



Key English Test (KET) Reading	7
Key English Test (KET) Listening	15





Key English Test (KET) Reading

General information

Background to the Examination

Key English Test (KET) is a general English qualification which is part of the Cambridge ESOL Main-suite examinations. Set at level A2 of the CEF, KET recognises the ability to cope with everyday written and spoken communications at a basic level. KET is designed for learners who have basic English skills, of the kind needed when travelling in a foreign country.

Candidature

KET is taken by more than 56,000 people each year in over 60 countries. Around 75% of KET candidates are aged 18 or under and a further 20% are in the 19-30 age group. Around 85% of candidates attend preparation classes.

Structure of the Test

KET tests the skills of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking – with each skill equally weighted at 25%. KET is administered in three separate papers. Paper 1 Reading and Writing, Paper 2 Listening and Paper 3 Speaking. There are four possible grades in KET: Two pass grades (pass with merit and pass) and two fail grades (narrow fail and fail). Results are based on candidates' aggregate scores across the four skills.

KET Reading and Writing Paper

The paper has a fixed format, with Parts 1-5 testing reading skills through a variety of texts ranging from very short notices to longer continuous texts. Candidates are assessed on their ability to understand written English at word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and whole text level. KET candidates should be able to understand the main message, and some detail, of a variety of short factual reading texts: for example, signs, notices, instructions, brochures, guides, personal correspondence and informative articles from newspapers and magazines. Other tasks on the paper include: reading for gist; understanding of real-world notices (matching task); reading and identifying appropriate vocabulary (multiple-choice sentences); reading and identifying appropriate functional responses (multiple-choice task) and reading for understanding of lexico-structural patterns in a text (multiple-choice cloze).

Part Four

This task focuses on reading for detailed understanding and main ideas. The text is always a short article, but one of two three-option objective task types may be used: either a Right/Wrong/Doesn't say task as in this example, or a three-option multiple-choice task. The texts come from authentic sources, but are adapted to make them accessible to candidates at the level. They may include vocabulary which is unfamiliar to candidates, but this should not interfere with their ability to complete the task.

Reading (CEFR A2)

Test to be analysed	Key English Test (KET)
Target language	English
Task	Reading component (Part 4)
Rubrics	Target language
Items	Target language
Time to do total test	1 hr 10 m
Target levels	CEFR A2
	ALTE 1
Age-group sector	Teenagers and adults
Domain	Public domain
Communicative activities:	
Overall reading comprehension	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary.
Reading for information and argument	Can identify specific information in simple written materials, such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.

Mark Distribution

Each of the seven items carries one mark, representing 20% of the marks available across the five reading tasks.

Effective Level

All KET Reading tasks are pre-tested using volunteer candidates. Typically, pre-test candidates are students preparing to take the exam in the near future. A range of age and nationality groups is represented in the pre-test population, which roughly corresponds to that of the live candidature.

Pre-tested materials are then subject to statistical analysis at task and item level using both classical item analysis to establish that items are discriminating, and Rasch analysis to deter-



mine the level of difficulty. Each task, therefore, consists of items of measured difficulty, which are selected from within a specified range to determine the mean difficulty of the task.

Tests are constructed from the tasks in the item bank. Each task, therefore, consists of items of measured (Rasch) difficulty, which are selected from within a specified range to determine the mean difficulty of the task.

Calibration

Tests are constructed from the calibrated tasks in the item bank. The one-parameter Rasch model is used for calibrating the items. For most routine analysis, Cambridge ESOL uses the BIGSTEPS analysis program supplemented by in-house programmes for formatting data and handling the output. The logit scale produced by BIGSTEPS is re-scaled to produce a conventional ESOL scale, which is used for test construction purposes. This is known as the common scale for item-based tests. The complete scale for Cambridge ESOL examinations, from KET (A2) to CPE (C2) covers a range from about 20 to 110. The expected ranges of values for KET on this scale is approximately 30-50, with a target mean of 41.

