



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of Mathematics

GUIDE TO ADMISSIONS

in MATHEMATICS

This guide is intended for students who are considering applying to Cambridge to read Mathematics, or Mathematics with Physics. It applies to the courses starting in October 2011.

The information contained here is only a very rough guide. Further general information about admissions can be found in the *University Undergraduate Admissions Prospectus*, obtainable from

Cambridge Admissions Office, Fitzwilliam House, 32 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QY
(telephone (+44) (0) 1223 333 308, fax (+44) (0) 1223 366 383, email: admissions@cam.ac.uk),
or from individual colleges. More specific information can be obtained by writing to individual colleges.

Further information about the mathematics course can be found in the leaflet *A Guide to the Mathematical Tripos* which can be obtained either from the admissions office of any Cambridge college, or from

Faculty Office, Centre for Mathematical Sciences, Wilberforce Road, Cambridge CB3 0WA
(telephone: (+44) (0) 1223 766879; e-mail: admissions@maths.cam.ac.uk).

All the documentation is available on <http://www.maths.cam.ac.uk/>. The pages of the individual Colleges can also be accessed from this site.

1 Cambridge Mathematics

The Cambridge undergraduate mathematics course is widely recognised not only as the most demanding undergraduate mathematics course available in Britain but also as one of the most rewarding. It is one of the largest such courses, having an intake of about 250 students each year.

In the first year **only** there are two options:

- (a) Pure and Applied Mathematics;
- (b) Mathematics with Physics.

Applicants for the two options are considered together: there is no quota of places for the different options and the mathematical criteria for admission are the same for option (b) as for option (a). Within each option, there is no choice of courses.

In the second year, there is only one option, but there is some choice both in the number of courses you take and the areas of mathematics you study. In the third year, there are 35 courses to choose from, and you can choose the number of courses you take (typically about 8), the level of difficulty of the courses and the areas of mathematics you study.

Although the BA degree course in mathematics lasts three years, the undergraduate course continues to an optional fourth year which leads to the M.Math degree in addition to the BA. It is a taught course (i.e. not based on a dissertation) and serves to bridge the gap between the end of the BA degree course and the frontiers of research. Admission to the fourth year is conditional on the results of previous years and about one third of our students stay on for the fourth year. They are joined by students from all parts of the world to take this course as a one-year graduate course.

You can find further details in the *Cambridge Admissions Prospectus*, or in the *Cambridge University Guide to Courses*, or in the *Guide to the Mathematical Tripos* produced by the Faculty of Mathematics (available on our web site).

Admissions are handled entirely by individual colleges. Most applicants name a college on their application form but you may instead make an open application, in which case you will be allocated a college on the basis of the number of mathematics applications per available place in each college.

2 Why Maths?

Here are some reasons often given for studying Mathematics at university.

- You find mathematics interesting — which is the only valid reason.
- You are good at mathematics. This is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition (as mathematicians would say).
- The job prospects are excellent. It is true that employers love mathematicians because mathematics is all about the vital skill of problem solving, but this on its own is not a good reason.

3 Why Cambridge Maths?

Here are some reasons for studying Mathematics at Cambridge.

- Cambridge is, according to some recent surveys, one of the top few universities in the world.
- The Cambridge mathematics course is certainly one of the very best mathematics courses in the UK.
- The fourth year of our mathematics course (called Part III) is world famous and a breeding ground for future leaders in mathematical research.
- Cambridge colleges offer a level of academic, pastoral and financial support that is possibly equalled but certainly not surpassed in any UK universities.
- Cambridge is a beautiful, ancient and vibrant city.

4 Which A-levels?

The first thing to say here is other qualifications at roughly the level of A-levels (Baccalaureate or Scottish Advanced Highers, for example) are perfectly acceptable and may even provide better grounding than A-levels. A-levels are referred to here because most of our applicants take A-levels. Information relating to other qualifications can be obtained from admissions@maths.cam.ac.uk or from individual colleges or from our faculty web site www.maths.cam.ac.uk/undergrad.

The best advice is to do as much mathematics as possible. The normal minimum requirement for our course is AS-level Further Mathematics (or an equivalent qualification) and most of our students have studied beyond this. Nevertheless, applications from students whose schools do not provide mathematics teaching to the full A2 Further Mathematics level are welcomed, and suitable allowance is made both in the interview and in the conditional offer. Note that if your school does not offer teaching for Further Mathematics modules, you may be able to get help from the the Further Mathematics Support Programme (<http://www.furthermathematics.org.uk/>).

