

**UNIT: 5**

**SUBJECT NAME: GENERAL ENGLISH**

**SUBJECT CODE: CLE 40**

# Tenses

Tenses play a crucial role in the English language. It denotes the time an action takes place, whether sometime in the past, in the present or will take some time in the future.

## Types of Tenses

From a general view of tenses, this module will go on to discuss each tense in detail with examples and also New way to learn Tense with Examples and Exercises. The table below gives a glimpse of the way tenses are used using the verb 'play'

Present	Plays (verb+s)
Past	Played (verb+ed)
Future	play ( shall+verb)
Present Continuous	is/am/are playing (is/am/are+verb+ing)
Past Continuous	was/were playing (was/were+verb+ing)
Future Continuous	will/shall be playing (will/shall be+verb+ing)
Present perfect	has/have played (has/have+past participle)
Past perfect	had played (had+past participle)
Future Perfect	will/shall have played (will/shall+past participle)
Present Perfect Continuous	had been playing (had been+verb+ing)
Past Perfect Continuous	has/have been playing (has/have been+verb+ing)
Future Perfect Continuous	will/shall have been playing (will/shall have been+verb+ing)

## 12 types of Tenses

### PRESENT TRENSE

**1) Simple Present Tense:** Indicates an action that is generally true or habitual. That is, it took place in the past, continue to take place in the present, and will take place in the future. This tense is used to denote

-a habitual action- for instance, "He walk to school."

general truths- for instance, "The sun rises in the east", "Honesty is the best policy."

-a future event that is part of a fixed timetable- for instance, "The match starts at 9 o' clock."

Note

a. The form of Simple Present Tense is- verb (infinitive without 'to' and agreeable with the subject)

**2) Present Perfect Tense:** Indicates an action that has been completed sometime before the present moment, with a result that affects the present situation. For example, "He has finished the work."

"He has slept."

Note

a. The form of Present Perfect Tense is- has/have + verb (past participle form or 3rd form of the verb)

**3) Present Continuous Tense:**Indicates an action that is taking place at the moment of speaking.  
For example, "She is walking." "I am studying."

Note

a. the form of Present Continuous Tense is- is/am/are + verb + ing

**4) Present Perfect Continuous Tense:**Indicates an action that started in the past and is continuing at the present time. For example, "He has been sleeping for an hour."

Note

a. The form of Present Perfect Continuous Tense is- has/have + been + verb + ing

Read More : What is Future Tense?Get Examples and Practice Exercise

## PAST TENSE

**1) Simple Past Tense:**Indicates an action took place before the present moment and that has no real connection with the present time.

For example, "He danced in the function." (The action took place in the past, is finished and is completely unrelated to the present)

"He flew to London yesterday."

Note

a. The verb 'flew' is an irregular

**2) Past Perfect Tense:**Indicates an action in the past that had been completed before another time or event in the past.

For example, "He had exercised before it started to rain."

"He had slept before I came back from the market."

Note

a. The form of Past Perfect Tense is- had + verb (past participle form or the 3rd form of the verb)

**3) Past Continuous Tense:**Indicates an action going on at some time in the past or an action in the past that is longer in duration than another action in the past.

For example, "It was getting darker."

"The light went out while theywere reading."

Note

a. The form of Past Continuous Tense is- was/were + verb + ing

**4) Past Perfect Continuous Tense:**Indicates an action in the past that took place before another time or event in the past and continued during the second event/time point in the past.

For example, "At that time, he had been writing a novel for two months."

"He had been exercising when I called."

Note

a. The form of Past Perfect Continuous Tense is- had + been + verb + ing

## FUTURE TENSE

**1) Simple Future Tense:**Indicates an action that will take place after the present time and that has no real connection with the present time.

For example, "She will visit her ailing grandmother soon."

"He will walk home."

Note

a. the form of Simple Future Tense is- will/shall + verb

**2) Future Perfect Tense:**Indicates an action in the future that will have been completed before another time or event in the future.

For example, "By the time we arrive, he will have studied."

Note

a. The form of Future Perfect Tense is- will/shall have + verb(past participle form or 3rd form of the verb)

**3) Future Continuous Tense:**Indicates an action in the future that is longer in duration than another action in the future.

For example, "He will be walking when it starts to rain."

Note

a. The form of Future Continuous Tense is-will/shall be + verb + ing

**4) Future Perfect Continuous Tense:**Indicates an action in the future that will have been continuing until another time or event in the future.

For example, "He will have been exercising an hour at 2:00."

Note

a. The form of Future Perfect Continuous Tense is- will/shall have been + verb + ing

**Q1. Choose the correct verb from those in brackets:**

- a. The earth \_\_\_\_\_ round the sun. (move, moves, moved)
- b. My friends \_\_\_\_\_ the film yesterday. (see, saw, have seen)
- c. It started to rain while we \_\_\_\_\_ tennis. (are playing, had played, were playing)
- d. I \_\_\_\_\_ English for five years. (have been studying, study, am studying)
- e. The train \_\_\_\_\_ before we reach the station. (arrives, will have arrived, had arrived)
- f. Don't disturb me. I \_\_\_\_\_ my work. (do, did, am doing)
- g. Fortune \_\_\_\_\_ the brave. (is favouring, will favour, favours)
- h. I \_\_\_\_\_ the letter before you arrived. (had written, wrote, will write)
- i. He \_\_\_\_\_ us next week. (will have met, will have been meeting, will be meeting)
- j. Perhaps we \_\_\_\_\_ Delhi next month. (visit, will visit, visited)

**Q2. Complete the dialogue.**

Rashid: Rahul! Your friend Manas has sent you a postcard. It's from Kerala. It \_\_\_\_\_ (look) nice.

Rahul: I bet it does!

Rashid: He \_\_\_\_\_ (write) that it's very hot there. There \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a lot of tourists. The hotels \_\_\_\_\_ (be) full.

He \_\_\_\_\_ (say) the restaurants \_\_\_\_\_ (be) always full!

