

12. ...you stop here, you will get no time for work.
13. ...you sow...you will reap.
14. ...fast you go, I shall follow you.
15. He had gone away...I came.
16. He...I is bold.
17. ...Ram...his brother came to attend the meeting.
18. We should get our house insured... there is an accident.
19. I enjoy the songs... this one.
20. ...he came here, he didn't say anything.

7.9 Correct Usage: Tenses

7.9.1 Introduction

In some languages, verb tenses are not very important or do not even exist. In English, the concept of tense is very important. The word, 'tense' (noun) has been derived from Latin word 'tempus' which means 'time.' It is a form of a verb, which is used to indicate the time, and sometimes the continuation or completeness of an action in relation to the time of speaking. In other words, tense is a method that we use in English to refer to time—past, present and future.

Nevertheless, we can also talk about time without using tenses. For example, 'going to' is a special construction which is used to talk about the future but it is not a tense. One tense does not always talk about one time; for instance, a present tense does not always refer to present time: 'I hope it rains tomorrow'—'rains' is simple present tense but here it refers to future time (tomorrow). In the same way, a past tense does not always refer to past time: 'If I had some money now, I could buy it'—here, 'had' is simple past but it refers to present time.

7.9.2 Table of Tenses

Tense and verb pattern	Sentences: Affirmative/negative and interrogative	Uses	Signal words
Simple Present: 1st form of the verb 's/es' with 3rd person singular number	Affirmative: I/we/you/they write. He/she/it writes. Negative: I/we/you/they do not write. He/she/it does not write. Interrogative: Do we/you/they/ I write? Does he/she/it write?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hobbies, routine and habitual actions: I like coffee. Things those are always true/general statements: The sun rises in the east. Running commentary: Ajay passes the ball to Mahesh who kicks it off. Facts, opinions and beliefs: I think you are right. Exclamatory sentences: Here comes Mr. Yadav! 	Every ..., never, normally, often, seldom, sometimes, usually, generally, occasionally, rarely, frequently

(Continued)

Tense and verb pattern	Sentences: Affirmative/negative and interrogative	Uses	Signal words
Present Continuous/Progressive: <i>Is/are/am + 'ing' in the first form of the verb</i>	Affirmative: I am writing. We/you/they are writing. He/she/it is writing. Negative: I am not writing. We/you/they are not writing. He/she/it is not writing. Interrogative: Am I writing? Are we/you/they writing? Is he/she/it writing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action or an event that is developing now: The patient is <i>getting</i> better and better. Action happening at the time of speaking: I <i>am</i> reading a book. Action in progress not necessarily at the time of speaking: I <i>am</i> teaching in a college. Definite future plans: I <i>am</i> leaving for Delhi tomorrow. Repeated undesirable/annoying habits: You <i>are</i> always coming late. 	at the moment, at present, for the time being, just, just now, Listen! Look! now, right now
Present Perfect: <i>Has/have + 3rd form of the verb</i>	Affirmative: I/we/you/they have written. He/she/it has written. Negative: I/we/you/they have not written. He/she/it has not written. Interrogative: Have I/we/you/they written? Has he/she/it written?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recently completed action: I <i>have</i> just finished my work. Past action when time given is not definite: I <i>have</i> read this article. Past events, which have a link with the present: The workers <i>have</i> called off the strike. An action that began in the past but is still continued in the present: We <i>have</i> lived here for five years. 	Already, ever, just, never, yet, recently, lately, today, till now, up to now, for, since, today, first time, second time, this week/year/month/year, etc.
Present Perfect Progressive: <i>Has/have+ been + 'ing' in the first form of the verb + since/for to denote time</i>	Affirmative: I/we/you/they have been writing since 8 p.m. He/she/it has been writing for two hours. Negative: I/we/you/they have not been writing since 8 p.m. He/she/it has not been writing for two hours. Interrogative: Have I/we/you/they been writing since 8 p.m.? Has he/she/it been writing for two hours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action that began in the past but is still continued in the present: It <i>has been</i> raining since two o'clock. An action that is finished but its result or effect still persists: The children <i>have been</i> playing the whole day and are now very tired. 	All day, for 4 years, since 1993, how long, recently, the whole week/day/year, for a long time, many hours

