedule an appointment, you have to “cancel” a blackout.

To make changes to your schedule:

1. Make sure to go to the appropriate “Schedule” – especially if you are a peer tutor in more than one discipline.
2. Click on the Blackout Times Management icon (see below) to switch to blackout schedule.
3. To change an unavailable appointment (dark blue) to an available appointment (white):
   a. Click on the time slot that you would like to change.
   b. A blackout management screen will appear. Change the drop-down time menus to include the times that you DO want to be scheduled.
   c. For example, in the screenshot below, if you wanted to schedule an appointment from 10:00-11:00am, you would choose 10:00 and 11:00 and then click “cancel this entire blackout.”
d. Please note that you may have to make more than one blackout change, especially if your scheduled hours are not consecutive.

e. Be sure to check the schedule to see that you have made the changes that you intended to make.

4. To change an available appointment (white) to unavailable (dark blue):
   a. Click on the time slot that you would like to change.
   b. When the blackout management screen appears, select the hours that you DO NOT want to work.
   c. For the example below, this would cancel an appointment between 2:00 and 3:00pm.

   ![Create New Blackout](image)

   d. Click “save blackout.”
   e. Be sure to check the schedule to see that you have made the changes that you intended to make.

For more details about scheduling, look on the WCOnline website at https://help.mywconline.com/.
Making An Appointment

1. Go to the WCOnline website - https://yalenus.mywconline.com
2. Login to your WCOnline account (must be a Yale-NUS email and the password you chose at registration)
3. Select one of the white boxes (dark blue are unavailable, light blue are booked by another student)
4. An appointment form will pop up. Select the right client: by default, the client will be you. If you are making appointment for another student, search for the student's name. For group session, choose "Open / Drop-in Session" as your client.
5. Fill out the fields with information on what student would like to work on.
6. Click “Save Appointment”.

[Image of appointment schedule]

[Image of appointment form]

[Image of appointment calendar]
Filling out a Client Report Form

1. Click on the appointment
2. Click: “Add New” Client Report form
3. Fill out “Actual Length of Session”
4. Change staff or resource, if you covered for someone else’s appointment
5. Choose the discipline of your session
6. Tick the boxes that describe general issues you tackled (writing appointments only)
7. Fill out client report form (see detailed instructions below)
8. Do not select any email options
9. Click Save
Writing a Client Report Form

After your consultation, take five minutes to write out a report form. Answer the following questions. In addition to checking the boxes of the main areas you worked on answer the following questions:

1. What did the student come to the appointment for?
2. What was your own assessment of what the student needed to work on?
3. What did you work on in the consultation?
4. What techniques did you use?
5. How did you feel the consultation went, overall?

This client report form details the main goals and achievements from the session, strategies used, and recommendations made to the tutee. Client report forms can be used by future tutors to better understand what has and has not worked in past consultations so that they can build upon efforts from previous consultations and/or try out new strategies with the tutee.

Client report forms should be written immediately following a consultation when your memory of the session is fresh. You must submit a client report form for each appointment in order to be paid for the consultation hour.

Sample client report forms:

“Student X came in with a second draft of his LH2 paper. He wanted help with close reading, but after reading his draft, his close reading skills were fine, but he needed help with translating the quotes that he picked and organising all his thoughts in a coherent manner that served the overarching argument. We looked at 3 body paragraphs closely, and walked him through the logical leaps he was making. He started to fix the body paragraphs himself by thinking through what he wanted to say, and what the best order was for his essay. To conclude, I shared editing tips, and reminded him to cite all his sources.”

“Student Y wanted to ensure that her PPT paper was argumentative. As it stood, her thesis was at the end of the paper, and her paragraphs had no commentary linking her evidence back to her thesis. I asked her to consider how the paper might change if she started it with her thesis, then explained how the end of each paragraph should reflect back on the thesis, linking all evidence and ideas together. She revised several sentences in the session.”
**Appropriate Use of Client Report Form Data**

We hope that having access to these client report forms will provide useful information for tutors to prepare for their sessions and to be engaged with each other regarding tutoring pedagogy and practice. However, with the availability of this data comes the requirement of ensuring its appropriate use. All tutors must ensure that students’ privacy is respected and that information from the client report forms is kept confidential. CTL/WC staff will be closely monitoring these reports to make sure they are used appropriately. CTL and the WC take the confidentiality of student information very seriously and violations could be subject to disciplinary action, including removal from your peer tutor role and referral to Dean of Student Office for violation of student codes of conduct.

When writing, reading and accessing client report forms, please follow these guidelines:

1. Client report forms should only include academic information, such as strategies used, topics discussed, and suggestions for future action. They should not include any personal information, mental health concerns, gossip, or complaints about a professor or another tutor.

2. Client report forms cannot be shared with other peer tutors, faculty, students or staff. The only people with whom you can and should share a client report form are the staff and faculty from the CTL and the Writers’ Centre.

3. You should only read client report forms about students that you are tutoring. Do not read reports about your friends, classmates, or suitemates unless you are tutoring them.

4. Report any inappropriate client report forms to the CTL and/or Writers’ Centre Staff immediately. If you read something that you find inappropriate, do not edit or delete it yourself.
Missed Appointments

1. “Missed” appointments are: no-shows and appointments cancelled within the six hours before the scheduled appointment time.

