

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

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

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.

- Δ 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

- Δ **Gist questions punish word-catching.** If you grab *bread* and answer *customer*, the bakery trick worked. Ask yourself: what is the **whole** sentence about?
- Δ **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.
- Δ **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.
- Δ **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.