# **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			
	• 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.

5. She/ not, to study

- 1. He/ to go
  2. They / to play
  3. Mary/ to wash
  4. My children / be
- **EXERCISE** (3) Put the following verbs in the correct tense.

I - Maria sometimes (to read)—	Spanish novels.
2- David (wash)————	—the family car on Sundays.

- 3-The teacher (wear)————— a suit and tie every meeting.
  4- My children (to be)—————usually sick in Autumn.
- 5- (Jackie, go)———to the gym every week?



#### **SIMPLE PAST**



Form	<ul> <li>regular verbs + ed/ irregular (the list)</li> <li>to be → was/ were</li> <li>not → didn't + verb</li> </ul>			
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 the	ese verbs in present continuous.
1. They / play	·>
2. Sara and Leila/ dance	· <b>&gt;</b>
3. I/ not, speak	·>
4. He/ to sing	
5. David / not, to write	
EXERCISE 3 Put the	e following verbs in the correct tense.
1. Now, it (rain)———	heavily outside.
2. She (not, speak) ———	French at the moment.
3. Many people (still, fightin Africa.	nt)——— against poverty
4. Mark's children (to pla	y)video games at the

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. 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

moment. 5. (Sandra, to do)

- 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)\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_this car for two hours. 4. She (drive)\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_in prison since 2003. 5. He (to be)\_\_ Hemingway's novels? 6. (you, ever, read)\_\_\_\_



#### **PAST PERFECT**



Form	had + Past Participle 2 actions in the past 1st action → Past Perfect 2nd action → Simple Past	
Use	For actions which happened before the 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	ͺ∠,	Find the past perfect to these verbs.

1. come

2. not, have

3. see 4. play

5. cut

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

- 1. Before Randa (to take)\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_the test exam yesterday, she (memorize)\_\_\_\_\_\_ irregular verbs.
- 2. After she (to do) her homework last night, she (go)\_\_\_\_\_to bed.
- \_\_\_home yesterday, the film 3. When I (arrive)\_\_\_\_\_ (already, start)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. Last time, I (feel) stressed because I (never, take) the IELTS Test before.
- 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.
- \_\_\_Helen next month. 3. Alberto (marry) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. The Smiths (not, to be) \_\_\_\_\_\_ in England next January.
- \_\_\_\_the conference tomorrow? 5. (James, attend)

#### **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)\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_from the trip by 3- My brother (to return)— 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<sup>st</sup> action → Past perfect = had + Past Participle 2<sup>nd</sup> action → Simple past = (ed/list)
- 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	ney (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	e the boss (come in)	·
5. They (play)	for two hours when it (begin)	to rain.	
6. I (feel)	tired vesterday 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. By 8 O'clock tomorrow, she (to do)\_\_\_\_\_\_the laundry.
- 2. The Smiths (visit) \_\_\_\_\_ all Europe by next year.
- 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.