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Tense and verb pattern	Sentences: Affirmative/negative and interrogative	Uses	Signal words
Simple Past: <i>2nd form of the verb</i>	Affirmative: I/we/you/they/he/she/it wrote. Negative: I/we/you/they/he/she/it did not write. Affirmative: Did I/we/you/they/he/she/it write?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A past event or action not related to the present: I visited my uncle's place yesterday. A past habit or regular action in the past: In school days he never spoke a lie. An action that lasted for a period of time in the past: He worked in this office for five years. Past events in the order in which they occurred: I got up early, had my breakfast and studied for two hours. 	Yesterday, 2 minutes ago, in 1990, the other day, last Friday/Sunday/night/morning/week/year
Past Continuous/Progressive: <i>Was/were + 'ing' in the first form of the verb</i>	Affirmative: We/you/they were writing. He/she/I/it was writing. Negative: We/you/they were not writing. He/she/I/it was not writing. Interrogative: Were I/we/you/they writing? Was he/she/it writing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action that was in progress at sometime in the past: I was working on internet at 10 p.m. Two or more actions in progress at the same time: I was doing my homework while my brother was playing. The students were talking when the teacher was teaching. Often repeated annoying past habits: He was always coming to my place at odd hours. 	When, while, as long as, as, on..., at..., whereas
Past Perfect: <i>Had + third form of the verb</i>	Affirmative: I/we/you/they/he/she/it had written. Negative: I/we/you/they/he/she/it had not written. Interrogative: Had I/we/you/they/he/she/it written?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action completed before a certain moment in the past: At 7.30 a.m. I <i>had</i> reached college. An action that was completed before another action: We <i>had</i> checked the bag before we left. An unfulfilled desire: I wish I <i>had</i> followed my father's advice. 	Already, just, never, not yet, once, until that day

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Tense and verb pattern	Sentences: Affirmative/negative and interrogative	Uses	Signal words
Past Perfect Progressive: <i>Had been + 'ing' in the first form of the verb + since/for to denote time</i>	Affirmative: I/we/you/they/he/she/it had been writing since 8 o'clock/for two hours. Negative: I/we/you/they/he/she/it had not been writing since 8 o'clock/for two hours. Interrogative: Had I/we/you/they/he/she/it been writing since 8 o'clock, for two hours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action that began before a certain time in the past and continued up to that time or stopped just before that: The baby <i>had been</i> crying for sometime before I attended to it. A repeated action in the past on a continuous basis: I <i>had been</i> trying to contact him. 	For, since, the whole day, all day
Simple Future: <i>Will/shall + first form of the verb</i>	Affirmative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will/shall write. Negative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will/shall not write. Interrogative: Will/shall I/we/you/they/he/she/it write?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions scheduled to take place in future: We <i>will</i> do our work. Instant decisions: Oh, I'll go and switch it off. Strong determination, will, warning, order or command: I <i>will</i> not allow you to do it. Advice, suggestion, request or proposal: <i>Shall</i> we start our work? <i>Will</i> you have coffee? Universal truth or habit: Christmas <i>will</i> come in December. A gambler <i>will</i> gamble. 	... in a year, next ..., tomorrow, perhaps in one year, next week, tomorrow
Future Continuous/ Progressive: <i>Will/shall + be + 'ing' in the first form of the verb</i>	Affirmative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will/shall be writing. Negative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will/shall not be writing. Interrogative: Will/shall I/we/you/they/he/she/it be writing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action that will occur in the normal course: I <i>shall be</i> staying with my uncle. An action that will be in progress at a given time in the future: At 3.30 p.m., I <i>will be</i> attending a lecture. Future planning or intentions: I <i>will be</i> in Delhi on Monday. Polite request: <i>Will</i> you be going to market? 	At 9 a.m., on Monday/Tuesday... in a year, next ..., tomorrow, perhaps in one year, next week,

