

Course Companion

A2 Key and B1 Preliminary (KET, PET) · Cambridge English · A2 Key (KET)

Every topic handout in one volume

exercises.lol

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RW.1-3 · Key reading: messages and short texts

A2 Key and B1 Preliminary (KET, PET) · Cambridge English · A2 Key (KET)

What this topic covers

A2 Key (KET) A2 starts with Reading and Writing Part 1–3: short, real-world texts. Notices, text messages, signs, and one longer text with multiple-choice questions.

- **Part 1:** six short notices or messages; choose what each one says (A, B or C).
- **Part 2:** three short texts on the same topic – usually three people writing about it. Seven questions; for each question, choose the text (A, B or C) that says it.
- **Part 3:** one longer text with five 3-option questions.
- Memory hook: Parts 1–3 are the **street** , not the library. Everything is a sign, a note or a message – read it like you read a shop window.
- Always check the current format in the official Cambridge handbook ; these notes teach the strategy, not the rulebook.

Part 1: read the notice like a detective

Six tiny texts: a sign, a note, a message. Each has three options, and **two of them are traps**.

- The trap options usually **repeat words** from the text but twist the meaning. The correct answer **says the same thing in different words** .
- Example: “Mum: Your football is at Sam’s house. He found it in the garden.” – A) Sam lost the football. B) Sam found the football. C) The football is in the garden. → **B**. C repeats the garden word but the ball has moved on; that is the trap shape.
- Strategy : read the text, say its meaning in one Chinese sentence, then find the option that matches your sentence – not the option that matches the words.

Part 2: which text says it?

Three short texts about one topic – usually three people (A, B and C) writing about the same thing: their hobbies, a journey, a club. Seven questions; each question names a detail, and exactly one text contains it.

- **Skim the three texts first:** one line each – who is A, who is B, who is C, and what does each one say? Then the questions tell you what to hunt .

- **The question is the target, not the topic.** *Who says the class was too expensive?* – all three may mention the class; only one mentions the price. Match the detail, not the topic.
- Δ The trap texts **share the words** of the question. If two texts say *weekend*, the answer is the one that says what the question actually asks about the weekend. Read to the end of the sentence.
- Memory hook: each question is a photograph ; only one text is the place it was taken.

Part 3: the longer text

One text, five questions, in order.

- The questions follow the text order – question 2's answer comes after question 1's answer in the text. Use the order as a map .
- Find the part of the text, read two lines before and after, then choose.
- Δ Don't answer from your own knowledge . The text is the truth, even when it's about pandas and you know everything about pandas.
- If a question asks about the writer's **purpose** or **feeling**, find the feeling words (*amazed, disappointed, relieved*), not the facts.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- Δ **Translating word by word kills time.** 60 minutes for 7 parts is tight. Read for meaning in chunks , not word by word.
- Δ **The word-match trap is designed for you.** If an option copies the text's exact words, be suspicious : Cambridge rewords correct answers and copies wrong ones.
- Δ **Don't leave blanks.** No negative marking – a guess beats a gap.
- Δ **Answer on the answer sheet as you go.** There is no transfer time in Reading & Writing. The answer sheet is the exam; the question paper is scratch paper .

Try it

Read this note: “*Tom – the library closes at 5 today, not 6. Bring my book back before then, or I can't renew it.* – Ana”

1. Ana wants Tom to – A) return the book after 5. B) return the book before 5. C) renew the book himself.
2. The library today – A) opens at 5. B) closes earlier than usual. C) is closed.

Answers: 1 **B** (before then = before 5). 2 **B** (closes at 5, not 6 – earlier than usual).

A in question 1 is the word-match trap: it repeats “5” but reverses the meaning.

Now a miniature Part 2. Three friends write about their weekend:

- **A** (Mia): “*I stayed home and watched a film with my brother. The tickets for the match were too expensive.*”
 - **B** (Leo): “*My cousins visited, so we all went to the football match. Great seats!*”
 - **C** (Zoe): “*I watched the match on TV with my dad. I never pay for tickets.*”
1. Who went to the match? 2. Who mentions the price of tickets?

