

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.