

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-75480-4 - Cambridge Key English Test 3: Teacher's Book: Examination Papers from University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Excerpt

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KET content and marking

The KET examination consists of Paper 1 (Reading and Writing), Paper 2 (Listening) and Paper 3 (Speaking).

Paper 1	1 hour 10 mins	Reading and Writing	9 parts	60 marks weighted to 50% of total
Paper 2	about 30 mins (including 8 minutes transfer time)	Listening	5 parts	25 marks 25% of total
Paper 3	8–10 mins	Speaking	2 parts	20 marks weighted to 25% of total

Paper 1 Reading and Writing (1 hour 10 minutes)

In the KET Reading and Writing paper, Parts 1–5 focus on reading and Parts 6–9 focus on writing. There is a total of 56 questions, with an example for each part. The time allowed for this paper is one hour and ten minutes.

Reading texts

Texts vary according to the different test focus of each part. In Parts 1, 4 and 5, texts are authentic but edited to bring vocabulary and structure within the grasp of students at this level. Texts in other parts are specially written but based on authentic types to ensure task authenticity. Texts may contain some vocabulary or structures unknown to candidates, but they will be able to deduce the meaning from the context, and understanding of these words will not be necessary to complete the task. Most texts are short; no text exceeds 230 words.

- Part 1* Signs, notices, labels and other very short texts of the type found on roads, in railway stations, airports, shops, restaurants, schools, offices, etc.
- Part 2* Simple sentences with a connecting theme or simple narrative of the type students at this level should be able to read and understand.
- Part 3* Texts based on the language used in the routine exchanges of daily life.
- Part 4* Factual text from a newspaper or magazine article or similar source.
- Part 5* Factual text from a newspaper or magazine article, junior encyclopaedia or similar source.

*KET content and marking***Test focus**

- Part 1* Reading for main message.
- Part 2* Reading and identifying appropriate vocabulary.
- Part 3* Reading and identifying appropriate response.
- Part 4* Reading for main idea(s) and specific detail: making use of interpretation strategies.
- Part 5* Reading and identifying appropriate structural word.
- Part 6* Reading and writing down words (focus on vocabulary and spelling).
- Part 7* Reading and writing down words (focus on structure and vocabulary).
- Part 8* Reading and writing down words (focus on content).
- Part 9* Reading and writing a short message (focus on communication of message, appropriacy, accuracy, vocabulary).

Tasks

- Part 1* This is a matching task with five questions and seven options to choose between.
- Part 2* This is a three-option multiple choice with a lexical focus. There are five questions.
- Part 3* There are five multiple-choice questions (each with three options), which require candidates to complete five separate two-line exchanges; these are followed by a matching task with five questions and seven options to choose between, in the context of a short gapped dialogue.
- Part 4* The task is either three-option multiple-choice, or one involving a choice between Right/Wrong/Doesn't say. There are seven questions.
- Part 5* This is a three-option multiple-choice cloze task. There are eight questions.
- Part 6* This is a productive task with a lexical testing focus. Five common words are defined and the first letter of the answer is given. Students need to complete the word.
- Part 7* This is an open cloze task. Candidates are required to show control of structure and vocabulary in the context of a short letter (or two short notes) of the kind that students at this level might be expected to write. There are ten questions.
- Part 8* This is an information transfer task, requiring candidates to extract relevant information from one or two short input texts and use the information provided to complete some kind of form (for example, sports club membership form, visa application form, etc.). There are five questions.

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Part 9 In this Part, candidates are required to show they can communicate a written message (25–35 words) of an authentic type, for example, a note or postcard to a friend. The instructions indicate the type of message required, who it is for and what kind of information should be included. Alternatively, candidates may be asked to read and respond appropriately to a short note from a friend. Candidates are asked to convey three pieces of information.

Marks

Candidates record their answers in pencil on a separate answer sheet within the time allowed. This involves marking the appropriate lozenge for each question in Parts 1–5, writing one word per question for Parts 6 and 7, writing a word, figure or phrase for each question in Part 8 and writing the note or other message asked for in Part 9 (see the photocopiable sample answer sheets at the back of the Student's Book).

One mark is given for each correct answer in Parts 1–8. Correct spelling is required in Parts 6, 7 and 8. There are five marks for Part 9 (see below for more details). The total score of a possible 60 marks is then weighted to 50% of the marks available over the whole test.

Assessment of Part 9

An impression mark is awarded to each piece of writing using the criteria shown in the mark scheme on page 14.

Candidates are expected to write a coherent message which clearly conveys all the pieces of information indicated in the instructions. Credit is given for reasonably correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, and appropriate use of vocabulary. However, writing at this level is not expected to be error-free and more weight is given to successful communication of the message than to absolute correctness. Where appropriate, candidates should show awareness of the conventions of note-writing by including a salutation and a signature in their note.

The mark scheme is used in conjunction with notes specific to each test. These task-specific notes indicate which three pieces of information the candidate is expected to include in the piece of writing.