Answers: 1 **B** – Mia and Zoe both mention the match, but only Leo went; the word *match* is the bait twice. 2 **A** – Leo’s match and Zoe’s *tickets* are both traps; only Mia says they were *too expensive*.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. An option copies the text’s exact words. – **Be suspicious.** Correct answers are reworded.
2. Part 2: the question asks *who went with a friend*, and two texts mention friends. – **Read the detail, not the topic word.** Only one text says what the question asks; the other just shares the word.
3. Part 3, question 3 – **its answer sits between answers 2 and 4 in the text.** The order is a map.
4. A question asks how the writer **felt**. – **Find the feeling words**, not the facts.
5. Blank answer at the end? – **Guess.** No negative marking; a guess beats a gap.

Vocabulary card meanings

A2 Key (KET): The Cambridge English exam for basic everyday use, formerly called KET. street: A public road in a town, with buildings along it. official handbook: The exam board’s own book of rules for candidates. paraphrase: Saying the same idea again in different words. strategy: A planned way of tackling a task. hunt: A careful search for one particular piece of information. map: A drawing that shows where places are. knowledge: Everyday facts a person already knows, apart from a school subject. chunks: Groups of words that are learned and used together. suspicious: Feeling that something may be untrue or unsafe. scratch paper: Rough paper used for working, not handed in as the answer.

RW.4-5 · Key cloze: vocabulary and grammar in context

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What this topic covers

Parts 4 and 5 are the **cloze** parts: a short text with gaps. Part 4 gives three word choices per gap (vocabulary); Part 5 gives no choices at all (grammar). Together they are the “vocabulary and grammar in context” engine of A2 Key.

- **Part 4:** six gaps, three options each. It tests **word choice**: collocation, meaning, phrasal verbs.
- **Part 5:** six gaps in a short email – sometimes an email and its reply. No options; you write one word per gap: an article, a preposition, a pronoun, a modal – the small grammar words.
- Memory hook: Part 4 is a **shop** – choose from the shelf. Part 5 is a **kitchen** – cook the word yourself from whatever the sentence gives you.

Part 4: choosing from the shelf

Three options; usually all three are “possible English”, but only one fits **this sentence**.

- **Collocation is king.** *We ____ a great time.* A) made B) had C) took → **had** (*have a great time* is the fixed pair). The other two are fine words at the wrong party.
- Read the **whole sentence**, not just the gap. The answer often hides three words later: *She is very fond ____ cats.* → **of**. (*fond of* – the shelf only sells the pair.)
- △ If two options feel right, one of them is collocating with a neighbour word you’re ignoring. Re-read the gap’s neighbours on both sides.

Part 5: cooking the word yourself

No options. One word per gap, and the menu is predictable:

The gap’s job	The usual answers
article	a, an, the
preposition	in, on, at, for, with, by
pronoun	it, they, who, which
modal / auxiliary	can, will, would, do, is, are, has
linker	and, but, so, because, when, if

- The grammar you learned in A1 and A2 **is** the answer key: articles (A2 topic 7), prepositions of time and place, *there is*, question words, modals.

- Example: *I have lived here ____ 2019.* → **since.** *____ you like tea?* → **Do.** The A2 review pays its rent here.
- △ **Spelling counts.** A right word spelled wrong is a wrong word. *whent* gets no mark and no sympathy.

The cloze rhythm

1. **Read the whole text first** without writing anything. Know the story.
 2. Then fill the gaps one by one, reading the full sentence each time.
 3. Re-read the finished text. If a sentence sounds wrong in your head, it is wrong.
- Memory hook: the first read is the map; the gaps are the roads; the re-read is the drive.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **The article gaps are yours to lose.** Chinese has no articles, so *a/the* gaps feel invisible. They are not invisible; they are free marks wearing camouflage.
- △ **One word only.** Part 5 takes exactly one word. “*in the*” in one gap is two words and zero marks.
- △ **Don’t invent rare words.** The answer is always a small common word. If your answer is *serendipity*, the gap wanted *so*.
- △ **Check the capital letter.** A gap at the start of a sentence needs a capital. *There* not *there*.

Try it

Last summer, I went to the beach ____ my family. We stayed ____ a small hotel near the sea. The weather ____ perfect, so we swam every day. I have never had ____ a good holiday. I will never forget it.

