

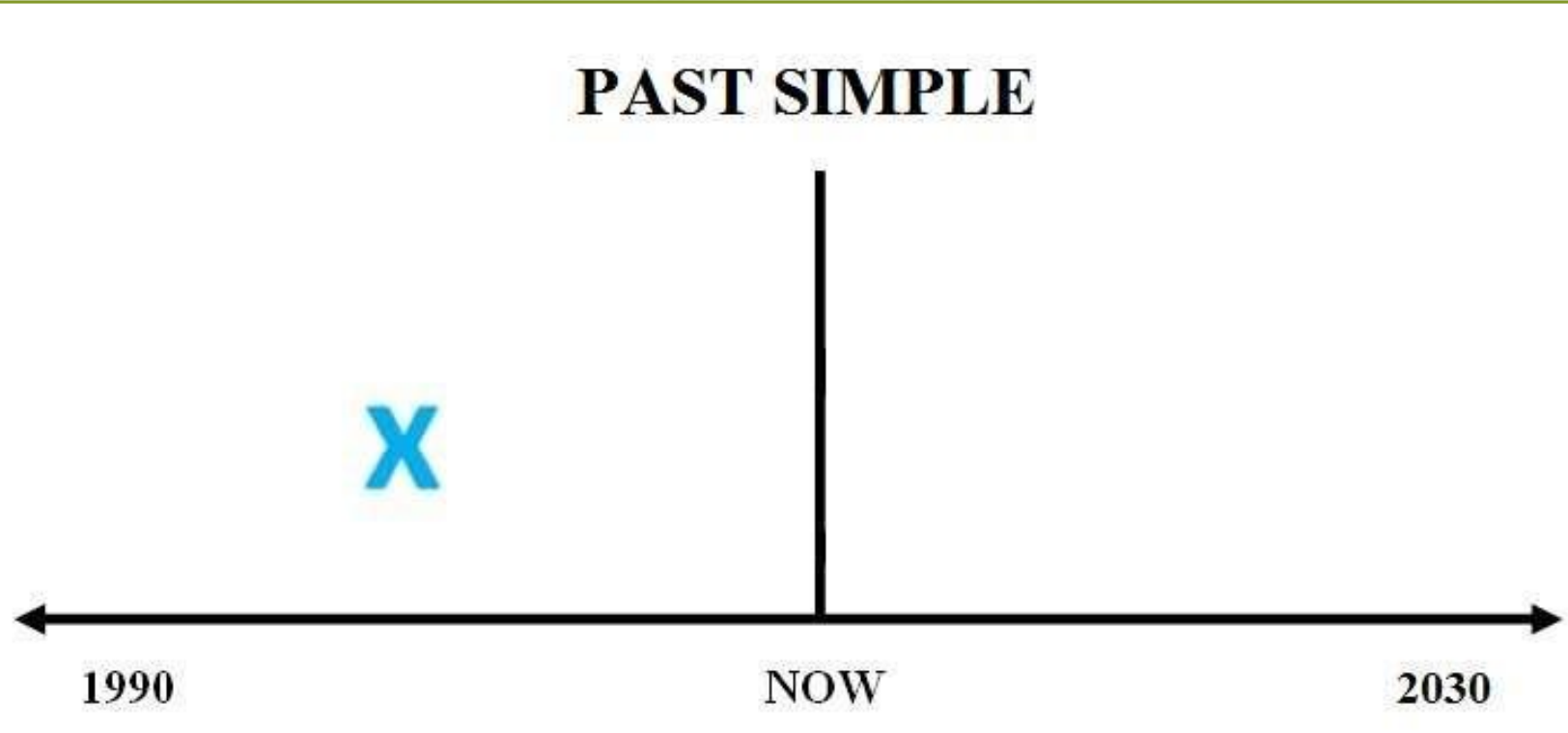
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«Verb Tenses in Academic and Medical Communication. Part 2»

The Past Tenses:

- Past Simple (Indefinite)
- Past Continuous (Progressive)
- Past Perfect
- Past Perfect Continuous

- **Regular Verbs** – Formation: bare infinitive + **-ed**: to treat – **treated**; to examine – **examined**; to measure – **measured**. *E.g.*: Mary **visited** the polyclinic yesterday.
- **Irregular Verbs** – Formation: each verb has its own form; see Appendix 3 for a list of common verbs (e.g., to say – **said**; to have – **had**; to take – **took**). *E.g.*: The patient **took** this medication yesterday.



- **Negative form:** I/you/we/she/they. . . **did not (didn't)** + bare infinitive.
- Mary **did not** visit the polyclinic yesterday. The patient **did not** take this medication yesterday
- She **didn't** take long to recover from the operation. I **didn't** feel a thing, the injection **didn't** hurt.
- **General (closed) questions:** **Did** I/you/we/she/they. . . + bare infinitive
- **Did** Mary **visit** the polyclinic yesterday? **Didn't** the patient **take** this medication yesterday?
- **Did** the operation **go** successfully?
- **Special (open) questions:**
- Where **did** Mary go yesterday? When **did** she go to the polyclinic?
- What **did** the patient take? Who **took** this medication?
- **Emphasis:**
- I **did** indeed remember to wash my hands.

The **Past Simple** describes completed actions:

1) with *time indicators* e.g. *yesterday, last year, last month, last week* etc.):

- Yesterday we **operated** on five patients and **did** a kidney transplant.
 - I **completed** the course on Anatomy last term.
 - I **qualified** as a surgeon when I was 30 years old.
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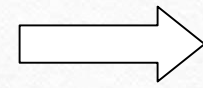
2) that continued for a period of time or were repeated:

- I **enjoyed** my resident's training very much.
- When I **worked** as a resident in Madrid, I **lived** in a small apartment.
- I worked in the same clinic every evening last week.

