

ArivArk General English Video Series

Tenses + Concord: Practice Questions

Group 2/2A Prelims: General English, Unit I Grammar

Real questions: TNPSC previous year questions (2025), official key. Practice questions: ArivArk Academy.

The 12 tenses in one table

Tense	Simple	Continuous (be + ing)	Perfect (have + V3)	Perfect continuous (have been + ing)
Present	I write	I am writing	I have written	I have been writing
Past	I wrote	I was writing	I had written	I had been writing
Future	I will write	I will be writing	I will have written	I will have been writing

Only three formulas: **continuous = be + ing**, **perfect = have + third form (V3)**, **perfect continuous = have been + ing**.

Which tense when? Clue words

Clue words	Tense	Example
usually, always, every day, universal truths	Simple present	He usually walks to school.
now, look!, listen!, at present	Present continuous	Look! It is raining.
just, already, yet, ever	Present perfect	She has just finished her work.
two past actions: the earlier one; by the time, before	Past perfect	The plane had left by the time I got to the airport.
a definite future time: at 2 p.m. tomorrow, tonight	Future continuous	She will be taking an exam at 2 p.m. tomorrow.
by next June, by evening	Future perfect	They will have finished the work by evening.

Clue words	Tense	Example
for + duration, since + starting point	Perfect continuous	I have been waiting for two hours.

Concord: subject verb agreement

Singular subject, singular verb. He, she, it or a name takes the -s verb: she loves, he does, he has. I, you, we, they take the plain verb.

Every / each + singular noun + singular verb: Every student likes the teacher.

One of the + plural noun + singular verb: One of the boys is absent.

Collective noun acting as one group takes a singular verb: The team has been working hard.

Neither ... nor / either ... or: the verb agrees with the nearer subject: Neither Ravi nor his friends are coming.

The number of + plural noun takes a singular verb; **a number of** takes a plural verb.

Words ending in -s that are one subject (news, mathematics) take a singular verb: The news is good.

TNPSC PYQs (official key)

1. The plane _____ by the time I got to the airport.

(A) is left

(B) had left

(C) was left

(D) were left

Answer: (B) had left. Two past actions: the plane left first, so the earlier action takes the past perfect.

2. She _____ an exam at 2 p.m. tomorrow.

(A) will take

(B) will be taking

(C) shall take

(D) shall be taking

Answer: (B) will be taking. At a definite future time the action will be in progress: future continuous.

3. Select the correct tense form: "Will you be doing laundry tonight?"

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (A) Future perfect tense | (B) Future tense |
| (C) Future continuous tense | (D) Future perfect continuous tense |

Answer: (C) Future continuous tense. will be + ing = future continuous.

4. Find the error and pick the correct sentence: "At that time, she was writing a book for three months."

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) At that time, she have writing a book for three months | (B) At that time, she had writing a book for three months |
| (C) At that time, she had been writing a book for three months | (D) At that time, she has writing a book for three months |

Answer: (C) At that time, she had been writing a book for three months. A duration (for three months) in the past takes the past perfect continuous.

5. Identify the sentence which has an error in subject verb agreement.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (A) The team has been working hard. | (B) Time and tide waits for no man. |
| (C) She don't have a pen. | (D) He doesn't come outside nowadays. |

Answer: (C) She don't have a pen. "She" is singular, so "doesn't", not "don't".

6. Select the correct sentence.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (A) Every students like the teacher. | (B) He do not have a music system. |
| (C) He is taller than I. | (D) She love her father. |

Answer: (C) He is taller than I. "He is taller than I (am)". The other three break subject verb agreement.

Practice MCQs**1. She _____ to school every day.**

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| (A) gone | (B) go |
| (C) is going | (D) goes |

2. Look! The baby _____.

(A) has slept

(B) sleeps

(C) is sleeping

(D) slept

3. I _____ my homework already.

(A) finish

(B) am finishing

(C) had finish

(D) have finished

4. They _____ in Chennai since 2015.

(A) have been living

(B) lived

(C) are living

(D) live

5. When I reached the station, the train _____.

(A) left

(B) leaves

(C) has left

(D) had left

6. This time tomorrow, we _____ to Ooty.

(A) travelled

(B) will be travelling

(C) travel

(D) will travel

7. By next June, she _____ her degree.

(A) will have completed

(B) completed

(C) completes

(D) will complete

8. He _____ a letter when the phone rang.

(A) has written

(B) writes

(C) wrote

(D) was writing

9. The sun _____ in the east.

(A) rises

(B) is rising

(C) rise

(D) rose

10. She _____ for three hours when I met her.

(A) has been waiting

(B) waits

(C) had been waiting

(D) is waiting

11. Identify the tense: "They will have finished the work by evening."

(A) Future continuous

(B) Simple future

(C) Future perfect

(D) Present perfect

12. One of my friends _____ a doctor.

(A) have

(B) is

(C) are

(D) were

13. Each of the students _____ a book.

(A) has

(B) were having

(C) have

(D) are having

14. Neither the teacher nor the students _____ present.

(A) were

(B) has been

(C) was

(D) is

15. Either the boys or the girl _____ the prize.

(A) are winning

(B) win

(C) wins

(D) have won

16. The news _____ good.

(A) were

(B) have

(C) are

(D) is

17. Bread and butter _____ my favourite breakfast.

(A) have

(B) were

(C) are

(D) is

18. Choose the correct sentence.

(A) He don't like tea.

(B) He not like tea.

(C) He doesn't like tea.

(D) He doesn't likes tea.

19. The number of students _____ increasing.

(A) were

(B) is

(C) are

(D) have

20. A number of students _____ absent today.

(A) are

(B) has

(C) was

(D) is

Answer key: 1 D, 2 C, 3 D, 4 A, 5 D, 6 B, 7 A, 8 D, 9 A, 10 C, 11 C, 12 B, 13 A, 14 A, 15 C, 16 D, 17 D, 18 C, 19 B, 20 A

Why? Short explanations

1 (D) Habit + singular subject: simple present with -s.

2 (C) "Look!" shows the action is happening now: present continuous.

3 (D) "already" with the present: present perfect.

4 (A) "since 2015" up to now: present perfect continuous.

5 (D) The train left first: past perfect.

- 6 (B) A definite future time, action in progress: future continuous.
- 7 (A) "By next June": completed before a future point: future perfect.
- 8 (D) A longer past action interrupted by a short one: past continuous.
- 9 (A) A universal truth: simple present.
- 10 (C) A duration up to a past moment: past perfect continuous.
- 11 (C) will have + V3 = future perfect.
- 12 (B) The subject is "one": singular verb.
- 13 (A) "Each" takes a singular verb.
- 14 (A) The verb follows the nearer subject, "students" (plural).
- 15 (C) The nearer subject "the girl" is singular.
- 16 (D) "News" is singular.
- 17 (D) Two nouns that make one dish take a singular verb.
- 18 (C) "doesn't" + plain verb (like, not likes).
- 19 (B) "The number of" takes a singular verb.
- 20 (A) "A number of" (= many) takes a plural verb.