

TENSES

FBISE Instructions: Part A is based on the appropriate use of Tenses. The candidates are required to fill in the given blanks with the correct tense/form of the verbs provided in brackets. **5-6 Marks**

Model Question

Q. 5 (A) Fill in the blanks with the correct tense/form of the verbs given in brackets:

She _____¹ her homework before dinner every day. (*finish*)

Listen! Someone _____² at the door. (*knock*)

By the time we arrived, the movie _____³ already _____⁴. (*start*)

I _____⁵ in Lahore for ten years now. (*live*)

They _____⁶ to Murree next month. (*travel*)

TENSES

WHAT IS TENSE?

Tense is the form of a verb that shows the **time** of an action or state — whether it happens in the **present**, the **past**, or the **future**. Each of these three time-frames has four aspects: **Indefinite (Simple)**, **Continuous (Progressive)**, **Perfect**, and **Perfect Continuous** — giving **12 tenses** in total.

The Three Main Time Frames:

- **Present Tense** — an action happening now, habitually, or a general truth.
- **Past Tense** — an action that has already happened and is finished.
- **Future Tense** — an action that has not yet happened but will happen later.

THE TWELVE TENSES AT A GLANCE:

Aspect	Present	Past	Future
Indefinite	V1 / V1+s/es	V2	will/shall + V1
Continuous	am/is/are + V1+ing	was/were + V1+ing	will/shall + be + V1+ing
Perfect	has/have + V3	had + V3	will/shall + have + V3
Perfect Continuous	has/have + been + V1+ing	had + been + V1+ing	will/shall + have + been + V1+ing

V1 = base form, V2 = past form, V3 = past participle.

DETAILED STRUCTURE, USE & EXAMPLES

(i) PRESENT INDEFINITE (Simple Present)

Formula: Subject + V1 (+s/es for 3rd person singular)

Used for: habitual actions, general truths, fixed schedules, and permanent facts.

- She walks to school every day.
- The sun rises in the east.
- The train leaves at 6 p.m.

(ii) PRESENT CONTINUOUS (Present Progressive)

Formula: Subject + am/is/are + V1+ing

Used for: actions happening right now, temporary situations, and pre-arranged future plans.

- I am reading a novel at the moment.
- They are meeting the client tomorrow morning.

(iii) PRESENT PERFECT

Formula: Subject + has/have + V3

Used for: actions completed in the recent past with a present result, or actions continuing up to now (often with just, already, yet, ever, never, since, for).

- She has finished her homework.
- I have lived here since 2015.
- Have you ever visited Karachi?

(iv) PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Formula: Subject + has/have + been + V1+ing

Used for: an action that started in the past and is still continuing, emphasizing its duration.

- He has been working on this project for three hours.
- It has been raining since morning.

(v) PAST INDEFINITE (Simple Past)

Formula: Subject + V2

Used for: actions completed at a definite time in the past.

- He visited his grandmother last week.
- They finished the exam on time.

(vi) PAST CONTINUOUS

Formula: Subject + was/were + V1+ing

Used for: an action in progress at a specific moment in the past, often interrupted by another action.

- She was cooking dinner when the phone rang.
- We were watching a movie at 9 p.m. yesterday.

(vii) PAST PERFECT

Formula: Subject + had + V3

Used for: an action completed before another action or time in the past (the "earlier of two past events").

- The train had left before we reached the station.
- She had finished her work before he arrived.

(viii) PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Formula: Subject + had + been + V1+ing

Used for: an action that continued for some time before another action took place in the past.

- He had been studying for two hours before the power went out.
- They had been waiting since noon when the bus finally came.

(ix) FUTURE INDEFINITE (Simple Future)

Formula: Subject + will/shall + V1

Used for: actions that will happen in the future, predictions, promises, and spontaneous decisions.

- She will join the meeting tomorrow.
- I shall help you with this task.

(x) FUTURE CONTINUOUS

Formula: Subject + will/shall + be + V1+ing

Used for: an action that will be in progress at a specific time in the future.

- This time tomorrow, we will be flying to Islamabad.
- He will be attending the seminar at 10 a.m.

(xi) FUTURE PERFECT

Formula: Subject + will/shall + have + V3

Used for: an action that will be completed before a specific time in the future.

- By next year, they will have completed the project.
- She will have finished her degree by 2027.

(xii) FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Formula: Subject + will/shall + have + been + V1+ing

Used for: an action that will continue up to a certain point in the future, emphasizing duration.