3) in history:

- Wilhelm Röntgen **discovered** X-rays in 1895.
- Golding Bird **designed** a flexible stethoscope and **published** its description in 1840.

Verb “to be”



“was”, “were”

Singular:

1 st person	When I <u>was</u> a medical student I worked with Dr. Ross Grey, a leading researcher in craniofacial development.
2 nd person	You <u>were</u> the brightest student in our group.
3 rd person	John <u>was</u> a medical student in 1990s.

Plural:

1 st person	We <u>were</u> happy to work with Dr. Smith and his team.
2 nd person	You <u>were</u> all diligent students.
3 rd person	My residency years <u>were</u> very busy years and we worked very hard

Verb “to have” → “had”

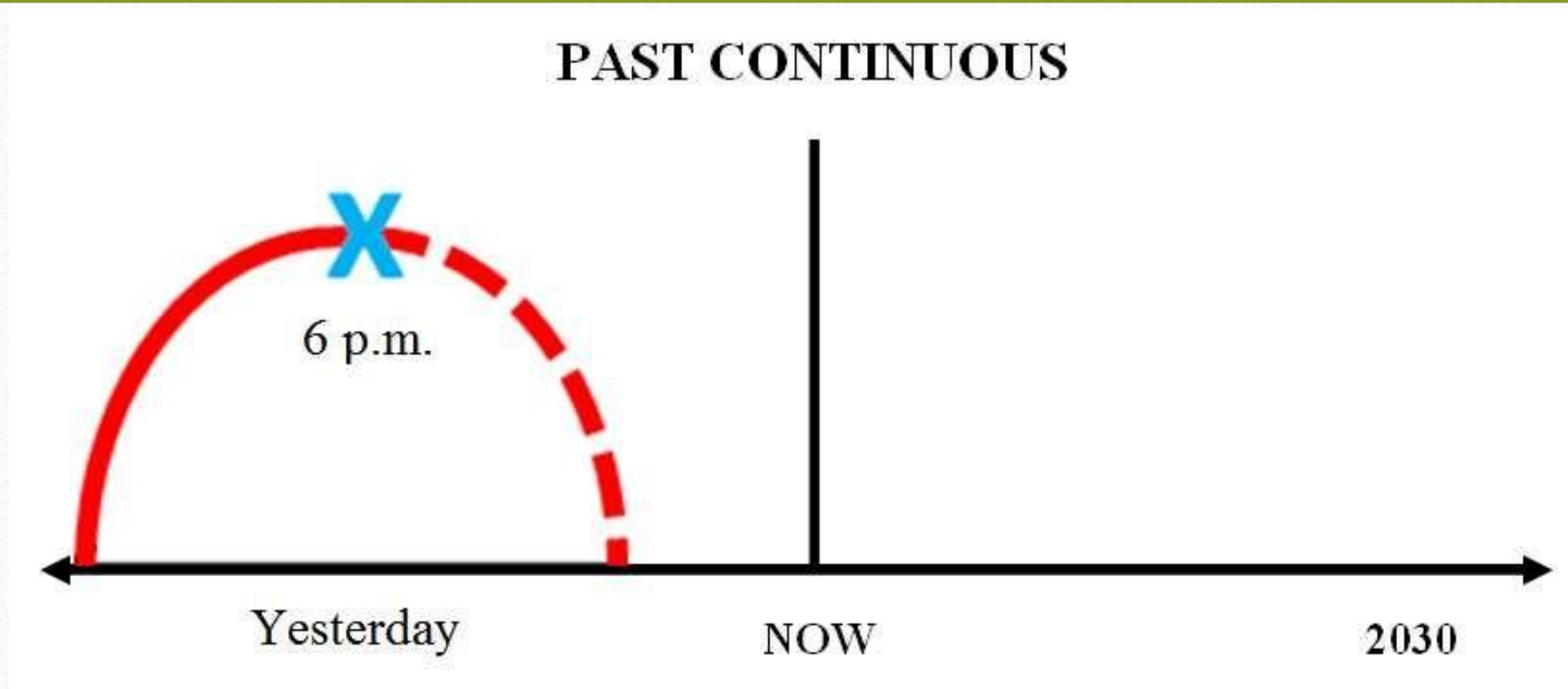
Singular:

1 st person	When I was a medical student, I <u>had</u> a chance to work with an experienced head and neck surgeon.
2 nd person	You <u>had</u> a chance to study this course but you decided not to take it.
3 rd person	She <u>had</u> great experience during the exchange programme.

Plural:

1 st person	We <u>had</u> Latin classes during our course of study.
2 nd person	You both <u>had</u> clinical practice in neonatal care.
3 rd person	They <u>had</u> no difficulties in respiratory control during anaesthesia.

- The PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE indicates activity at a particular time in the past.