(Continued)

Tense and verb pattern	Sentences: Affirmative/negative and interrogative	Uses	Signal words
Future Perfect: <i>Will/shall + have + 3rd form of verb</i>	Affirmative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will/shall have written. Negative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will/shall not have written. Interrogative: Will/shall I/we/you/they/he/she/it have written?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action that is expected to be completed by a certain time in future: I <i>will have</i> finished my project by the end of this week. The speaker's belief that something has taken place: You <i>will have</i> heard about this. 	By the time, before, by the end of this week/year/month... on..., at...
Future Perfect Continuous: <i>Will/shall + have been + 'ing' in the first form of the verb + since/for to denote time</i>	Affirmative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will have been writing since 2 o'clock/for two hours. Negative: You/they/he/she/it/I/we will/shall have not been writing since 2 o'clock/for two hours. Interrogative: Will/shall I/we/you/they/he/she/it have not been writing since 2 o'clock/for two hours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action that will be in progress over a period of time in future: I <i>will have</i> been teaching for 5 years next September. 	Since, for, next year/month/January...

7.9.3 Common Errors in the Use of Tenses

- Will or shall: We use 'shall' for future only with the first person, that is, after I and we.
 - I *will/shall* finish college in June.
 - We *will/shall* know the result soon. (Not everyone shall know the results soon.)
 - They *will* finish the work today. (Not they shall...)
- 'I/we will' and 'I/we shall' have the same meaning but 'shall' is a little formal.
 - I *will* buy this watch yesterday. (Not ... have bought ... yesterday)
 - I *finished* my letter last night. (Not ... have finished ... last night...)
- Present perfect tense should not be used with the time expressions of the past tense:
 - I *have bought* this watch yesterday. (Not ... have bought ... yesterday)
 - I *have finished* my letter last night. (Not ... have finished ... last night...)
- Past tense in the principal clause is followed by the past tense in the subordinate clause:
 - I *asked* him what he *had* done. (Not ... what he has done.)
 - Children *ran* outside to see what *was* happening. (Not ... what is happening.)
- Past tense in the principal clause is followed by the present tense in the subordinate clause to denote universal truth or facts:
 - I *learned* at school that the *earth* *is* round like a ball. (Not ... was round like...)
 - My father *taught* me that honesty *is* the best policy. (Not ... honesty was...)

6. Simple present tense is used for states or permanent facts while present continuous tense is used for temporary actions:
- A photographer *takes* photographs. Smile please; I *am taking* your photograph.
 - They *live* in a nice flat. They *are living* in a small flat for the time being.
 - It *usually rains* at weekends. It *is raining* at the moment.
 - Paper *burns* easily. See how the paper *is burning*.
7. Verbs of senses—see, hear, smell, notice, seem, appear, recognize; verbs of emotions—want, like, desire, love, hate, forgive, forget, wish, prefer; verbs of thinking—think, suppose, know, mean, realize, understand, suppose, believe, remember, expect, agree, consider, trust, imagine, mind and the verbs showing possession—have, has, own, belong, possess, contain, consist, keep—are used in simple tenses not in continuous tenses when they refer to states, permanent quality or facts. However, they may be used in continuous tenses when they refer to actions, temporary behaviour or short-lived feelings, etc.:
- The house *is clean*. The sweeper *is cleaning* the house.
 - I *see* your problem. I *am seeing* your problem.
 - I *like* my school. I *am liking* school much better now.
 - I *think* you are right. I *am thinking* about your problem.
 - We *have* a big car. We *are having* lunch.
 - We *all enjoy* parties. We *are enjoying* this party.
8. For interrupted actions we use present perfect tense not present perfect continuous:
- I *have written* five letters *since morning*. (Not ... have been writing...)
 - They *have played* four games *since afternoon*. (Not ... have been playing...)
9. The adverbials—just, already, never, ever, so far, till now, lately, recently, yet, before, today, this week/month/year—are generally used in the present perfect tense when they show finished actions in the present state of completion:
- I *have just finished* writing it. (Not I just received...)
 - They *have already received* your message. (Not They already received...)
10. 'Since' and 'for' denote time. Both of them are used as prepositions. 'Since' is used for 'a point of time' while 'for' is used for 'the duration or length of time':
- I *have been learning* English *since* class II. (Not ... for class II)
 - We *have been reading* this book *for* two hours. (Not since...two hours)
11. When 'since' is used as a preposition, it is always preceded by a verb in the present perfect or past perfect tense:
- The college *had been closed* *since* Monday. (Not ... was closed...)
 - He *has been irregular* in classes *since* July. (... Not was irregular...)
12. When 'since' is used as a conjunction, it is followed by a verb in the simple past tense and preceded by a verb in the simple present or present perfect tense:
- A month *has passed* *since* I *came* here.
 - Two hours *have passed* *since* he *fell* asleep.
 - Hours *pass* quickly *since* I *have got* this job.
13. Two or more actions, given in a sequence are described in the simple past tense. If the sequence is not given, the first action is described in simple present tense and the second one is described in the past perfect tense:
- He *got up*, *looked* here and there and *went* away.
 - The train *had left* before I *reached* station.
14. Future tense is not used after the temporal conjunctions—until, when, before, after, as soon as, as, etc.:
- He *will come* when he *is* ready. (Not ...when he will be ready)
 - I *will be* here till you *come*. (Not...till you will come)
15. When 'were' is used to refer to the future, subordinate clause cannot express a completed action:
- *Were* I in her place, I *would enjoy* a lot. (Not...I would have enjoyed a lot.)
 - *Were* you in my place you *would feel* sick. (Not...you would have felt sick.)