- By December, he will have been working here for five years.

COMMON TIME-SIGNAL WORDS (Clues to Identify Tense):

Tense	Typical Signal Words
Present Indefinite	always, usually, often, every day/week, generally, normally
Present Continuous	now, right now, at the moment, currently, still, Look!/Listen!
Present Perfect	already, yet, just, ever, never, so far, since, for, recently
Present Perfect Continuous	since, for, all day, lately, how long
Past Indefinite	yesterday, last week/month/year, ago, in 2010, once
Past Continuous	while, when, as, at that moment, all evening
Past Perfect	before, after, already (in the past), by the time
Future Indefinite	tomorrow, next week/month/year, soon, in future
Future Perfect	by tomorrow, by next year, by the time (future)

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- In **Present Indefinite**, add **-s/-es** to the verb for third-person singular subjects: *He plays; She watches.*
- **Since** is used with a **point in time** (since 2020); **for** is used with a **duration** (for two years).
- The **Past Perfect** is used for the action that happened **first** of two past actions; the **Past Indefinite** is used for the action that happened **second**.
- Stative verbs (know, believe, like, want, own, understand, seem) are **not** normally used in continuous tenses.
- In conditional/time clauses (if/when/before/after), the **Present tense** expresses future time: *If it rains, we will stay home.*

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Instructions: Fill in each blank with the correct tense/form of the verb given in brackets.

PRACTICE 1

Fill in the blanks using the Present Indefinite or Present Continuous form of the verb in brackets.

1. Water _____ (boil) at 100 degrees Celsius.
2. Look! The children _____ (play) in the park.
3. He usually _____ (go) to the mosque for Friday prayers.
4. She _____ (not, like) spicy food at all.
5. We _____ (study) for the test right now.
6. The shop _____ (open) at 9 a.m. every day.

PRACTICE 2

Fill in the blanks using the Present Perfect or Present Perfect Continuous form.

1. I _____ (know) him since we were children.
2. She _____ (just, complete) her assignment.
3. They _____ (wait) for the bus for twenty minutes.
4. Have you _____ (ever, visit) the northern areas of Pakistan?
5. He _____ (work) on this report all morning.
6. We _____ (not, see) each other since last Eid.

PRACTICE 3

Fill in the blanks using the Past Indefinite or Past Continuous form.

1. While she _____ (cook), the doorbell rang.
2. He _____ (finish) his dinner and then _____ (go) for a walk.
3. They _____ (watch) TV when the lights went out.
4. I _____ (meet) my old friend at the market yesterday.
5. The children _____ (play) cricket all afternoon yesterday.
6. She _____ (not, attend) the meeting last week.

PRACTICE 4

Fill in the blanks using the Past Perfect or Past Perfect Continuous form.

1. By the time the doctor arrived, the patient _____ (already, recover).
2. He _____ (study) for three hours before he took a break.

3. The guests _____ (leave) before we reached the venue.
4. She _____ (never, see) snow before she moved to Murree.
5. They _____ (work) on the project for months before it was cancelled.
6. I realized I _____ (forget) my keys at home.

PRACTICE 5

Fill in the blanks using the correct Future tense form.

1. By next year, she _____ (complete) her degree.
2. This time next week, we _____ (travel) to Karachi.
3. I _____ (call) you as soon as I reach home.
4. By 2030, scientists _____ (develop) new sources of energy.
5. He _____ (attend) the conference next month.
6. By the time you arrive, I _____ (finish) cooking dinner.

PRACTICE 6

Fill in the blanks with the correct tense (mixed practice: all tenses).

1. My father _____ (work) in this company for the past ten years.
2. She _____ (write) a letter when the guests arrived.
3. The train _____ (already, leave) by the time we got to the station.
4. Every morning, the birds _____ (sing) sweetly in the garden.
5. Next month, they _____ (celebrate) their tenth anniversary.
6. He _____ (not, finish) his homework yet.

PRACTICE 7

Rewrite each sentence in the tense given in brackets.

1. She sings beautifully. (Change to: Present Continuous)
2. He has completed the task. (Change to: Past Perfect)
3. They are travelling to Lahore. (Change to: Future Continuous)
4. We finished the project. (Change to: Present Perfect)
5. I will help you. (Change to: Future Perfect)
6. She was reading a book. (Change to: Past Perfect Continuous)