Formation:

**Was/were + present participle of the verb
 (“-ing” ending)**

E.g.:

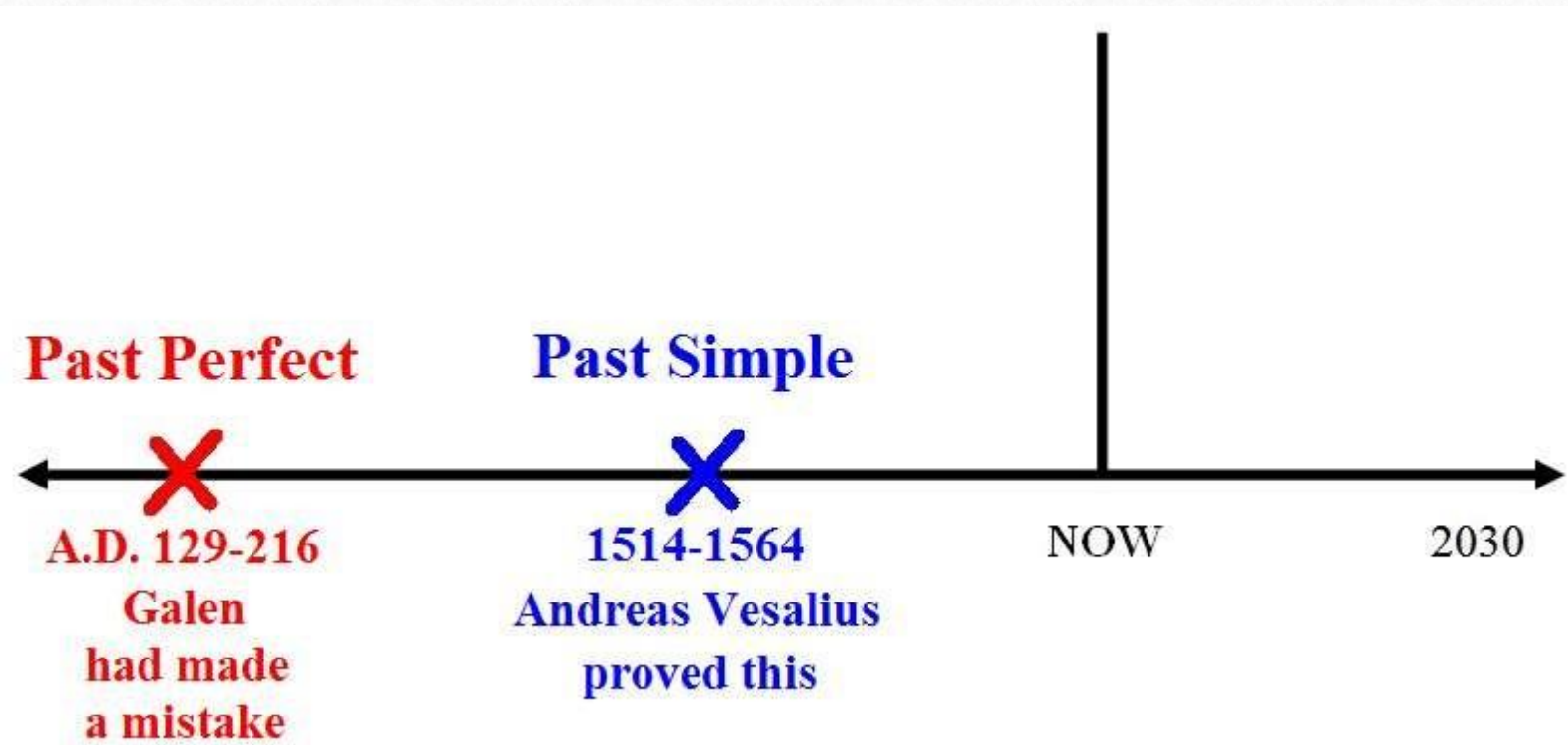
- I **was reading** an interesting case report at 6 o'clock yesterday.
- They **were examining** this patient at 6 p.m. yesterday.
- We **were working** in the laboratory from 3 to 5 p.m. yesterday.
- He **was delivering** the lecture on endocrine disorders at 10 a.m. yesterday.

The Past Continuous tense is used:

- 1) to describe actions going on at a certain time in the past:
 - The nurse was measuring patient's blood pressure *at 6 o'clock yesterday*.
 - *This time last year* I was writing an article on lipid metabolism.
- 2) to describe incomplete or interrupted actions in the past. The action stopped at a key point:
 - The doctor was examining the patient when the nurse entered the ward.
 - Dr. Bloom was conducting an experiment when her colleague interrupted her.
- 3) to describe events that extend across complete periods of time:
 - We were travelling the whole day. We were working on this project from morning to night.
- 4) to describe parallel actions in the past (scene setting):
 - When I entered the hospital, many patients were waiting in the corridor. Some of them were talking on their phones, one patient was complaining about his health, others were reading leaflets. In the ward, the doctor was writing a case history and a nurse was measuring a patient's blood pressure.

The **Past Perfect** describes a completed action further back in the past.

- Formation: **had + past participle** of the main verb
- *E.g.:* In 1543, Andreas Vesalius proved that Galen **had made** a mistake in describing human anatomy.



The **Past Perfect** can be used to describe:

1) An event that had already happened before something else happened:

- When I arrived at the meeting, the chairman **had** already **begun** his presentation.

2) With adverbial time modifiers e.g. *by 5 o'clock / end of the year, within the deadline*:

- He **had sent** his abstracts to the Congress *by the 1st of June*.

3) In reporting other past tenses (e.g. reported speech):

- Actual: Jane: “The new doctor **has arrived** at reception.”
- Reported: Jane said that the new doctor **had arrived** at reception.
- Actual: John: This patient **has been waiting** a month for an appointment.
- Reported: John said that the patient **had been waiting** a month for an appointment.
- Actual: Patient: “My back **has been hurting** for some weeks.”
- Reported: The patient complained that his back **had been hurting** for some weeks.
- Actual: Doctor: “I **performed** the operation yesterday.”
- Reported: The doctor reported that he **had performed** the operation yesterday.