Rahul: Yes. I'm sure it is. The papers \_\_\_\_\_ (say) that the temperature there is 30C.

Rashid: Then he \_\_\_\_\_ (write) that he has learnt a bit of Malayalam, and that he \_\_\_\_\_ (get on) well with the people there, especially the women!

Rashid: Look, didn't the newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ (say) that there's another strike in Kerala.

Rahul: Yes, it did Manas won't mind having to stay in Kerala longer!

**Q3. Correct the following sentences:**

- i. I lived in Calcutta since 1930.
- ii. She died before her husband came.
- iii. I have written a letter to her last Monday.
- iv. I am reading Kalidasa for the last six days.
- v. The new hotel has been opened last Saturday.
- vi. He had gone to Madras last week.
- vii. The train leaves the station before I reached there.
- viii. I wish my men had been coming quickly and find us.
- ix. At the moment the baby sleeps in the cradle.
- x. He goes out for ten minutes.

## Verb

Definition: A verb is a word or a combination of words that indicates action or a state of being or condition. A verb is the part of a sentence that tells us what the subject performs. Verbs are the hearts of English sentences.

Examples:

Jacob walks in the morning. (A usual action)

Mike is going to school. (A condition of action)

Albert does not like to walk. (A negative action)

Anna is a good girl. (A state of being)

### Basic Forms of Verbs

There are six basic forms of verbs. These forms are as follows:

Base form: Children play in the field.

Infinitive: Tell them not to play

Past tense: They played football yesterday.

Past participle: I have eaten a burger.

Present participle: I saw them playing with him today.

Gerund: Swimming is the best exercise.

Different Types of Verbs

Main/Base Verb

Regular/Weak Verb

Irregular/Strong Verb

Transitive Verb

Intransitive Verb

Weak Verb

Strong Verb

Finite Verbs  
Non-finite Verbs  
Action Verbs  
Linking Verb  
Auxiliary Verbs  
Modal Verbs  
Reflexive Verb  
Ergative Verb  
Phrasal Verb  
Lexical Verb  
Delexical Verb  
Stative/Being Verb  
Dynamic Verb  
Non-continuous Verb  
Participle  
Gerund  
Infinitive

**Base Verb:**The base verb is the form of a verb where it has no ending (-ing, -ed, -en) added to it. It is also called the Root Verb since it is the very root form of a verb.

Examples:

I go to school every day.

You run a mile every morning.

Do your homework.

**Regular Verb:**The Verbs that follow the most usual conjugations are considered Regular Verbs. It is regular since it abides by most if not all of the regular grammar rules there are.

Examples:

Rehan plays cricket.

Tam called out my name.

You really walked all the way back?

**Irregular Verb:**The Verbs that have irregularities in terms of following grammar rules are Irregular Verbs, in general.

Examples:

Do the dishes.

I hardly ever drink enough water in a day.

She drove all the way back.

**Transitive Verb:**The Main Verb that takes a direct object sitting right after it would be a Transitive Verb. They usually construct the most straightforward of sentences.

Examples:

She went to the fair.

We do not like being called out loud in crowds.

I love visiting my village home.

**Intransitive Verb:**The main Verb that does not take a direct object specified right afterward and rather there is an indirect one mentioned somewhere along the line is called an Intransitive Verb. These verbs often make the corresponding sentences incomplete.

Example:

I laughed.

John ran.

A ghastr of cold wind blew.

**Weak Verb:**Verbs that end with “-d” and “-t” in their Past Indefinite and Past Participle form are Weak Verbs. There is a tendency to associate Weak Verbs with Regular Verbs but not all Weak Verbs are Regular Verbs in the English language.

Examples:

Present Indefinite	Past Indefinite
Spend	Spent
Walk	Walked
Book	Booked
Learn	Learnt
Want	Wanted

**Strong Verb:**Strong Verbs are those in which the vowels in the verb stem changes from “i” to “a” to “u” in the Present Indefinite to Past Indefinite to Past Participle form of Verbs.

Present indefinite	Past indefinite	Past participle
Ring	Rang	Rung
Drink	Drank	Drunk
Cling	Clang	Clung
Swim	Swam	Swum
Sing	Sang	Sung
Wring	Wrang	Wrung

**Finite Verbs:**Finite verbs are the actual verbs that are called the roots of sentences. It is a form of a verb that is performed by or refers to a subject and uses one of the twelve forms of tense and changes according to the number/person of the subject.

Example:Alex went to school. (Subject – Alex – performed the action in the past. This information is evident only by the verb ‘went’.)

Robert plays hockey.

He is playing for Australia.

He is one of the best players. (Here, the verb ‘is’ directly refers to the subject itself.)

**Non-finite Verbs:**Non-finite Verbs are not actual verbs. They do not work as verbs in the sentence rather they work as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Non-finite verbs do not change according to the number/person of the subject because these verbs, also called verbals, do not have any direct relation to the subject. Sometimes they become the subject themselves.The forms of non-finite verbs are – infinitive, gerund, and participle (participles become finite verbs when they take auxiliary verbs.)

Example:

Alex went abroad to play (Infinitives)

Playing cricket is his only job. (Present participle)

I have a broken bat. (Past participle)

Walking is a good habit. (Gerund)

**Action Verbs:** Action verbs indicate what the subject of a sentence performs. Action verbs can make the listener/reader feel emotions, see scenes more vividly and accurately.

Action verbs can be transitive or intransitive.

Transitive verbs must have a direct object. A transitive verb demands something/someone to be acted upon.

Example:

I painted the car. (The verb 'paint' demands an object to be painted)

She is reading the newspaper. (The verb 'read' asks the question "what is she reading?" – the answer is the object)

Intransitive verbs do not act upon anything. They may be followed by an adjective, adverb, preposition, or another part of speech.

Example:

She smiled. (The verb 'smile' cannot have any object since the action of 'smiling' does not fall upon anything/anyone)

I wake up at 6 AM. (No object is needed for this verb)

Note: {Subject + Intransitive verb} is sufficient to make a complete sentence but {Subject + Transitive verb} is not sufficient because transitive verbs demand a direct object.