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Outline mark scheme for Part 9	
<i>Mark</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
5	All three parts of message clearly communicated. Only minor spelling errors or occasional grammatical errors.
4	All three parts of message communicated. Some errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation.
3	All three parts of message attempted. Expression may require interpretation by the reader. or Two parts of message are clearly communicated, but one part is unattempted. Only minor spelling errors or occasional grammatical errors.
2	Only two parts of message communicated. Some errors in spelling and grammar. The errors in expression may require patience and interpretation by the reader.
1	Only one part of message communicated.
0	Question unattempted, or totally incomprehensible response.

Candidates are penalised for writing less than the minimum number of words (i.e. fewer than 25) and for ignoring the conventions of note-writing by not providing a suitable opening and close to their notes. They are not penalised for writing too much, though they are not advised to do so.

See the key for Part 9 of each paper for some sample scripts with task-specific notes and examiner's comments.

Marking

Answers to Parts 1–5 are scanned by computer. Parts 6–9 are double marked by a team of fully trained markers who are closely supervised at every stage.

The marking of Part 9 requires special treatment. After the examination, a meeting is held with the Chief Examiner in which sample scripts are chosen to demonstrate the range of responses and different levels of competence achieved in the writing task. Task-specific notes to go with the mark scheme are then drawn up. These sample scripts and task-specific notes are used to establish a common standard of assessment for all candidates. Markers refer to the mark scheme and notes throughout the marking process, discussing any problems with the Chief Examiner.

Paper 2 Listening (approx 30 minutes including 8 minutes to transfer answers)

The KET Listening paper is divided into five parts with a total of 25 questions.

The listening texts are recorded on cassette and CD and each text is heard twice. The speed of delivery is at the slower end of the normal speaking speed range. There

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are pauses for candidates to look at the questions and to make their answers. The instructions to the candidates on the cassette/CD mirror the instructions on the question paper, and there is an example for each Part. Candidates put their answers on the question paper as they listen, and they are then given eight minutes at the end of the test to transfer these answers to an answer sheet.

The complete listening test, including time for the transfer of answers, takes about 30 minutes.

Texts

The texts are written or adapted specifically for the test and recorded in a studio to simulate real spoken language. No listening text exceeds 180 words in length.

- Part 1* Five separate short dialogues, between two speakers, in informal and neutral contexts.
- Part 2* A conversational exchange between two speakers, in an informal context.
- Part 3* A conversational exchange between two speakers, possibly a phone conversation, in an informal or neutral context.
- Part 4* A dialogue between two people, possibly a phone conversation, in a neutral context.
- Part 5* A monologue in a neutral context, possibly a recorded message.

Test focus

- Parts 1–3* Listening to identify simple, factual information: for example, prices, times, directions.
- Parts 4 and 5* Listening and writing down information.

Tasks

- Part 1* There are five multiple-choice questions (each with three options) based on pictures or drawings.
- Part 2* This is a matching task with five questions and seven options to choose between. Based on what they hear in the text, candidates have to match, for example, presents to people, or activities to days of the week.
- Part 3* There are five multiple-choice questions (each with three options).
- Parts 4 and 5* There are five questions in both of these parts. Candidates are required to complete some sort of message, memo or form on the question paper by extracting information from the listening text and writing it down. Information to be written down will consist of numbers, times, dates, prices, words, spellings of names, etc. In each case, candidates will have to write down a figure or one or two words. Recognisable spelling is accepted, except with high frequency words, e.g. *bus*, *red* or if the word has been spelt out.

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Marks

One mark is given for each correct answer, making a possible total of 25, or 25% of the whole test.

Marking

Answers to Parts 1–3 are scanned by computer. Parts 4 and 5 are double marked by a team of fully trained markers who are closely supervised at every stage.

Paper 3 Speaking (8–10 minutes)

The KET Speaking test is conducted by two examiners (an interlocutor and an assessor) with pairs of candidates. The assessor takes no part in the interaction. The Speaking test takes 8–10 minutes for each pair of candidates. Exceptionally, where there is an odd number of candidates at an examining session, the last test of the session will be for a group of three candidates. In this case, the test will last 13–15 minutes.

The Speaking test is divided into two parts. In Part 1, the interaction is between the interlocutor and the candidates, with the interlocutor asking questions from a standardised script. In Part 2, the interaction is between the candidates and is based on scripted instructions and prompt cards. The language of the Speaking test is carefully controlled to be within the grasp of students at this level.

Test focus

- Interacting in conversational English both with an examiner and with a peer (the other candidate).
- Giving and obtaining factual personal information.
- Giving and obtaining factual non-personal information.
- Giving opinions and feelings on matters relating to personal life, living conditions, occupational activities and leisure activities.

Tasks

Part 1 In this Part, each candidate interacts with the interlocutor, using the language normally associated with meeting people for the first time and giving information about things like name, place of origin, occupation and family. This Part takes 5–6 minutes.