7.9.4 Conditionals

When we talk of the future, we think about a particular condition or situation and the result of this condition. Sentences describing such situations are called conditionals. There are several structures of conditionals used for different purposes:

1. The structure, 'If/when + simple present + simple present' is used for the result of a condition that is always true like a scientific fact. One thing follows the other automatically:
 - If you *heat* water, it *boils*.
 - When I *get up* late, I *get* late for the office.
2. The structure, 'If + simple present + will/can/shall + main verb' shows a real possibility that the condition will happen:
 - If it *rains*, I *will stay* at home.
 - If they *don't pass* the exams, their parents *will be* unhappy.
 - We can use present perfect or present continuous tense also in the 'if clause' and a modal in the main clause:
 - If you *are going* for a job interview, you *should* wear a tie.
 - If you *haven't got* a television, you *can't* see the match.
3. The structure, 'If + simple past + would/past form of a modal + main verb' shows unreal possibility or dream:
 - If we *took* a car, we *would reach* early.
 - If I *won* a lottery, I *would buy* a huge bungalow.
4. The structure, 'If + past perfect + would have + past participle' shows no possibility. In such conditionals, the condition as well as result is impossible now:
 - If you *had been* more careful, you *would not have* fallen.
 - If you *had called* me, I *would have come* to see you.
5. The 'if clause' usually comes first but it can come after the main clause too:
 - The ice *melts*, if you *heat* it.
 - We *will miss* the bus, if we *don't hurry*.
 - I *could do* it faster, if I *had* a calculator.
 - He *would have passed* the test, if he *had not made* that mistake.

7.9.5 Question Tags

A tag is something small that is added to something larger. For example, when you buy a dress, the little piece of cloth or a tag attached to it shows size, washing instructions or price. A question tag is a mini-question that follows a statement. The whole sentence is a 'tag question,' and the mini-question at the end of it is called a 'question tag.' Question tags are commonly used in spoken English to ask for confirmation or to make polite and friendly requests or to give orders.

