

KK-ENG501 - Tense Use in Academic Writing

Please do these tasks in the order given.

1. Before you start these exercises, consider what you already know about the form and meaning of the verb **tenses** and **aspects** in English.

2. **Watch** this short video in which the presenter explains what **verb tense and aspect** mean:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/towards-advanced/unit-30/session-1>

There is a transcript for the video if you find it difficult to follow, and the main points are also summarised on the webpage. You can also attempt the rather easy quiz at the bottom of the webpage.

3. Based on what you have learned, next try this exercise. For each of the tenses in the table below, find a suitable example in the table beneath it.

Tense	Function	Example
Simple Present	used for facts, generalizations, and truths that are not affected by the passage of time	
Simple Past	used for events completed in the past	
Simple Future	used for events to be completed in the future	
Perfect Present	used to emphasize an event whose consequences are still relevant	
Perfect Past	used to emphasize an event whose consequences were still relevant at an implied or stated past time	
Perfect Future	used to emphasize an event whose consequences will still be relevant at an implied or stated future time	
Progressive¹ Present	used to emphasize the continuing nature of an event (usually a temporary one)	
Progressive Past	used to emphasize the setting of other events in the past	
Progressive Future	used to emphasize the setting of other events expected to take place in the future	
Perfect-progressive Present	used to emphasize the continuing nature of events that ended recently and are still relevant	
Perfect-progressive Past	used to emphasize the continuing nature of events that ended just before an implied or stated past time and that were still relevant at that time	
Perfect-progressive Future	used to emphasize the continuing nature of events that will end just before an implied or stated future time and that will still be relevant to the that time	

1 In English, Progressive is also called continuous: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Present_continuous

Number	Example
1	"She will have been writing her papers for her classes (all night long by the time she finishes them)."
2	"She will have written papers for her classes (when she graduates)."
3	"She wrote papers for her classes."
4	"She had been writing her papers for her classes (just before she switched universities)."
5	"She will be writing her paper for her class (when we arrive)."
6	"She will write papers for her classes."
7	"She has been writing her papers for her classes."
8	"She has written papers for her classes."

9	"She writes papers for her classes."
10	"She was writing her paper for her class (when her pencil broke)."
11	"She is writing her paper for her class."
12	"She had written papers for her classes (just before she switched universities)."

4. When you are ready, check your answers on this webpage:

<https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/common-uses-tenses-academic-writing/>

On the same page you will find brief but clear explanations and examples of **when to use** the different tenses in academic writing. Read through these notes and think about these uses in relation to texts you have recently written.

According to this webpage, the **present simple**, **past simple**, and **present perfect** verb tenses account for approximately 80% of verb tense use in academic writing: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/verb-tenses/>

- The page provides some good examples of how to use these three verb tenses.

Different sections of academic papers (theses, dissertations and essays) will therefore naturally tend to use different tenses. The following webpage presents a breakdown of these tendencies by section:

<https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/tense-tendencies/>

5. Verb tenses in a journal article.

Select and download an **electronic journal article** in English (**as a pdf file**) from your field of study. This should be different from the one you used for the text analysis earlier in the course.

- Open the file in Acrobat Reader or a similar pdf reader.
- Focus on the **Introduction** section or alternatively, if it has one, the **Discussion** section.
- **Highlight** the verbs in the section you have chosen. For the highlighted verbs, **add a comment** in which you write the verb tense and aspect. Consider the function of the selected verb text in each case based on what you have covered so far in this worksheet.

For support, if needed, refer to the following:

<https://www.aje.com/dist/docs/AJE-Choosing-the-Right-Verb-Tense-for-Your-Scientific-Manuscript-2015.pdf>

When you have finished this exercise and the one that follows, **submit the pdf file and this worksheet to the folder provided in Moodle.**

6. Verb tenses in a magazine article

The article below is from a magazine. It is written in a less formal style than the text you will have just worked on. Highlight the verbs in the text and answer the question underneath it.

Drones will fly life-saving blood supplies to clinics in Rwanda

In a warehouse outside of Kigali, Rwanda, 15 drones sit waiting to receive a message. When the text comes in, one loads up and zips off into the sky – on a mission to save a life. Today, the government of Rwanda announced an emergency drone delivery service. These drones will make up to 150 trips per day, carrying blood supplies to clinics in need.

Rwanda has relatively good infrastructure in some places, but in others it can be unreliable, says Moz Siddiqui at the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), one of the partners in the project, along with UPS and California drone company Zipline. "It's the land of a thousand hills," he says. "In some

areas, access is really difficult, especially when you come to the rainy season, where roads are just not an option.”

That’s problematic for healthcare workers, who may not have the supplies they need to deal with emergency situations – such as postpartum hemorrhage, one of the leading causes of death for women in Africa.

Drones, says Siddiqui, “are quite an eloquent solution”. Now, when health workers at one of 21 clinics around the country need a particular blood type, they can send a text to the drone base, nicknamed the Nest. There, a Zip drone will be loaded with up to 1.5 kilograms of supplies. When it arrives at its destination, it will drop the payload, attached to a small parachute. This way, the team says, a trip that might have taken hours by car can be completed in under 30 minutes.

It isn’t the first time that researchers have turned to drones to transport medical equipment. Last July, the US government signed off on a project to fly pharmaceuticals to rural Virginia using a hexacopter drone. Another project, run by California company Matternet, delivered medicine to a clinic in Haiti.

If all goes well with the Rwanda program, the team plans to expand the drones’ cargo to include rabies vaccines, then perhaps other types of vaccine too. “When a child gets bitten by a rabid animal, it’s 100 per cent fatal,” says Siddiqui. “You need to actually have a vaccine at that particular point straight away.”

It’s a great idea, subject to a few constraints, says David Salisbury at Chatham House in London. He notes that it’s important to make sure that the package gets exactly where it needs to go and that workers can confirm it’s been received. Another obstacle is the “cold chain”: vaccines must be kept chilled within a narrow temperature range.

But, if the trips are short enough, Siddiqui thinks they might not have to worry about vaccines going bad on the ride over.

Ultimately, he hopes the project can expand to other countries too. “Our intention is to scale any intervention, any project that enables us to actually save lives and have access to vaccines wherever you are,” he says. “We think this can be one of those.”

Question: What verb tenses are used in the article and how do they function to tell the story? Type your answer below:

Optional online exercises

If you would like to try out further exercises to help you understand the functions of different tenses, visit the following webpage. Links to the exercises are given underneath the video:

<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni/tenses-in-academic-writing>