If a choice of modules is available to you, it is best (from the point of view of our course) to take as much pure mathematics and mechanics as possible, in preference to statistics and discrete mathematics.

Our mathematics course has a significant component of applied mathematics and theoretical physics, so A-level Physics is useful (especially if you are taking few mechanics modules).

As for other A-level or AS-level subjects, you should just choose the subjects you enjoy most.

5 Gap Year

Only a small minority of mathematics students take a gap year. Some of those who do take a gap year apply for a deferred place before they leave school. Although in many subjects the extra maturity gained from a gap year is a great asset, in mathematics this has to be balanced against the danger of going stale or 'off the boil'. If you do decide that you want a gap year, then you should plan to keep up your mathematics in some way if possible, and you should certainly get back into good practice (for example, by working through past STEP papers) before you start the course. Some colleges are more encouraging than others to those wishing to defer entry: see page 9 below.

6 STEP

The Sixth Term Examination Papers (STEP) are administered by Cambridge Assessment (which is the parent company of the OCR examination board). Examination entries are handled by Cambridge Assessment (not Cambridge University and not, any longer, OCR). Cambridge Assessment has international centres in many countries so you may be able to take STEP if you are not in the UK; but it would be a good idea to consult the college that has made you a conditional offer about this. Cambridge Assessment has a STEP website

<http://www.stepmathematics.org.uk>

and an e-mail help line (stepinfo@cambridgeassessment.org.uk); or call 01223 558455.

The papers are taken in the summer at roughly the end of June. There are three mathematics papers. Each paper consists of 13 questions: 8 pure, 3 mechanics and 2 statistics/probability. You are assessed on 6 questions. There are five grades: S, 1, 2, 3 and U.

The syllabus for Mathematics I and II is based on a typical single subject A-level syllabus: the pure mathematics content is very slightly more than the A-level common core. The syllabuses for the Mechanics and the Probability and Statistics sections are each equivalent to more than two A-level modules but, since there is no common core for these areas, the material may not coincide with the modules of your particular A-level. Paper I is intended specifically for candidates who are not taking the full Further Mathematics A-level (or the equivalent).

The syllabus for Mathematics III is based on a 'typical' Further Mathematics A-level syllabus (there is no Further Mathematics core syllabus).

Full syllabus specifications can be found on the Cambridge Assessment web site above.

All colleges like to make offers involving STEP. There are four reasons for this.

1. STEP is a better predictor of success in the Mathematical Tripos than A-levels, partly because the questions are less standard and less structured, which helps to distinguish between ability (or potential) and good teaching.
2. Preparation for STEP also serves as useful preparation for our course.
3. The STEP marks and the scripts themselves are available for inspection by college staff. This means that it is possible to make allowances for a near miss and to make judgements on the actual work rather than on just the marks or grades.
4. The meaning of A-level grades may differ significantly between the different boards, so STEP provides a fairer across-the-board comparison.

If you live in the UK, you should be able to sit the STEP examinations in your school. If you live abroad, then it is still possible for you to sit STEP at your own school providing your examinations officer is happy to administer the test. This may involve setting up the school as a CIE (Cambridge International Examinations) examination centre; further information can be obtained from the STEP e-mail help line (see above). Alternatively, you can sit the examination at a British Council office, but the British Council may apply a significant additional fee; or the STEP help line may be able to advise you of a nearby school in which candidates are taking STEP papers.

Here are two important pieces of advice:

- **Do not worry if your school is not able to provide much help with STEP.**

There is plenty of material with which you can help yourself. The best preparation for STEP is to work through past papers. Full solutions (and much more) are available to guide you if you get stuck from the Meiklriggs mathematics site <http://meikleriggs.org.uk/> and other help for some papers is available from the Cambridge Assessment STEP website (www.stepmathematics.org.uk) in the same zip file as the examination papers.

You will find the following booklets useful. Both are down-loadable from www.stepmathematics.org.uk.

- *Advanced Problems in Core Mathematics*; this would be a good starting point for your STEP preparation.
- *Advanced Problems in Mathematics*; this consists of 43 STEP-like problems with discussion, hints and full solutions.