Performance of this task

This was one of the most challenging tasks on the paper and candidates found some questions, particularly 28 and 32, quite difficult. The answer to Question 28 is B because the text states that the purpose of Peter Bloxham's trip to China was business. Question 32 was the most difficult item. In order to get the correct answer, candidates have to process the last two sentences of the text. Yang says, 'I don't suppose there are many people in this place who have seen or heard a pipa before'. From this candidates need to realise that not everyone in the village knows her music.



Reading Items

Instructions to candidate:

Read this article about a famous Chinese woman who plays music.

Are sentences 26-32 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B)?

If there is not enough information to answer 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B), choose 'Doesn't say' (C).

For questions 26-32, mark A, B or C on the answer sheet

Chinese Music in an English Village

Yang Jing usually plays her music in big halls in places like New York and Paris. Yang plays an old Chinese musical instrument called a pipa. She has been famous in China since 1986. Now she is 34 years old and the best pipa player in the world. She usually gets \$3000 each time she plays.



A businessman called Peter Bloxham saw Yang playing in China when he was on a business trip. Peter comes from Cheswardine, a village in England. After the show, he talked to Yang. He told her that his village needed to repair their old village hall, so Yang agreed to play there. "You can use all the ticket money for your hall," she said. "You needn't pay me anything."

Last week, Yang arrived in Cheswardine for her show. She said: "I usually stay in big hotels where everything is fast and busy, so it is lovely to stay in a small place where everyone has time to talk to me and be so nice. I don't suppose there are many people in this place who have seen or heard a pipa before. I hope they will like my music."

Item 0. example item *Yang Jing has played in New York*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item 26 *Yang became famous when she was 34.*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item 27. *Yang often plays with other people.*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item 28. *Peter Bloxham went to China to see Yang play.*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item 29. *Yang will not earn any money in Cheswardine.*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item 30 *Yang is staying in Cheswardine with Peter and his family.*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item 31. *Yang thinks Peter's village is a friendly place.*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item 32. *Everyone in Cheswardine knows Yang's music.*

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Content analysis

Reading component

The tasks, instructions, rubrics and items are all in English, the target language. The time allocated to the complete test paper (paper 1) is 70 minutes. (Paper one consists of reading and writing tasks.) No time allocation is specified for individual tasks/components within the sub-test.

Text Characteristics

(Analysis of example tasks and items has been carried out in conjunction with the [Dutch CEF Grid](#), the [CEFR](#), the [ALTE](#) can-do statements and the [DIALANG](#) performance descriptors.)

Test to be analysed	KET (Paper 1)
Task	Part 4
Skill	Reading
Rubric in L1/Target language	TL
Target language	English
Item in L1/Target language	TL
Time to do total task	Not specified (total test 70m)
1. Text source	Genuine, magazine
2. Authenticity	Adapted /simplified
3. Discourse type	Narrative
4. Discourse subtype	
5. Domain	Personal
6. Topic	Free time and entertainment
7. Nature of content	Mostly concrete
8. Text length	200 words
9. Vocabulary	Only frequently occurring
10. Grammar	Simple structures only
Comprehensible by learner at CEF level	A2



Item Characteristics

All seven items relating to the text are in multiple choice format. The language of the text itself and of the items is adapted for A2 level comprehension, though some of the questions demand a higher level of linguistic inferencing skills. Rasch difficulties, facilities and discrimination indices are provided. All statistical information is based on a sample candidature of at least 4000.

Item 0 – example item

Yang Jing has played in New York.

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve information relating to a specific detail in the text.
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Item 26 Yang became famous when she was 34.

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Inferring from information implicit in the text.
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Item 27 Yang often plays with other people.

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Inferring from information implicit in the text.
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Item 28 Peter Bloxham went to China to see Yang play.

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Inferring from information implicit in the text.
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Item 29 Yang will not earn any money in Cheswardine.

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve information relating to a specific detail in the text.
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Item 30 Yang is staying in Cheswardine with Peter and his family.

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Inferring from information implicit in the text.
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Item 31 Yang thinks Peter's village is a friendly place.

