

General ENGLISH

for

GATE • PSU's

Also useful for

State public service commissions and other
competitive examinations





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General English for GATE • PSUs

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Section

A

GRAMMAR

Tense

Tense is a form of verb which tells us about the time of action.

1. The Present Tense
2. The Past Tense
3. The Future Tense

Aspects

1. Indefinite / Simple
2. Progressive / Continuous
3. Perfect
4. Perfect Progressive

NOTE

In fact there are only two tenses in English, but the future aspect is possible with the help of modal i.e. will / shall or **Present Simple / Present Progressive**.

Simple Present

introduced by

Always, Everyday, Sundays, Mondays, Often, Usually, Seldom, .

Formation

1. **Singular Subject** : *He, She, It, Name.*
2. **Plural Subject** : *You, we, They.*
3. 'I' is a singular subject, but treated as plural in the present tense.

Rule : 1 (Singular sub + V₁ + s/es + ob)

V₁ [main verb/base form/principal verb/root verb] is always plural; we add s/es to make it singular.

1. *Go* : Plural verb
2. *Goes* : Singular verb

EXAMPLES —

1. Mohan *goes* to office.
2. She cooks food.
3. One of my friends lives in Delhi.

Rule : 2 (Plural sub + V₁ + object)

1. They go to temple.
2. We help the poor.

(Negative)

[To say no to something or somebody]

(Singular sub + does not + V₁ + ob)

EXAMPLES —

1. She does not go to temple.
2. I do not compose a song.

Never = Not any time in Present, Past or Future.

1. She never comes on time.
2. They never help the poor.

Interrogative / Interrogative negative [Asking Question]

Yes / No Type [Do/ Does/ Sub + V₁ + ob?]

1. Does she write a letter?
2. Do you play hockey?

WH type [WH + do / does + sub + V₁ + ob?]

Where do you live?

When does she go to office?

Why do you not go to school?

NOTE

Who functions as a singular sub. (**Who + V₁ + s/es + ob?**)

Who teaches you English?

Usage:

1. Present Habits

- Cindy cooks food [Again and again]

3. Near future

- She goes to Holland next month.

2. News paper headlines

- India wins by three wickets.

4. Universal Truth

- The sun rises in the east.

Present Continuous Tense

The present continuous tense is used to indicate an action which is going on at the time of speaking.

EXAMPLE —

She is writing a letter. [*Now*]

To understand it better, please read the following points carefully:

1. Action should be going on while speaking.
2. Action should be deliberate.
3. Action should be temporary.
4. Sometimes action may be incomplete while speaking.
5. Verb should be dynamic

EXAMPLE —

I am writing a novel. [It maybe the writer is not writing a novel while speaking]

Rule : (Subject + is / am / are + V₁ + ing + object)

EXAMPLES —

1. She is writing a letter.
2. I am listening to the music.
3. They are watering the plants.

VERB	
Action	State
Reading	Taste
Writing	Hate
Playing, etc.	Prefer, like, etc.

To indicate 'state' we do not use progressive tense.

Some verbs are not used in progressive tenses. They are called **Stative Verbs**.

Stative Verbs

like, dislike, know, belong to, love, hate, detest, realise, seem, appear, sound, agree, mind, believe, remember, forget, [look = seem] prefer, resemble, see, hear, smell, taste, astonish, have, recognise, own, wonder, understand, think.

- Wrong** : I am understanding your problem.
- Right** : I understand your problem.
- Wrong** : He is wondering to see her shouting at the beggar.
- Right** : He wonders to see her shouting at the beggar.

NOTE

Some *Stative verbs* can be used in continuous to indicate temporary action.

1. Think (Stative) : Opinion / believe

Ex: I *think* you are right [correct]

It *means*, It is my opinion that you are right.

Think (Dynamic) : Consider, or to have something on mind

Ex: I am *thinking* about my friend.

2. See (Stative) : Understand / see with your eyes

Ex: I *see* what you mean.

I *see* a donkey on the road.

See (Dynamic) : To meet

I am *seeing* her tomorrow.

