

A

Strategy: Choose the correct verb form: present, past

Verb forms are a commonly tested feature. This unit will help you to find clues in the questions and choose the correct answer choice.

Test tip

Choose the correct verb form
Many questions focus on choosing the correct verb form. Look at the sentence and decide what verb form it requires, then choose an answer of the same type.

Test tip

Look at the sentence first
You usually do not need to read the text to answer the questions. Go straight to the first question and look for time clues.

Test tip

Sometimes the sentence may not give clues to the required tense
In this case look at the rest of the text to find when the action happens.

1 Language building: Present/Past tense verb forms

Present tense verb forms

Read the information about verb forms. Then complete sentences 1–4 by putting the verb in the correct tense.

Present simple

base form (*he/she/it* statements + *s*)
(Happening regularly or always true)

e.g.
Cheetahs run very fast.
She runs 5 km twice a week.

Present continuous

am/is/are + verb + *ing*
(Happening right now and not finished yet)

e.g.
I am waiting to see the doctor.
He is waiting till Christmas to buy the present.

1. They often (play) golf with their customers on Saturday.
2. The parts (still/sit) on the truck waiting to be unloaded.
3. The customer (sign) his name on the insurance form as we speak.
4. Mary (work) as a cashier in the bank on Wilkins Street.

Follow up: Now write one true present simple and one true present continuous sentence about yourself and compare with your partner.

Past tense verb forms

Read the information about verb forms. Then complete sentences 1–6 by putting the verb in the correct tense.

Past simple (+)

base form + *ed* or irregular past (single or completed action, finished in the past)

e.g.
I dropped a ball on my foot!
She lived in Spain when she was young.
He ate the cake.
(irregular verb)

Past simple (- / ?)

did/didn't + base form (single or completed action, finished in the past)

e.g.
Did you see the movie?
I didn't meet him!

Past continuous

was/were + base form + *-ing*
(past action that continued for a period of time when another interrupted it.)

e.g.
He was driving slowly when he saw the accident.
As they were sleeping, the man entered the house.

1. The workers (stand) around waiting for the foreman to arrive for over an hour.
2. he (take) the package with him?
3. While we (sleep) the thieves broke into our house and stole our TV.
4. How long ago the package (arrive)?
5. I (drop) Sally off at the bus stop more than an hour ago.
6. They (not/go) to the conference.

Follow up: Write one true past simple statement, one true past simple negative statement and one true past continuous sentence about yourself and compare with your partner.

2 Test tactic: Use clues to choose the correct present/past forms

- A Read the text and decide if the missing verb should be in the present or past form. Circle the part of the text that tells you this. Then with a partner guess the words that could go in each blank.

All first-year engineering students (1) the story of Herbert Mansfield when they enter university.	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Past
Before his invention of the steam converter in 1903, Herbert (2) as a design engineer for a manufacturing company.	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Past
He (3) in a small, tidy, very average house outside Billington.	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Past
He (4) at the National Institute before receiving his degree in engineering.	4 <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Past
It wasn't until several years later that he (5) the invention that would change the world.	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Past
Many of the most influential scientists still (6) it to be the greatest breakthrough of the century.	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Past
Currently the city (7) a monument to this very important individual.	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Past

- B Complete the text using the verbs in the box. Did you guess correctly?

made believe lived studied is building worked learn

3 Tactic practice

Read the sentences for questions 1-4, decide which tense is needed and think of a word that would fit. Compare your ideas with a partner. Then quickly choose the correct answer.

Questions 1-4 refer to the following letter.

Tactics checklist

- Choose the correct verb form.
- Look at the question first for time clues.
- If there are no time clues in the sentence, look to the rest of the text.

Re: Diesel generator – Order No. B90008

Dear Mr. Johnson

I am writing to complain about the above noted large diesel generator that we from

1. (A) get
(B) received
(C) taken
(D) are accepting

you yesterday.

Upon unpacking the equipment, we found the width of the mounting brackets to be almost 8 inches longer than we in our design specifications. These will have to be replaced

2. (A) noted
(B) writing
(C) picture
(D) say

immediately as the generator must be installed by the end of the week.

Furthermore, the unit was sent without the wiring harness for the main control unit. Please this out in the same shipment as the correct mounting bracket.

3. (A) to send
(B) sending
(C) sent
(D) send

It is vital that we receive these parts by Tuesday. Late delivery our own installation schedule.