The Past Perfect Continuous

- Formation: **had been +** main verb in **-ing** form.
- The **Past Perfect Continuous** can be used to describe an extended or repeated event which took place before a particular point in the past.
- *E.g.:* The patient **had been losing** the battle against cancer.
Galen **had been describing** something incorrectly.

- **The event stops at the specified time point:**
 - He had been driving without a break for several hours when the car crashed.
- **The event continues beyond the specified time point:**
 - She had been pregnant for 5 weeks before they discovered the tumour.
- **The event has recently finished before the specified time point:**
 - Her eyes were sore; the doctor could tell she had been rubbing them.
- *NB!* “*Since*” and “*for*” are often used to describe an event’s duration to a certain time point.

Contextual use in academic writing

- Past Simple is extensively used in the “Methods” section to describe the procedure of the research:
- “We studied the effects of a melatonin-aluminum oxide-polymethylsiloxane complex (complex M) on the expression of apoptosis regulators”.
- “We examined clinical outcomes in 8399 patients with heart failure and reduced ejection fraction according to history of diabetes mellitus and glycemic status. Patients with a history of diabetes mellitus had a higher risk of the primary composite outcome of heart failure hospitalization. The benefit of valsartan compared with enalapril was consistent across the range of HbA1c in the trial”.
- Past Simple is also widely used in the “Results” section:
- “Overall, 2907 (35%) patients had a history of diabetes mellitus”.
- Results indicated that the median follow-up in patients with normal HbA1c was 26 months, and it was 27 months in both patients with pre-diabetes mellitus and diabetes mellitus.

Contextual use in academic writing

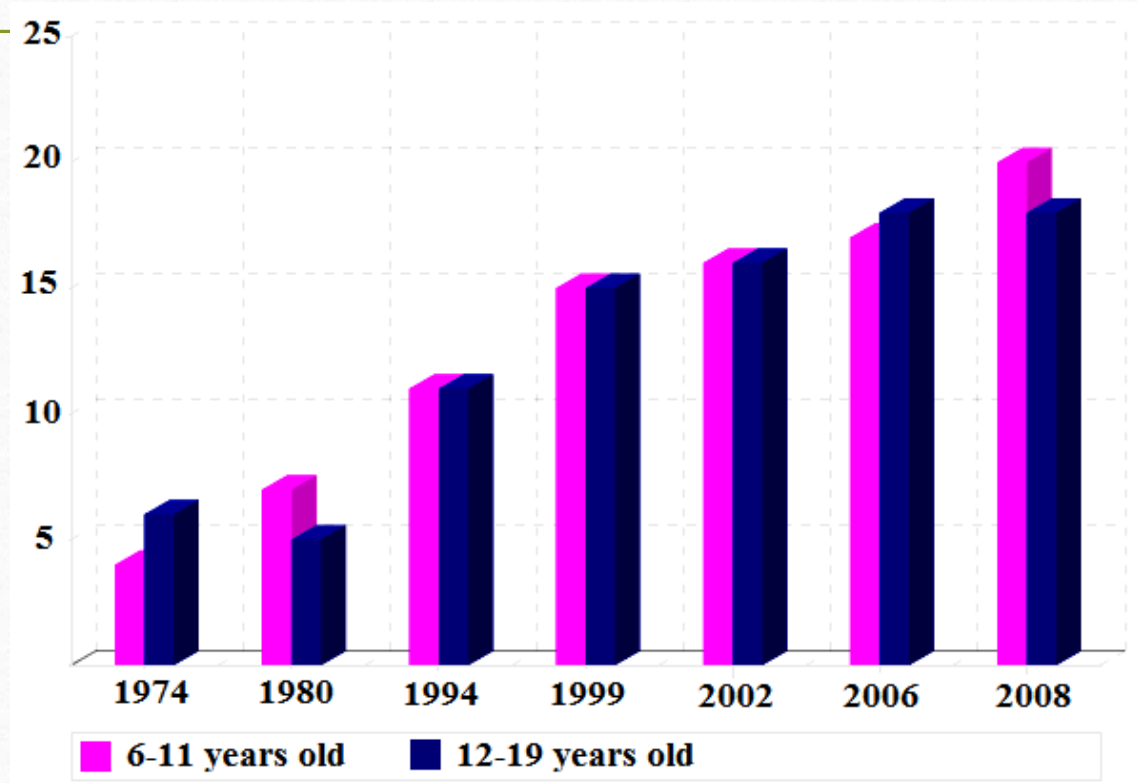
- “Therefore we concluded that we were dealing with a primary bacterial peritonitis (PBP) of an anaerobic microorganism whose metabolism was responsible for the TP”.
- “Although we had offered her neurolysis or nerve decompression for her limited dysfunction she did not want to be operated on again”.
- “His symptoms had progressed from pain when running to a constant pain that affected his daily living activities”.

Communication Tasks:

- 1. Using the Past Simple tense, talk about your previous professional experience. What did you do last year? (a few years ago, last term, etc.)
- 2. Using the Past Simple tense, ask your partner some special questions about his/her previous professional experience.
- 3. Tell about the most significant breakthrough in your specialty. When did it happen? Why was it important? Tell your colleagues about it.

