

# ENGLISH GRAMMAR: TENSES

Comprehensive Study Notes & Practice Questions

## Overview of Tenses

Tenses denote the time of an action or state of being, indicated by the form of the verb. There are three primary timelines: **Present**, **Past**, and **Future**. Each is sub-divided into four aspects.

## Tense Master Structure Matrix

Type	Present Tense	Past Tense
<b>Simple / Indefinite</b>	<p><b>Sub + V1 + s/es + Obj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Habitual actions, universal truths.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He writes an essay.</p>	<p><b>Sub + V2 + Obj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed actions in the past.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He wrote an essay.</p>
<b>Continuous / Progressive</b>	<p><b>Sub + is/am/are + V1+ing + Obj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing action right now.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He is writing an essay.</p>	<p><b>Sub + was/were + V1+ing + Obj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing action in the past.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He was writing an essay.</p>
<b>Perfect</b>	<p><b>Sub + has/have + V3 + Obj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions finished recently with relevance now.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He has written an essay.</p>	<p><b>Sub + had + V3 + Obj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action completed before another past action.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He had written an essay.</p>
<b>Perfect Continuous</b>	<p><b>Sub + has/have + been + V1+ing + since/for</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Started in past, ongoing now.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He has been writing since morning.</p>	<p><b>Sub + had + been + V1+ing + since/for</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing in past up to a past point.</li> </ul> <p>Ex: He had been writing for two hours.</p>

## Important Shortcuts & Tricks

### Trick 1: Since vs For

- Since** is used for a *Point of Time* (e.g., Since Monday, Since 1995, Since morning).
- For** is used for a *Period / Duration of Time* (e.g., For 2 hours, For 5 days, For many years).

### Trick 2: The Double Past Rule (Past Perfect)

When two past actions occur sequentially, the **first action** takes the **Past Perfect (had + V3)** and the **second action** takes the **Simple Past (V2)**.

Example: The train had left before I reached the station.

### Trick 3: Conditional Sentences Time Clauses

If a sentence has an "if/when" clause stating a future scenario, do not use "will" in both parts. The condition takes **Simple Present** and the outcome takes **Simple Future**.

Example: If it rains, we will cancel the match. (NOT: If it will rain...)

## MCQs cum Revision

- i. Water ..... at 100 degrees Celsius. (boil / boils / boiling)
- ii. I ..... my homework an hour ago. (finish / finished / have finished)
- iii. They ..... in this city since 2010. (live / are living / have been living)
- iv. Look! The stars ..... brightly in the sky. (shine / are shining / shone)
- v. By the time the doctor arrived, the patient ..... (died / has died / had died)
- vi. Next week at this time, we ..... our holidays in Goa. (enjoy / will be enjoying / will enjoy)
- vii. She usually ..... tea, but today she is drinking coffee. (take / takes / took)
- viii. If you study hard, you ..... the examination. (pass / will pass / passed)

## SPOT THE ERROR

- i. (a) He is working / (b) in this bank / (c) for the last five years. / (d) No error.
- ii. (a) have seen him / (b) yesterday evening / (c) near the market. / (d) No error.
- iii. (a) If he will come to me, / (b) I will help him / (c) with money. / (d) No error.
- iv. (a) The news of his death / (b) was broadcasted / (c) yesterday. / (d) No error.
- v. (a) When I reached his house, / (b) he already left / (c) for his office. / (d) No error.
- vi. (a) I am knowing / (b) everything about / (c) this specific case. / (d) No error.