You can get tuition and much more from the Further Mathematics Support programme:

www.furthermathematics.org.uk.

You can get online help (including a discussion forum) from the Mathematics Millennium Project (www.nrich.maths.org.uk).

Finally, if you are from a non-selective UK state school that offers no help with STEP preparation, and you hold a conditional offer to read mathematics, you may qualify for the Easter STEP Study School, which is held over four days in Cambridge. The college to which you apply is responsible for nominating you, and this happens in January after you receive a conditional offer; no need for you to apply yourself.

- **Do not worry if the STEP questions seem very difficult.**

STEP is supposed to be difficult: it is aimed at the top 2% or so of all A-level candidates. It is therefore important to adjust your sights when tackling a STEP paper. The questions are much longer and more demanding than A-level questions (they are intended to take about 45 minutes, rather than the 10 or so minutes for an A-level question). They therefore look daunting; but you should not be daunted. In recent years, good answers to four questions were sufficient for a grade 1.

You may be interested to know the exact borderlines in terms of marks. They vary from year to year, since the marks are not scaled to fit pre-stated borderlines (such as UMS marks at A-level). Here are some examples (questions marked out of 20); more information can be found on the Cambridge Assessment STEP web site.

2009	S/1	1/2	2/3	2003	S/1	1/2	2/3
Paper 1	95	72	58	Paper 1	94	73	55
Paper 2	98	71	61	Paper 2	95	70	55
Paper 3	95	67	55	Paper 3	77	56	43

7 Which College?

Admissions policies and procedures differ between colleges. This has the advantage of giving applicants a choice and the disadvantage of making the whole system appear complicated. This leaflet contains a summary of information supplied by the colleges and is intended to help overcome the disadvantage. You can obtain further details (for example, if you have special circumstances or if anything is not clear) by contacting the appropriate college directly.

You should not attach too much importance to the differences in admissions procedures between the colleges: although colleges use different methods of assessing applicants, the chances of being made a Cambridge offer probably do not depend greatly on which college you apply to.¹ If your chosen college does not make you an offer (perhaps because it has an unusually large number of applicants), you will be ‘pooled’ if your application fulfils certain criteria agreed by all the colleges. Your application will then be considered by other colleges. Furthermore, if you are made a conditional offer and you do not quite fulfil the conditions, you may still be accepted by your chosen college; otherwise, you will be pooled and your application will then be considered by other colleges.

In any case, other factors (such as age, size or situation of the college, and sporting or musical facilities,) could be far more important in determining your choice of college than small differences in admissions arrangements.

Although there are significant differences in admissions arrangements between the colleges, they are far outweighed by the similarities, which can be summarised as follows.

- All colleges are prepared to be flexible to meet the needs of individual applicants.
- All colleges like to interview all realistic applicants.
- All colleges require some information beyond A-level grades (or the equivalent qualification if you are not taking A-levels). This will normally take the form of at least one mathematical interview and, if this goes well, a conditional offer involving STEP (see section 8 below). Sometimes, the interview is based on previously prepared material or on work done under examination conditions just before the interview. The main purpose of this extra information is to ensure that only students for whom the course is suitable, in terms of level, style and content, are offered places.

8 College Admissions Procedures

When reading the summaries below, you must bear in mind that *all colleges are willing to be flexible in order to take into account the background of individual applicants*. For example, many applicants each year take examinations other than A-level. For further details, you should either write to or e-mail the college directly (individual enquiries are welcome) or consult the web pages of the individual college: a convenient central access point is the Mathematics Faculty page (www.maths.cam.ac.uk), then click on *Information about undergraduate studies* followed by *Admissions*.

¹If you are a mature student (i.e. aged 21 or over on 1st October of the year you start) you may wish to give special consideration to the colleges which specialise in mature applicants, namely Hughes Hall, Lucy Cavendish (women only) and St Edmund’s.

8.1 Christ's

You will normally have two separate 25 minute interviews that will include unseen mathematical problems (often, one interview will concentrate mainly on pure mathematics and the other mainly on applied mathematics). Each interview will aim to assess your potential rather than your A-level knowledge. Applicants for Mathematics with Physics will usually have an additional interview. Some offers, to the very strongest applicants, may be Easy Offers (EE at A-level); other offers usually include two STEP papers.