Communication Tasks:

4. Describe the bar chart given below: summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



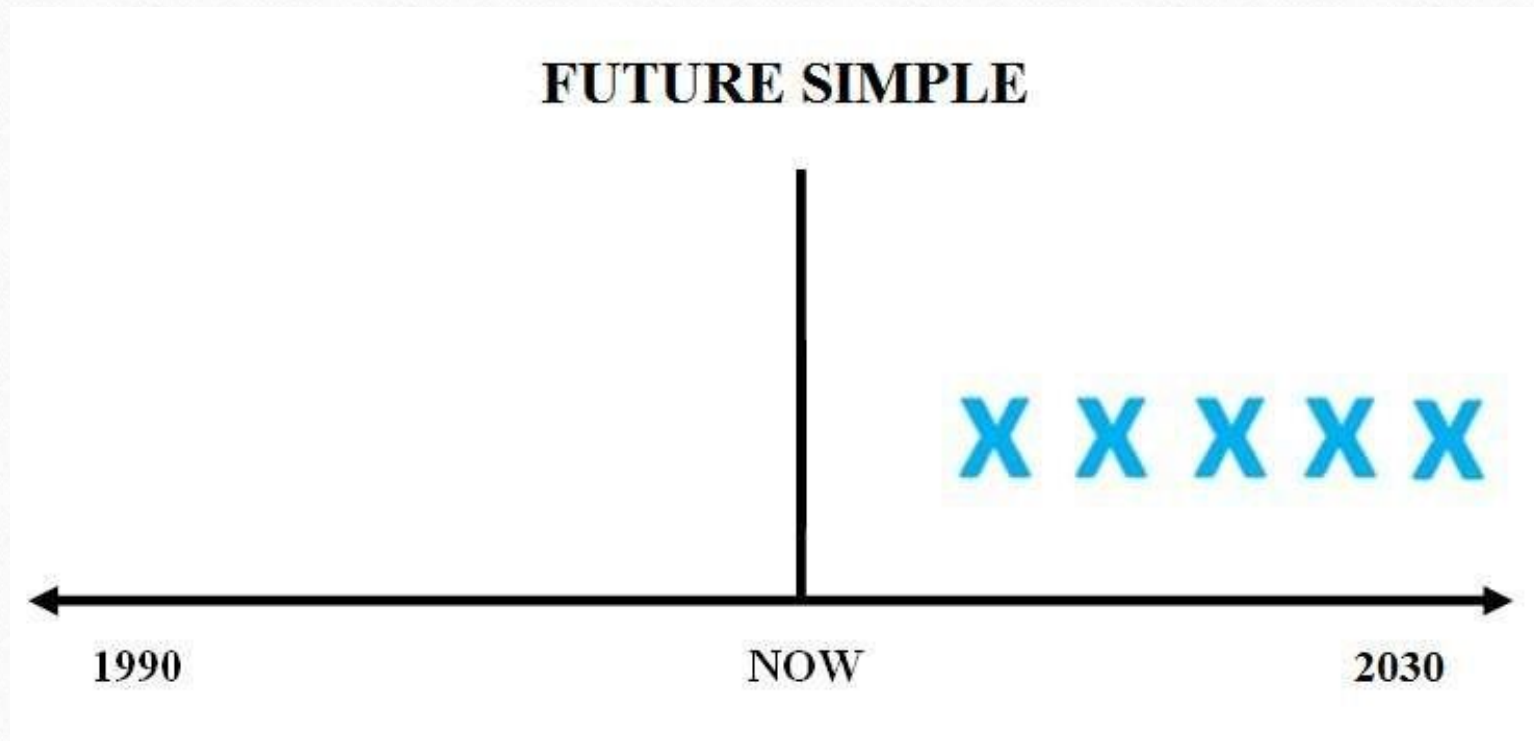
- 5. The image given below displays two consecutive actions in the past. Think of possible events (e.g., from your personal experience) and write down their brief description, using Past Simple and Past Perfect tenses.
- The following model may be of help: “Yesterday, I was late for the meeting. By the time I arrived at 8:15, it had already started”.



The Future Tenses:

- Future Simple (Indefinite)
- Future Continuous (Progressive)
- Future Perfect

The FUTURE SIMPLE is used to describe a future happening or a future situation.



Formation:

Will + bare infinitive (without particle “*to*”)

E.g.:

I **will send** you a copy of the latest article on oral cancer as soon as I get it.

She **will attend** the European Congress next year.

Dentistry **will be** very different in a hundred years time.

NB! In modern English “*will*” may be used in all cases: *I, we, he, she, it, you, they*.

