English Tenses

In exams, students are asked to put the verbs in brackets in the correct tense. As all tenses will be mixed up, it becomes harder for the student to know which tense it should be. So, students should look for the signal word first and once they find one, they think of the form. Let's consider these two examples:

- 1. I (to go) to New York last year. The signal word is "last" and it refers to Simple Past. So, the answer is "went".
- 2. By 7 O'clock, Smith (to finish).....painting the room. The signal word is "By..." and it refers to Future Perfect Simple. So, the answer is "will have finished".



SIMPLE PRESENT



Form	• he, she, it→ verb + s/ + es			
	 he, she, it→ verb + s/ + es I, you, we, they→ + verb 			
	• to be→ am/ is/ are			
	• not → doesn't + verb/ don't + verb			
Use	daily routine, habits and repeated actions,			
	and general truths.			
Signal words	every, on Mondays, usually, sometimes,			
	often, rarely			

EXERCISE 1 Find the signal words for simple present.

- 1. Which is a signal word for simple present? last week – on Mondays – next week
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for simple present? usually – everyday – in 2005

EXERCISE 2 Put these verbs in simple present.

- 1. He/ to go
 2. They / to play
 3. Mary/ to wash
- 4. My children / be
 5. She/ not, to study

EXERCISE 3 Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

- 1- Maria sometimes (to read)———Spanish novels.
- 2- David (wash)————the family car on Sundays.
- 4- My children (to be)——usually sick in A 5- (Jackie, go)——to the gym every week?



SIMPLE PAST



Form	 regular verbs + ed/ irregular (the list) to be → was/ were not → didn't + verb 	
Use	actions happened at a specific time in the past.	
Signal words	last, yesterday,ago, in 2011, the other day	

EXERCISE 1 Find the signal words for simple past.

- 1. Which is a signal word for simple past? the other day – tomorrow - rarely
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for simple past?ago in 2005 next week

EXERCISE 2 Put these verbs in simple past.

- 1. go
 2. see
 3. play
- 4. not, come
 5. they/ be

EXERCISE (3) Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

- 1- Mike's parents (arrive) _______ yesterday at 6 O'clock.
 2- My little brother (see) ______ a nightmare last night.
- 3- Alfred and Dave (to be) _____ in the swimming two hours ago.
- 4- We (not, to like) _____ the party last weekend; it was too noisy.
- 5- (Nancy, go) _____ shopping last night?



Form	am, is, or are + verb + ing
Use	actions happening now, at the moment of speaking.
Signal words	now, at the moment, still, Look! Listen!

EXERCISE 1 Find the signal words for present continuous.

- 1. Which is a signal word for present continuous? last - now - every night
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for present continuous? now - already - still

EXERCISE	2	Put these verbs in present continuous.
1. They / play	=	·

- 2. Sara and Leila/dance ••
- 3. I/ not, speak 4. He/ to sing

EXERCISE (3) Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

- —— heavily outside. 1. Now, it (rain)—
- 2. She (not, speak) French at the moment.
- ----- against poverty 3. Many people (still, fight)—
- 4. Mark's children (to play) video games at the moment
- 5. (Sandra, to do) her homework now?

PAST CONTINUOUS



Form	was or were + verb + ing
Use	For actions which were in progress in the past.
Signal words	when, while + long action in the past

EXERCISE 1 Find the signal words for past continuous.

- 1. Which is a signal word for past continuous? while - by next week - tomorrow
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for past continuous? next week - when - while

EXERCISE (2) Put these verbs in past continuous.

- 1. She/ watch
- 2. They/ to play 3. It/ rain
- 4. Many students/ to work •••

5. David / not, to write

5. He/ not, to drive

EXERCISE (3) Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

- 1- Barbara (to do)————her homework yesterday when I came in.
- 2- When I (write)___ ____the E-mail last time, Mary (to watch)______TV.
- 3- I saw my teacher yesterday when I (wait) ____ for the bus.
- 4- When Sandra (arrive) home yesterday, her father (not, to cook) _____ lunch.
- 5- (Your brother, to play) ______ the game when the computer crashed down?

PRESENT PERFECT



Form	have or has + Past Participle	
Use	For actions which started in the past and continued up to the present.	
Signal words	just, already, yet, for, since, so far, recently,	

NB. We use Present Perfect Continuous (have/has+ been + verb +ing) to give more emphasis on the duration of the action. However, some verbs can't be used in the continuous form such as own, smell, need, belong, cost, agree, contain..., etc.

EXERCISE (1) Find the signal words for present perfect.

- 1. Which is a signal word for present perfect? still - usually - since
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for present perfect? since - before - for

EXERCISE (2) Put these verbs in present perfect.

- 1. They/ to do
- 2. Jack / to publish
- 3. He/ not, to have
- 4. She/ to study
- 5. Mike and Lina / to have

EXERCISE (3) Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

- 1. He (just, phone) Sabrina; she is in Chicago now.
- 2. I (buy, recently) ____a laptop to Louis. ____the dinner yet.
- 3. The maid (not, cook)_____ 4. She (drive)_____this car for two hours.
- ______ in prison since 2003. 5. He (to be)__
- 6. (you, ever, read) Hemingway's novels?