8.2 Churchill

You will have one or two 30 minute subject interviews, with Mathematics fellows. You will also be required to take a 60 minute Mathematics Aptitude test the evening before your interview(s). Offers will usually include conditions based on two STEP papers.

8.3 Clare

You will have two separate interviews with mathematicians. Applicants for Mathematics with Physics will have an additional interview. Offers will normally involve two STEP papers.

8.4 Corpus Christi

At interview you will be asked to do some written work on material previously prepared, but not part of the usual A-Level syllabus. You will have two separate interviews with mathematicians, one of which will be with the Director of Studies and will largely be a discussion of this written work. Offers usually include conditions based on two STEP papers.

8.5 Downing

At present, Mathematics applicants receive two 20-30 minute interviews on the same day, each with one or two interviewers. Before the interviews the applicants will be given 45 minutes to work on 10 written questions. The questions will cover a variety of subjects at A level(or equivalent) Mathematics in order to give the candidates an opportunity to think about typical interview topics beforehand. All the applicants who have been assigned morning interviews will work on the written questions at the same time and in the same room, just prior to the start of the morning interviews. Applicants with afternoon interviews will work on their written questions in the same manner, just prior to the start of afternoon interviews. Deferred entry applicants should be prepared to explain at interview how they intend to further their mathematical education during their gap year.

8.6 Emmanuel

Emmanuel always aims to attract students from a wide variety of backgrounds. You will have two interviews, each with two of our mathematicians, both of which will be approximately 40 minutes long. In both interviews most of the time is spent discussing particular mathematical problems. Offers for all students will involve conditions based on two STEP papers.

8.7 Fitzwilliam

You will have two or three half-hour interviews, designed to assess potential rather than knowledge. Offers usually include two STEP papers. No special preparation for the interview is required or expected, although you may be required to sit a Thinking Skills Test. Applications to Fitzwilliam have traditionally come from a wide variety of school backgrounds, and this is taken into account in the admissions procedure.

8.8 Girton

You will have two interviews, of about 25 minutes each, with mathematics staff, after taking a short written test which serves as a basis for discussion in these interviews. We aim to maintain a balance between the numbers of men and women we admit each year and we are keen to have students from a wide range of backgrounds. Offers will normally involve two STEP papers.

8.9 Gonville & Caius

You will have two 30 minute interviews, each with two of our mathematicians; one of these is a general mathematics interview and the other is usually based on a chapter of a book from a shortlist which we send you before your interview. Most of our offers include STEP but we are prepared to discuss alternatives (before or during your interview). About 90% of our candidates with offers succeed in gaining admission.

8.10 Homerton

Homerton always aims to attract students from a wide variety of backgrounds. You will have two interviews, each approximately 25 minutes long. Both will be focussed on your academic work but one will be solely concerned with your mathematical ability and potential and may include work on problems given out previously to applicants. Offers for A-level students will involve conditions based on two STEP papers.

8.11 Jesus

You will have a two specialist Mathematics interviews, of 20 or 30 minutes. No specific preparation for the interviews is required, but you may be asked to work at a problem just before one of the interviews. In the longer interview, you may be asked about your general interests. The shorter interview will probably be entirely mathematical. If you are applying for Mathematics with Physics, you will have an additional interview. Our offers are based on two STEP papers.

8.12 King's

When we acknowledge your application we will give you some mathematical reading to do. You must make sure that you study this material in depth before your interview. You will have one or two interviews with members of the mathematical staff, and may also be asked to take a short mathematical test prior to your interview(s). During interview you may be asked about the material you have read, problems from the test, other mathematical problems, and general questions about your application. Our offers are usually based on STEP.

8.13 Magdalene

You will have two interviews each one of about 30 minutes, and one written test of 90 minutes' duration. One interview with the Director of Studies will be entirely mathematical and may contain a discussion about your attempts on the written test. The second interview will focus more on the applied or applicable mathematics encountered at school and may also include a general, non-mathematical, component. We have a strong tradition of admitting candidates with non A-level qualifications from overseas as well as those with traditional A-level or equivalent backgrounds. Our offers will always include STEP conditions in two of the three papers.

