

The English Tenses
Exercise Book

Phil Williams

MMXIX

Copyright

Copyright © 2019 by Phil Williams

The moral right of Phil Williams to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All the characters in this book are fictitious, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

All rights reserved.

This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Cover design by Phil Williams

Cover images © Bob Wright, © schiva (Depositphotos)

ISBN: 978-1-913468-06-4

Published by English Lessons Brighton, an imprint of Rumian Publishing

Contents

Contents	i
Introduction	3
How to Use This Book.....	4
Tense Forms	5
Forming the Past	6
1. Past Simple	6
2. Past Continuous	13
3. Past Perfect	19
4. Past Perfect Continuous.....	25
Forming the Present	30
5. Present Simple	30
6. Present Continuous	37
7. Present Perfect	43
8. Present Perfect Continuous.....	49
Forming the Future.....	55
9. Future Simple.....	55
10. Future Continuous	62
11. Future Perfect.....	69
12. Future Perfect Continuous	76
Forming Mixed Tenses	82
13. Mixed Simple Tenses.....	82
14. Mixed Continuous Tenses	91

15. Mixed Perfect Tenses	99
16. Mixed Perfect Continuous Tenses.....	109
Tenses in Use	117
17. The Past in Use.....	118
18. The Present in Use.....	142
19. The Future in Use	167
20. Mixed Tenses in Use	189
Infinitives and Participles	218
21. Identifying Bare Infinitives	219
22. Participles	221
23. Mixed Verb Types.....	223
A Note from the Author.....	226
Answers	227

SAMPLE

Introduction

Welcome to *The English Tenses Exercise Book* – a collection of 161 exercises designed to drill the 12 key tenses of English: the **past**, **present** and **future** in their **simple**, **continuous**, **perfect** and **perfect continuous** forms. This book can be used for general, independent practice, though the exercises roughly match the guidelines laid out in *The English Tenses Practical Grammar Guide*.

This book is designed to make you fully comfortable with forming and using the tenses, both on their own and in conjunction with other tenses. Many other excellent grammar guides and exercise books exist, but it is rare that they offer more than one or two exercises on a particular topic. This book does the opposite: the topic is narrow, but the quantity of exercises and number of examples is vast. Some examples repeat similar ideas or themes – this is to reinforce lessons, demonstrate different usage and (in some cases) provide extra continuity or engagement.

As a writer and teacher for over fifteen years, I have devised these exercises and examples with the aim of presenting English in natural use, considering various styles and subjects. You will find everyday sentences and more unusual examples; short stories and non-fiction passages; academic English and business English; and more. Regardless of your level, my hope is that the examples will help familiarise you with the tenses across a broad range of usage. The vocabulary I have chosen is generally at an intermediate level, occasionally using more basic or advanced language, and the majority of verbs come from lists of those most commonly used. The prose exercises particularly aim to present more varied and fluent use of English, and for wider exposure, some examples have been included to demonstrate how a particular tense *could* be used. Please do complete the book with an accompanying dictionary if necessary and feel free to get in touch if anything is unclear.

And if you find some examples lean towards life in an English seaside town, that reflects my own setting, and the setting for my website, *English Lessons Brighton*.

How to Use This Book

The exercises in this book primarily concern verb forms, asking you to choose and correctly form the appropriate tense for each sentence. Sentences are either presented in isolated lists or in prose format. Instructions are given for each exercise as to the tense or tenses being tested, usually indicated in **bold**.

These exercises usually provide a space for you to fill in the correct tense. The information in brackets lets you know which verb to use and whether any additional words are necessary, such as a subject or adverbs. The spaces are standard sizes depending on the exercise and do not specifically indicate how long the answer should be.

The book is organised into two main sections, **Tense Forms** and **Tenses in Use**. These are divided into groups covering the **past**, **present** and **future** tenses, and each also contains mixed tense exercises. Within each grouping, you will find more basic list exercises and more complex prose exercises for comparative use. You may complete the exercises in any order you choose, but be aware that the book becomes more complex as it builds to more comparative use at the end of each section, particularly with the mixed tenses exercises. To present more natural use, there are occasional passive or modal examples to demonstrate wider contexts of the tenses. An additional section, **Infinitives and Participles**, is included at the back to specifically drill understanding of the verb forms that help complete the more complicated tenses.

