What are the class sizes like?

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum · https://shanistutoring.com/help-doc/what-are-the-class-sizes-like/

At Shani's Tutoring, we offer a variety of class sizes for different purposes, comfort levels and budgets. The most common sizes are:

- One-to-one classes
- Groups of three
- Groups of five
- Groups of 10-15
- Lectures of 15+

During planning, our top priority is to ensure we have the best impact on our students. All our decisions are guided by educational psychology and evidence-based teaching methods. For each course, we create a target list of knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) that we're teaching. We then use this to guide us on what activities will best serve our targets, which plays the biggest role in class sizes.

As a rule of thumb, we deliver knowledge-heavy classes as lectures. This allows us to cover key topics in an efficient, cost-effective manner. It also means that students can plan ahead: they can sign up for sessions that cover areas where their knowledge is weaker, and avoid paying for content they already know.

Skills-based classes vary more than this. They depend on both the skills we're teaching and the student's current level. For developing argumentation skills, we usually rely on bigger groups for Harkness discussions. Analysis skills are more complex. Students who already have experience often benefit from Harkness discussions to challenge them to think differently. For students new to analysis, class sizes of three to five are ideal.

Of course, one of our main aims is to make tutoring accessible to as many students as possible. Affordability is key in achieving that goal. That's why we also offer lecture-based versions of our skill- and behaviour-focused classes. It allows us to create a useful compromise. We can lower prices to benefit students who wouldn't otherwise have access to tutoring services, and also fairly compensate our highly skilled and qualified tutors.

What about students with unconventional learning needs?

For some students, their educational context is different to the average student. This could be for many reasons, such as:

- High or complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Experiencing significant gaps in education.
- Anxiety or other mental health concerns which mean students are unable to access conventional education.
- Being home educated, flexi-educated or educated abroad.
- Balancing education with caring responsibilities or work commitments.
- Having English as an Additional Language.
- Studying for an exam that we don't typically cover.

For these students, we always consider what class sizes would suit them on a case-by-case basis. We set up a needs analysis meeting that helps us to build an individualised plan of the most effective methods for them. This involves baselining the student, factoring in their learning goals, and considering their prior experiences of education. Then, we use this information to help us decide the student's target KSBs and ideal group sizes.

No two students are the same, and a one-size-fits-all approach to education is detrimental to the development of the student. So, we do everything we can to ensure we're considering the unique needs of each individual. However, we do have some general principles which help us to determine how to best help our students.

For example, if a student has high educational needs, they often benefit from bespoke one-to-one classes. This is because we can tailor the content to them, building their self-management skills and successful academic behaviours along the way. When a student has had a large gap in their education, catching up on knowledge and maintaining social skills is often crucial. So, we tend to recommend lecture sessions to catch up on knowledge mixed with group discussions to develop oracy and social skills.