PAST PERFECT



Form	had + Past Participle 2 actions in the past 1st action → Past Perfect 2nd action → Simple Past For actions which happened before the
ose	other one in the past.
Signal words	before, after, already, when, never as soon as, until

EXERCISE 1 Find the signal words for past perfect.

- 1. Which is a signal word for past perfect? last week after now
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for past perfect? at the moment after- already

EXERCISE 2	Find the pa	ast perfect to these verbs.	
1. come	·> —		
2. not, have	·		
3. see	-		
4. play	·		
5. cut	·		
EXERCISE 3	Put the foll	lowing verbs in the correct tense	<u>.</u>
1. Before Randa	(to take)	the test exam yesterday	/,
she (memori:	ze)	irregular verbs.	
2. After she (to	do)	her homework last night	t,
she (go)	to b	oed.	

(already, start)______. 4. Last time, I (feel)_____stressed because I (never, take)_____ the IELTS Test before.

___home yesterday, the film

3. When I (arrive)____

5. Jonny (get)_____the job after he (graduate)_____from Oxford university.



SIMPLE FUTURE



Form	will + verb
Use	For actions which will occur in the future.
Signal words	next, tomorrow, soon, later,

EXERCISE 1 Find the signal words for simple future.

- 1. Which is a signal word for simple future? already - next week- in 2017
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for simple future? by tomorrow tomorrow- soon

EXERCISE 2 Find the simple future to the following verbs.

- 1. to work
 2. to play
 3. to speak
 4. not, to come
 5. to enjoy
- **EXERCISE** 3 Put the following verbs in the correct tense.
- 1 I (to travel)——around the world next summer holiday.
 2. The boss (not, to meet)——you tomorrow; he's busy.
- 3. Alberto (marry) ______ Helen next month.
- 4. The Smiths (not, to be) ______in England next January.
- 5. (James, attend) ______the conference tomorrow?



FUTURE PERFECT



Form	will have + Past Participle	
Use	For actions that will be finished before some point in the future, also to express certainty that an action was completed.	
Signal words	by, intime	

EXERCISE 1 Find the signal words for future perfect.

- 1. Which is a signal word for future perfect? tomorrow- in two days' time next week-
- 2. Which is **not** a signal word for future perfect? already by ... in three weeks' time

EXERCISE 2 Put these verbs in future perfect.

- 1. to go
 2. to play
 3. to do
 4. to visit
 5. to enjoy
- **EXERCISE** 3 Put the following verbs in the correct tense.
- 1- By 9 O'clock, many students (finish)————doing their exercises.
- 2- In two days' time, we (go)_____back home.
- 3- My brother (to return) ______from the trip by 7 O'clock.
- 4- By November, we (buy)_____a new apartment in Paris.
- 5- By the end of next year, we (study) _____ English for three years.



Past Perfect, Past Perfect Continuous & Future Perfect



Past Perfect Simple:

• Form:	1 st action ·-→	Past perfect = had + Past Participle	2^{nd} action \longrightarrow Simple past = (ed/list
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• Signal words: before, after, already, when, never, as soon as,

Exercise Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

1. My friends (to eat) _____everything before I (join) ____them yesterday.

2. After he (have) _____ a shower last night, we (go out) ____ with Laura.

3. When I (arrive)————at the cinema, the film (already, start)———.

4. Sara and Peter (know) _____ each other for three years before they (get) ____ married.

5. She (to phone)______to New York yesterday.

6. As soon as he (finish)______to Morocco.

Past Perfect Continuous:

- Form: Past perfect continuous = had been + verb + ing (here more emphasis is put on the duration of the action.)
- Signal words: before, after, when, because, all day, for.....

NB. Some verbs can't be used in the continuous form such as own, smell, need, belong, cost, agree, contain...etc.

Exercise Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

1. The police (look for)_	the thief for 10 days before th	ey (catch)	$_{-}$ him.
2. She (to be)	tired because she (work)	all day.	
3. She (drive)	for a couple of hours before she (have)	the accident.	
4. He (to work)	on the project for three hours before	the boss (come in)	
5. They (play)	for two hours when it (begin)	to rain.	
6. I (feel)	tired yesterday because I (to drive)	all night.	

Future Perfect:

- Form: Future Perfect = will have + Past Participle (here, the action will be completed at a point in the future)
- Signal words: by.../ in....s' time.....

Exercise Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

1. B	/ 8 O'clock tomorrow	, she	(to do))the laundr	V.
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- 2. The Smiths (visit) ______ all Europe by next year.
- 3. By this time tomorrow, we (finish) ______ the project.
- 4. By 10 O'clock, the kids (fall) asleep.
- 5. By next year, Maria (to receive)______her promotion.
- 6. The maid (clean)______ the entire house by dinner.
- 7. Monica and Rosa (to begin) working by this time tomorrow morning.
- 8. By Sunday, you (do)———all the homework.
- 9. In three days' time, the school (receive) prizes.
- 10. In five minutes' time, they (to leave) ______ the classroom.

