

R.3-4 · Preliminary reading: detailed meaning and cohesion

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

What this topic covers

Reading Parts 3 and 4 are the long texts. Part 3: one text with five 4-option questions on **detailed meaning**. Part 4: a text with **five sentences removed** – you put them back from a list of eight. That second part is the famous one, and the one students fear most.

- Part 3 is A2's Part 3 grown up: questions in text order, answers paraphrased, feelings and opinions now included.
- Part 4 is a **jigsaw**: the removed sentences are held in place by glue – pronouns, time words, linkers and repeated ideas.
- Memory hook: Part 3 asks *what does it mean?* Part 4 asks *where does it snap in?* Meaning in one, **cohesion** in the other.

Part 3: detailed meaning

Five questions, four options each, in text order.

- The questions now ask about **opinion, attitude and implication**: *What does the writer think about...? What does she suggest?*
- The correct option paraphrases the text; the traps are half-true: right fact, wrong judgement.
- △ *“What does the writer suggest?”* is not *“what does the text say?”* Suggestion lives in *should, might, it's worth, if I were you*. Hunt the modal words.
- Strategy: question → locate the paragraph → read two lines around it → paraphrase it yourself → match. The A2 map still works; the roads are longer.

Part 4: the sentence jigsaw

Five gaps, eight sentences. Three sentences are decoys.

- The glue is visible. Check **both sides** of each gap:
 - **Pronouns**: *he, it, they, this* – the sentence before must contain the person or thing.
 - **Time and order words**: *then, after that, at first, finally*.
 - **Linkers**: *but, however, so, although* – the two sides must contrast or agree as the linker demands.

- **Repeated ideas:** the gap's neighbours and the sentence must be about the same thing.
- Strategy: fill the easiest gap first. Each placed sentence shrinks the decoy list.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- **△ The decoys are written to fit grammatically.** Grammar alone can't solve the jigsaw; **meaning and cohesion** can. A decoy fits the grammar and betrays the logic.
- **△ Pronoun hunting is the highest-value habit.** Every *he/this/it* in a candidate sentence must have an owner in the text before the gap. No owner, no place.
- **△ Implication questions:** the answer is not written in the text – it is *justified* by it. The difference: the text never says it directly, but says everything needed to conclude it.
- **△ Don't spend ten minutes on one gap.** Place the easy ones, take the best guess on the last, and move. A guess beats a gap, and the clock is a budget.

Try it

Text with a gap: "...the bakery opens at six. _____. By eight, the queue reaches the corner." Candidate: "The smell of fresh bread fills the street by seven." – fits: the time chain (six → seven → eight) and the bakery idea. A decoy about "My grandfather loved fishing" fits neither; grandfather, fishing and the queue never meet.

Part 3 style: "I wouldn't say the course was easy, but it was worth every evening." The writer's attitude: **positive, with effort** – the *but* carries it.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. "What does the writer suggest?" – **hunt the modal words:** should, might, it's worth.
2. A candidate sentence starts with "He" – **find the owner** before the gap. No owner, no place.
3. A decoy fits the grammar perfectly – **still wrong if it breaks the logic.** Cohesion over grammar.
4. Part 4's three extra sentences – **decoys.** Place the easy gaps first and watch the list shrink.
5. "It wasn't easy, but worth every evening." – the attitude is **positive with effort;** the *but* carries it.