

# 9

## Tenses



**Jack went to the market.**

**Jack goes to the market.**

**Jack will go to the market.**

The given sentences indicate ‘when’ Jack went to market through different forms of verbs: past, present, and future. As you can see the whole context and time frame of the sentence alters with the different forms of the verb ‘go’ used here. It is crucial to have a good hold on tenses, not just for writing purposes, but to also not be misinterpreted when explaining any event.

The first sentence indicates that Jack ‘went’ to the market sometime in the past. The second sentence indicates that Jack ‘goes’ to the market sometime in the present or he may go to the market regularly. The third sentence indicates that Jack ‘will go’ to the market sometime in the future. The three sentences essentially refer to the same act—that of going to the market—but they indicate different times of going to the market. For this, the sentences use different forms of verbs—first form, second form, and third form.

Can you now infer what tenses are?

Tenses indicate the time of action in a sentence. They are roughly of three forms—past tense, present tense, and future tense. They can be further divided into: Simple tense, perfect tense, continuous tense, perfect continuous tense.

But before that, read the following sentences and try to identify the differences in them.

**Jack goes to the market.**

**Jack is going to the market.**

**Jack has gone to the market.**

**Jack has been going to the market.**

Do the given sentences refer the action to sometime in the present? If yes, what are the differences between these three sentences? Read them out loud for better understanding. Before answering these questions, study the following sentences:

**Jack went to the market.**

**Jack was going to the market.**

**Jack had gone to the market.**

**Jack had been going to the market.**

Do the given sentences refer to the action to sometime in the past? If yes, what are the differences between these three sentences? Now study the following sentences by reading them out loud:

**Jack will go to the market.**

**Jack will be going to the market.**

**Jack will have gone to the market.**

**Jack will have been going to the market.**

Do the given sentences refer the action to sometime in the future? If yes, what are the differences between these three sentences? In this chapter, we will understand how these sentences denote different times in the past, present, and future.

### Hotkeys

No need to learn the tense rules by heart!

Study the sentences and understand the different parts of speech.

Reading the examples can help you understand and learn the rules more than learning the rules in isolation will!

### PRESENT TENSE

#### Simple present

It may denote a universal truth, scientific facts, or tasks/actions done on a daily basis. The actions or acts happening at the moment are expressed in the present tense. Actions happening unceasingly and regularly are called present indefinite.

**Rule: subject + verb 1 + s/es + object**

#### Present continuous

It denotes an action happening in the present which will/ or might continue for a short while in the future too. It can be distinguished from

the simple present tense as the action here is temporary and is in progress in the present. However, the simple present tense is to express the actions in the immediate present.

#### Understand With Example



- Nancy goes to school every day. (Present indefinite)
- The sun rises in the east.
- Dogs hate water.
- I cook thrice a day for my family.
- She writes a letter to the authorities.
- They walk to their office daily.
- Water evaporates when heated.
- My father drops me to the destination.
- The earth revolves around the sun.
- The guests are in the dining hall.

**Rule: subject + is/am/are + verb 1 + ing + object**

#### Present perfect

It denotes something that started in the past and is just finished. Any action which took place in the past, at an indefinite time, is also expressed in Present perfect (Example: I presume we have met before).

#### Hotkey

Any certain time period if provided of the

#### Understand With Example



- Nancy is going to school.
- I am cooking for my family.
- Dua is writing a letter to the authorities regarding this situation.
- I am learning to read and write in Spanish.
- She and her friends are watching a comedy movie.
- I am residing in Moscow with my colleagues for the winter.

- We are renting an apartment.
- The sun is shining bright.
- They are listening to jazz.
- You are not participating in the tournament.

completion of the work in the past is not to be expressed in the present perfect tense. For example: We have briefed the team about the work at 11 this morning. (incorrect)  
We have briefed the team about the work. (Correct)

**Rule: subject + has/have + verb 3 + object**

#### Understand With Example



- Nancy has gone to school.
- Dua has written to the authorities regarding this situation.
- She has not seen her mother in a while.
- Have you been to this place before?
- I have received seventy-eight responses till now.
- I have ironed all the clothes.
- We have lived in this city for twenty years.
- Her parents have gone to bed.
- Have you ever broken a bone?
- They have prepared some presentations for our referral.