Answers: **with** · **in/at** · **was** · **such**. (*such a good holiday* – the collocation shelf again. *so* would need *so good a holiday*, and nobody has time for that.)

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. *We _____ a great time.* – **had**. The collocation decides.
2. *I have lived here _____ 2019.* – **since**. A start line, from A2.
3. Part 5, no options – **one small grammar word**: article, preposition, pronoun, modal, linker.
4. A right word spelled wrong – **no marks**. Spelling counts.
5. *“in the”* in one gap – **illegal**. One word per gap.

Vocabulary card meanings

cloze: A passage with gaps the reader has to fill. collocation: Words that commonly sit side by side. phrasal verbs: A verb plus a small word, often with a new combined meaning. auxiliary: A helper verb such as do, be, or have. camouflage: A disguise that makes something hard to notice.

RW.6 · Key writing: a message of at least 25 words

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What this topic covers

Part 6 of the Reading & Writing paper: write a short **message** – a note, email or postcard – of **at least 25 words**, answering a friend's message. The friend's message always contains **three things** to do: usually two questions and one request or suggestion.

- Example task: your friend invites you to a picnic. *Say yes. Say what food you can bring. Ask what time it starts.*
- Memory hook: the task is a **menu with three dishes**. Serve all three, in order, and the marks follow.
- △ Under 25 words loses marks; the count includes everything, so count.
- The tone is friendly: short forms are welcome (*I'm, can't, let's*). This is the one exam where *I'm* is not just allowed but encouraged.

The menu method

1. **Circle the three jobs** in the task before writing a word.
2. Write **one or two sentences per job**, in order.
3. Open with *Hi / Dear + name* and close with *See you / Best / Write soon + your name*.

A full answer to the picnic task:

Hi Sam, I'd love to come to the picnic! I can bring some fruit and drinks.
What time does it start? See you, Lin

Three jobs, three sentences, 25+ words. Done. The exam rewards **completeness over beauty** – a correct boring answer beats a beautiful one that forgot the drinks.

The bank of useful sentences

Job	The sentence
accept	I'd love to come. / That sounds great!
refuse politely	I'm sorry, but I can't come.
offer	I can bring some drinks. / Shall I bring anything?
ask	What time does it start? / Where shall we meet?
suggest	Let's meet at the gate. / How about the park?

- Questions are free marks: *What time? Where? Who else is coming?* – one per task, word-for-word from the A1 question machine.
- Δ Every question needs its flip: “*What time it starts?*” $\times \rightarrow$ *What time does it start?* Topic A1-9’s flip still collects marks.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- Δ **Don’t skip a job.** Three jobs = the shape of the marks. One missing job is a missing dish; the examiners notice the empty plate.
- Δ **Don’t write a novel.** 30–40 words is the sweet spot. A 120-word masterpiece spends time Part 7 needs, and long answers grow error trees.
- Δ **Register : friendly, not formal.** No *Dear Sir*, no *Yours faithfully*. It’s a friend: *Hi Sam – See you – Lin.*
- Δ **Check the three classics:** third-person -s (*it starts*), articles (*a picnic, the park*), and verb forms after *can/can’t* (*I can bring*). Sixty seconds of checking is worth more than a fourth sentence.

Try it

Your friend Mia writes: “*I’m having a birthday dinner on Friday. Can you come? Tell me what food you like. And could you bring your guitar?*”

Write the reply (25+ words). Cover: yes/no, the food, the guitar.

Model: *Hi Mia, I’d love to come! I like fish and rice, please. I’ll bring my guitar, no problem. See you on Friday!* – Alex (29 words; all three dishes served.)

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. How many jobs in a Part 6 task? – **Three.** Serve all three.
2. “*What time it starts?*” – $\times \rightarrow$ **What time does it start?** The flip collects marks.
3. 20 words – **too few.** Under 25 loses marks; count.
4. *Dear Sir* / *Yours faithfully* – $\times \rightarrow$ **Hi Sam** / **See you.** A friend, not a bank.
5. A perfect answer that forgot the guitar – **loses a dish.** Completeness over beauty.