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn't say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Inferring from information implicit in the text.
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Item 32 **Everyone in Cheswardine knows Yang’s music.**

A Right

B Wrong

C Doesn’t say

Item type	MCQ - three options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve information relating to a specific detail in the text
	Intensive reading and detailed comprehension.
Item level estimated	A2

Answer Key

- 1 = A
- 26 = B
- 27 = C
- 28 = B
- 29 = A
- 30 = C
- 31 = A
- 32 = B

Statistical Report

Statistical Report (whole task)

mean facility (p)	0.69
mean discrimination (Pb)	0.37

Statistical Report (individual items)

	item 0	item 26	item 27	item 28	item 29	item 30	item 31	item 32
Facility (p)	e.g.	0.8	0.77	0.63	0.72	0.68	0.72	0.54
Discrimination (i.d.)	e.g.	0.41	0.34	0.41	0.43	0.32	0.35	0.36
Sample size	>5603							

Key English Test (KET) Listening

General information

Background to the Examination

Key English Test (KET) is a general English qualification which is one of the Cambridge ESOL Main-Suite Examinations. Set at level A2 of the CEF, KET recognises the ability to cope with everyday written and spoken communications at a basic level. KET is designed for learners who have basic English skills, of the kind needed when travelling in a foreign country.

Candidature

KET is taken by 56,000 candidates per year in 60 countries. Around 75% of KET candidates are aged 18 or under and a further 20% are in the 19-30 age group. Around 85% of candidates attend preparation classes.

Structure of the Test

KET tests the skills of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking – with each skill equally weighted at 25%. KET is administered in three separate papers: Paper 1 Reading and Writing, Paper 2 Listening and Paper 3 Speaking. There are four possible grades in KET: Two pass grades (pass with merit and pass) and two fail grades (narrow fail and fail). Results are based on the candidate's aggregate scores across the four skills.

KET Listening - Paper 2

The paper has a fixed format, with Parts 1-5 testing listening skills in a variety of formats. There are 25 questions. Texts are written or adapted by item writers and recorded in a studio to simulate genuine spoken language. Candidates are expected to demonstrate listening strategies, such as separating out important information from redundant material and deducing meaning from context by focusing on important key words and ignoring unimportant unfamiliar terms.

Part Three - Questions 11-15

This task focuses on listening for detailed understanding. The text is a short informal dialogue (approx. one minute) between two people who know each other, talking about a topic of personal interest to both speakers. The candidates show their understanding of the conversation by answering five multiple choice questions, each with three options. The dialogues

are entirely scripted, and performed by actors speaking standard variations of English at a moderate pace with clear articulation.

Listening (CEFR A2)

Test to be analysed	Key English Test (KET)
Target language	English
Task	Listening component (Paper 2, part 3)
Rubrics	Target language
Items	Target language
Time to do total test	30m (inc. 8 m transfer time)
Target levels	CEFR A2
	ALTE 1
Age-group sector	Teenagers and adults
Domain	Public domain
Communicative activities:	
Overall listening comprehension	Can understand general meaning and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters.
Listening for information and argument	Can retrieve specific information from a dialogue between two individuals provided that they are speaking clearly, at a moderate pace in standard English.

Mark Distribution

Each of the five items carries one mark, representing 20% of the marks available across the five listening tasks on this paper.

Effective Level

All KET listening tasks are pre-tested using volunteer candidates. Typically, pre-test candidates are students preparing to take the exam in the near future. A range of age and nationality groups is represented in the pre-test population which roughly corresponds to that of the live candidature.

Pre-tested materials are then subject to statistical analysis at task and item level using both classical item analysis to establish that items are discriminating adequately, and Rasch analysis to determine the level of difficulty. Each task, therefore, consists of items of meas-



ured (Rasch) difficulty, which are selected from within a specified range to determine the mean difficulty of the task.

Calibration

Tests are constructed from the calibrated tasks in the item bank. The one-parameter Rasch model is used for calibrating the items. For most routine analysis, Cambridge ESOL uses the BIGSTEPS analysis program supplemented by in-house programmes for formatting data and handling the output. The logit scale produced by BIGSTEPS is re-scaled to produce a conventional ESOL scale, which is used for test construction purposes. This is known as the common scale for item-based tests. The complete scale for Cambridge ESOL examinations, from KET (A2) to CPE (C2) covers a range from about 20 to 110. The expected ranges of values for KET on this scale is approximately 30-50, with a target mean of 41.