**Linking Verb:** A linking verb adds details about the subject of a sentence. In its simplest form, it connects the subject and the complement — that is, the words that follow the linking verb. It creates a link between them instead of showing action. Often, what is on each side of a linking verb is equivalent; the complement redefines or restates the subject. Generally, linking verbs are called 'be' verbs which are - am, is, are, was, were. However, there are some other verbs that can work as linking verbs. Those verbs are: Act, feel, remain, appear, become, seem, smell, sound, grow, look, prove, stay, taste, turn. Some verbs in this list can also be action verbs. To figure out if they are linking verbs, you should try replacing them with forms of the be verbs. If the changed sentence makes sense, that verb is a linking verb.

Example:

She appears ready for the game. (She is ready for the game.)

The food seemed delicious. (The food was delicious.)

You look happy. (You are happy.)

**Auxiliary Verbs:** Auxiliary verbs are also called helping verbs. An auxiliary verb extends the main verb by helping to show time, tense, and possibility. The auxiliary verbs are – be verbs, have, and do. They are used in the continuous (progressive) and perfect tenses. Linking verbs work as main verbs in the sentence, but auxiliary verbs help main verbs. Do is an auxiliary verb that is used to ask questions, to express negation, to provide emphasis, and more.

Example:

Alex is going to school.

They are walking in the park.



I have seen a movie.

Do you drink tea?

Don't waste your time.

Please, do submit your assignments.

Modal Verbs

A modal verb is a kind of auxiliary verb. It assists the main verb to indicate possibility, potentiality, ability, permission, expectation, and obligation. The modal verbs are can, could, must, may, might, ought to, shall, should, will, would.

Example:

I may want to talk to you again.

They must play their best game to win.

She should call him.

I will go there.

**Reflexive Verb:** When the Subject and the Object are the same and the Verb reflects on the Subject, that is the Reflexive Verb. These Verbs are often used with Reflexive Pronouns like - myself, himself, herself, itself etc.

Examples:

He has done it himself.

I'll watch it myself.

**Ergative Verb:** Ergative Verbs can be used as Transitive and Intransitive Verb. They are also called Labile Verb in English.

Examples:

Intransitive Verbs

Transitive Verbs

The door opens.

I opened the door.

The bell rang.

She rang the bell.

The light is fused.

They fused the lights.

The whistle blew.

Tom blew the whistle.

**Phrasal Verb:** An idiomatic phrase consisting of a Verb and another element, most likely an Adverb or a Preposition is called a Phrasal Verb.

Examples:

She broke down in tears.

Don't look down upon the poor.

I'll see to it.

**Lexical Verb:** Lexical Verb is the main or principal verb of a sentence which typically takes the major responsibility of a Verb that represents the action of the Noun or Pronoun.

Examples:

He ran to his father.

I laughed out loud.

Rina tried her best.

**DE-Lexical Verb:** Delexical Verbs lack importance when it comes to meaning since these Verbs hardly have meanings of their own when used individually. The meaning is taken out of the Verbs and put into the Noun. Take, have, make, give etc. are Delexical Verbs.

Examples:

He took a shower.

I had a cold drink.

She made some arrangements.

**Stative Verb:** The Verbs that describe the state of being are called Stative or Being Verbs.

Examples:

I need some boxes.

You belong to the pomp and power.

He smells danger.

They remember what happened that day.

**Dynamic Verb:** The Verbs that entail continuous or progressive action of the Subject are called Dynamic or Fientive Verbs. They express the Subject's state of being on the move.

Examples:

He's running fast.

Keep hitting the ball hard.

The dog goes for a walk every afternoon.

**Non-continuous Verb:** The Verbs that are usually never used in their continuous forms are called Non-continuous Verbs.

Examples:

I like to swim.

I'm liking to swim.

I love to do the chords.

I'm loving to do the chords.

He does not hate you.

He's hating you.

**Intensive Verb:** The Verbs that focus intensely on just the Subject are called Intensive Verbs. Intensive Verbs are also called Linking or Copular Verbs.

Examples:

You seem happy.

It appears to be just perfect.

She looks stunning.

He's become rather irritable.

Extensive Verb

All the Verbs that do not focus intensively on just the Subject (as the Intensive Verbs) of the sentence are Extensive Verbs.

Examples:

He loves her

She runs too fast.

Ron sells fish.

**Participle:** A participle is a Verb form where they retain some of the characteristics and functions of both Verbs and adopt those of the Adjectives.

Examples:

Present Participle (Verb + -ing)

Have I become a laughing stock?

Cycling is a well-rounded exercise.

Past Participle

I have taken a hint.

Have you given it enough thought?

Perfect Participle (Having + Past Participle)

Having said that, I was quite worried.

Having stepped out of my comfort zone, I saw a whole new world.

**Gerund:** The Verbs having -ing endings that function like Nouns in sentences are called Gerunds.

Examples:

Smoking is injurious to health.

Walking is good for health.

I love swimming.

Infinitive

The 'to + Verb' forms where the Verbs are at their base or stem forms while they function as Nouns, Adjectives or Adverbs instead of Verbs.

Examples:

I wanted to help you out.

Are you trying to go there?

I just love to flaunt my new Ferrari.

## Subject-Verb Concord

'Subject' is a noun or pronoun that tells us what the sentence talks about and 'verb' represents the action in the sentence. Then what is 'subject verb concord/agreement'? It means that the subject and verb in a sentence should agree or match, otherwise the sentence will not sound right. Let's understand the basic rules of subject-verb agreement.

### Rule 1

The verb and subject must agree in number (singular or plural) This means that if the subject is singular, the verb should be singular and if the subject is plural, the verb should also be plural.

Examples:

He plays football. (SINGULAR)

They play football. (PLURAL)

subject verb

Subject-Verb Agreement – Rule 1 [Source: vimeo]

Rule 2

The number of the subject (singular or plural) will not change due to words/phrases in between the subject and the verb.