Vocabulary card meanings

message: A short note left for someone who is away. a menu with three dishes: An example of a food list that names three dishes, which may share one course rather than forming three courses. completeness: Having every required part, with nothing left out. sweet spot: The point at which a choice works best.

RW.7 · Key writing: a three-picture story

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What this topic covers

Part 7: write a short story of **at least 35 words** from **three pictures**. The pictures show a beginning, a middle and an end; you supply the words.

- Look at all three pictures **before** writing: the story is already there – you are narrating it, not inventing it.
- Memory hook: the pictures are a **comic** with no speech bubbles. You are the bubbles.
- The marks reward: covering all three pictures, past tenses used correctly, and connectors that move time forward.
- This is where the A2/B1 grammar pays you back: the **past simple** carries the events, **connectors** carry the time.

The story machine

1. Name the pictures: *a rainy street – a broken umbrella – a warm shop*. Three nouns = your skeleton.
2. One or two sentences per picture, past simple, in order.
3. Add one feeling and one connector per picture: *suddenly, then, after that, luckily, finally*.

A model:

It was raining hard, and Tom was walking to school. Suddenly, his umbrella broke in the wind! He was cold and wet. Luckily, a small café was open, so he went in and had a hot chocolate. He arrived at school late, but happy.

Five sentences, three pictures, one broken umbrella. 60 words – safely over 35.

The tense toolkit for stories

Tool	Job in the story
past simple	the events: <i>his umbrella broke</i>
past continuous	the background: <i>it was raining</i>
a feeling adjective	<i>cold, wet, worried, happy</i>
a connector	<i>suddenly, then, luckily, finally</i>

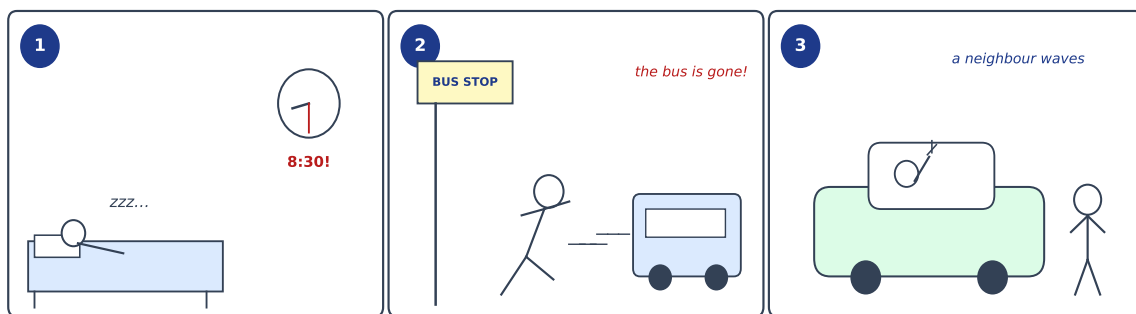
- △ The whole story lives in the **past**. Don't drift into the present halfway: "*He goes into the café*" × – *He **went** into the café*.

- One background sentence (*it was raining*) upgrades the story from a police report to a film. The B2 narrative cameras work at A2 too.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **Don't describe; narrate.** "*There is a boy. He has an umbrella.*" is a description, not a story. Stories move: *It was raining. His umbrella broke. He found a café.*
- △ **Past tense consistency** is the big mark-loser. Write, then re-read once, checking only the verbs: every event in the past simple.
- △ **The third picture matters.** Students spend so long on picture 1 that picture 3 gets one sad sentence. Budget : roughly equal lines per picture.
- △ **Spelling of story words:** *suddenly, finally, luckily* – learn the spellings; they appear in every story you will ever write.

Try it



Author-drawn practice pictures, not official Cambridge artwork. In the exam the three pictures are real drawings; here they are the three panels above. Write 35+ words.
Model:

Jack woke up late and felt terrible. He ran to the bus stop, but the bus had already left. Luckily, his neighbour saw him and drove him to school. Jack was on time – and very grateful .

