

# Tense- Exercises

# EXERCISES

- In the following passage from Alex Haley's novel *Roots*, some of the tense verbs have been deliberately omitted.
- Supply the appropriate tense for each missing verb, the plain form of which is given in brackets.

# EXERCISE

- In Banjul, the capital of Gambia, I met a group of Gambians. They [tell] me how for centuries the history of Africa has been preserved. In the older villages of the back country, there are old men called griots, who [be] in effect living archives. Such men [memorize] and, on special occasions, [recite] the cumulative histories of clans or families

# EXERCISE

- or villages as those histories [have] long been told. Since my forefather [have] said his name was Kin-tay (properly spelled Kinte), and since the Kinte clan [be] known in Gambia, the group of Gambians would see what they could do to help me. I was back in New York when a registered letter [arrive] from Gambia.

# EXERCISE

- Words [have] been passed in the back country, and a griot of the Kinte clan [have], indeed, been found. His name, the letter said, [be] Kebba Kanga Fofana. I [return] to Gambia and [organize] a safari to locate him.

# ANSWERS

- The verbs in bold in the following passage are in the correct tense.
- In Banjul, the capital of Gambia, I met with a group of Gambians. They **told** me how for centuries the history of Africa has been preserved. In the older villages of the back country, there are old men called griots, who **are** in effect living archives. Such men **memorize** and, on special occasions, **recite** the cumulative histories of clans or families or

# ANSWERS

- villages as those histories **have** long been told. Since my forefather **had** said his name was Kin-tay (properly spelled Kinte), and since the Kinte clan **was** known in Gambia, the group of Gambians would see what they could do to help me. I was back in New York when a registered letter **arrived** from Gambia.

# ANSWERS

- Word **had** been passed in the back country, and a griot of the Kinte clan **had**, indeed, been found. His name, the letter said, **was** Kebba Kanga Fofana. I **returned** to Gambia and **organized** a safari to locate him.

# Let us practice some more....

- **Recognizing Shifts in Sentences**
- Check the following sentences for confusing shifts in tense.
- If the tense of each underlined verb expresses the time relationship accurately, **write S (satisfactory)**.
- If a shift in tense is not appropriate, **write U (unsatisfactory)** and make necessary changes.
- In most cases with an inappropriate shift, there is more than one way to correct the inconsistency.
- Reading the sentences aloud will help you recognize differences in time.

# EXERCISES

1. If the club limited its membership, it will have to raise its dues.
2. As Barbara puts in her contact lenses, the telephone rang.
3. Thousands of people will see the art exhibit by the time it closes.
4. By the time negotiations began, many pessimists have expressed doubt about them.

# EXERCISES

5. After Capt. James Cook visited Alaska on his third voyage, he is killed by Hawaiian islanders in 1779.
6. I was terribly disappointed with my grade because I studied very hard.
7. The moderator asks for questions as soon as the speaker has finished.
8. Everyone hopes the plan would work.

# EXERCISES

9. Harry wants to show his friends the photos he took last summer.
10. Scientists predict that the sun will die in the distant future.
11. The boy insisted that he has paid for the candy bars.
12. The doctor suggested bed rest for the patient, who suffers from a bad cold.

# ANSWERS

- Correct responses are in bold, *and incorrect responses are in italics.*

1. U If the club **limited** its membership, it *will* have to raise its dues. (**change *will* to *would***)

2. U As Barbara *puts* in her contact lenses, the telephone **rang**. (**change *puts* to *put***) OR

As Barbara *puts* in her contact lenses, the telephone **rings**. (**change *rang* to *rings* to illustrate ongoing action**)

3. S Thousands of people **will see** the art exhibit by the time it **closes**.

4. U By the time negotiations **began**, many pessimists *have* expressed doubt about them. (**change *have* to *had***)

# ANSWERS

5. After Capt. James Cook **visited** Alaska on his third voyage, he *is* killed by Hawaiian islanders in 1779. (**change *is* to *was***)
6. U I **was** terribly disappointed with my grade because I *studied* very hard. (**change *studied* to *had studied***)
7. S The moderator *asks* for questions as soon as the speaker **has finished**. (***asks* as habitual action; *will ask* is also possible**)
8. U Everyone *hopes* the plan **would work**. (**change *hopes* to *hoped***)

# ANSWERS

9. S Harry **wants** to show his friends the photos he **took** last summer.
10. S Scientists **predict** that the sun **will die** in the distant future.
11. U The boy **insisted** that he *has* paid for the candy bars. (**change *has* to *had***)
12. U The doctor **suggested** bed rest for the patient, who *suffers* from a bad cold. (**change *suffers* to *was suffering***)

