

Key Word Transformation: The Ultimate Strategy Guide

By EnglishExam.eu Team | 2/11/2026

Struggling with Use of English Part 4? Discover the recurring grammar patterns and learn the step-by-step strategy to solve Key Word Transformations.

Use of English Part 4 (Key Word Transformation) differs between FCE, CAE, and CPE only in difficulty. The technique remains the same. Here is how to crack the code.

THE RULES

- You must use the key word given. You cannot change it.
- You must use between 2 and 5 words (FCE) or 3 and 6 words (CAE/CPE). Contractions (don't, can't) count as two words.
- The meaning must remain exactly the same.

COMMON PATTERNS

Cambridge tests the same grammar points repeatedly. Learn to spot them:

1. ACTIVE TO PASSIVE (AND VICE VERSA)

They cancelled the meeting because of the rain. (CALLED)

-> The meeting WAS CALLED OFF because of the rain.

2. CONDITIONALS

I didn't study, so I failed. (IF)

-> I would not have failed IF I HAD studied.

3. COMPARATIVE STRUCTURES

She is the best tennis player in the club. (GOOD)

-> No one else in the club IS AS GOOD AS her.

4. PHRASAL VERBS & SET PHRASES

This is where your vocabulary is tested. You need to know that "succeed in" is followed by a gerund, or that "prevent" goes with "from".

STUDY TIP

Keep a notebook of transformations. Write the grammar pattern next to each one you get wrong. You will start to see the patterns emerging after a few practice tests.

