

Tenses Exercise 1

Choose the most appropriate tense for the following sentences. Why is your choice the best one?

Choices: a) present simple, b) past simple, c) present perfect.

Example:

- Assume**
- a) Unfortunately, this course **assumes** prior knowledge. You must pass a mathematics topic before you can enrol.
 - b) Unfortunately, this course **assumed** prior knowledge. You must pass a mathematics topic before you can enrol.
 - c) Unfortunately, this course **has assumed** prior knowledge. You must pass a mathematics topic before you can enrol.

Answer: a) Unfortunately, this course **assumes** prior knowledge. You must pass a mathematics topic before you can enrol.

Answer: a) present simple – a fact in the present

- 1. Constitute
 - a) International students **constitute** 30% of the university's enrolments at present.
 - b) International students **constituted** 30% of the university's enrolments at present.
 - c) International students **have constituted** 30% of the university's enrolments at present.

- 2. Create
 - a) A clever web designer recently **creates** this user-friendly website.
 - b) A clever web designer recently **created** this user-friendly website.
 - c) A clever web designer **has** recently **created** this user-friendly website.

- 3. Doubt
 - a) The lecturer later **doubts** the integrity of the writing and gave it a 'fail' mark.
 - b) The lecturer later **doubted** the integrity of the writing and gave it a 'fail' mark.
 - c) The lecturer **has** later **doubted** the integrity of the writing and gave it a 'fail' mark.

- 4. Estimate
 - a) The students **estimate** how much time the task had taken.
 - b) The students **estimated** how much time the task had taken.
 - c) The students **have estimated** how much time the task had taken.

5. Export
- a) Australia **exports** goods to other countries since the nineteenth century.
 - b) Australia **exported** goods to other countries since the nineteenth century.
 - c) Australia **has exported** goods to other countries since the nineteenth century.
6. Formulate
- a) Now we **formulate** our ideas it is easier to write about them.
 - b) Now we **formulated** our ideas it is easier to write about them.
 - c) Now we **have formulated** our ideas it is easier to write about them.
7. Hate
- a) People nowadays often **hate** the effort required to write an essay.
 - b) People nowadays often **hated** the effort required to write an essay.
 - c) People nowadays often **have hated** the effort required to write an essay.
8. Indicate
- a) Signposts are very helpful because they **indicate** the direction to take.
 - b) Signposts are very helpful because they **indicated** the direction to take.
 - c) Signposts are very helpful because they **have indicated** the direction to take.
9. Involve
- a) Academic writing, even today, still **involves** hours of researching and reading before the actual writing.
 - b) Academic writing, even today, still **involved** hours of researching and reading before the actual writing.
 - c) Academic writing, even today, **has** still **involved** hours of researching and reading before the actual writing.
10. Like
- a) Research indicates that everyone **likes** to receive high marks when they submit an essay.
 - b) Research indicates that everyone **liked** to receive high marks when they submit an essay.
 - c) Research indicates that everyone **has liked** to receive high marks when they submit an essay.

11. Realise
- a) The lecturer quickly **realises** her mistake and so she corrected it.
 - b) The lecturer quickly **realised** her mistake and so she corrected it.
 - c) The lecturer **has** quickly **realised** her mistake and so she corrected it.
12. Respond
- a) Yesterday, students **respond** unwillingly to questions in class.
 - b) Yesterday, students **responded** unwillingly to questions in class.
 - c) Yesterday, students **have** often **responded** unwillingly to questions in class.
13. Want
- a) Students **want** better university transport since last year.
 - b) Students **wanted** better university transport since last year.
 - c) Students **have wanted** better university transport since last year.

Answers to Tenses Exercise 1

Example:

- Assume** a) Unfortunately, this course **assumes** prior knowledge. You must pass a mathematics topic before you can enrol.

Answer: present simple – a fact in the present

1. Constitute a) International students **constitute** 30% of the university's enrolments at present.

Answer: present simple – a fact in the present

2. Create c) A clever web designer **has** recently **created** this user-friendly website.

Answer: present perfect – something that happened recently

3. Doubt b) The lecturer later **doubted** the integrity of the writing and gave it a 'fail' mark.

Answer: past simple – a completed action in the past. 'Later' and 'gave' also put the sentence into the past simple.

4. Estimate b) The students **estimated** how much time the task had taken.

Answer: past simple – a completed action in the past. The past perfect, 'had taken', shows that something (i.e. the action of doing the task) happened before another event in the past.