Present Perfect Tense

This tense is used to indicate an action which is finished just now / recently.

[Sub + has / have + V₃ + ob]

[V₃ = Past Participle]

1. [He / She / It / Name + has]
2. [I, you, we, they + have]

EXAMPLES —

1. He has written a letter.
2. They have composed a song.

Negative [Subject + has / have + not + V₃ + Ob]

He has not written a letter.

They have not composed a song.

Interrogative / Negative**WH + (has / have + subject + V₃ + object?)**

1. Have they watered all the plants?
2. Why have you not eaten food yet?

Errors in the use of present perfect.**Rule : 1 (Imperative sentence + when + subject + has / have + V₃ + object.)**

- Wrong** : Take this medicine when you ate food.
- Right** : Take this medicine when you have eaten food.
- Wrong** : Ask him to go to school when he completes his homework.
- Right** : Ask him to go to school when he has completed his homework.

Rule : 2 (Gone / been)

Gone : To go somewhere and be there.

Been : To go somewhere and come back.

- Wrong** : Have you ever gone to Holland?
- Right** : Have you ever been to Holland?
- Wrong** : Cindy has been to office, so Rochester is waiting for her.
- Right** : Cindy has gone to office, so Rochester is waiting for her.

Rule : 3 (It is the first time, the second time + + Subject + has / have + V₃ + object.)

- Wrong** : It is the third time, I saw her melting in his arms.
- Right** : It is the third time, I have seen her melting in his arms.

Rule : 4 (This is the only time + Subject + has / have + V₃ + object.)

- Wrong** : This is the only time Cathy went to America to meet her Sunday husband.
- Right** : This is the only time Cathy has gone to America to meet her Sunday husband.

Rule : 5 (Present Perfect + since + subject + V₂ + object.)

- Wrong** : Five years have passed since I have seen him reading a detective novel.
- Right** : Five years have passed since I saw him reading a detective novel.

Rule : 6 (Subject + has / have + V₃ of stative verb + object + since / for + time.)

- Wrong** : I know her since childhood.
- Wrong** : I have been knowing her since childhood.
- Right** : I have known her since childhood.
- Wrong** : I have this car since 2015.
- Right** : I have had this car since 2015.
- Wrong** : How long do you love Belinda?
- Right** : How long have you loved Belinda?

Rule : 7 (Do not use the Present Perfect Tense with the Past Time)

- Wrong** : Lydia has left her home town bag and baggage ten years ago.
- Right** : Lydia left her home town bag and baggage ten years ago.
- Wrong** : Meera has written a letter yesterday.
- Right** : Meera wrote a letter yesterday.

Present Perfect Continuous

This tense is used to indicate an action which starts in the past and continues while speaking.

1. [Subject + has / have + been + V₁ + ing + object + since / for + time]
2. Usage of [since / for]

'Since' is used to denote point of time.

- Morning, evening, noon
- Sunday, Monday,
- January, February,
- 2010, 2012,
- 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock,
- Birth, death, childhood, boyhood,
- Festivals : Holi, Diwali,
- Century : 19th century, 18th Century,
- **O'clock** — of the clock [5 o'clock means 5 of the clock]

REMEMBER

Since + last

For + the last

For is used to denote period of time such as for two months, years, hours, etc.

NOTE

The Present Perfect continuous is not used with '*Stative Verbs*'.

- Wrong** : They are watering the plants since morning.
- Right** : They have been watering the plants since morning.
- Wrong** : How long are you sitting in this classroom?
- Right** : How long have you been sitting in this classroom?

EXAMPLES —

1. They have been teaching in this school for the last two years.
 2. Mother has been cooking food since morning.
- Negative** : They have not been reading this book for two days.

Future Perfect Continuous Tense

We use the future perfect continuous tense to show that something will continue until a particular event or time in the future.

[Subject + will have been + V₁ + ing + object + by the / for + time]

- ☒ **Wrong** : It *will have been* raining since morning.
- ☑ **Right** : It *will have been* raining by the morning.
- ☑ **Right** : Alison *will have been* teaching in this school for five years.

Negative

- He *will not have been* reading this book by the noon.