Examples:

One of the glasses is empty. (Here, since the subject is 'one', the verb should be 'is').

The bouquet of red roses smells so sweet. (Here, since 'bouquet' is the subject and not 'roses', the verb should be 'smells' and not 'smell')

Browse more Topics under Verb

Introduction to Verbs

Forms of Verb

Auxiliary and Modal Verbs

Subject-Verb Agreement

Transitive and Intransitive Verb

Rule 3

Subjects that are joined by 'and' in a sentence, use a plural verb. Subjects that are joined by 'either/or', 'neither/nor' use a singular verb.

Examples:

Radha and Meera are coming home.

Neither Akshay nor Rohit is coming home.

My dad or my mom is arriving today.

Rule 4

The verb in a sentence containing 'or', 'either/or', 'neither/nor' agrees with the noun or pronoun closest to it.

Examples:

Neither the shoes nor the bag matches the dress. (Here, 'bag' is closest to the verb, hence 'matches')

Neither the bag nor the shoes match the dress. (Here, 'shoes' is closest to the verb, hence 'match')

Rule 5

When the subject is followed by words such as 'as well as', 'along with', 'besides', 'not' etc. ignore them and use a singular verb if the subject is singular.

Examples:

Matt, as well as his dog, is expected shortly.

Pratik, along with his brother, is going to school.

Rule 6

In sentences that begin with 'here', 'there', the true subject usually follows the verb.

Examples:

Here are the chocolates.

There is a big puddle on the road.

Rule 7

In sentences that include sums of money, periods of time or distances etc. (as a unit), use singular verbs.

Examples:

500 rupees is a high price to pay.

62 years is the minimum age of retirement.

10 kilometers is too far to walk.

Rule 8

In the case of words such as 'a lot of', 'all', 'some' etc. in a sentence, pay attention to the noun after 'of'. If the noun after 'of' is singular then use a singular verb, if plural, use a plural verb.

Examples:

All of the cake is gone.

All of the cakes are gone.

A lot of the cake is gone.

A lot of the cakes are gone.

Some of the cake is gone.

Some of the cakes are gone.

Rule 9

In the case of collective nouns such as 'group', 'population', 'family', in a sentence, the verb can be singular or plural depending on their use in the sentence.

Examples:

Most of my family is here OR are here.

Half of the population was against the bill OR were against the bill.

Rule 10

Nouns such as 'mathematics', 'civics', 'news' etc. while plural in form, are singular in meaning and use singular verbs.

Examples:

Mathematics is very difficult for some people.

The news is very saddening.

Rule 11

In sentences that express a wish, request or contrary to fact, the word 'were' is used instead of 'was'.

Examples:

I wish my sister were here.

Aditya requested that she raise her glass.

Solved Examples for You on Subject Verb Concord

**Choose the correct subject verb combinations in the sentences below.**

The lady in the car (look/looks) like your mother.

Most of the milk (is/are) gone.

One of the flowers (has/have) wilted.

Either Ram or Shyam (is/are) coming today.

Here (is/are) the newspaper.

The group of dancers (is/are) here.

Civics (is/are) my favorite subject.

## Types of Adverbs

Adverbs dress up verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. Since verbs are such integral parts of our everyday language, their modifiers are also multi-faceted. To start, there are five types of adverbs you should familiarize yourself with: adverbs of degree, frequency, manner, place, and time. With these categories under your belt, you'll be well-positioned to identify all the different types of adverbs.

adverbs dress up verbs adjectives other adverbs

**Adverbs of Manner:** Adverbs of manner tell us how, or in what manner, something was carried out. They mostly modify verbs and can often be found at the end of a clause or right before the word they modify. This category comprises the most common adverbs — the ones that end in -ly.

Here are some examples of adverbs of manner:

beautifully

generously

happily  
neatly  
patiently  
softly  
quickly  
well

Example sentences that include these types of adverbs include:  
He trimmed the white roses neatly. (How did he trim them?)

I combed my dog's fur carefully because it had lots of tangles. (How did you comb it?)

Please discuss the topic calmly. (How should I discuss it?)

An anonymous donor generously gave us enough money for the new stage. (How did they give the money?)

The little girl skipped happily down the road. (How did she skip?)

**Adverbs of Degree:** Adverbs of degree tell us more about the intensity of the verb in the sentence. They describe how much, or to what degree, something happened. Adverbs of degree are often placed before the word they modify, although in some cases, they follow the word (such as the adverb "enough").

Popular adverbs of degree include:

almost  
enough  
hardly  
just  
nearly  
quite  
simply  
so  
too

Read these sample sentences to see how adverbs of degree provide more information about the words they modify.

This short essay is hardly sufficient. (How sufficient is it?)

The dress is simply gorgeous. (How gorgeous is it?)

I'm so excited to move to Ireland. (How excited are you?)

Tori lost almost all her savings. (How much of her savings did she lose?)

The book was interesting enough to keep my attention. (How interesting was it?)

**Adverbs of Frequency:** Adverbs of frequency let us know how often something occurs. These adverbs tend to appear right before the main verb in the sentence or at the end of the clause. Popular adverbs in this category include:

again  
always  
every (hour, day, week, year, and so on)  
never  
normally  
rarely  
seldom  
sometimes  
usually

Sentences with these types of adverbs include:

I always read a book before bed. (How often do you read a book before bed?)

He normally walks his dog at this time. (How often does he walk his dog at this time?)

She usually shops at the Korean market in town. (How often does she shop there?)

We never stay up past ten o'clock. (How often do you stay up that late?)

I'd love to visit Denmark again. (How often would you like to visit?)

**Adverbs of Place:** Adverbs of place tell us more about where the verb took place. Many writers confuse them with prepositions, which describe the location of nouns. While some of these words can function as prepositions, they are considered adverbs when they modify verbs. Also, prepositions are followed by objects, while adverbs of place are not.

Common adverbs of place include:

above  
anywhere  
back  
below  
everywhere  
here  
inside  
nowhere  
out  
outside  
there

Let's take a look at them in action:

In Ireland, there are thatched-roof cottages everywhere. (Where are the cottages?)

