Identify the tenses

There are twelve tenses in English and each one of them has different verb forms. The biggest problem that students face while using tenses is the inability to conjugate verbs.

English verbs tend to change their forms according to the number and person of the subject. For example, in the simple present tense, the verb takes the marker –s when the subject is a singular noun or pronoun.

In the present continuous tense, the verb takes the auxiliary is when the subject is third person singular noun or pronoun. It takes the auxiliary verb are when the subject is a plural noun or pronoun.

While native speakers pick up these rules easily, they cause a great deal of confusion for an ESL student.

Use this exercise to test your ability to recognize the different tense forms. It is simple. You just need to write the name of the tense against each sentence. Some sentences may be in the passive voice. In that case, you also need to mention that.

1. I have been working on my computer for six hours.
   Present continuous
   Past continuous
   Present perfect continuous

2. She has lived in this street for ten years.
   Simple present
   Simple past
Identify the tenses

Present perfect

3. I finished the project yesterday.

Simple past
Simple present
Present perfect

4. What are you doing there?

Present continuous
Present perfect
Past continuous

5. She had not realized that.

Simple present
Present perfect
Past perfect

6. Susan will be joining us.

Present continuous
Future continuous tense
Past continuous
Identify the tenses

7. Have you ever been to Australia?

Simple present
Present perfect tense
Past perfect tense

8. This house had been destroyed by the fire.

Present perfect
Past perfect
Simple past

9. The boys were severely reprimanded by their teacher.

Simple past tense
Present perfect
Past perfect

10. I had been working in the garden.

Present continuous
Past continuous
Past perfect continuous
Identify the tenses

11. She will come with us.

Simple present
Simple future
Present perfect

12. By this time tomorrow, I will have finished working on it.

Simple future
Future continuous
Future perfect

Answers

1. I have been working on my computer for six hours. (Present perfect continuous tense – active)

2. She has lived in this street for ten years. (Present perfect tense – active)

3. I finished the project yesterday. (Past simple tense – active)

4. What are you doing there? (Present continuous tense – active)

5. She had not realized that. (Past perfect tense – active)

6. Susan will be joining us. (Future continuous tense – active)
Identify the tenses

7. Have you ever been to Australia? (Present perfect tense - active)

8. This house had been destroyed by the fire. (Past perfect tense - passive)

9. The boys were severely reprimanded by their teacher. (Past simple tense - passive)

10. I had been working in the garden. (Past perfect continuous tense - active)

11. She will come with us. (Simple future tense - active)

12. By this time tomorrow, I will have finished working on it. (Future perfect tense - active)