Interrogative / Negative

- *Will he have been* reading this book by the noon?
- *Will he not have been* reading this book by the noon?

NOTE

Do not use since with the *Future Perfect Continuous*.



PRACTICE EXERCISE

Tenses

Instructions : Out of the following four sentences, select the most suitable sentence with respect to grammar and usage.

1. (a) He has left his home town with bag and baggage last year.
(b) He has leave his home town with bag and baggage last year.
(c) He had left his home town with bag and baggage last year.
(d) He left his home town with bag and baggage last year.
2. (a) How long do you know him?
(b) How long have been knowing him?
(c) How long have you known him?
(d) How long are you knowing him?
3. (a) I am understanding your problem.
(b) I understand your problem.
(c) I understanding your problem.
(d) I understands your problem.
4. (a) I am reading this book since noon.
(b) I do read this book since noon.
(c) I had read this book since noon.
(d) I have been reading this book since noon.
5. (a) They have been teaching in this school since the last ten years.
(b) They have been teaching in this school for the last ten years.
(c) They have been teaching in this school for the last ten year.
(d) They have being teaching in this school since the last ten years.
6. (a) Return this book to me when you read it.
(b) Return this book to me when have you read it.
(c) Return this book to me when you have read it.
(d) Return this book to me when you will read it.
7. (a) It is the only time she goes to office.
(b) It is the only time she went to office.
(c) It is the only time she has gone to office.
(d) It is the only time she is going to office.
8. (a) It is high time he writes a letter.
(b) It is high time he wrote a letter.
(c) It is high time he was writing a letter
(d) It is high time he is writing a letter.
9. (a) It will have been raining since morning.
(b) It will have been raining for morning.
(c) It will have been raining by the morning.
(d) It will has been raining by the morning.

10. (a) Sandra cooked food before you came.
 (b) Sandra has cooked food before you came.
 (c) Sandra had cooked food before you come.
 (d) Sandra has cooked food before you comes.

Answer Key >**Tenses**

1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (b) 6. (c)
 7. (c) 8. (b) 9. (c) 10. (c)

Explanations >**Tenses****1. (d)**

Present perfect is not followed by past time, so options (a) and (b) are wrong. For single action we don't use past perfect tense, so option (c) is wrong.

For past time we use past indefinite tense so option (d) is the best option choice.

2. (c)

'How long' is followed by either perfect tense or perfect continuous tense. So options (a), (b) and (d) are wrong.

According to rule option (c) is the best option choice.

3. (b)

Understand is a stative verb so it has no continuous tense, so options (a) and (c) are wrong.

'I' takes plural verb (V_1) so option (d) is wrong. Option (b) is the best option choice.

4. (d)

In case of since or for, perfect tense is required, so options (a), (b) and (c) are wrong.

According to rule option (d) is the best option choice.

5. (b)**The Rule says :**

For + The last
Since + last

According to the above rule

Option (a) is wrong.

Option (c) is wrong because it contains ten year instead of the ten years.

Being is not used with perfect continuous tense, so option (d) is wrong.

Thus according to rule option (b) is the best option choice.

6. (c)**The Rule says :**

[Imperative sentence + When + Present Perfect Tense]

According to above rule options (a), (b) and (d) are wrong.

Option (c) is the best option choice.

7. (c)**The Rule says :**

[It is the only time + Present Perfect Tense]

Options (a) and (b) are wrong.

Option (c) is the best option choice.

8. (b)**The Rule says :**

[It is high time + Past Indefinite Tense]

According to above rule options (a), (c) and (d) are wrong.

Option (b) is the best option choice.

9. (c)

We do not use since with future perfect continuous tense, so option (a) is wrong.

We do not use for before morning. So option (b) is wrong.

Will is not followed by has, so option (d) is wrong.

We use by the at the place of since with future perfect continuous tense, so option (c) is the best option choice.

10. (c)**The Rule says :**

[Subject + had + V_3 + object + before + subject + V_2 + Object]

According to rule of past perfect tense

Options (a), (b) and are wrong.

Option (c) is the best option choice.