#### Present perfect continuous

It signifies an action that started in the past and is still continuing in present.

**Rule: subject + has/have + been + verb 1 + ing + object**

## PAST TENSE

### Simple past

It denotes any action that already happened and has been completed in the past. Unlike Past continuous tense, Simple past tense highlights the finality of the action that we are talking about.

#### Hotkey

Whenever a verb follows did, the verb must be in the base form. Did + past form of a verb is grammatically incorrect. Here 'did' is an auxiliary verb, which if incorporated in a sentence, makes it necessary for the 'main verb' to be in the base form. For instance, When did you sleep yesterday?  
Did you sleep well last night?

**Rule: subject + verb 2 + object**

### Past continuous

It indicates an action that was going on some time in the past. Such action was ongoing in the past, and is no longer continuing in the present.

**Rule: subject + was/were + verb 1 + ing + object**

#### Understand With Example



- Dua has been writing to the authorities regarding the current situation.
- You have been lying to me all this time.
- He has been working for seven hours without a break and I am concerned for his health.
- She has been spending a lot of time with her friends these days.
- They have been saving money for their next trip to the Maldives.
- Randy has been working in this firm for eleven years now.
- Has my son been attending the online classes?
- Have I been making myself sufficiently clear?

- James has been texting the wrong person for months.
- The committee has been reprimanding all the rule-breakers harshly.

### Past perfect

It usually denotes an action done a long time ago in the past. It would usually denote an action that happened earlier than the other actions mentioned in the sentence.

**Rule: subject + had + verb 3 + object**

#### Understand With Example



- I was watching that movie last night.
- She was living in Paraguay with her husband before she moved to the United States.
- He was working at that time.
- You were not playing with your friends yesterday, were you?
- Were you running in the park when I called you?
- They were not washing the laundry.
- Was I cooking food in the kitchen when the doorbell rang?
- As I was reaching out for the book, someone else grabbed it.
- The boss was doing a great job handling the workplace conflict.
- They were not watching anything super scary.

### Past perfect continuous

It denotes an action that began in the past and continued till sometime in the past. The point of difference between the Present Perfect Continuous tense and past perfect continuous is that the action here was continuous at some point in the past and is not happening right now.

**Rule: subject + had been + verb 1 + ing + object**

### Understand With Example



- She had arrived late at the meeting.
- I had completed the assignment before the professor asked for it.
- She had lived in Paraguay with her husband before she moved to the United States.
- Jeanine had not called him on time, so he was hostile.
- Had they informed you before barging into your home like that?
- By the time someone came in to help, the patient had already passed away.
- Had I been clear in my wording?
- Until I knocked on the door, no one had come out of the apartment.
- I had never seen such beautiful mountains before I went to Wyoming.
- I had forgotten to turn off the washing machine, so I had to return home.

- Had they been working at all?
- It had been raining all day, so I had to take an umbrella with me.
- Had you been sending them the reports on time?
- This shop had been selling original, handmade souvenirs before the authorities ordered it to stop its business.

It denotes an ongoing action in the future. The action will start sometime in the future and will continue for a certain time period in the future. The action will not be finished until then but will be in motion.

**Rule: subject + will/shall + be + verb 1 + ing + object**

#### Future perfect

It denotes an action that will occur in the

## FUTURE TENSE

### Simple future

It indicates an action that will happen in the future. The helping verb 'shall' can be used with 'we' and 'I' unless denoting a promise or a commitment, in which case, 'shall' is used with we/I.