8.14 Murray Edwards

We invite you to two interviews (about 25 minutes each): the first is a subject interview and the second a more general interview which also includes some mathematical content. Before your subject interview we ask you to work through some mathematical problems which can then be discussed further within the interview. We welcome students with potential from any background and are also happy to consider those taking a gap year. Offers are based on A-levels or their equivalent, and on two STEP papers. Applicants for Mathematics with Physics may have an additional interview.

8.15 Newnham

Our admissions decisions take into account the profile and circumstances of each individual applicant. You will have two interviews: one of about 40 minutes and one of about 20 minutes, both with members of the mathematics teaching staff. Before the longer interview, you will be given a selection of mathematical problems to look at; these will form the basis of the longer interview. Our aim in both interviews is to find out how you think, rather than dissect your current knowledge. Applicants for Mathematics with Physics may have an additional interview. We routinely make offers to applicants who are following courses other than A-levels. Our offers will usually include grades in STEP papers II and III. Newnham is a college for women.

8.16 Pembroke

You will normally have two interviews with mathematicians and a tutorial interview. You will be asked to work through some problems for half an hour before one of the maths interviews. Emphasis will be laid on assessing your potential rather than your A-level knowledge. We normally make offers based on grades in STEP II and III. Pembroke usually receives applications from students with a wide variety of educational backgrounds, and this is taken into account in the admissions procedure.

8.17 Peterhouse

We give all maths applicants a 45 minute interview with two mathematics fellows, regardless of whether they are taking A-level Further Mathematics. They then have a 20 minute interview with the Admissions Tutor. Applicants for Maths with Physics have a 40 minute interview in their second subject. Our offers specify grades in two A-levels but we adapt our STEP offer according to the amount and level of support an applicant is receiving at school, so it may be either one or two STEP grades at any of the levels.

8.18 Queens'

You will normally have two interviews of about 30 minutes each, with one of the mathematics staff. (Applicants in Mathematics with Physics, will have an additional interview with a Physicist.) You will be asked to name topics in mathematics that you are presently studying, or that you find particularly interesting, and to discuss one or more questions that we shall suggest in the areas you name. We normally make offers which include STEP papers, always taking account of the individual circumstances and educational background of the candidate.

8.19 Robinson

You will normally have two interviews, one of about 30 minutes that will include some general questions, and one of about 20 minutes. In both interviews you will be asked to deal with a number of mathematical problems. You will be asked to take a mathematical test. Applicants for Mathematics with Physics will have a physics interview instead of one of the mathematics interviews. Offers normally include STEP papers II and III.

8.20 St Catharine's

You will have two interviews: a general interview of around 20 to 30 minutes and a subject interview of about 45 minutes. The subject interview will be with one or two of the mathematics staff and will cover a range of mathematical problems - half of the interview will consist of problems based on school work and one half on the teaching of new material. Offers usually include two STEP papers. You may be asked to try one or two short written problems on the day of the interview before the interview.

8.21 St John's

Those invited for interview normally have three interviews, each of 20-25 minutes duration: one with the Tutor for mathematicians, who will be concerned to find out what you can contribute to the College in addition to your academic skills, and two subject interviews, one with the Director of Studies in Applied Mathematics and one with the Director of Studies in Pure Mathematics. In the subject interview, our aim is to probe your mathematical ability as well as your motivation for studying the subject; we shall probably ask you to tackle some unseen mathematical problems, but no special preparation for these is necessary or even desirable. Our normal conditional offer includes at least Grade 1 in Mathematics II and Mathematics III at STEP.

8.22 Selwyn

Mathematics applicants to Selwyn have one 15 minute general interview, and two 30 minute mathematics interviews which are based around mathematical problems; Mathematics with Physics applicants have a physics interview instead of one of the mathematics interviews. We use STEP because we feel it provides the fairest admission criterion for most students.

8.23 Sidney Sussex

You will have two specialist Maths interviews, one in Pure and one in Applied Maths. Each will last around 25 minutes. Your interviewers may ask some preliminary questions about your wider application, but will focus upon working through maths problems with you. Our offers normally include STEP but under exceptional circumstances (if you are unable to take STEP) we can make you an offer including Advanced Extension Award (AEA) Mathematics instead.

8.24 Trinity

Our admissions procedure normally involves a single lengthy interview, with conditional offers based on a careful assessment of the candidate's school record, and performance in the test and at interview. Candidates will be asked to spend an hour before the interview working through a selection of problems. (These problems will be adapted where appropriate for those applying for Mathematics with Physics but will still be predominantly mathematical.) Nearly all offers include grades in STEP.

