ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Verb tenses

Difficulty level: Intermediate

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you show when an action happened in your writing, like telling a story about yesterday, today, or tomorrow, so your reader never has to guess the timing. The tense of a verb places the action in the past, the present, or the future, and the reader relies on that to follow the story. Mixing tenses by accident makes the timing unclear, and the reader has to stop and work out when things happened. Getting the tense right keeps the story clear, so the reader always knows whether something already happened, is happening now, or is yet to happen.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Put 'walk' in the past tense: Yesterday, she ___ to school.

SOLUTION

The time word 'Yesterday' shows the action is finished.

The past tense of 'walk' is 'walked'.

So: Yesterday, she walked to school.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Put 'eat' in the future tense: Tomorrow, we ___ pizza.

SOLUTION

The time word 'Tomorrow' shows the action has not happened yet.

The future tense uses 'will' plus the base verb: 'will eat'.

So: Tomorrow, we will eat pizza.

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Practice questions

1 Put 'play' in the past tense: Last week, they ___ soccer.

- A played
- B plays
- C will play
- D playing

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2 Put 'go' in the future tense: Next year, I ___ to France.

- A goes
- B went
- C will go
- D going

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3

Put 'read' in the present tense (she): She ___ every night.

A read

B reads

C will read

D reading

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4

Put 'swim' in the past tense: He ___ yesterday.

A swims

B swam

C will swim

D swimming

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5 Which sentence is in the future tense?

- A We wrote letters yesterday.
- B We write letters every week.
- C We will write letters tomorrow.
- D We are writing letters now.

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6 Correct the sentence: 'The cat jump over the fence yesterday.'

- A The cat jumps over the fence yesterday.
- B The cat jumped over the fence yesterday.
- C The cat will jump over the fence yesterday.
- D The cat jumping over the fence yesterday.

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7

Put 'sing' in the present tense (they): They ___ in a choir.

A sings

B sang

C sing

D will sing

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8

Put 'buy' in the past tense: She ___ a book.

A buys

B bought

C will buy

D buying

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9 Which sentence is in the past tense?

A I run tomorrow morning.

B I will run tomorrow morning.

C I ran yesterday morning.

D I am running now.

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10 Correct the sentence: 'He cook dinner every day.'

A He cooks dinner every day.

B He cooked dinner every day.

C He will cook dinner every day.

D He cooking dinner every day.

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ANSWER KEY

1. played

2. will go

3. reads

4. swam

5. We will write letters tomorrow.

6. The cat jumped over the fence yesterday.

7. sing

8. bought

9. I ran yesterday morning.

10. He cooks dinner every day.

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