

L.1-2 · Preliminary listening: detail and short-extract meaning

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

What this topic covers

B1 Preliminary Listening opens with **short extracts** : Part 1, seven short recordings with three-option questions (several with pictures); Part 2, six short recordings, each asking for the **meaning** – the speaker’s feeling, opinion, purpose or the main point.

- Everything from A2 listening still applies: played twice, preview the questions, the first number is bait.
- The B1 upgrade: extracts are longer, and Part 2 asks **so what?** – attitude and intention , not just facts.
- Memory hook: Part 1 is the **photo** – one detail, exactly. Part 2 is the **review** – what the speaker really meant.

Part 1: the detail photo

Seven short extracts; each question targets one detail: a time, a place, an object, a reason.

- Preview the question and the options; name the difference before the recording starts (the A2 clock trick, one level faster).
- △ **All three options are mentioned.** The extract corrects itself: *“I wanted the morning train, but I missed it, so I’m on the afternoon one.”* The correction is the answer.
- The pictures differ by one detail; the words come reworded. *a dog* → *“my pet”*; *a bicycle* → *“I cycled”*.

Part 2: what they really meant

Six extracts; each asks for the speaker’s **feeling, opinion, purpose or the main point**.

- Listen for the **evaluation** words: *amazing, disappointed, not bad, a waste of time, worth it*.
- △ The polite no is the classic B1 sound: *“The film was... well, the music was nice.”* – the opinion is negative; the compliment was a cushion . English criticism arrives wrapped in a compliment; unwrap it.
- △ *“I expected more”* = disappointed. *“It exceeded my expectations”* = impressed. The expectation verbs carry the attitude; learn to hear them.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **The cushion trap.** Chinese politeness often says the negative directly; English wraps it. *“The food was interesting”* after a strange dish is not praise. Tone and the pause before the word tell the truth.
- △ **Numbers and corrections are still bait.** *thirteen/thirty, first the wrong price, then the right one.* Wait for the correction.
- △ **Don’t answer from your own opinion.** The question asks what the **speaker** thinks, not what you think. The option you agree with is a trap wearing your face.
- △ **Answer on the first play, check on the second.** The second listening is for the unsure, not the unprepared.

Try it

Teacher-read rehearsal : this page has no recording. Your teacher reads each extract aloud twice, exactly like the exam; the printed text is the script, not the task.

Extract: *“The concert? Well, the singer was amazing. The seats were a bit far from the stage, honestly.”* How does he feel about the concert? A) completely positive B) positive, with a complaint C) negative. Answer: **B** – *amazing* plus the cushion complaint.

Detail: *“I wanted the morning train, but I missed it, so I’m on the afternoon one.”* → the **afternoon** train.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. All three options mentioned in the extract – **normal at B1**. The correction is the answer.
2. *“The music was nice, honestly.”* (about a bad concert) – **a cushion**: the opinion is negative.
3. *“I expected more.”* – **disappointed**. The expectation verb carries the attitude.
4. The option you personally agree with – **a trap wearing your face**. The speaker’s opinion, not yours.
5. The second listening – **for checking**, not for starting.