There are more boxes over there. (Where are there more boxes?)

It's time for lunch, so go inside. (Where should I go?)

You can park anywhere. (Where can I park?)

Let's go back before we get lost. (Where should we go?)



**Adverbs of Time:** Adverbs of time detail when the verb took place. We usually see these kinds of adverbs placed at the beginning or end of a sentence. Although many prepositions can also indicate when something happened, they are always followed by objects, so you can easily tell when a word is an adverb.

Adverbs of time include:

already

earlier

immediately

lately

later

now

recently

soon

tomorrow

yesterday

You can use adverbs of time in the following sentences:

Lately, you've been rude to everyone around. (When were you rude?)

They recently relocated to Santa Fe. (When did they relocate?)

The morning newspaper arrives earlier. (When does it arrive?)

We'll take a trip to Yosemite later. (When will we take a trip?)

I'll finish my project tomorrow. (When will you finish it?)

## **READING COMPREHENSION**

### **WHAT IS READING COMPREHENSION?**

Reading comprehension is the ability to process what is being read, understand the meaning the author is trying to convey — both textually and subtextually — and make inferences based on prior knowledge. This skill deals about the reader's cognitive skills, such as visual processing, processing speed, and logic and reasoning skills, can all have an impact on their ability to comprehend text.

Prior knowledge, language fluency, and the ability to make inferences will also play a role in a reader's comprehension. Reading comprehension involves both text comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. You need to know what each word means individually and as part of the whole in addition to what the text is trying to convey.

## **WHY ARE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IMPORTANT?**

Reading comprehension demonstrates your ability to understand, interpret, analyze, and infer written information. Your reading comprehension level is indicative of many other important, and sought-after, skills in the workplace. Your overall communication skills, your critical thinking skills, your attention to detail, your decision-making ability, even your ability to concentrate can all be assumed from your ability to understand what you read.

Considerable jobs also examines the comprehension abilities to determine if a candidate will be a good fit for the role and the company. Comprehension plays a role in your ability to communicate with and understand your coworkers, supervisors, managers, and your clients. It can help you make decisions and formulate a plan. Your ability to interpret the written word empowers you.

## **HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS**

Reading comprehension is a skill. And, like any skill, it can be improved with practice. It should be noted, though, that this is an extremely difficult skill to build. You will need time and patience to improve your comprehension abilities to any degree. Improve your vocabulary. Your understanding of the words being used will have a direct effect on your ability to comprehend the text. Fluency in the language you are reading is important, but may not always be possible.

Do your best to build your vocabulary regularly to improve your comprehension.

Every exchange has its language. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the common language used in your exchange or organization. Without knowledge of the common terms and phrases, you will not be able to fully comprehend what you're reading.

**Skim first:** This is more useful for longer or more complex texts. Although, you may skim your emails and memos to gather important information quickly. Be sure to skim through the text first to glean any important information before reading through more thoroughly. By skimming first, you allow yourself to gather the main points before diving in deeper. This can help you to focus on the information you need more clearly.

**Ask questions:** Before you begin reading, while you are reading, and after you are finished, you should be asking questions about the text. This can help you to determine the main points and find the deeper meaning. Asking questions can help you become more invested in the text as you search for answers. The more specific the questions you ask, the more insight you'll gain.

**Use context clues:** If you're unable to understand exactly what a word, sentence or phrase means, use clues from the surrounding text to help you gain clarity. Using context clues can help you to build your vocabulary, which we already know is an important part of reading comprehension.

**Summarize:** You can practice this throughout the text, or once you've finished reading. By restating the main ideas in your own words, you will see the text in a language that makes the most sense to you. Not only will this help you to better understand the information being conveyed, but you will also be better able to relay this information. You want to make sure that you are clear in your meaning when you explain the text to coworkers or clients.

**Make inferences:** You need to read between the lines. Reading comprehension is about understanding what is being said both textually and subtextually. Try to see the subtext and understand what is being implied. By drawing inferences, you can make connections and conclusions based on what you've read.

**Visualize:** If you're working with a complex concept or struggling to understand it, visualization can be the difference. Create a mental image or draw a graphic organizer to help extract meaning from the text. Visualization is an immensely helpful skill that can have a significant impact on your ability to recall information. Visualization is strongly linked to short-term and long-term memory.

### **POINTERS TO MAKE EFFECTIVE READING COMPREHENSION PRACTICE:**

It is not easy to improve your reading comprehension skills. Time and practice are the only way to build this skill, meaning it's important to practice regularly. In other words: read, read, read, and read some more. You can do both guided reading practice and relaxed reading practice. Both will help you build your comprehension skills. There are ways to help you make the most of your reading comprehension practice. If you're trying to improve your comprehension skills:

- **Read aloud:** When you hear the text instead of just seeing the words on the page, it can help you to decipher meaning. It can help you to better concentrate on the text, sharpening your focus and allowing you to dedicate your attention to what is being said. Studies have found that reading aloud can also help you to commit the text to memory and recall it later.
- **Reread to build fluency:** If a text is complex or you're having trouble understanding it, reading through it at least twice can help immensely. The first read-through allows you to focus on the vocabulary knowledge involved in incomprehension. Subsequent read-throughs will allow you to focus on text comprehension. To truly benefit from this strategy, you should follow the steps outlined above in the first, and perhaps second, time reading the text to ensure that you're absorbing all the necessary information.
- **Do both guided reading and relaxed reading:** Typically, guided reading refers to reading with an instructor in a small group setting. Here, guided reading simply means reading passages or chapters and checking that knowledge. There are plenty of reading comprehension worksheets and passages available. If you find these to be too simple, you can find free versions of standardized exams available online. There are also inexpensive books dedicated to the reading comprehension sections of many exams. These will provide you with exactly what you need: complex passages that are followed by questions to check your comprehension.
- **Don't focus solely on guided reading, though:** You should also practice relaxed reading. This is reading books, magazines, graphic novels, anything you enjoy reading in a relaxed setting. With relaxed reading, you don't want to focus on getting everything you can out of the text. You simply want to practice your skills through reading.
- **Keep notes:** Keep a notebook or set of Post-it notes with you while you're reading. Make notes of main points, important facts, or anything you feel you need to remember. If there is a challenging passage that you're able to decipher, make a note of it.
- **Mark anything you don't understand:** If you come across a word or phrase that you don't understand, make a note. You can mark it in the notes you're keeping thanks to the previous point, or highlight/underline it in the text.