5. Export c) Australia **has exported** goods to other countries since the nineteenth century.

Answer: present perfect with 'since', indicating a period of time from the past to the present. This period of time is not yet complete and could continue in the future.

6. Formulate c) Now we **have formulated** our ideas it is easier to write about them.

Answer: present perfect – something which started in the past and has an ongoing impact

7. Hate a) People nowadays often **hate** the effort required to write an essay.

Answer: present simple – a fact in the present. The present is shown by the word 'nowadays'.

8. Indicate a) Signposts are very helpful because they **indicate** the direction to take.

Answer: present simple – a fact in the present. The other verb in the sentence, 'are', is also in the present simple, which is a clue that the whole sentence is probably in the present tense.

9. Involve a) Academic writing, even today, still **involves** hours of researching and reading before the actual writing.

Answer: present simple – a fact in the present. The present is indicated by the words 'still' and 'today'.

10. Like a) Research indicates that everyone **likes** to receive high marks when they submit an essay.
- Answer:** present simple – a fact in the present. ‘indicates’ is in the present simple, so we know that ‘likes’ is in the present simple too.
11. Realise b) The lecturer quickly **realised** her mistake and so she corrected it.
- Answer:** past simple – a completed action in the past. ‘corrected’ also puts the sentence into the past simple.
12. Respond b) Yesterday, students **responded** unwillingly to questions in class.
- Answer:** past simple – a completed action in the past. ‘yesterday’ tells us that the action was in the past.
13. Want c) Students **have wanted** better university transport since last year.
- Answer:** present perfect with ‘since’, indicating a period of time from the past to the present. This period of time is not yet complete and could continue in the future.

Tenses Exercise 2

What tense would you use to describe:

1. a general principle
2. what happened in an experiment
3. ideas that were held in the past
4. something that has changed over time
5. someone's opinion
6. the results of an experiment
7. a habitual action in the present
8. recent research and its present impact
9. a theory
10. a claim
11. a fact

Answers to Tenses Exercise 2

1. Present simple
2. Past simple
3. Past simple
4. Present perfect
5. Present simple
6. Present simple
7. Present simple
8. Present perfect
9. Present simple
10. Present simple
11. Present simple

Tenses Exercise 3

Can you explain why each of the following sentences was written in a particular tense? Choose your reasons from this list:

1. a general principle
2. what happened in an experiment
3. ideas that were held in the past
4. something that has changed over time
5. someone's opinion
6. the results of an experiment
7. a habitual action in the present
8. recent research and its present impact
9. a theory
10. a claim
11. a fact

Example:

Smith and Jones think this is unlikely. **Answer:** present simple – someone's opinion

1. The charcoal was ground and put in a container.
2. These findings indicate the danger of mixing potassium nitrate, charcoal and sulphur.
3. General relativity is a theory of great significance.
4. Advertisers work on the principle that most people like chocolate.
5. Recent surveys have shown that most people prefer milk chocolate to white chocolate.
6. Many people eat chocolate every day, as it is a good source of antioxidants.
7. Many people have gained weight quickly because of eating increasing amounts of chocolate.
8. It was thought that chocolate would replace alcohol as a beverage.
9. Chocolate is made from cocoa beans.
10. Smith maintains that white chocolate is not really chocolate.
11. The experiment indicates that chocolate consumption may boost serotonin levels.

Answers to Tenses Exercise 3

1. The charcoal **was ground** and **put** in a container.
Answer: past simple – what happened in an experiment
2. These findings **indicate** the danger of mixing potassium nitrate, charcoal and sulphur.
Answer: present simple – the results of an experiment
3. General relativity **is** a theory of great significance.
Answer: present simple – a theory
4. Advertisers work on the principle that most people **like** chocolate.
Answer: present simple – a general principle
5. Recent surveys **have shown** that most people prefer milk chocolate to white chocolate.
Answer: present perfect – recent research and its present impact
6. Many people **eat** chocolate every day, as it is a good source of antioxidants.
Answer: present simple – a habitual action in the present
7. Many people **have gained** weight quickly because of eating increasing amounts of chocolate.
Answer: present perfect – something that has changed over time
8. It **was thought** that chocolate would replace alcohol as a beverage.
Answer: past simple (passive) – an idea that was held in the past
9. Chocolate **is made** from cocoa beans.
Answer: present simple (passive) – a fact
10. Smith **maintains** that white chocolate is not really chocolate.
Answer: present simple – a claim
11. The experiment **indicates** that chocolate consumption may boost serotonin levels.
Answer: present simple – the results of an experiment

Tenses Exercise 4

Should the verbs in this exercise be in the present simple or the present perfect?