**Rule: subject + will/shall + verb 1 + object**

### Future continuous

### Understand With Example



- I had been working for seven hours.
- Jack had been staying in London in a rented apartment.
- She had been helping people find jobs for months.
- The team had been doing a good job until the new boss arrived.
- Had you been cooking when I called?
- When the team arrived, the cleaners had been finishing up their work.

### Understand With Example



- I shall write a letter to the authorities regarding this situation.
- Mr. Jacobs will help you with your financial bills.
- I will not repeat this again, so please note down the information right now.
- Shall I send them a notice regarding your arrival?
- They will reside in Moscow, now that Sebastian has acquired a job there.
- We shall pay them once they have delivered all the shipments.
- Their team will win the match today.
- The missionaries will sail to the island.
- I will watch a documentary tomorrow.
- Shall we go to the salon tomorrow?

future and will be finished by a particular point of time in the future. Such an action can take place anytime between now and the particular moment in the future.

**Rule: subject + will/shall + have + verb 3 + object**

#### Understand With Example



- They will be walking to their school at seven in the morning tomorrow.
- I shall be calling him home if he does not behave.
- He will be studying during his finals.
- I will be teaching their class next semester.
- She will be out running at that time of the day.
- The professor will be teaching the class.
- I shall be having a talk with her regarding this.
- Will you be waiting for me?
- The train will be leaving the station on time.
- I will not be bothering you anymore.

#### Future perfect continuous

It indicates an action that will happen in the future and will continue for some time. We cast ourselves sometime in the future, and look back at the ongoing action (which is still a part of the future). There must be a time reference in such sentences.

**Rule: subject + will/shall + have been + verb 1 + ing + object**

#### Understand With Example



- They will have cleaned the rooms by the time the guests arrive.
- We will not have prepared for the presentation by seven if Janet does not arrive on time.
- Will the supervisor have written his feedback by the time the tournament is completed?
- The team will have come up with a plan by now.

- Mr. Johnson shall have given them the tender by this time tomorrow.
- By the end of the month, I will have earned a fortune.
- Will we have completed the task by next week?
- My mother will not have cleaned the house before my boss arrives.
- They will have won the match.
- She will have annoyed her friends all day.

#### Understand With Example



- She will have been working on that project for the rest of the day tomorrow.
- They will have been enjoying the party by tomorrow night.
- Will Mr. Chandran have been writing them a notice?
- The landlady will have been vacuuming the whole apartment tomorrow.
- I will have been studying Political Governance by next semester.
- They will have been sailing through the ocean at this time next month.
- Will they have been laughing at my Christmas performance on New Year's Eve?
- The students will have been working on their projects for three hours.
- The ministers will not have been delivering their speeches by next week.
- The maid will have been cleaning the kitchen for half an hour.

#### Hotkey

Understanding tenses rules can help you solve questions like identification of incorrect sentences in GATE and other engineering entrance exams. Plus, a proper understanding of tenses can help you understand the correct meanings of the passages.



Following are the rules you can apply to make your sentences better.

## RULES

### Simple Present

Assertive – SUBJECT + VERB 1 + s/es + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + does/do not + VERB 1 + s/es + OBJECT

Interrogative – Does/Do + SUBJECT + VERB 1 + s/es + OBJECT

### Present Continuous

Assertive – SUBJECT + is/am/are + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + is/am/are + not + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Interrogative – Is/Am/Are + SUBJECT + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

### Present Perfect

Assertive – SUBJECT + has/have + VERB 3 + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + has/have + VERB 3 + OBJECT

Interrogative – Has/Have + SUBJECT + VERB 3 + OBJECT

### Present Perfect Continuous

Assertive – SUBJECT + has/have + been + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + has/have + not been + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Interrogative – Has/Have + SUBJECT + been + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

### Simple Past

Assertive – SUBJECT + VERB 2 + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + did not + VERB 1 + OBJECT

