As 1905 dawned,

the soon-to-be 26-year-old Albert Einstein faced life as a failed academic.

Most physicists of the time would have **scoffed** at the idea

that this **minor civil servant** could have much to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to science.

Yet within the following year,

Einstein would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ not one,

not two,

not three,

but four extraordinary papers, each on a different topic,

that were **destined** to radically \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our understanding of the universe.

The **myth** that Einstein had failed math is just that.

He had mastered calculus on his own by the age of 15

and done well at both his Munich \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school

and at the Swiss Polytechnic,

where he studied for a math and physics teaching diploma.

But \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ classes to spend more time in the lab

and **neglect**ing to show proper **deference** to his professors

had **derailed** his \_\_\_\_\_\_ career path.

Passed over even for a lab assistant position,

he had to **settle** for a job at the Swiss patent office,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the help of a friend's father.

Working six days a week as a patent clerk,

Einstein still managed to make some time for physics,

discussing the latest work with a few close friends,

and publishing a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of minor papers.

It came as a major surprise

when in March 1905 he submitted a paper with a shocking hypothesis.

Despite decades of evidence that light was a wave,

Einstein \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that it could, in fact, be a particle,

showing that mysterious **phenomena**, such as the photoelectric effect,

could be explained by his hypothesis.

The idea was **derided** for years to come,

but Einstein was simply twenty years \_\_\_\_\_\_ of his time.

Wave-particle **duality** was **slated** to become a cornerstone of the quantum revolution.

Two months later in May, Einstein submitted a second paper,

this time **tackling** the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ old question of whether atoms actually exist.

Though certain theories were built on the idea of **invisible** atoms,

some **prominent** scientists still believed them to be a useful **fiction**,

rather than actual physical objects.

But Einstein used an **ingenious** argument,

showing that the behavior of small \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

randomly moving around in a liquid, known as Brownian motion,

could be precisely predicted

by the collisions of millions of invisible atoms.

Experiments soon \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Einstein's model,

and atomic **skeptics** threw in the towel.

The third paper came in June.

For a long time,

Einstein had been troubled by an **inconsistency**

between two fundamental principles of physics.

The well \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ principle of relativity,

going all the way back to Galileo,

stated that absolute motion could not be defined.

Yet electromagnetic theory, also well established,

**asserted** that **absolute** \_\_\_\_\_\_ did exist.

The **discrepancy**, and his inability to **resolve** it,

left Einstein in what he described as a state of psychic **tension**.

But one day in May,

after he had **mulled** over the puzzle with his friend Michele Besso,

the clouds parted.

Einstein realized that the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ could be resolved

if it was the speed of light that remained constant,

regardless of reference frame,

while both time and space were relative to the observer.

It took Einstein only a few weeks to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the details

and formulate what came to be known as special relativity.

The theory not only **shattered** our \_\_\_\_\_\_ understanding of reality

but would also **pave** the way for technologies,

ranging from particle **accelerators**,

to the global positioning system.

One might think that this was enough,

but in September,

a fourth paper arrived as a "by the way" **follow-up** to the special relativity paper.

Einstein had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a little bit more about his theory,

and realized it also **implied** that mass and energy,

one apparently **solid** and the other supposedly ethereal,

were actually equivalent.

And their relationship could be expressed in what was to become the most famous

and **consequential** equation in history:

E=mc^2.

Einstein would not become a world famous icon for nearly another fifteen years.

It was only after his later general theory of relativity was confirmed in 1919

by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the bending of starlight during a solar eclipse

that the press would turn him into a celebrity.

But even if he had disappeared back into the patent office

and accomplished nothing else after 1905,

those four papers of his miracle year

would have remained the gold standard of **startling** unexpected genius.