Here are some guidelines:

- Present simple: a general principle
someone's opinion
the results of an experiment
a habitual action in the present
a theory
a claim
a fact
- Present perfect: something that has changed over time
a recent action and its present impact

Introduction

University essays which typically receive (1) high marks are (2) well researched, flow (3) in a logical, clear, grammatical manner, and are (4) analytical. It is (5) impossible to write an academic essay without doing adequate research and reading first. The information acquired must then be analysed and ordered, and each theme must be written up as a paragraph. Finally, to demonstrate the student's level of understanding of the material, evidence of combining a range of ideas, with the appropriate referencing details, needs to be included.

Content of the introductory paragraph

An essay always opens (6) with an introductory paragraph, which, like the one above, sets (7) the scene. Besides containing background or explanatory information, it needs (8) to include a central thesis, outline key areas that the essay will address and give a statement of purpose. The introductory paragraph often opens (9) with a very big, 'global' sentence and then limits (10) the essay focus with a more specific statement (Oshima & Hogue, 1983). Any brief definitions might also be included here, or they may form the next paragraph.

Role of the body paragraphs

The body paragraphs need (11) to be clearly related to the main point and, of course, the essay topic. There should only be one theme in each paragraph. One way of doing this is (12) to start each paragraph with a topic sentence. As exemplified by Oshima and Hogue (1983), the whole content of the paragraph must link to this specific topic. This should make it easier to decide what supporting material goes into the paragraph and what does not.

Features of an academic essay

In traditional academic essays, it is (13) important to be and to sound objective. There are (14) three ways of achieving this. Firstly, it is vital to identify the origin / source of the information. If quotes are given, then quotation marks must be used and the author's name, the year of publication and the page number of the quote must also be included. If paraphrasing is used, i.e. the student has rewritten (15) the author's original text in their own words, then only the author's surname and year need to be included. If a brief summary is used or a general idea is taken from an author, then the

in-text reference still requires (16) the author's surname and the year of their publication. Secondly, the use of pronouns such as *I*, *you*, *we* and *our* should be minimized in essays for most subjects. Thirdly, emotive and unqualified adjectives should be avoided, but the use of a range of verbs and tenses that indicate (17) an understanding of what the student has read (18) and written (19) about within the context of the essay is important.

Synthesising the ideas of others

The critical, and perhaps most difficult, part of the essay is (20) the analysis. This is where the student writer highlights (21) similarities or differences between authors. It may require comparing and contrasting the research approach; it may require identifying the advantages and disadvantages of a particular method; or it may highlight how similar research can be interpreted differently and other conclusions drawn. In brief, this is the section where ideas from different sources are blended together and synthesised.

Conclusion

The final paragraph of the essay forms (22) the conclusion. It must focus the major points that have been made (23) in the middle paragraphs back to the essay topic and to the key points outlined in the introductory paragraph. A concluding or summarising statement completes (24) the essay.

Answers to Tenses Exercise 4

1. Present simple – a general principle, indicated by the word ‘typically’
2. Present simple – a general principle, continuing the sequence of verb tenses started by ‘typically’
3. Present simple – a general principle, continuing the sequence of verb tenses started by ‘typically’
4. Present simple – a general principle, continuing the sequence of verb tenses started by ‘typically’
5. Present simple – a fact, indicated by the strong word ‘impossible’. A reference to published research in the area would make this fact stronger.
6. Present simple – a fact, indicated by the strong word ‘always’. A reference to published research in the area would make this fact stronger.
7. Present simple – a fact, continuing from the strong word ‘always’ earlier in the sentence and referring to a previous example for support
8. Present simple – a general principle to give advice
9. Present simple – a habitual action in the present, indicated by the word ‘often’
10. Present simple – a habitual action in the present, indicated by the word ‘often’ which appears earlier in the sentence
11. Present simple – a general principle, indicated by the use of the word ‘need’, to give advice
12. Present simple – a general principle, indicated by the use of the words ‘one way’ to indicate that the writer is making a suggestion
13. Present simple – a claim, indicated by the use of the word ‘important’
14. Present simple – a fact, supported by three ways to achieve objectivity
15. Present perfect – a recent action and its present impact
16. Present simple – a general principle, indicated by the word ‘still’
17. Present simple – a general principle indicating what someone should usually do
18. Present perfect – a recent action and its present impact
19. Present perfect – a recent action and its present impact. The word ‘has’ is not repeated because it continues from the present perfect in 18 (*has read*) and can be left out.
20. Present simple – an opinion. The writer thinks that one part of the essay is more difficult than another.
21. Present simple – a habitual action in the present
22. Present simple – a general principle indicating what usually happens in an essay

23. Present perfect – a recent action and its present impact. The past simple would also be acceptable here: ‘the points that were made’. The present perfect, however, makes the action more immediate.