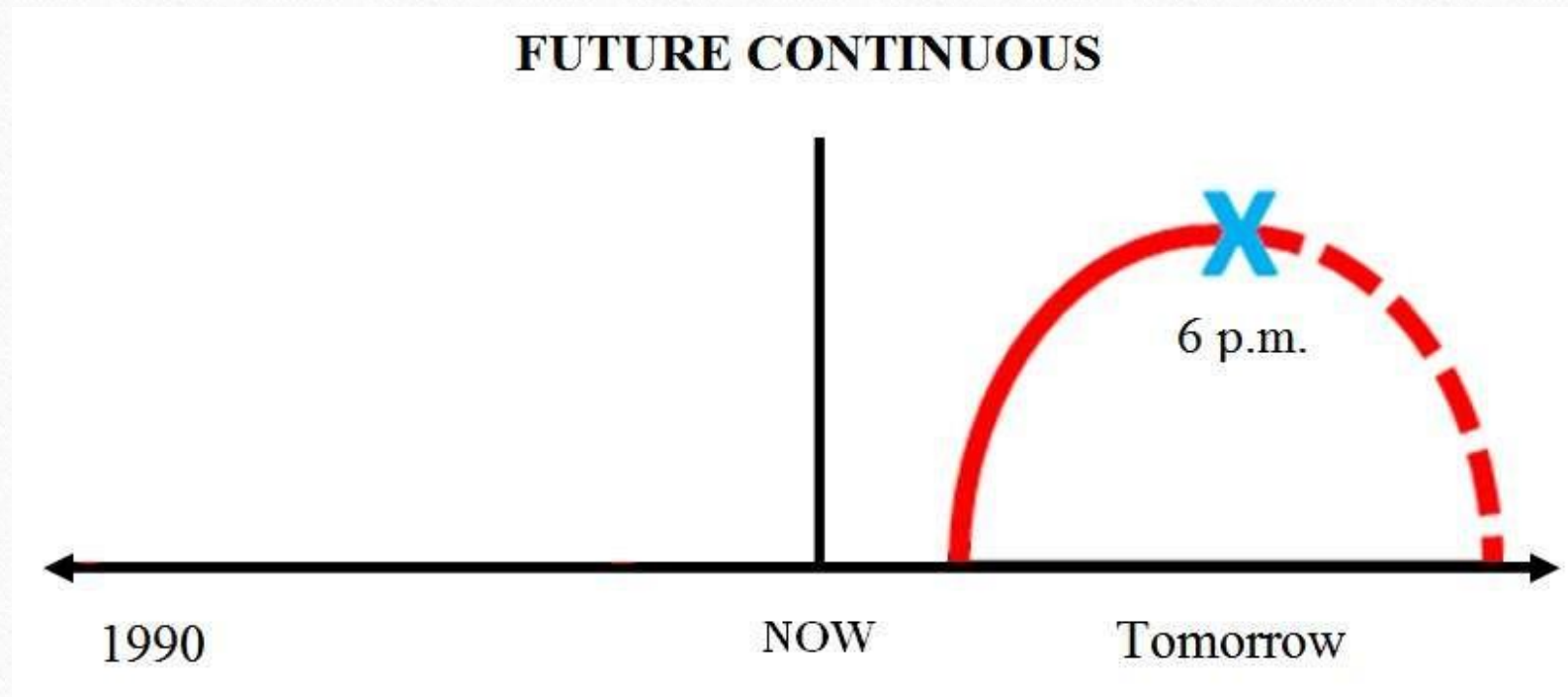
For 1 person singular and plural (“**I**”, “**we**”), one may also use “shall” – primarily in suggestion and offer questions:

Shall we go to the symposium?

Shall we try this new medicine and see what happens?

Shall I go and see what’s happening?

- The FUTURE CONTINUOUS describes a planned or predicted event at a certain time in the future *the next day, the whole day tomorrow, tomorrow at 10 p.m., tomorrow from 10 to 11 a.m.*)



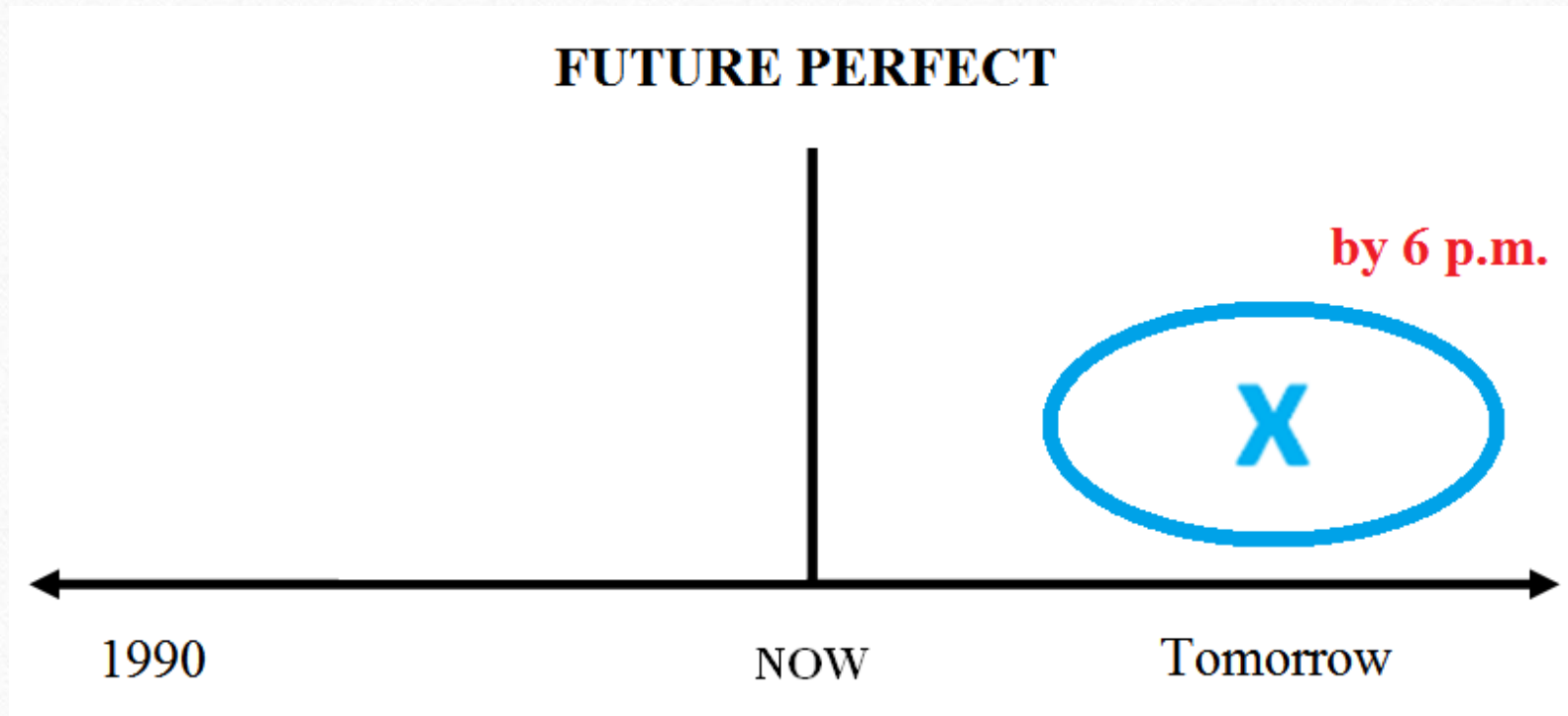
Formation:

Will be + -ing form of the main verb.