- **Don't just make a note, though:** Look up the meaning and mark that in your notes as well. This will help you to recall the information better when you read through it again.
- **Avoid distractions :** If you can't concentrate on what you're reading, your comprehension will suffer. If you've ever been in a distracting environment and found yourself rereading the same sentence over and over without the information ever sinking in, you know what I mean. If you're reading a complex text or one that is overflowing with important information, remove the distractions. If it's loud, consider using headphones to block out the noise. If you're in a visually distracting environment, relocate.
- **Summarize :** This point was made in the previous section, but it felt necessary to mention it again. Summarizing what you have read is one of the easiest ways to build your reading comprehension skills. This means more than summarizing everything you've read. If you come across a particularly dense or confusing passage, summarize. If there is a sentence you're not quite decoding, try to summarize. And, one more time with feeling: summarize.
- **Read a variety of texts and subjects:** Not all texts are created equal. And, even if they were, it would get boring to read the same type of content over and over. Add some variation to your practice.
- **Keep it simple or find something more complex:** Expose yourself to a variety of subjects. The variation will help you build out your vocabulary even further and add to your knowledge bank. Inferring will become easier and comprehension will come faster.
- **Underline main points:** This is pretty straightforward. Underlining the main points and important pieces of information as you read will allow you to go back to them. This is information you want to commit to memory and recall later. If you can skim through and easily locate it, it will simplify the process for you.

## Reading Comprehension Practice Questions

### RC Passage 1:

Caffeine, the stimulant in coffee, has been called “the most widely used psychoactive substance on Earth.” Synder, Daly and Bruns have recently proposed that caffeine affects

behavior by countering the activity in the human brain of a naturally occurring chemical called adenosine. Adenosine normally depresses neuron firing in many areas of the brain. It apparently does this by inhibiting the release of neurotransmitters, chemicals that carry nerve impulses from one neuron to the next. Like many other agents that affect neuron firing, adenosine must first bind to specific receptors on neuronal membranes. There are at least two classes of these receptors, which have been designated A1 and A2.

Snyder et al propose that caffeine, which is structurally similar to adenosine, is able to bind to both types of receptors, which prevents adenosine from attaching there and allows the neurons to fire more readily than they otherwise would.

For many years, caffeine's effects have been attributed to its inhibition of the production of phosphodiesterase, an enzyme that breaks down the chemical called cyclic AMP. A number of neurotransmitters exert their effects by first increasing cyclic AMP concentrations in target neurons. Therefore, prolonged periods at the elevated concentrations, as might be brought about by a phosphodiesterase inhibitor, could lead to a greater amount of neuron firing and, consequently, to behavioral stimulation. But Snyder et al point out that the caffeine concentrations needed to inhibit the production of phosphodiesterase in the brain are much higher than those that produce stimulation. Moreover, other compounds that block phosphodiesterase's activity are not stimulants.

To buttress their case that caffeine acts instead by preventing adenosine binding, Snyder et al compared the stimulatory effects of a series of caffeine derivatives with their ability to dislodge adenosine from its receptors in the brains of mice. "In general," they reported, "the ability of the compounds to compete at the receptors correlates with their ability to stimulate locomotion in the mouse; i.e., the higher their capacity to bind at the receptors, the higher their ability to stimulate locomotion." Theophylline, a close structural relative of caffeine and the major stimulant in tea, was one of the most effective compounds in both regards. There were some apparent exceptions to the general correlation observed between adenosine-receptor binding and stimulation. One of these was a compound called 3-isobutyl-1-methylxanthine (IBMX), which bound very well but actually depressed mouse locomotion. Snyder et al suggest that this is not a major stumbling block to their hypothesis. The problem is that the compound has mixed effects in the brain, a not unusual occurrence with psychoactive drugs. Even caffeine, which is generally known only for its stimulatory effects, displays this property, depressing mouse locomotion at very low concentrations and stimulating it at higher ones.

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- (A) discuss a plan for investigation of a phenomenon that is not yet fully understood
- (B) present two explanations of a phenomenon and reconcile the differences between them
- (C) summarize two theories and suggest a third theory that overcomes the problems encountered in the first two
- (D) describe an alternative hypothesis and provide evidence and arguments that support it
- (E) challenge the validity of a theory by exposing the inconsistencies and contradictions in it

2. According to Snyder et al, caffeine differs from adenosine in that caffeine

- (A) stimulates behavior in the mouse and in humans, whereas adenosine stimulates behavior in humans only
- (B) has mixed effects in the brain, whereas adenosine has only a stimulatory effect
- (C) increases cyclic AMP concentrations in target neurons, whereas adenosine decreases such concentrations
- (D) permits release of neurotransmitters when it is bound to adenosine receptors, whereas adenosine inhibits such release
- (E) inhibits both neuron firing and the production of phosphodiesterase when there is a sufficient concentration in the brain, whereas adenosine inhibits only neuron firing

3. In response to experimental results concerning IBMX, Snyder et al contended that it is not uncommon for psychoactive drugs to have

- (A) mixed effects in the brain
- (B) inhibitory effects on enzymes in the brain
- (C) close structural relationships with caffeine
- (D) depressive effects on mouse locomotion
- (E) the ability to dislodge caffeine from receptors in the brain

4. According to Snyder et al, all of the following compounds can bind to specific receptors in the brain EXCEPT

- (A) IBMX
- (B) caffeine
- (C) adenosine

- (D) theophylline
- (E) phosphodiesterase

5. Snyder et al suggest that caffeine's ability to bind to A1 and A2 receptors can be at least partially attributed to which of the following?