4. (A) affects
(B) affected
(C) will affect
(D) has affected

Yours Sincerely

Thomas Hardings

Thomas Hardings
Director

Now apply the *Test tactics* at the actual test speed with questions 1–12.



You have 6 minutes to complete 12 items. To use your time wisely, use the 2-pass method you learnt in Unit 5.1. Spend no more than 30 seconds on each item. If you don't know the answer, guess and move on.

Questions 1–4 refer to the following letter.

Mr. Robert Cheung
Sea Dragon Shipping
372 Clementi Ave 2#03–149A
SINGAPORE
120356

March 23

Dear Mr. Cheung,

I am writing on behalf of one of our clients, Mikra Electronics, Jakarta, who us that the

1. (A) have sent
- (B) telling
- (C) have informed
- (D) written

SS Liberty Star, due to arrive in Auckland on March 22 failed to arrive as scheduled.

2. (A) will
- (B) is
- (C) having
- (D) has

This vessel was carrying a consignment (B/L 8974) for our client and they would like to know why the vessel has been and when it is expected to arrive.

3. (A) delayed
- (B) stop
- (C) going
- (D) done

Since this delivery was being made through your Priority Express system, we must also inform you that you will be held responsible for any late delivery penalties our client may due to the delay.

4. (A) owing
- (B) have paid
- (C) be
- (D) face

A prompt reply would be appreciated in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Emerson Filho

Emerson Filho

Questions 5–8 refer to the following memo.

Memorandum

To: Alvin Kurosawa, Vancouver Branch Manager

From: Melville Bromwich, Accounting Section

Alvin,

I am just to confirm that my colleague Tom Brooks and I will be

5. (A) write
(B) writing
(C) written
(D) been writing

in Vancouver from the end of next week for the annual expenses audit. Could you please ask one of your staff to arrange our accommodation? We plan to arrive on the 14th and on the 19th.

6. (A) left
(B) leaving
(C) is leaving
(D) will be leaving

Also, I don't know if you have heard yet, but the board has us to evaluate

7. (A) asking
(B) tell
(C) instructed
(D) ordering

the travel and entertainment expenses starting from the last quarter. Since we are likely to be extremely busy, I we will be unable to find time to take in a

8. (A) think
(B) will say
(C) have thought
(D) am saying

hockey game as you had previously suggested.

Thanks in advance for any assistance with the hotels, and looking forward to seeing you next week.

Yours truly,

Mei

Questions 9–12 refer to the following letter.

Mr. Niels Kirstein
Olaf and Bohr Furnishings
Kristianiagade 19
2100 Copenhagen
Denmark

Dear Mr. Kirstein,

We your delivery of 150 hardwood table and chair sets (order# DH4589)

9. (A) receive
(B) received
(C) will receive
(D) receives

this morning, but unfortunately, when we opened them we discovered that there is one leg missing from table.

10. (A) each
(B) all
(C) some
(D) any

Obviously we will need this problem corrected as soon as possible. We would appreciate if you could the missing 150 legs to our warehouse by this

11. (A) be sent
(B) sending
(C) send
(D) sent

Friday (August 16) at the latest. The tables are to go on display in our

12. (A) wanting
(B) hoped
(C) planning
(D) scheduled

showroom the following Monday.

I look forward to hearing from you in the next day or so.

Yours sincerely,

Alfred Axely

Alfred Axely
Purchasing Director

Read three short texts and put the verbs in the correct tense.

1. Business letter

Dear Mr. Jones,

I (1) (write) in connection with the article in this month's American Engineer. Our company (2) (make) parts for the aerospace industry and we think that your invention meets our specifications. Would you be willing (3) (meet) with one of our design engineers to discuss licensing your design?

2. Complaint letter

Last month your company (1) (put) in new automatic doors on our warehouse. Since then we have twice had problems with the motors. In the first case, they didn't (2) (open) when the operator (3) (press) the button and we had to call in a mechanic to fix them. In the second case, the doors suddenly closed when a truck (4) (come) into the garage. This (5) (delay) the delivery of an important consignment of goods. I am afraid we must hold you responsible for any penalties.

3. Email

Sally,

Have you been told that Jack Benson (1) now (work) on the Dorfin Project? As you know he (2) previously (manage) our Texas outfit, but he (3) just (arrive) this morning from Dallas and (4) (need) accommodation near the office.

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