You can complete the exercises writing directly in the spaces provided, and generous space around the exercises is given to aid note-taking, but you may wish to use a separate piece of paper or notebook so you can practise the exercises more than once. You can photocopy these exercises for personal or class use, but please be conscious of wasting paper and always credit the book.

Tense Forms

The following section drills forming the tenses, to get you used to quickly identifying and using different verb forms in the **past**, **present** and **future**. Each section includes exercises for the **simple**, **continuous**, **perfect** and **perfect continuous**, covering affirmative and negative statements, questions with and without question words, negative questions and mixed tenses.

The focus here is always on the required tense form. This means that the example sentences in this section are not necessarily the only way to express these points, but are used for illustrative purposes. This is particularly true of the **perfect** and **perfect continuous** forms, which can be relatively rare in practice, and usually require specific contexts to make complete sense. The mixed tenses passages are designed to include as many instances of these forms as possible, though in everyday use such passages may be expressed in simpler ways.

Forming the Past

1. Past Simple

1.1 Past Simple Statements

Form complete sentences in the **past simple** (affirmative or negative), without contractions, using the information provided.

For example:

Q: I / to know / not / where he lived

A: I did not know where he lived.

1. the postman / to be / late again

2. Felicity / to grow / tomatoes in her garden

3. he / to understand / not / the project

4. we / to fail / to finish in time

5. they / to give / not / us the bag of flour

6. Liam / to ask / not / the question politely

7. the hummingbirds / to build / a nest in our attic

8. the piano / to look / too old to use

9. she / to say / we / to be / wrong

10. I / to pick / not / the right flowers

11. our cake / to taste / not / right

12. we / to drive / all the way to Scotland

13. you / to bring / not / the green umbrella

14. they / to arrest / the wrong man

15. the lady of the manor / to write / not / a convincing memoir

2.5 Mixed Past Continuous

Complete the following dialogue with the appropriate **past continuous affirmative, negative** or **question form**, using the information in brackets.

The Ice Cream Van

Simon: Do you know what I just saw? An ice cream van
(1) _____ (to drive) down our road.

Carl: Really? (2) _____ (they / to sell) ice cream? It's
November!

Simon: Well, (3) _____ (it / to play) music, so I think they
wanted customers.

Carl: (4) _____ (the van / to go) to the beach?

Simon: It couldn't have been; (5) _____ (the driver / to head
/ not) in the right direction.

Carl: Then where (6) _____ (he / to plan) to park?

Simon: Hmm. (7) _____ (something / happen / not) in the
town centre earlier today?

Carl: Of course! (8) _____ (they / open) a new sports shop
this morning!

Simon: Oh! I (9) _____ (to think) about going to that, but I
decided not to.

Carl: But (10) _____ (you / to expect / not) ice cream! Let's
go!

3.4 Past Perfect Negative Questions

Complete the following sentences in **past perfect negative question form**, without contractions, using the subjects and verbs in brackets.

For example:

Q: Why _____ your homework? (you / to finish)

A: Why **had you not finished** your homework?

1. _____ her about the invitation? (he / to tell)
2. _____ in Boston? (where / Charlene / to be)
3. _____ together? (the team / to work)
4. _____ the cooker before going out? (I / to turn off)
5. _____ the radiator to the right temperature? (the plumber / to set)
6. _____ in his report? (what / the night manager / to include)
7. _____ at 7 a.m.? (why / the alarm / to go off)
8. _____ to the soup? (what / the chef / to add)
9. _____ the situation clearly? (I / to explain)
10. _____ the car's engine before travelling? (why / they / to check)

3.5 Mixed Past Perfect

Complete the following text with the appropriate **past perfect affirmative, negative or question form**, using the information in brackets.

A Fresh Cake

Stephen was looking forward to a freshly baked cake. (1) _____ (he / to leave) it baking for 45 minutes now. This was the final step in a

process (2) _____ (Stephen / start) four hours earlier, after (3) _____ (his wife / to suggest) that he try a new recipe (4) _____ (she / to find). (5) _____ (he / not / to plan) to spend the day baking, but (6) _____ (they / to buy) all the ingredients already, and (7) _____ (they / not / to make) homemade cake for a long time, so he agreed to give it a go.