8.25 Trinity Hall

You will have two mathematical interviews, each lasting about 25 minutes. In one interview, we ask questions on material sent beforehand for you to study; in the other, we ask a free range of questions adapted to each candidate. Offers will usually be 1 and 1 in STEP papers II and III, together with A*AA in A-levels including Mathematics and Further Mathematics (or equivalent). Individual circumstances are always considered with care.

8.26 Hughes Hall, Lucy Cavendish and St Edmund's

These colleges admit only mature students (those over the age of 21). They tend to be more flexible about admissions requirements and their admissions procedures reflect this. However, the aim is still to ensure that only students for whom the course is suitable are offered places, which means that evidence

of a high level of mathematical ability is required. The number of mature mathematicians in any given year is small, so entries in the table of data given below are not appropriate.

Lucy Cavendish is for women only, and requires all candidates to take a subject-based written test in addition to a specialist Maths interview. Offers usually include grades in STEP.

9 Admissions Data and Typical Offers

The following table gives some information which you may find useful. It should be read in conjunction with the preceding section. Last year, about 1280 students applied for the roughly 250 places allocated to Mathematics. About 400 conditional offers were made, 80 of them to pooled applicants.

COLLEGE	#p/y	#a/p	Typical Offer	4A's	STEP	Pool	Gap
Christ's	10	–	A*AA + 11 (or EE)	R	U	S	N
Churchill	14	↓	A*AA + 11	N	U	U	DU
Clare	12	–	A*AB + 11 or 12	N	U	R	EI
Corpus Christi	7	–	A*AA + 12	N	U	O	DU
Downing	6	–	A*AA + 12	N	U	S	DU
Emmanuel	12	↑↑	A*AA + 11	R	U	S	DU
Fitzwilliam	6–8	↓	A*AA + 11	N	U	U	N
Girton	10	↓	A*AA + 12	N	U	U	DU
Gonville & Caius	10	–	A*AB + 12	N	U	S	DU
Homerton	6–8	↓	A*AA + 12 or 11	R	U	U	N
Jesus	10	–	A*AA + 11 or 12	S	U	O	N
King's	12	–	A*AA + 12 or 11	N	U	R	N
Magdalene	6	–	A*AA + 11	N	U	O	DU
Murray Edwards	4	↓	A*AA + 12	N	U	U	N
Newnham	6	↓↓	A*AA + 11	N	U	U	EI
Pembroke	9	↑	A*AB + 12	N	U	S	DU
Peterhouse	6	↓	A*A + 11	N	U	S	DU
Queens'	16	–	A*AA + 11 or 12	N	U	R	E
Robinson	8	↑	A*AA + 11 or 12	N	U	U	EI
St Catharine's	10	↓	A*AA + 12	R	U	O	DU
St John's	16	–	A*AA + 11	R	U	R	N
Selwyn	6	–	A*AA + 11	N	U	U	DU
Sidney Sussex	6–8	–	A*AA + 11	R	O	S	N
Trinity	40	–	A*AA + 11	N	U	R	DU
Trinity Hall	6–8	–	A*AA + 11	N	U	S	DU

Key

#p/y. Average number of places given to first year students reading Mathematics (including Mathematics with Physics).

#a/p. Number of applicants per place for Mathematics compared with the average (4.5) for all colleges: slightly higher (↑); higher (↑↑); slightly lower (↓); lower (↓↓); about the same (–). *These are three-year averages, and vary from year to year.*

Typical offer. A-level grades + STEP grades (or equivalent, if appropriate). *There is no guarantee that this is the offer you will receive.*

4A's. Are offers based on four A-levels? **N**ever, **R**arely, **S**ometimes, **O**ften.

STEP. Do offers involve STEP? **N**ever, **S**ometimes, **O**ften, **U**sually.

Pool. Are students taken from the pools? **R**arely, **S**ometimes, **O**ften, **U**sually.

Gap. Attitude to deferred places (i.e. a gap year): **D**iscourage, **D**iscourage **U**nless you have something particularly worthwhile/relevant to do, **N**eutral, **E**ncourage **I**f you have something particularly worthwhile/relevant to do; **E**ncourage.