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. Minimum length? – **35 words**. Over is safe; under loses marks.
2. “*He goes into the café*” in a past story – $\times \rightarrow$ **went**. The story lives in the past.
3. The pictures show rain – **open with the background**: *It was raining*. The film, not the police report.
4. Picture 3 gets one sad sentence – $\times \rightarrow$ **equal lines per picture**. The ending carries marks.
5. *suddenly / finally / luckily* – **learn the spellings**. They appear in every story.

Vocabulary card meanings

narrating: Telling what happened, in time order. comic: A story told in drawn panels. connectors: Words that join ideas, such as because or but. skeleton: The bare outline that holds a piece of writing up. grateful: Feeling or showing thanks.

L.1-3 · Key listening: visual choices, notes and conversations

A2 Key and B1 Preliminary (KET, PET) · Cambridge English · A2 Key (KET)

What this topic covers

The A2 Key Listening paper: about 30 minutes, five parts, and **every recording plays twice**. Parts 1–3 test detail : what you see, what you write, what you choose.

- **Part 1:** five short conversations, each with a **picture** question – three images, choose the right one.
- **Part 2:** a longer talk; fill **five gaps** in notes with a word, number, date or time.
- **Part 3:** a longer conversation; five 3-option questions.
- Memory hook: listening is a **movie played twice** . The first watch is for the story; the second is for the answers.
- The pause before each part is reading time. Use it: **preview** the questions, always.

Part 1: the picture question

Three pictures differ in one detail: three times, three objects, three places.

- Before listening, **name the difference** between the pictures: *eight / half past / nine* – the clock question. *bike / bus / car* – the transport question.
- **△ All three options are usually mentioned.** The man says: “*I wanted the eight o’clock train, but I missed it, so I took the nine one.*” All three times appear; only one is the answer. The recording is a rumour; the question is the truth.
- The answer words come **reworded**: the picture shows a dog, the voice says “*my pet*”.

Part 2: the note gaps

Write a word, number, date or time in each gap.

- The gaps are **predictable**: name, day, time, price, place. The notes tell you what to listen for before the voice says a word.
- **△ Spell the names right.** Names are spelled aloud on the recording: “*It’s M-A-R-I-A.*” Write letters as they come.
- **△ Numbers love traps:** *thirteen vs thirty, 8:15 vs 8:50*. The recording says the wrong one first and corrects itself. Wait for the correction; the first number is bait

- △ One or two words per gap. Three words is a wrong answer wearing a hat.

Part 3: the conversation

Five questions about a longer conversation, in order.

- The questions follow the conversation order – the same map as reading Part 3.
- Listen for **agreement** : the answer is what they *decide*, not what they first say. “*Shall we meet at six?*” – “*Six is too early. Seven?*” – “*Fine, seven.*” → the answer is seven.
- △ The first suggestion is usually not the decision. Listening exams run on changed minds.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **Don’t translate while listening.** The recording doesn’t wait. Train yourself to hold meaning in English: hear “*the nine one*” and see the clock picture, not the Chinese sentence.
- △ **Numbers, days and months** are the free marks: drill *thirteen/thirty, Monday...Sunday, January...December* until they’re reflexes .
- △ **The second listening is for checking, not for starting.** Answer on the first play, confirm on the second. Students who “wait for the second time” discover the second time is for people who already answered.
- △ **Never leave a gap blank.** A guessed word costs nothing; an empty gap costs a mark.

Try it

Teacher-read rehearsal : this page has no recording. Ask your teacher to read the text aloud twice, exactly like the exam – or read it yourself to rehearse the method. The real test is listening, not reading.

A voice says: “*The museum opens at nine, but on Sundays it’s half past nine. Tickets are five pounds, or three for students.*”

Notes: *Museum – Sunday opening time: _____ · student ticket: £_____*

Answers: **9.30 · 3.** The nine is bait; the Sunday correction is the answer. The five is bait; the student price is three.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. How many times is each recording played? – **Twice**. First for the story, second for the check.
2. Three pictures show clocks – **name the difference before listening**: eight / half past / nine.
3. *“I wanted the eight o’clock train... took the nine one.”* – **nine**. The first number is bait.
4. The name is spelled aloud – **write the letters as they come**: M-A-R-I-A.
5. Blank gap? – **Guess**. An empty gap costs a mark; a guess costs nothing.