The question tag should have the same verb or tense as that of the tag question. If the sentence is in negative, the tag should be in affirmative and if the sentence is in affirmative, the tag should be in negative. Contractions—*can't/don't/doesn't/won't/shan't/aren't/isn't/wasn't/weren't/hasn't/haven't/hadn't/shouldn't/wouldn't/couldn't/mustn't*—should be used. For example:

- The rose is beautiful. *Isn't it?*
- Honey tastes sweet. *Doesn't it?*
- I could do it well. *Couldn't I?*
- You can't climb mountains. *Can you?*
- You don't know him. *Do You?*
- They will not help us. *Will they?*
- We must not give her the news. *Must we?*

Task

Correct the following sentences:

1. We have written to you yesterday about this matter.
2. He ran outside to see what is happening.
3. He would come, if you wished it.
4. Were I in his place I should have paid the money.
5. I am here since 1992.
6. She didn't see the President yet.
7. Two years passed since his father died.
8. He is long known to me.
9. Boys are to go to school daily.
10. He might have come to see me now.
11. He will come when he will be ready.
12. She sang very well. Isn't it?
13. He saw the Taj Mahal.
14. Kindly see my testimonials.
15. He asked me where was I going.
16. I did nothing but cried.
17. I want to realize the consequences of your actions.
18. We shall start for picnic as soon as you will come.
19. Let us purchase a radio before the price will go up.
20. If only I met her earlier, I would have given you the invitation for the party.

7.10 Correct Usage: Subject-Verb Agreement

The verb must agree with the subject in number and person. The basic principle is: singular subjects need singular verbs; plural subjects need plural verbs. For example:

- My brother is a doctor.
- My sisters are teachers.

1. Two or more singular subjects joined by 'and' take a plural verb:
 - Oil and water do not mix.
 - A car and a bike are the popular means of transportation.
2. When two singular nouns joined by 'and' together express one idea, a singular verb is used:
 - Slow and steady wins the race.
 - Rice and curry is my favourite dish.
3. If two subjects are joined with—'as well as', 'in addition to', 'besides', 'not', 'with', 'along with', or 'together with'—the verb agrees with the first subject:
 - The owner as well as his servants is honest.
 - The players as well as their captain are happy.
 - Diseases in addition to poverty and illiteracy pose a big challenge in slums.
 - You not he have been fined.
 - Several other activities besides writing keep me busy.
 - The teacher with/along with his students was present in the programme.
 - The leader together with his friends is going to prison.
4. When two subjects are joined with 'not only – but also' the verb agrees with the latter subject:
 - Not only the students but also the teacher was asked to give a presentation.
 - Not only the master but his attendants were also praised.

5. Two singular subjects connected with – 'or', 'nor', 'either – or', 'neither – nor' – take a singular verb:
 - For example:
 - Neither Joy nor Sam is available.
 - Either Vandana or Jyoti is helping with stage decorations.

6. When the subjects of different numbers are connected by 'or', 'nor', 'either – or', 'neither – nor' the plural subject is placed the last and verb is used according to it:
 - Neither Aarti nor her friends like coffee.
 - The minister or his officials have to take responsibility of the accident.

7. When subjects of different persons are connected by 'or', 'nor', 'either – or', 'neither – nor', the second person comes first, the third person comes second and the first person comes last. The verb agrees with the subject nearest it:
 - Neither she nor I am going to the festival.
 - Either you or Tinkle has to do the job.

8. The expressions, 'many a', 'a great deal of', 'one of the + (plural noun)', 'the number of', 'a majority of', 'pair of' take a singular verb:
 - Many a new idea has come to my mind.
 - A great deal of patience is required to do this job.
 - One of the boys has broken the flask.
 - The number of books on this subject is very small.
 - A majority of people was in favour of banning smoking.
 - A pair of shoes was lying on the floor.

9. Some plural nouns showing an amount, a fraction or an element of time are considered singular and take a singular verb:
 - Sixty minutes is enough to finish this task.
 - Ten dollars is a high price to pay.
 - Two weeks is a good holiday.
 - Three fourths of land is barren.

10. The pronouns, 'anyone', 'anybody', 'everyone', 'everybody', 'someone', 'no one', 'nobody', 'each', 'every', 'neither' and 'either', are singular and take a singular verb:
 - Does anyone else want to come?
 - Is there anybody in the room?
 - Everybody has done his or her homework.
 - Someone has left her book.
 - There is no one in the room.
 - Each of these shops is doing good business.
 - Every boy and every girl was given a sweet.
 - Neither of the traffic lights is working.