Part 2 In this Part, the two candidates interact with each other. This involves asking and answering questions of a non-personal kind. Prompt cards are used to stimulate questions which will be related to daily life, leisure activities and social life, including references to places, times, facilities, where to go, how to get there, what to eat, etc. Candidates are required to ask and answer about five questions each. This Part takes 3–4 minutes.

Assessment and marking

Throughout the Speaking test, candidates are assessed on their language skills, not their personality, intelligence or knowledge of the world. Candidates at this level are not expected to be fluent or accurate speakers, but they are expected to be able to interact and communicate appropriately according to the demands of the test. The language of the Speaking test is carefully controlled to be accessible to candidates at this level. If candidates do not understand a question or an instruction, they should ask for repetition or clarification and they will get credit for using this strategy. Similarly, they will get credit for the use of paraphrase to supplement inadequate linguistic resources. In some cases, a one- or two-word response is all that is required to a question, but candidates will be given credit for extending their utterances to the phrase or sentence level, where this is appropriate.

The assessor awards a mark out of 5 for each of the three criteria, while the interlocutor gives an impression mark out of 5. A total mark of 20 is weighted to give a final total out of 25.

Candidates are assessed on their own individual performance according to the established criteria and are not assessed in relation to each other. In Part 2, where candidates are required to interact with each other, they will get credit for co-operating to negotiate meaning, but one candidate will not be penalised for another's shortcomings.

The marks given for the whole test are awarded on the basis of the following criteria.

Grammar and vocabulary

This refers to the ability to use vocabulary, structure and paraphrase strategies to convey meaning. Candidates at this level are only expected to have limited linguistic resources, and it is success in using these limited resources to communicate a message which is being assessed rather than range and accuracy.

Pronunciation

This refers to the intelligibility of the candidate's speech. First language interference is expected and not penalised if it does not affect communication.

Interactive communication

This refers to the ability to take part in the interaction, with the examiner and the other candidate, appropriately and with a reasonable degree of fluency. Hesitations while the candidate searches for language are expected and not penalised so long as they do not strain the patience of the listener. Candidates should also display the ability to ask for repetition or clarification, if necessary.

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Standardisation

All oral examiners are fully trained so that they conduct the Speaking test and award marks in a standardised way. After initial recruitment, induction and training, standardisation of procedure and assessment is maintained both by attendance at regular co-ordination sessions and by monitoring visits to centres by Team Leaders.

In most countries, oral examiners are assigned to teams, each of which is led by a Team Leader, who gives advice and support to examiners as required. The Team Leaders are responsible to a Senior Team Leader who is the professional representative of Cambridge ESOL for the oral examinations. Senior Team Leaders are appointed by Cambridge ESOL and attend co-ordination and development sessions in the UK. Team Leaders are appointed by the Senior Team Leader in consultation with the local administration.

Grading, awards and results

Grading

Grading takes place once all answer sheets and mark sheets have been returned to Cambridge ESOL and marking is complete. This is approximately four weeks after the examination.

The final grade boundaries are set using the following information:

- information on the difficulty level of individual items and the components as a whole (from pretesting information and the use of anchor tests)
- data on the candidates
- data on the overall candidate performance
- statistics on individual items, for those parts of the examination for which this is appropriate (Papers 1 and 2).

A candidate's overall KET grade is based on the aggregate score gained by the candidate across all three papers.

Grade Review takes place immediately after Grading. All candidates who have failed the examination by a very small margin have their Writing Component mark checked.

Special Circumstances

Special Circumstances covers three main areas: Special Arrangements, Special Consideration and Malpractice.

Special Arrangements: These are available for candidates with a long term disability such as hearing/sight impairment, dyslexia or a speech impediment, or short-term difficulties such as a broken arm. They may include extra time, separate accommodation or equipment, Braille transcription, etc. Consult the Cambridge ESOL Local Secretary in your area for more details.

Special Consideration: Cambridge ESOL may give Special Consideration to candidates affected by adverse circumstances immediately before or during an examination. Applications for Special Consideration are submitted by centres and must be made within two weeks of the examination date.

Malpractice: The Malpractice Committee will consider cases where candidates are suspected of copying or collusion, or where other breaches of exam regulations are reported. Results may be withheld pending further investigation. Centres are notified if a candidate is suspected of malpractice.

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Grading, awards and results

Results

Statements of Results are usually sent out about five or six weeks after the date of the examination. Results are reported in the following way: there are two pass grades ('Pass with Merit' and 'Pass'), and two fail grades ('Narrow Fail' and 'Fail').

Pass with Merit ordinarily corresponds to a mark of 85% and above in the examination. Pass usually represents a mark of between 70–85%. A Narrow Fail result indicates that the candidate was within 5% of the Pass boundary.

Each candidate is provided with a Statement of Results which includes a graphical display of the candidate's performance in each paper. These are shown against the scale Exceptional–Good–Borderline–Weak and indicate the candidate's relative performance in each paper.

Certificates are sent to candidates achieving one of the pass grades within six weeks of the despatch of Statements of Results.