Vocabulary card meanings

a movie played twice: An example of a film that is shown two times. preview: A quick look before a careful reading. agreement: Reaching a shared decision with someone else. suggestion: An idea offered for someone else to consider. bait: Something used to tempt a person toward a trap. drill: Repeated practice of one small skill. reflexes: Quick automatic responses that need little thought.

L.4-5 · Key listening: gist and matching

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What this topic covers

Listening Parts 4 and 5 change the question. Parts 1–3 asked for details; Parts 4–5 ask for the **gist** – the main idea, the speaker’s feeling, the purpose of the talk – and for **matching** .

- **Part 4:** five short talks or conversations, each with one question: *What is the speaker doing? How does she feel? Why is he calling?*
- **Part 5:** one longer conversation and a matching task – match five items to **eight** lettered options, A–H (e.g. five friends to the activities they choose). Three options are never used.
- Memory hook: Parts 1–3 ask *what exactly?* Parts 4–5 ask **so what?** The answer is the meaning, not the words.

Part 4: the gist question

Each short recording has one question about the big picture.

- The questions are usually: **What is the speaker’s job? How does the girl feel? Why is the man calling? What are they talking about?**
- △ The detail words are bait. “*I love the smell of fresh bread in the bakery*” – the question is *What is her job?* She is a **baker**, not a customer who likes bread. The smell is bait; the job is the answer.
- Listen for the **purpose verbs**: *I’m calling to apologise / to invite / to complain / to remind.* The verb after *calling to* **is** the answer.
- Feelings come through tone and adjectives: “*That’s fantastic!*” (delighted), “*I don’t believe it...*” (surprised), “*Oh no, not again*” (annoyed).

Part 5: the matching task

A conversation where people choose things: five friends choosing from **eight** activities (A–H); five guests, eight dishes. Three options will be left over – nobody chooses them.

- The extra options are not decoration: they hold the **rejected** choices. “*I wanted the pasta, but they’re out of it, so the fish.*” → the fish. The pasta stays in the list, waiting for you.
- Strategy: as each person speaks, write a **mark** by their choice – a tick for chosen, a cross for rejected. Don’t write the final letter until they finish speaking.

- △ The rejected options are the answer list's traps. Each rejected dish will sit in the options, waiting for you.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **Gist questions punish word-catching.** If you grab *bread* and answer *customer*, the bakery trick worked. Ask yourself: what is the **whole** sentence about?
- △ **Feelings are not facts.** *How does she feel?* is answered by adjectives and tone, not by events. The event is the evidence; the feeling is the answer.
- △ **Matching needs a system.** Ticks and crosses while listening; letters at the end. Students who assign letters mid-sentence meet the correction and lose both marks.
- △ **Don't panic at one missed item.** The parts are independent; a missed gist question is one mark, not a disaster. The next recording starts fresh – so should you.

Try it

Teacher-read rehearsal : no recording here – your teacher reads each text aloud twice, like the exam, and you listen without reading. The transcript is the script, not the task.

A girl says: “*Hi Dad, I’m at the station. The six o’clock train was cancelled , so I’m taking the seven one. Don’t wait dinner for me.*”

Why is she calling? A) to buy a ticket B) to give news about her journey C) to invite her father to dinner. Answer: **B**. The ticket and the dinner are bait; the purpose is the news.

Matching: “*Tom wanted the pasta, but they’re out of it, so the fish. Anna never eats fish; she’ll have the salad.*” → Tom: **fish**, Anna: **salad**. The pasta sits in the options, waiting.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. Gist question: *How does she feel?* – **Listen for adjectives and tone**, not the events.
2. *“I’m calling to apologise.”* – **the purpose verb is the answer**: to apologise.
3. *“I wanted the pasta, but they’re out of it, so the fish.”* – **the fish**. Rejected options are traps.
4. In matching, assign letters mid-sentence? – **No: ticks and crosses first, letters at the end**.
5. One missed gist question – **one mark, not a disaster**. The next recording starts fresh; so should you.

Vocabulary card meanings

gist: The main idea, without the small details. matching: Pairing each item with the one that belongs with it. mark (notation): A written sign used to show a choice or a correction. cancelled: Called off, so that it will not happen.