2. Once students have three “missed” appointments, their ability to book appointments on MyWCOnline will be blocked.

3. To record a missed appointment: Go to the appointment, edit appointment, select missed, click saved appointment.

4. If a student tells you less than six hours in advance, say the following: “Thanks for letting us know! We have a policy that doesn’t allow for cancellations less than six hours before your appointment in order to make it fair for all students, so I’ll need to mark this as a “missed” appointment. You can have up to three missed appointments before you’ll be automatically blocked from the system. At that point, you’ll just need to come talk to staff at the Writers’ Centre or CTL to have your privileges reinstated.”
Cancellations

Students can cancel their own appointments online (up to six hours before the appointment time), but if they are unable to or ask for your help, you can show them. Open the appointment and click “Cancel this Appointment.”
COMPENSATION

Payment:
Tutoring (one-to-one and open/drop-in session): S$20/hour (pro-rated for any incomplete hour). You will be paid for tutoring hours booked by students via the WCONline booking system. The total tutoring hours must be within the hours allocated for the class as you will not be paid for tutoring hours that exceed the allocation. Please work closely with the instructors to offer tutoring sessions when students are most likely to seek tutoring help (e.g. weeks before exam/assignment deadline).

Training/meeting with course instructor: S$12/hour (pro-rated for any incomplete hour). You will be paid for training/meeting with the instructors (capped at 4 hours/semester). The CTL will also offer training sessions which you will also be paid for attending.

You are required to submit your payment claim for a given month by the 1st working day of the following month via the NUS Student Work Scheme (NSWS) system. Please send the consolidated name list of the attendees for the open/drop-in sessions conducted to the CTL (Learning@vale-nus.edu.sg) after submitting your monthly claims. Any claims submitted after the deadline will be processed in the following month.

Hours:
All peer tutors (local and international students) should not work more than 16 hours per week. If you are an international student holding a Student’s Pass in Singapore issued by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA), you are only allowed to work in Singapore if you meet specific requirements. It is your own responsibility to comply with the Student’s Pass regulations and work pass exemption for foreign students. You may view this information available at:

- www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-pass-exemption-for-foreign-students;

The working hour limits above apply to the total combined number of hours worked per week, from one or more positions that a student holds on or off-campus. In the event you are holding two or more appointments at the College, you acknowledge the above working hour limits apply to all appointments and you shall ensure that your payment claims for hours worked do not overlap between various appointments. You shall also declare to the College in the event that you are concurrently working elsewhere off-campus or for a third party.

Late Cancellations and No-Shows: If your tutee cancels less than 6 hours before the appointment time or no show, you may report the tutoring hour and mark the appointment as "missed" in WCONline.
ADDITIONAL COLLEGE RESOURCES

Academic and Residential Support Resources

You may want to refer tutees to these resources for more specialised support as appropriate to their needs.

**Assistant Deans** – for study strategies, reading and note-taking assistance, time-management, goal-setting and academic planning advice, personal support. If a student is facing a severe and unexpected medical or psychological condition interrupting school work, they may approach their AD to request an AD Note which temporarily allows delayed work and absence from class. ADs should also be consulted if a student is considering under-loading or over-loading course credits, or is interested in taking a Leave of Absence, or withdrawing from the College. ADs should be notified if a student seems to be in significant mental/emotional distress.

**Deans Fellows, and RCAs** (for first-years) – for general study strategies, reading and note-taking assistance, time-management, goal-setting and academic planning advice, conflict resolution among students, and personal support.

**Capstone Advisors and Heads of Study** – for capstone advice.

**CIPE** – for career planning, study abroad, internships, professional development advice, and on-campus job postings.

**Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL)** – for learning accommodations support and peer tutoring.

**Faculty and Faculty Advisor** – for learning strategies, academic planning, and to identify additional learning opportunities.

**Financial Aid** (within the Admissions Office) – for advice on how to apply for financial assistance.

**Languages** – for any issues related to language peer tutoring, please contact languages@yale-nus.edu.sg

**Library/ ERT** – for research assistance and workshops on study-enhancing technologies.

**Major Advisor/ Head of Studies** – for advice on major selection, course selection, and post-graduation planning.

**Registry** – for course registration, tracking credits, checking on academic standing.

**Student Services** – for enquiries regarding billing, student health and travel insurance.

**Writers’ Centre** – for writing support and opportunities.
Mental Health Resources

**Residential College Assistant Deans and Deans Fellows**

Cendana AD: TBC - Contact AD Paul Gallagher for assistance in the meantime.
Elm AD: Chew Suyin, suyin.chew@yale-nus.edu.sg, 6601-3662
Saga AD: Paul Gallagher, paul.gallagher@yale-nus.edu.sg, 6601-3371

**Cendana** After Hours On-Call: 9338-3452
**Elm** After Hours On-Call: 9338-3449
**Saga** After Hours On-Call: 9338-3440

**Lifeline 24/7 NUS Hotline**: 6516-7777

**Ambulance**: 995

**Yale-NUS Counseling Centre**: book an appointment online at [https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/counselling-centre/](https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/counselling-centre/)

**NUS Counseling Services**: drop in and appointments available at [www.nus.edu.sg/uhc/contact/general-enquiries.html](http://www.nus.edu.sg/uhc/contact/general-enquiries.html)

Safety and Security Resources

**Yale-NUS Security**: 6601-3696

**Police**: 999
SOURCES AND REFERENCES

We consulted and borrowed many good ideas from the following sources:

“Handbook for Peer Tutors: 2017-18” Harvard University, Bureau of Study Counsel, Center for Academic and Personal Development; Handbook for Peer Tutors: 2017-18” Harvard University


“Campus Tutoring Program Handbook” Furman University, Center for Academic Success; http://www.furman.edu/academics/center-for-academic-success/tutoring/Documents/Tutoring%20Handbook.pdf