Once he started, he realised it was actually good fun. (8) _____ (he / to measure) everything carefully before combining the ingredients, and then made a terrible mess mixing the batter. It was too sticky. His wife asked: (9) _____ (why / he / not / to use) more flour? (10) _____ (he / read) the recipe correctly?

Eventually, (11) _____ (Stephen / to wrestle) the mixture under control, and he cleaned the whole kitchen while they waited for it to rise. (12) _____ (it / to turn out) to be quite simple really. When he put the mix in the oven, he asked himself, (13) _____ (why / he / not / to try) this sooner?

After half an hour, (14) _____ (the kitchen / to start) to smell amazing.

Finally, 45 minutes were almost over, and Stephen's mouth was watering. He opened the oven to find (15) _____ (the cake / to rise) beautifully, and (16) _____ (it / to develop) a firm, golden top. They would definitely enjoy this, and Stephen admitted, (17) _____ (his wife / to be) right. It was a good idea.

Answers

1.1 Answers

1. The postman was late again.
2. Felicity grew tomatoes in her garden.
3. He did not understand the project.
4. We failed to finish in time.
5. They did not give us the bag of flour.
6. Liam did not ask the question politely.
7. The hummingbirds built a nest in our attic.
8. The piano looked too old to use.
9. She said we were wrong.
10. I did not pick the right flowers.
11. Our cake did not taste right.
12. We drove all the way to Scotland.
13. You did not bring the green umbrella.
14. They arrested the wrong man.
15. The lady of the manor did not write a convincing memoir.

1.2 Answers

1. Were your dogs very messy?
2. Did the chef cook something spectacular?
3. Did you read all three of your textbooks this weekend?
4. Did she ask him to go on a date?
5. Did you know about the rotten fruit?
6. Did the priests demand that the film be banned?
7. Did you buy a new bicycle?
8. Did he Hoover the house because of the dust?
9. Did the children play on the swings?
10. Was she very disappointed with the presentation?
11. Did you misjudge the time it would take to get to the party?
12. Did you lose your keys again?
13. Did the story get a lot more interesting after the main character died?

14. Did they send a replacement cabinet after yours broke?
15. Did the council ban parking on your road?
16. Did she run a marathon last spring?
17. Was it the hottest day of the year?
18. Did Ulric visit the doctor for the first time?
19. Did your computer stop working?
20. Did they prepare for the storm months in advance?

1.3 Answers

1. Where did you help the old man?
2. What did Julian sing?
3. Where did you search for the doctor?
4. Why was she very angry?
5. When did everyone go for ice cream?
6. Which necklaces did they steal?
7. How much did you give the homeless man?
8. What did the critic hate?
9. Who did he have a disagreement with? (*or* Who had a disagreement with the man who sold him his car?)
10. What was cut down yesterday?
11. What did Tyler want to free? (*or* What did Tyler want to do?)
12. Where did the family take the bottles?
13. What did the girl believe in?
14. How did you tie the knots?
15. Who ate her last cupcake?

1.4 Answers

1. What did he not tell us?
2. Did it not seem like an easy task?
3. Where did Mindy not take the students?
4. Why was the door not locked?
5. How did you not get there in time?

Enjoyed Reading?

This sample represents only 5% of *The English Tenses Exercise Book*, formatted for PDF/print. It is also available optimised for eReaders. If you found it useful and would like to continue, get the full book directly from the ELB site [HERE](#).

Also Available from ELB

Word Order in English Sentences

Quickly master the basics of English sentence structure, with simple grammar that focuses on the parts of speech. A long-term Kindle bestseller, Word Order in English Sentence has sold over 10,000 copies worldwide.

The English Tenses Practical Grammar Guide

A comprehensive guide to the usage patterns of all 12 aspects of the English language, covering all the rules and grammatical forms. The English Tenses: Practical Grammar Guide is ideal as either an accompaniment to core texts or as a full self-study guide.

Advanced Writing Skills for Students of English

This comprehensive guide covers everything from style and planning through to spelling rules, editing and considerations for specific areas of writing, such as cover letters, academic writing and creative writing.

All ELB books are available from the website [HERE](#).