E.g.:

- She **will be** attending this conference.
- We **will be** living in Kyiv next year.
- The meaning can be qualified or specified by additional words in the sentence:
- This time tomorrow morning he **will be attending** the conference on medications and the CNS.
- I **will be examining** this patient tomorrow from 3 to 4 p.m.

- The FUTURE PERFECT is used to describe the result of an action before a certain time in the future (*by the end of the next week, by the 1st of May, by 6 o'clock*).



Formation:

Will have + past participle of the verb

E.g.:

- I will have completed my PhD thesis by 2020.
- Your doctor will have prescribed the dose suitable for your individual condition by the end of the week.
- You will have received the schedule by 5 o'clock tomorrow.

Contextual use in academic writing

- The Future tenses are often used in the “Background” and “Introduction” sections to describe the general outline of the research paper:
- “We will illustrate diagnostic challenges through this new case of primary angiosarcoma of the breast. We will also discuss the relevant medical literature”.
- ~~“Here, we will present a rare case, a patient with AF who was diagnosed with EC compressing the left atrium”.~~
- “Along with a review of the literature, we will define the risk factors, clinical characteristics, diagnostic methods, and treatment of this infection”.
- The Future tenses are also effective in the “Conclusion” section to make a prognosis or suggest a perspective for further research:
- “An ultrasound-guided approach rather than the use of a landmark technique to insert CVC will help”.
- “Patients will tolerate the procedure with adequate airway preparation using topical anesthesia”.
- “Finally, impending large-scale case-control and cohort copy number variation investigations will further document the prevalence of triple X syndrome in various patient groups”.
- “After approximately 3 months, the villi will have mostly returned to normal, mitosis will have decreased, and chronic inflammation will be minimal”.

Communication Tasks:

1. Complete your agenda for tomorrow. Tell the colleagues about your schedule and ask them some questions using Future Simple, Future Continuous and Future Perfect tenses.

E.g.: What will you do tomorrow? What will you be doing tomorrow from 10 to 11 a.m.? What will you have done by 14 p.m. tomorrow?

The first line has been filled for you as an example:

TO-DO LIST:

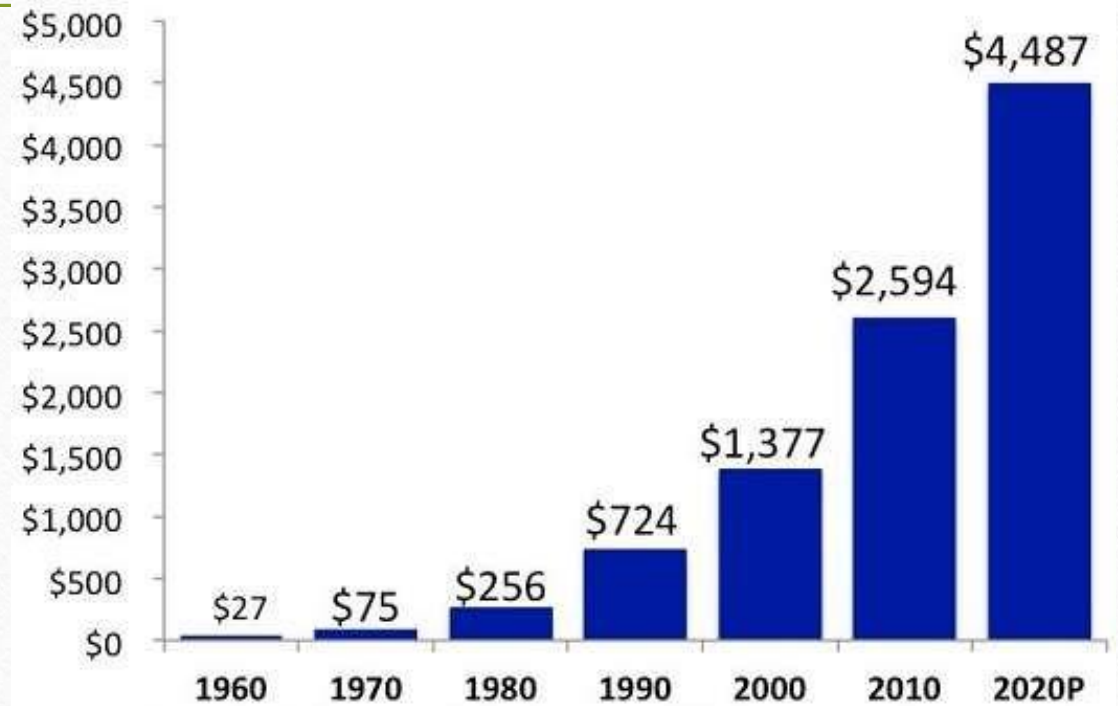
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Communication Tasks:

2. Describe the bar chart given below using the Future tenses :

Healthcare Costs 1960 – 2020

(In Billions)



Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 2012 California Healthcare Foundation

Communication Tasks:

3. Think about the future prospects in your specialty and answer the questions:

- 1. What will medicine have achieved by the year 2100?
- 2. What will scientists have discovered by that time?
- 3. What will researchers have invented by then?
- 4. What level will health care have reached by that time?