24. Present simple – a general principle indicating what usually happens in an essay

Tenses Exercise 5

Does the highlighted verb in each of these sentences refer to a habitual action, a completed action or an action occurring before another action?

Here are some guidelines to help you:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Present simple: | a habitual action |
| Past simple: | a completed action |
| Past perfect: | an action occurring before another action |

1. The committee **agreed** yesterday to pass the amendment.
2. The committee **had agreed** prior to the final meeting to pass the amendment.
3. The Federal government normally **finances** Health, Education and Transport.
4. An organisation **was established** to identify a research project.
5. His first report **included** an executive summary.
6. An organisation **had been established** earlier to identify a research project.
7. He **researched** very thoroughly into the history of the town.
8. Reports usually **include** executive summaries.

Answers to Tenses Exercise 5

1. The committee **agreed** yesterday to pass the amendment.
(a **completed action** / a habitual action / an action occurring before another action)
Reason: The word 'yesterday' indicates that this is a completed action in the past.

2. The committee **had agreed** prior to the final meeting to pass the amendment.
(a completed action / a habitual action / **an action occurring before another action**)
Reason: The words 'prior to the final meeting' indicate that one event occurred before another event.

3. The Federal government normally **finances** Health, Education and Transport.
(a completed action / **a habitual action** / an action occurring before another action)
Reason: The present tense and the word 'normally' indicate that this is a habitual action.

4. An organisation **was established** to identify a research project.
(a **completed action** / a habitual action / an action occurring before another action)
Reason: The past simple indicates that this is a completed action in the past.

5. His first report **included** an executive summary.
(a **completed action** / a habitual action / an action occurring before another action)
Reason: The past simple indicates that this is a completed action in the past.

6. An organisation **had been established** earlier to identify a research project.
(a completed action / a habitual action / **an action occurring before another action**)
Reason: The word 'earlier' indicates that one event occurred before another event.

7. He **researched** very thoroughly into the history of the town.

(a **completed action** / a habitual action / an action occurring before another action)

Reason: The past simple indicates that this is a completed action in the past.

8. Reports usually **include** executive summaries.

(a completed action / **a habitual action** / an action occurring before another action)

Reason: The present tense and the word 'usually' indicate that this is a habitual action.

Tenses Exercise 6

Which is the correct verb form – singular or plural?

Example The details for my credit card *is/are* at the bottom of the form.

Answer: The details for my credit card *is/are* at the bottom of the form.
Reason: The subject is *details*, which is a plural noun.

1. The newest book on the library shelf *is/are* green.
2. The computers in the library *is/are* always available.
3. There *was/were* a large increase in enrolments for the course this year.
4. The number of new students *is/are* declining annually.
5. Recent graduates *has/have* found employment in many different areas.
6. A number of essays *was/were* very well written.
7. The recent power cuts in the library *has/have* led to a review of the electrical system.
8. The changes in our article *indicates/indicate* that we have made many improvements to it.
9. There *is/are* several things you can do to strengthen your argument.
10. The final date for submission of all your assignments *is/are* 31 May.

Answers to Tenses Exercise 6

1. The newest book on the library shelf **is/are** green.
Reason: The subject is *book*, which is a singular noun.
2. The computers in the library **is/are** always available.
Reason: The subject is *computers*, which is a plural noun.
3. There **was/were** a large increase in enrolments for the course this year.
Reason: The subject is *increase*, which is a singular noun.
4. The number of new students **is/are** declining annually.
Reason: The subject is *number*, which is a singular noun.
5. Recent graduates **has/have** found employment in many different areas.
Reason: The subject is *graduates*, which is a plural noun.
6. A number of essays **was/were** very well written.
Reason: The subject is *essays*, which is a plural noun.
7. The recent power cuts in the library **has/have** led to a review of the electrical system.
Reason: The subject is *power cuts*, which is a plural noun.
8. The changes in our article **indicates/indicate** that we have made many improvements to it.
Reason: The subject is *changes*, which is a plural noun.
9. There **is/are** several things you can do to strengthen your argument.
Reason: The subject is *things*, which is a plural noun.
10. The final date for submission of all your assignments **is/are** 31 May.
Reason: The subject is *date*, which is a singular noun.