Candidate performance of this task

This part focuses on the candidate's ability to pick out specific information in the context of a dialogue and to answer 3-option multiple-choice questions (MCQ). Candidates generally had little difficulty with this particular part. They found Question 15 the easiest and Question 13 the most difficult. In question 13, many of the weaker candidates did not hear the negative in "They don't make you wear a swimming hat" and mistakenly chose option B as the answer.

Listening Items

Questions 11-15 Instructions (recorded)

Now look at Part 3. Listen to Sue talking to her friend Jim about the new sports centre. For questions 11 -15 tick A, B or C. You will hear the conversation twice. Look at questions 11- 15 now. You have 20 seconds.

Item 0 – example item

The new sports centre is

- A cheap.
- B big.
- C dark.

Item 11

Which bus goes to the sports centre?

- A 15
- B 18
- C 25

Item 12

From Monday to Saturday, the sports centre is open from

- A 6 a.m.
- B 7 a.m.
- C 9 a.m.

Item 13

If Sue goes swimming, she must take

- A soap.
- B a swimming hat.
- C a towel.

Item 14

At the sports centre, you can buy

- A sandwiches.
- B fruit.
- C drinks.

Item 15

Jim and Sue are going to the sports centre next

- A Wednesday.
- B Thursday.
- C Saturday.

Content analysis

Listening component

The time allocated to the complete test paper (paper 2) is 30 minutes. (Paper Two consists of FIVE tasks.) No time allocation is specified for individual tasks/components within the test paper.

Text Characteristics

(Analysis of example tasks and items has been carried out in conjunction with the [Dutch CEF Grid](#), the [CEFR](#), the [ALTE](#) can-do statements and the [DIALANG](#) performance descriptors.)

Test to be analysed	KET (Paper 2) Listening
Task	Part 3
Rubric in L1/Target language	Target language
Item in L1/Target language	Target language
Time to do total task	Not specified (total test 30m)
1. Text source	Informal dialogue
2. Authenticity	Scripted (synthetic)
3. Discourse type	Conversation
4. Discourse subtype	Dialogue
5. Domain	Personal
6. Topic	Free time and entertainment
7. Nature of content	Concrete
8. Text length	1 minute
9. Vocabulary	Only frequently occurring
10. Grammar	Simple structures only
11. Text speed	Moderate pace
12. Number of participants	Two
13. Accent	Standard variations of English
14. Clarity of articulation	Clear
15. How often played (how many times?)	Twice
Comprehensible by learner at CEF level	A2

Item Characteristics

All questions (6 items, including the example) relating to the text are in multiple choice (three options) format. The language of the text itself and of the items is scripted for A2 level comprehension. Facility values, discrimination indices, etc. are provided in the statistical section. Rasch difficulty values are calculated for each item to ensure consistency and the stability of the level across different test versions. All statistical information is based on a sample candidature of at least 4000.

Item 0 – example item

Item Type	MCQ – 3 options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve
	Information explicit in text
	Specific detail
Item level estimated	A2

Item 11

Item Type	MCQ – 3 options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve
	Information explicit in text
	Specific detail
Item level estimated	A2

Item 12

Item Type	MCQ – 3 options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve
	Information explicit in text
	Specific detail
Item level estimated	A2

Item 13

Item Type	MCQ – 3 options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve
	Information explicit in text
	Specific detail
Item level estimated	A2

Item 14

Item Type	MCQ – 3 options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve
	Information explicit in text
	Specific detail
Item level estimated	A2

Item 15

Item Type	MCQ – 3 options
Operations involved in answering	Recognise and retrieve
	Information explicit in text
	Specific detail
Item level estimated	A2

Answer Key

- 0 = B
 11 = B
 12 = A
 13 = C
 14 = A
 15 = B

Statistical Report

Statistical Report (whole task)

mean facility (p)	0.76
mean discrimination	0.44

Statistical Report (individual items)

	item 0	item 26	item 27	item 28	item 29	item 30
Facility (p)	0.76	0.72	0.71	0.63	0.81	0.93
Discrimination (i.d.)	0.44	0.54	0.37	0.51	0.44	0.35
Sample size	>4,000					