- The **PASSIVE VOICE** is used to show interest in the action rather than the person or object that performs this action. We can leave out this agent if it is not that important who/what did the action or if we don't know it.
- The **passive verb** is formed by putting the verb “to be” into the same tense as the active verb and adding the past participle of the active verb:

Active Voice	Passive Voice
The scientist uses new method.	New method <u>is used</u> by the scientist.
Someone described the first case of this disease in 1984.	In 1984, the first case of this disease <u>was described</u> .

- If we want to mention the agent, we will put it at the end of the sentence preceded by the particle “by”: Penicillin **was discovered** in 1928 **by Fleming**.

PASSIVE FORMS of the Present Simple Tense

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
I	am	V ₃
he, she, it	is	
you, we, they	are	

E.g.:

- Active: Doctor Smith *treats* this patient.
- Passive: This patient **is treated** by doctor Smith.

- Active: Doctors *review* the most interesting cases every day.
- Passive: The most interesting cases **are reviewed** every day.

- ***NB!*** Opinion and similar constructions have two forms:

1) to be + past participle + to be, e.g.:

- Huntington's disease was known to be a hereditary disease.

- Huntington's disease is now known to be passed through the female line.
- This disease is considered to be hereditary and manifests from birth.

2) 3rd person construction, e.g.:

- It is considered that Huntington's disease **is** hereditary.
- Previously, it was not understood that Huntington's disease **was** hereditary
- also: *known* / *thought* / *believed* / *expected* / *understood* etc.

PASSIVE FORMS of the Past Simple Tense

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
I	was	V ₃
he, she, it	was	
you, we, they	were	

E.g.:

- **Active:** The nurse *checked* the patient's blood pressure before the operation.
- **Passive:** The blood pressure of the patient was checked before the operation.
- **Active:** The doctor *examined* these patients yesterday.
- **Passive:** These patients were examined by the doctor yesterday.

PASSIVE FORMS

of the Future Simple Tense

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
I he, she, it you, we, they	will be	V ₃

- **Active:** This surgeon *will perform* these operations.
- **Passive:** These operations will be performed by this surgeon.

PASSIVE FORMS of the Perfect Tenses

TENSE		SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
PERFECT	Present	I, they, you, we	have been	V ₃
		he, she, it	has been	
	Past	I, he, she, it, they, you, we	had been	V ₃
	Future	I, we he, she, it, you, they	will have been	V ₃

Present perfect

- **Active:** The doctor *has attended* to ten patients this morning.
- **Passive:** Ten patients have been attended to this morning.

Past perfect

- **Active:** They *had sent* the CT films before the operation started.
- **Passive:** The CT films had been sent before the operation started.

Future perfect

- **Active:** We *will have calculated* the correct daily dose for this patient before the concilium starts.
- **Passive:** The correct daily dose for this patient will have been calculated before the concilium starts.

PASSIVE FORMS of the Continuous Tenses

TENSE		SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
CONTINUOUS	Present	I	am	being + V ₃
		he, she, it	is	
		we, you, they	are	
	Past	I	was	
		he, she, it	was	
		we, you, they	were	
	Future	—	—	—

Present continuous

- **Active:** The professor *is delivering* the lecture at the moment.
- **Passive:** The lecture is being delivered by the professor at the moment.
- **Active:** The surgeons *are operating* on an old woman right now.
- **Passive:** An old woman is being operated on right now.

Past continuous

- **Active:** They *were carrying* the injured person to the hospital.
- **Passive:** The injured person was being carried to the hospital.

NB! In order to transform Future Continuous into Passive, Future Indefinite is used:

- **Active:** At ten o'clock tomorrow Nick *will be writing* the letter.
- **Passive:** At ten o'clock tomorrow the letter will be written by Nick.

Active/Passive Voice

- The passive is often used in academic writing, as some people consider it to be impersonal and thus more objective (e.g., “the tolerability of this surgical technique **was examined**”).
- However, passive voice can be imprecise and confusing; it can slow the reader down and disrupt the sentence focus.
- Therefore, it is usually appropriate to use **a good balance** of passive and active forms within academic writing.
- In general, passive voice is used to describe a **process**, the **results** of study, or similar material which is **objective** in nature. Active voice is used to describe **actions**.
- Thus, choice of active/passive voice depends on the context. Clarity of meaning is paramount in medical research. The aim must be to avoid any possibility of confusion in the written and spoken meaning.

Impersonal “it”-constructions

(“it seems / it appears / it is clear that / it is important to point out / it is necessary to bear in mind”, etc.)

- The “it”-constructions depersonalize text and create an impression of the writer’s distance and objectivity.
- E.g., in *Type 2 diabetes mellitus in children and adolescents* by Thomas Reinehr (*World J Diabetes*. 2013; 4(6): 270–281.):

- ✓ “**It is well recognized** that insulin resistance to insulin-stimulated glucose uptake is a characteristic finding in patients”;
- ✓ “**...it is not surprising** that the peak age at presentation of type 2 diabetes mellitus in children coincides with the usual age of mid-puberty”;
- ✓ “**It is interesting to note** that adipose tissue expanding in the obese state synthesizes and secretes metabolites”;
- ✓ “**...it is likely** that type 2 DM is a common condition in childhood”;
- ✓ “**It is unclear** whether foot examinations are important in children”;
- ✓ “**It is questionable** that the traditional techniques used to optimize glycemic control in patients with type 1 diabetes mellitus are also useful in children”;
- ✓ “**...it is debatable** whether the most appropriate context for therapy is a pediatric hospital”.