***Let us Practice the skill to complete the sentence using the given clues***

1. We stand patiently, hoping that \_\_\_\_\_. (use future tense)
2. Advertisers seem to believe that \_\_\_\_\_. (use present tense)
3. By the time the fog lifted, \_\_\_\_\_. (use past perfect tense)
4. We will leave for Florida as soon as \_\_\_\_\_. (use present tense)
5. One student keeps repeating what \_\_\_\_\_. (use present perfect tense)

# Exercise Contd...

6. Yesterday our track team competed in a meet that \_\_\_\_\_. (use past tense)
7. Before the crew paves a driveway, they always \_\_\_\_\_. (use present tense [habitual action])
8. Before the crew paves the driveway, they \_\_\_\_\_. (use future tense [one-time action])
9. By the time the letter arrives, \_\_\_\_\_. (use future perfect tense)
10. When the final report is published, \_\_\_\_\_. (use future tense)

# Let us practice the MCQs

Choose the correct tense from the options given below and complete the following sentence:

1. It ..... me five minutes to get to college.

- a. Take   b. Takes   c. Took   d. Taken

2. We are usually ..... the news on TV at 9:00.

- a. Watch   b. Watching   c. watched   d. watches

3. Each July we ..... to Turkey for a holiday.

- a. Go   b. Goes   c. going   d. had gone

4. I ..... to believe that he did not know the car was stolen.

- a. Refused   b. Refuse   c. was refusing   d. am refusing

5. The growing number of visitors ..... the footpaths.

- a. Is damaging   b. Are damaging   c. damage

# MCQs... continued

6. The Prince is coming to visit, and I ..... he is very rich.  
a. Heard b. Hear c. am hearing d. was hearing
7. I have ..... my hands so that I can help you with the cooking.  
a. Washed b. Wash c. Washes d. Am washing
8. I have .....about the traffic before.  
a. Complain b. Complained c. complaint d. complaining
9. Prices ..... sharply over the past six months.  
a. Had fallen b. Have fallen c. fell d. were falling
10. 10. When ..... you arrive in Britain?  
a. Does b. Did

# MCQs ... Continued

11. Chinese craftsmen ..... both paper and printing.

- a. Invented   b. Had invented   c. were inventing

12 Does it concern you that you ..... the test?

- a. Fail   b. Failed   c. were failing   d. had failed

13. Marie ....., at the age of 86, in 1964.

- a. Has died   b. Died   c. had died

14. My head .....again, so I went home.

- a. Was aching   b. Aching   c. is aching   d. Has been aching

15 She ..... Up, when the alarm clock went off.

- a. Get   b. Got   c. Gets   d. was getting

# MCQs... continued

16. He ..... hard all his life.

- a. Worked    b. Was working

17. I ..... until midnight last night.

- a. Was reading    b. Have been reading  
c. am going to read    d. will be reading

18. Tim ..... for the national team in 65 matches so far.

- a. Has played    b. Had played    c. plays    d. is playing

19. The next meeting of the committee members ..... on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

- a. Is    b. Was    c. are

20. David ..... to meet us in the restaurant at 8o' clock.

- a. Is going    b. Going    c. will be going

# MCQs... continued

21. Did you know that Bob and Kath ..... to get married next week?

- a. Is going   b. Are going   c. were going

22. I ..... the letter in his very presence

- a. Wrote   b. Write   c. Writing

23. The sun ..... in the east.

- a. Rises   b. Rise   c. Will rise

24. She ..... sad.

- a. Seems   b. Seem   c. Is seeming   d. Was seeming

25. He ..... just gone out.

- a. Had   b. Has

# MCQs .... continued

26. He ..... for five hours.

- a. Has been sleeping   b. Had been sleeping

27. The steamer .....yesterday.

- a. Sailed   b. Sail   c. Went   d. Left

28. When I reached the station the train .....

- a. Had started   b. Has started   c. Left   d. Started

29. I ..... twenty next Saturday.

- a. Shall be   b. Going to be   c. Am going to be

30. I won't go out if it .....

- a. Rains   b. Will rain   c. Is raining   d. Would rain

# ANSWERS

1. Takes
2. Watching
3. Go
4. Refuse
5. is damaging
6. hear
7. washed
8. complained
9. have fallen
10. did
11. invented
12. failed
13. Died
14. was aching
15. got
16. worked
17. was reading
18. has played
19. is
20. is going
21. are going
22. wrote
23. rises
24. seems
25. Has
26. has been sleeping
27. sailed
28. Had started
29. Shall be
30. rains.