- (A) The chemical relationship between caffeine and phosphodiesterase
- (B) The structural relationship between caffeine and adenosine
- (C) The structural similarity between caffeine and neurotransmitters
- (D) The ability of caffeine to stimulate behavior
- (E) The natural occurrence of caffeine and adenosine in the brain

, rules, and lists articles can be found on the General English For Competitive Exams page.

### **RC Passage 2**

Archaeology as a profession faces two major problems. First, it is the poorest of the poor. Only paltry sums are available for excavating and even less is available for publishing the results and preserving the sites once excavated. Yet archaeologists deal with priceless objects every day.

Second, there is the problem of illegal excavation, resulting in museum-quality pieces being sold to the highest bidder. I would like to make an outrageous suggestion that would at one stroke provide funds for archaeology and reduce the amount of illegal digging. I would propose that scientific archeological expeditions and governmental authorities sell excavated artifacts on the open market. Such sales would provide substantial funds for the excavation and preservation of archaeological sites and the publication of results. At the same time, they would break the illegal excavator's grip on the market, thereby decreasing the inducement to engage in illegal activities.

You might object that professionals excavate to acquire knowledge, not money. Moreover, ancient artifacts are part of our global cultural heritage, which should be available for all to appreciate, not sold to the highest bidder. I agree. Sell nothing that has unique artistic merit or scientific value. But, you might reply, everything that comes out of the ground has scientific value. Here we part company. Theoretically, you may be correct in claiming that every artifact has potential scientific value. Practically, you are wrong.



I refer to the thousands of pottery vessels and ancient lamps that are essentially duplicates of one another. In one small excavation in Cyprus, archaeologists recently uncovered 2,000 virtually indistinguishable small jugs in a single courtyard, even precious royal seal impressions known as melek handles have been found in abundance — more than 4,000 examples so far.

The basement of museums is simply not large enough to store the artifacts that are likely to be discovered in the future. There is not enough money even to catalogue the finds; as a result, they cannot be found again and become as inaccessible as if they had never been discovered. Indeed, with the help of a computer, sold artifacts could be more accessible than are the pieces stored in bulging museum basements. Prior to sale, each could be photographed and the list of the purchasers could be maintained on the computer. A purchaser could even be required to agree to return the piece if it should become needed for scientific purposes. It would be unrealistic to suggest that illegal digging would stop if artifacts were sold in the open market. But the demand for the clandestine product would be substantially reduced. Who would want an unmarked pot when another was available whose provenance was known, and that was dated stratigraphically by the professional archaeologist who excavated it?

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

The primary purpose of the passage is to propose

- (A) an alternative to museum display of artifacts
- (B) a way to curb illegal digging while benefiting the archaeological profession
- (C) a way to distinguish artifacts with scientific value from those that have no such value
- (D) the governmental regulation of archaeological sites
- (E) a new system for cataloging duplicate artifacts

The author implies that all of the following statements about duplicate artifacts are true EXCEPT:

- (A) A market for such artifacts already exists.
- (B) Such artifacts seldom have scientific value.
- (C) There is likely to be a continuing supply of such artifacts.
- (D) Museums are well supplied with examples of such artifacts.
- (E) Such artifacts frequently exceed in quality in comparison to those already cataloged in museum collections

Which of the following is mentioned in the passage as a disadvantage of storing artifacts in museum basements?

- (A) Museum officials rarely allow scholars access to such artifacts.
- (B) Space that could be better used for display is taken up for storage.
- (C) Artifacts discovered in one excavation often become separated from each other.
- (D) Such artifacts are often damaged by variations in temperature and humidity.
- (E) Such artifacts' often remain uncatalogued and thus cannot be located once they are put in storage

The author's argument concerning the effect of the official sale of duplicate artifacts on illegal excavation is based on which of the following assumptions?

- (A) Prospective purchasers would prefer to buy authenticated artifacts.
- (B) The price of illegally excavated artifacts would rise.
- (C) Computers could be used to trace sold artifacts.
- (D) Illegal excavators would be forced to sell only duplicate artifacts.
- (E) Money gained from selling authenticated artifacts could be used to investigate and prosecute illegal excavators

The author anticipates which of the following initial objections to the adoption of his proposal?

- (A) Museum officials will become unwilling to store artifacts.
- (B) An oversupply of salable artifacts will result and the demand for them will fall.
- (C) Artifacts that would have been displayed in public places will be sold to private collectors.
- (D) Illegal excavators will have an even larger supply of artifacts for resale.
- (E) Counterfeiting of artifacts will become more commonplace

### **RC Passage 3:**

In the two decades between 1910 and 1930, over ten percent of the Black population of the United States left the South, where the preponderance of the Black population had been located, and migrated to northern states, with the largest number moving, it is claimed, between 1916 and 1918. It has been frequently assumed, but not proved, that the majority of the migrants in what

has come to be called the Great Migration came from rural areas and were motivated by two concurrent factors: the collapse of the cotton industry following the boll weevil infestation, which began in 1898, and increased demand in the North for labor following the cessation of European immigration caused by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This assumption has led to the conclusion that the migrants' subsequent lack of economic mobility in the North is tied to rural background, a background that implies unfamiliarity with urban living and a lack of industrial skills.

But the question of who actually left the South has never been rigorously investigated. Although numerous investigations document an exodus from rural southern areas to southern cities prior to the Great Migration, no one has considered whether the same migrants then moved on to northern cities. In 1910, over 600,000 Black workers, or ten percent of the Black workforce, reported themselves to be engaged in "manufacturing and mechanical pursuits," the federal census category roughly encompassing the entire industrial sector. The Great Migration could easily have been made up entirely of this group and their families. It is perhaps surprising to argue that an employed population could be enticed to move, but an explanation lies in the labor conditions prevalent in the South.