11. Indefinite pronouns—'several', 'few', 'both', 'many'—are used with plural verbs:
 - Several books were lying on the table.
 - Both the books require careful reading.
 - Few people were present on the occasion.
 - Many mistakes were found in the article.

12. The words 'here' and 'there' are generally used as adverbs even though they indicate place. In sentences beginning with 'here' or 'there', the verb is used according to the real subject that follows it:
 - There are many difficulties to overcome.
 - There is a big problem in his way.
 - Here are two apples.
 - Here comes Mr. Smith.

13. While using the words indicating portions—'half of', 'a part of', 'percentage of', 'a variety of', 'plenty of', 'a lot of', 'remainder', 'fraction of', 'all', 'any', 'more', 'most of', 'none of' and 'some of'—take a singular verb when they refer to amount or quantity as a whole and a plural verb when they refer to a number. For example:
- *Half of the money was mine. Half of the students have passed.*
 - *A large part of the population is voting against her. / A large part of students enjoy doing mischief.*
 - *Forty percent of the students are in favour of changing the examination system. / Forty percent of the student body is in favour of changing the policy.*
 - *A variety of questions were selected for the test. / This is a rare variety of rose.*
 - *Plenty of books are available on this topic. / Plenty of money was spent on decorations.*
 - *All five men are hard workers. All wood tends to shrink.*
 - *Are there any stamps? Is there any water?*
 - *Some of the books have been stolen. Some of the milk is missing.*
 - *More work remains to be done. / More people are expected to visit this place.*
 - *Most of the classical music sends me to sleep. / Most of the stories about him are false.*
14. Adjectives—'much', 'less', 'little'—are used with uncountable nouns and take a singular verb:
- *Much of the work has been done.*
 - *It is less of a problem than I had expected.*
 - *A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.*
15. When subjects and verbs are separated by a comma, a clause or a longer phrase, use the verb according to the actual subject:
- *The dress, I bought on my birthday, is really good.*
 - *All the songs, recorded by him, are really entertaining.*
16. Similarly, when the subject of the verb is a relative pronoun, use the verb according to the antecedent of the relative pronoun:
- *I am the person who has always stood by you.*
 - *I who am your friend should have been told about it.*

For the correct usage of verb with collective nouns, nouns singular in form and plural in sense, nouns plural in form but singular in usage, nouns used in singular only, nouns used in plural only, nouns used in the same form in plural as well as in plural and nouns indicating length, weight, measurement, money or number, please refer to 'Correct Usage: Nouns'-7.2.6.

Task

Correct the following sentences:

1. This is one of the most difficult papers that has ever been set.
2. I am one who have always prayed for your well being.
3. Not only boys but their teacher also deserve praise.
4. Each of the suspected men was arrested.
5. A pair of spectacles are lying on the table.
6. None of his speeches have been appreciated.
7. Neither praise nor blame seem to affect him.
8. A series of lectures were delivered by him.
9. A lot of time have been wasted.
10. Every boy and every girl were given a prize.
11. Hard work as well as luck are necessary for success.
12. Gulliver's Travels are a captivating book.

13. A great deal of work remain to be done.
14. Everyone in the class read their book.
15. Students together with their teacher was watching the match.
16. Three miles are not a long distance.
17. Soup and salad are too light a breakfast.
18. Neither he nor you is allowed to go there.
19. My friend who lives with his aunt come to meet daily.
20. The cows as well the dog is a faithful animal.
21. The teacher and the student goes there.
22. The majority of students was satisfied with the decision.
23. Any body who are a student of the college can take part in this contest.
24. She or her friend have stolen my book.
25. There was no windows in our room.
26. The owner of these houses are very clever.
27. There is 11 players in the team.
28. Rice and curry are his favourite dish.
29. Both of the books requires careful reading.
30. Neither Tina nor her friends is going there.
31. A number of books is missing.
32. A doctor and a nurse is working in this hospital.