Interrogative – Did + SUBJECT + VERB 1 + OBJECT

### Past Continuous

Assertive – SUBJECT + was/were + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + was/were + not + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Interrogative – Was/were + SUBJECT + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

### Past Perfect

Assertive – SUBJECT + had + VERB 3 + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + had not + VERB 3 + OBJECT

Interrogative – Had + SUBJECT + VERB 3 + OBJECT

### Past Perfect Continuous

Assertive – SUBJECT + had been + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + had + not been + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Interrogative – Had + SUBJECT + been + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

### Simple Future

Assertive – SUBJECT + will/shall + VERB 1 + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + will/shall + not + VERB 1 + OBJECT

Interrogative – Will/shall + SUBJECT + VERB 1 + OBJECT



### Simple Future

Assertive – SUBJECT + will/shall + VERB 1 + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + will/shall + not + VERB 1 + OBJECT

Interrogative – Will/shall + SUBJECT + VERB 1 + OBJECT

### Future Continuous

Assertive – SUBJECT + will/shall + be + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + will/shall + not + be + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

Interrogative – Will/Shall + SUBJECT + be + VERB 1 + Ing + OBJECT

### Future Perfect

Assertive – SUBJECT + will/shall + have + VERB 3 + OBJECT

Negative – SUBJECT + will/shall + not + have + VERB 3 + OBJECT

Interrogative – Will/shall + SUBJECT + have + VERB 3 + OBJECT

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Select the correct tense form and fill in the blanks.

### Past Tense

1. We \_\_\_\_\_ the food we brought from the farmers' market. (Past perfect | cook)
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ that he was ill. (Simple past | inform)
3. Marionette \_\_\_\_\_ with her friends before we arrived. (Past perfect | leave)
4. The fireworks \_\_\_\_\_ the children. (Simple past | terrify)
5. The assistants \_\_\_\_\_ the rooms very neatly. (Past perfect | clean)
6. I \_\_\_\_\_ all of my friends at the party. (Simple past | invite)
7. I \_\_\_\_\_ in the office when my colleagues arrived and asked me to leave the room. (Past perfect continuous | work)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ cooking when we knocked at the door? (Past perfect continuous)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ they \_\_\_\_\_ you regarding the meeting? (Past perfect | notify)
10. Mr. Jamieson \_\_\_\_\_ me to preside this committee for a month until her arrival. (Past continuous | tell)
11. I \_\_\_\_\_ for work when I saw the mail on my porch. (Past continuous | leave)
12. She \_\_\_\_\_ in love with him when he broke her heart. (Past perfect | be)
13. \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone? (Simple past | audible)
14. He told me that Jeremy \_\_\_\_\_ another book when the publishers reached out to him. (Past perfect continuous | write)
15. I am of the view that she \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ to be our president. (Simple past | fit)
16. Mrs. Kennedy \_\_\_\_\_ in the fields yesterday. (Past continuous | work)
17. They \_\_\_\_\_ her skills when they found out that she had won the competition. (Past perfect continuous | appreciate)
18. Last month, Seema \_\_\_\_\_ to Delhi for her internship. (Simple past | travel)
19. She \_\_\_\_\_ the whole night before she presented her research in the class. (Past perfect continuous | study)
20. Meera and I \_\_\_\_\_ movie last night (simple past | watch)