About thirty-five percent of the urban Black population in the South was engaged in skilled trades. Some were from the old artisan class of slavery-blacksmiths, masons, carpenters—which had had a monopoly of certain trades, but they were gradually being pushed out by competition, mechanization, and obsolescence. The remaining sixty-five percent, more recently urbanized, worked in newly developed industries—tobacco, lumber, coal and iron manufacture and railroads. Wages in the South, however, were low, and Black workers were aware, through labor recruiters and the Black press, that they could earn more even as unskilled workers in the North than they could as artisans in the South. After the boll weevil infestation, urban Black workers faced competition from the continuing influx of both Black and White rural workers, who were driven to undercut the wages formerly paid for industrial jobs.

Thus, a move towards the North would be seen as advantageous to a group that was already urbanized and steadily employed, and the easy conclusion tying their subsequent economic problems in the North to their rural background comes into question.

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

The author indicates explicitly that which of the following records has been a source of information in her investigation?

(A) United States Immigration Service reports from 1914 to 1930

- (B) Payrolls of southern manufacturing firms between 1910 and 1930
- (C) The volume of cotton exports between 1898 and 1910
- (D) The federal census of 1910
- (E) Advertisements of labor recruiters appearing in southern newspapers after 1910

In the passage, the author anticipates which of the following as a possible objection to her argument?

- (A) It is uncertain how many people actually migrated during the Great Migration.
- (B) The eventual economic status of the Great Migration migrants has not been adequately traced.
- (C) It is not likely that people with steady jobs would have reason to move to another area of the country.
- (D) It is not true that the term “manufacturing and mechanical pursuits” actually encompasses the entire industrial sector.
- (E) Of the Black workers living in southern cities, only those in a small number of trades were threatened by obsolescence.

According to the passage, which of the following is true about the wages in southern cities in 1910?

- (A) They were being pushed lower as a result of increased competition.
- (B) They had begun to rise so that southern industry could attract rural workers.
- (C) They had increased for skilled workers but decreased for unskilled workers.
- (D) They had increased in large southern cities but decreased in small southern cities.
- (E) They had increased in newly developed industries but decreased in the older trades.

The author cites each of the following as possible influences in a Black worker’s decision to migrate north in the Great Migration EXCEPT

- (A) wage levels in northern cities
- (B) labor recruiters
- (C) competition from rural workers
- (D) voting rights in northern states

(E) the Black press

The primary purpose of the passage is to

(A) support an alternative to an accepted methodology

(B) present evidence that resolves a contradiction

(C) introduce a recently discovered source of information

(D) challenge a widely accepted explanation

(E) argue that a discarded theory deserves new attention

Candidates can check the List of English Vocabulary Words on the given page that is frequently asked in the competitive exams.

#### **RC Passage 4:**

Let us go then, you and I, When the evening is spread out against the sky like a patient etherized upon a table; Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets, The muttering retreats Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells: Streets that follow like a tedious argument Of insidious intent To lead you to an overwhelming question. . . Oh, do not ask, "What is it?" Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes

The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains, Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys, Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap, And seeing that it was a soft October night Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time For the yellow smoke that slides along the street, Rubbing its back upon the window-panes; There will be time, there will be time To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet; There will be time to murder and create, And time for all the works and days of hands That lift and drop a question on your plate; Time for you and time for me, And time yet for a hundred indecisions And for a hundred visions and revisions Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room, the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo. And indeed there will be time

To wonder, “Do I dare?” and, “Do I dare?”

Time to turn back and descend the stair, With a bald spot in the middle of my hair— [They will say: “How his hair is growing thin!”] My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin, My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin— [They will say: “But how his arms and legs are thin!”] Do I dare Disturb the universe? In a minute there is time for decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all; Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons, I have measured out my life with coffee spoons; I know the voices dying with a dying fall Beneath the music from a farther room. So how should I presume?

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

Which of the following meanings can be inferred from the lines “o I dare Disturb the universe?”

- (A) The author is referring to his bright future.
- (B) The author fears that he will cause some major upheaval in world.
- (C) The author refers to the ‘status quo’ in which he is in.
- (D) The author expresses his feeling of being pinned against a wall.
- (E) The author is apprehensive about his last days.

What, according to the passage, is the reason for the author’s optimism?

- (A) That the women are talking of Michelangelo.
- (B) That the yellow fog rubs upon the window-panes.
- (C) That it was an October night.
- (D) That there will be moments for everything.
- (E) That the falling soot made a sudden leap.

In the first ten lines of the passage, the author embodies which of the following with human attributes?

- (A) toast
- (B) restaurants
- (C) intent
- (D) retreats
- (E) arguments

In the passage, the evening is compared to:

- (A) The spreading sky
- (B) The anesthetized patient
- (C) Wicked people
- (D) The deserted streets
- (E) A walk in the streets

**RC Passage 5:**

Opera refers to a dramatic art form, originating in Europe, in which the emotional content is conveyed to the audience as much through music, both vocal and instrumental, as it is through the lyrics. By contrast, in musical theater an actor's dramatic performance is primary, and the music plays a lesser role. The drama in opera is presented using the primary elements of theater such as scenery, costumes, and acting. However, the words of the opera, or libretto, are sung rather than spoken. The singers are accompanied by a musical ensemble ranging from a small instrumental ensemble to a full symphonic orchestra.

1. It is pointed out in the reading that opera ----.
- A) has developed under the influence of musical theater
  - B) is a drama sung with the accompaniment of an orchestra
  - C) is not a high-budget production
  - D) is often performed in Europe

E) is the most complex of all the performing arts

2. We can understand from the reading that ----.

A) people are captivated more by opera than musical theater

B) drama in opera is more important than the music

C) orchestras in operas can vary considerably in size

D) musical theater relies above all on music

E) there is argument over whether the music is important or the words in  
opera

3. It is stated in the reading that ----.

A) acting and costumes are secondary to music in musical theater

B) many people find musical theater more captivating than opera

C) music in musical theater is not as important as it is in opera

D) an opera requires a huge orchestra as well as a large choir

E) opera doesn't have any properties in common with musical theater