

Correct Use of Verb Tenses A

21e. Each of the six tenses has its own uses.

(1) The *present tense* expresses an action or a state of being that is occurring now, at the present time.

(2) The *past tense* expresses an action or a state of being that occurred in the past and did not continue into the present.

A past action or state of being may also be shown by using *used to*.

(3) The *future tense* expresses an action or a state of being that will occur. The future tense is formed with the helping verb *shall* or *will*.

(4) The *present perfect tense* expresses an action or a state of being that occurred at an indefinite time in the past. The present perfect tense is formed with the helping verb *have* or *has*.

(5) The *past perfect tense* expresses an action or a state of being that ended before some other past action or state of being. The past perfect tense is formed with the helping verb *had*.

(6) The *future perfect tense* expresses an action or a state of being that will end before some other future occurrence. The future perfect tense is formed with the helping verbs *shall have* or *will have*.

EXERCISE In each sentence below, circle the verb in parentheses that correctly completes the sentence.

Example 1. Yesterday Jill (*has changed*, *changed*) clothes three times before school.

1. Be sure you (*have put*, *will have put*) the lid on the blender before turning it on.
2. By next Thursday, Aretha (*has been finishing*, *will have finished*) all the exams for her first semester of college.
3. Last night the toddler (*draws*, *had drawn*) at least seven pictures by the time the baby sitter said it was time for bed.
4. You may not know it, but the swim team (*had been training*, *trains*) harder than usual for the meet they won yesterday.
5. Because their star athlete just went into the penalty box, the hockey team (*played*, *will play*) one person short until he can return to the ice.
6. Do you know that Jeremy Moddes still (*has been*, *is*) the tallest of the four brothers?
7. Because Stella had outgrown her favorite pair of shoes, she (*gave*, *gives*) them to her younger sister.
8. My cousin (*collects*, *has been collecting*) family photographs ever since the reunion.
9. What (*will have been*, *was*) your favorite scene in the movie last night?
10. Sometimes I accidentally (*do call*, *will call*) the twins by the wrong name.

Tense and Form

21d. The **tense** of a verb indicates the time of the action or of the state of being expressed by the verb.

PRESENT Liz **writes** stories.

PAST Jibril **wrote** a poem.

FUTURE Liz **will write** poetry.

PRESENT PERFECT Jibril **has written** stories.

PAST PERFECT Before she became a poet, Liz **had written** stories.

FUTURE PERFECT By the end of next year, Jibril **will have written** a book of poems.

The *progressive form* of each tense consists of the appropriate tense of *be* plus the present participle and is used to show continuing action or state of being. The *emphatic form*, for the present and past tenses only, consists of the appropriate tense of *do* plus the base form and is used to show emphasis.

PROGRESSIVE The children **are building** a fort made of boxes.

EMPHATIC Please **do tell** me your secret.

EXERCISE A Above each underlined verb below, write the tense and form of the verb.

past emphatic
Example 1. We always did love to visit Mexico.

1. The cicadas will soon arrive.
2. Vernon had accurately predicted the dreary outcome.
3. By then I will have been teaching for thirty years.
4. By midnight every camper will have retired for the night.
5. Sakiri had been writing her letter of application.

EXERCISE B For each of the following sentences, change the tense of the verb according to the instructions in italics.

did elect
Example 1. The committee will elect a new president. (*Change to past emphatic tense.*)

6. Your math skills impressed me. (*Change to present perfect tense.*)
7. Looking into the distance, we saw our friends. (*Change to past progressive tense.*)
8. Mr. Mora's art class was my favorite subject this year. (*Change to future perfect tense.*)
9. My nine-year-old sister will enjoy your homemade seafood dinner. (*Change to present emphatic tense.*)
10. The museum exhibit really includes dinosaur bones? (*Change to past emphatic tense.*)

Correct Use of Verb Tenses B

21e. Each of the six tenses has its own uses.

EXERCISE A For each sentence below, write the tense of the underlined verb above it.

Examples 1. The Kalispel Indians are living in the northwestern United States. *present progressive*

2. Have any of them been living in Southern Canada? *present perfect progressive*

1. The Kalispel in Montana make their home on the reservation near Flathead Lake.
2. The Kalispel in Montana have made their home on the reservation near Flathead Lake.
3. All Idaho Kalispel did live in the area around Pend Oreille Lake.
4. All Idaho Kalispel were living in the area around Pend Oreille Lake.
5. Some have joined relatives at the Coeur d'Alene Reservation.
6. Some were joining relatives at the Coeur d'Alene Reservation.
7. Others do share reservation land now with the Montana and Washington Kalispel.
8. Others are sharing reservation land now with the Montana and Washington Kalispel.
9. What are the Kalispel going to do this year to continue their traditions?
10. What will the Kalispel have done this year to continue their traditions?

EXERCISE B For each of the following sentences, write the tense of the verb in parentheses according to the instructions in italics.

Example 1. The Kalispel women (*travel*) several days before they reach the delta. (*future perfect tense*) *will have traveled*

11. These women (*gather*) plants that will later become mat coverings for many Kalispel buildings. (*future progressive tense*)
12. The canoe ends (*taper*) to make the craft glide through the marsh. (*present progressive*)
13. An older woman (*sing*) a chant of protection for the gatherers. (*present perfect*)
14. The plants, called bullrushes, (*provide*) both new and replacement coverings for the summer lodges. (*future tense*)
15. The Kalispel women (*follow*) this way of life for many years. (*past perfect*)

Sequence of Tenses

- 21f.** Use tense forms correctly to show relationships between verbs in a sentence. Do not change needlessly from one tense to another.

- (1) When describing events that occur at the same time, use verbs in the same tense.
 (2) When describing events that occur at different times, use verbs in different tenses to show the order of events.

SAME TIME Lars **dimmed** the lights, and Cassie **opened** the curtain. [past]

DIFFERENT TIMES Lars **had dimmed** the lights, so Cassie **opened** the curtain. [two different points in the past]

- 21g.** Do not use *would have* in "if" clauses that express the earlier of two past actions. Use the past perfect tense.

NONSTANDARD If Chet would have asked me, I would have helped him in the student store.

STANDARD If Chet **had asked** me, I would have helped him in the student store.

EXERCISE A On the line before each sentence below, indicate the time of the action for the underlined verbs by writing *S* for *same* or *D* for *different*.

Example D 1. Should I need a reference, may I give your name?

- _____ 1. By the time the rain began, we had left the park.
 _____ 2. I became alert once the alarm rings in the morning.
 _____ 3. When Gloria called, she was inviting me to a party.
 _____ 4. After I had lost my key, I called my father.
 _____ 5. If Jiro had arrived ten minutes earlier, he would have seen you.

EXERCISE B In the sentences below, cross out any verb-tense errors and write correct verbs above them. (Hint: There is more than one way to revise some sentences.)

Example 1. Jonathan ^{is} ~~was~~ the new student who ^{was} ~~is~~ in my class today.

6. This afternoon Mabel answers the phone and told me of the incident.
 7. If you would have waited, I could have given you a ride.
 8. Because I forgot my lunch at home, I had bought a sandwich at school.
 9. Ever since she visits the science museum, my cousin Samantha has dreamed of becoming an astronaut.
 10. An hour ago, Mr. Lambert says, "You should choose two classmates to work with on this project."