S.1-2 · Key speaking: interview and collaborative discussion

A2 Key and B1 Preliminary (KET, PET) · Cambridge English · A2 Key (KET)

What this topic covers

The A2 Key Speaking test: 8–10 minutes, **with a partner** , and two examiners. It is the friendliest part of the exam – a conversation, not an interrogation .

- **Part 1:** the interview. The examiner asks about you: name, school, hobbies, family, home.
- **Part 2:** the collaborative discussion. You and your partner look at five pictures and talk: which do you like, why, what would you choose.
- Memory hook: Part 1 is a **friendly chat** ; Part 2 is **planning a trip with a classmate**. Both are conversations you already have – just in English, with marks.
- The examiners want: clear answers, interaction with your partner, and everyday vocabulary. They do not want speeches.

Part 1: the interview

Answer in **full sentences**, two or three of them per question.

- *Where do you live? – × “Beijing.” → “I live in Beijing, in an apartment near the park. I like it because it’s quiet.”* Answer + detail + reason.
- Memory hook: every answer is a **sandwich** : the answer, a detail, a reason.
I like football. I play every weekend. It’s fun with my friends.
- Prepare the classics aloud: your name (spelled), your school, your family, your hobbies, your favourite food, your weekend. These are rehearsed answers – say them until they’re warm.

Part 2: the discussion

Five pictures (e.g. five birthday gifts), a question, and your partner. You must **talk to each other**, not just to the examiner.

- Start: *Which do you like? / I like the camera – what about you?*
- Agree, disagree, add: *I agree. / Really? I think the book is better, because... / That’s true, but...*
- **△ Never give a monologue** . The marks are in the interaction: ask your partner’s opinion, answer theirs, build on it.

- **△ Disagreeing is free marks.** “*I see your point, but I’d choose the bike*” shows more English than yes-saying. The exam is the one place where polite disagreement pays.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- **△ One-word answers are the mark-killer.** “*Yes.*” “*Beijing.*” “*Football.*” – three answers, zero sentences. The sandwich, every time.
- **△ Don’t recite a memorised speech.** Examiners hear it instantly and redirect. Prepare building blocks, not paragraphs.
- **△ Look at your partner in Part 2,** not at the examiner. The discussion is with them; the examiner is just listening in.
- **△ Don’t freeze on an unknown word.** Describe around it : “*It’s a thing for... you use it to...*” – *paraphrasing* is a marked skill, not a failure.
- **△ Pronunciation matters less than audibility.** Speak up. The quiet correct answer and the loud correct answer earn the same mark, but the quiet wrong-mumble earns nothing.

Say it aloud

Rehearse the interview classics, then run a two-minute discussion with a partner.

- Tell me about your family. – There are four of us. My sister is twelve. We fight about the TV, and I usually win.
- What do you do at the weekend? – I play basketball with my classmates. It’s fun, and I’m getting taller. Both matter.
- Part 2 with a partner: five gifts – a book, a bike, a camera, a game, a plant. Which is best for your teacher? Discuss. Disagree politely. The plant has feelings too.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. *Where do you live?* – **Answer + detail + reason.** The sandwich, every time.
2. Part 2: your partner says the book is best. – **Respond to them:** *Really? I think... / I agree, and...* Interaction is the mark.
3. You don’t know the word for – **describe around it:** *a plant – a green thing for your desk.* Paraphrasing is a skill, not a failure.
4. A memorised two-minute speech – **the examiner redirects instantly.** Blocks, not speeches.
5. Quiet mumble vs clear voice – **audibility is free marks.** Speak up.

Vocabulary card meanings

partner: The person you work with in a pair. interrogation: A harsh series of questions, unlike an easy conversation. friendly chat: An easy, informal conversation.

sandwich: Food made of a filling between two pieces of bread. rehearsed: Practised aloud before the real performance. monologue: A long speech spoken by one person alone. recite: To say a text from memory, word for word. describe around it: Explaining an idea with other words when the exact word will not come. audibility: How clearly a voice can be heard. plant (zhíwù): A living thing that makes its own food and usually has leaves, including kinds that grow in water rather than in soil.