### Present Tense

1. Lilly \_\_\_\_\_ a letter to the authorities regarding this situation. (Simple present | write)
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ all through this semester. (Present perfect | study)
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ to the Elton John concert this weekend. (Present continuous | go)
4. He \_\_\_\_\_ home for the summer break. (Present continuous | return)
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ on the notice board every morning regarding the schedules. (Simple present | write)
6. Their family \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of festivals together recently. (Present perfect continuous | celebrate)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ myself sufficiently clear? (Present perfect continuous | make)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ the team \_\_\_\_\_ together properly? (Present continuous | work)
9. The problem \_\_\_\_\_ quite often these days. (Present perfect continuous | arise)
10. I \_\_\_\_\_ a witness in a criminal case. (Present perfect | serve)
11. They \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ whether they can accept such a behaviour. (Simple present | sure)
12. Her plane \_\_\_\_\_ in Moscow as we speak. (Present continuous | land)
13. I \_\_\_\_\_ on my mental health for the past few weeks. (Present perfect continuous | focus)
14. She \_\_\_\_\_ the work on time. (Present perfect | submit)
15. Mr. Tumnus \_\_\_\_\_ in Narnia. (Simple present | live)
16. Peter \_\_\_\_\_ her every day for the past few months. (Present perfect | call)
17. The kid's socks \_\_\_\_\_ on the floor. (Present continuous | lie)
18. Leela \_\_\_\_\_ in Malaysia for 3 years. (Present perfect continuous | live)
19. Lata is \_\_\_\_\_ the concert. (Present continuous | attend)
20. I want to \_\_\_\_\_ in the event this evening. (Simple present | sing)

### Future Tense

1. They \_\_\_\_\_ for the station at seven in the morning tomorrow. (Future continuous | leave)
2. She \_\_\_\_\_ piano lessons from me next week. (Future continuous | take)
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ to her tomorrow. (Simple future | talk)
4. The team \_\_\_\_\_ the work by this time tomorrow. (Future perfect | complete)
5. Tokyo \_\_\_\_\_ Rangers \_\_\_\_\_ the game tomorrow. (Future perfect continuous | win)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ they \_\_\_\_\_ at the train station? (Simple future | be)
7. The landlord \_\_\_\_\_ for the rent tomorrow morning. (Future continuous | ask)
8. Maria \_\_\_\_\_ with the presentation by that time. (Future perfect continuous | finish)
9. I \_\_\_\_\_ the lessons today. (Future continuous | conclude)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ the Sharma's not \_\_\_\_\_ their portion of the work? (Future continuous | do)
11. They \_\_\_\_\_ her sooner than expected. (Future continuous | contact)
12. My plane \_\_\_\_\_ by this time tomorrow. (Future perfect | land)
13. Mr. Keller \_\_\_\_\_ his job as the new security guard of this building soon. (Simple future | begin)
14. I am not if they \_\_\_\_\_ the party or not. (Future continuous | attend)
15. Who \_\_\_\_\_ in-charge of this company by then? (Future perfect | made)
16. Radhika \_\_\_\_\_ as the new barmaid from this time tomorrow. (Future perfect continuous | start)
17. He \_\_\_\_\_ a better result after changing his routine. (Simple future | see)
18. Sarthak \_\_\_\_\_ his revision by





- tomorrow. (Future Perfect | finish)
19. The family \_\_\_\_\_ to Kolkata on Tuesday. (Future Continuous | travel)

20. \_\_\_\_\_ (He) us for dinner tomorrow? (Simple future | join)

## SOLUTIONS

### Past Tense

1. had cooked
2. informed
3. had left
4. terrified
5. had cleaned
6. invited
7. had been working
8. had been
9. had notified
10. was telling
11. was leaving
12. had been
13. was audible
14. had been writing
15. was fit
16. was working
17. had been appreciating
18. travelled
19. had been studying
20. watched

### Present Tense

1. writes
2. has studied
3. am going
4. is returning
5. write
6. has been celebrating
7. have been making
8. has worked
9. has been arising
10. have served

11. are sure
12. is landing
13. have been focusing
14. has submitted
15. lives
16. has called
17. are lying
18. has been living
19. attending
20. sing

### Future Tense

1. will be leaving
2. will be taking
3. shall/will talk
4. will have completed
5. will have been winning
6. will be
7. will be asking
8. will have been finishing
9. will be concluding
10. will be doing
11. shall/will be contacting
12. will have landed
13. will/shall begin
14. will be attending
15. will have been made
16. will have been starting
17. will/shall see
18. will have finished
19. will/ shall be travelling
20. will he join

