

Universidad de Los Andes
Facultad de Humanidades y Educación
Escuela de Idiomas Modernos

Verb Tenses – Exercises¹

- I. Change the position of the adverb clause in the sentence. Underline the adverb clause in the given sentence, and underline the adverb clause in the new sentence. Punctuate carefully.

Example: I didn't feel any older when I reached my 21st birthday.
When I reached my 21st birthday, I didn't feel any older.

1. I had a cup of tea before I left for work.

2. After I get home from work, I like to read the evening newspaper.

3. Since my watch broke, I have been late to work three times.

4. My cat hides under the house whenever it rains.

5. I'm going to get a job once I finish school.

6. While I was waiting for my bus, I heard a gunshot.

7. The village will have no electric power until a new generator is installed.

8. The last time I was in Taipei, I saw Mr. Wu.

9. As soon as we saw the tornado heading toward our town, we ran to the basement of the town hall.

- II. Using the words in parentheses, make logical connections between the ideas in *Column A* with the ideas in *Column B*. Punctuate carefully and pay attention to verb tenses. Underline the adverb clauses in the new sentences.

Examples: a. As soon as the taxi gets here, we can leave.
b. I turned off the TV before I left the room.

Column A

1. Our taxi gets here. (*as soon as*)
2. I turned off the TV (*before*)
3. I parachuted from a plane. (*the first time*)

Column B

- A. She was leaving the store.
- B. It destroyed everything in its path.
- C. We can leave.

¹ Adapted from: Azar, B. S. (2000). Understanding and using English grammar – Workbook (3rd ed.) White Plains, NY: Longman.

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|---|---|
| 4. My boss stormed into my office. (<i>while</i>) | D. I get sleepy. |
| 5. Ceylon had been independent for 24 years. (<i>after</i>) | E. I left the room. |
| 6. Jack fell off his bicycle. (<i>since</i>) | F. Its name was changed to Sri Lanka. |
| 7. Ms. Johnson will return your call. (<i>as soon as</i>) | G. We can eat. |
| 8. John learns how to use a computer. (<i>once</i>) | H. She has some free time. |
| 9. I won't return this book to the library. (<i>until</i>) | I. I finish my research project. |
| 10. Sue dropped a carton of eggs. (<i>as</i>) | J. I was both terrified and exhilarated. |
| 11. Anna goes to class. (<i>the next time</i>) | K. I was talking on the phone to an important |
| 12. The flooding river raced down the valley. (<i>when</i>) | client. |
| 13. The rice is done. (<i>just as soon as</i>) | L. He'll be able to work more efficiently. |
| 14. When I go to bed at night, I like to read. (<i>until</i>) | M. He's had to use crutches to walk. |
| | N. She'll remember to take her grammar book. |

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

III. Choose the letter of the correct answer.

1. After Jessica _____ her degree, she intends to work in her father's company.
A. will finish B. will have finished C. finishes D. is finishing
2. By the time I go to bed tonight, I _____ my work for the day.
A. will finish B. have finished C. will have finished D. finish
3. When my parents _____ for a visit tomorrow, they will see our new baby for the first time.
A. will arrive B. arrived C. will have arrived D. arrive
4. Fatemah looked down to discover a snake at her feet. When she saw it, she_____.

- A. was screaming B. had screamed C. screamed D. screams
5. By the time Alfonso finally graduated from high school, he _____ seven different schools because his parents moved frequently.
A. attended B. was attending C. had attended D. had been attending
6. Until you learn to relax more, you _____ your ability to speak English.
A. haven't improved B. aren't improving C. don't improve D. won't improve
7. I borrowed four books on gardening the last time I _____ to the library.
A. go B. went C. had gone D. have gone
8. Before I started the car, all of the passengers _____ their seat belts.
A. will buckle B. had buckled C. buckle D. have buckled
9. It seems that whenever I travel abroad, I _____ to take something I need.
A. forgot B. am forgetting C. forget D. had forgotten
10. When I see the doctor this afternoon, I _____ him to look at my throat.
A. will ask B. asked C. will have asked D. ask
11. After ancient Greek athletes won a race in the Olympics, they _____ a simple crown of olive leaves.
A. received B. had received C. were receiving D. have received
12. After the race _____, the celebration began.
A. had been won B. is won C. will be won D. has been won
13. I'll return Bob's pen to him the next time I _____ him.
A. see B. will see C. will have seen D. have seen
14. I _____ all of the questions correctly since I began this grammar exercise on verb tenses.
A. am answering B. answer C. have answered D. answered
15. A small stone struck the windshield while we _____ down the gravel road.
A. drive B. were driving C. had driven D. had been driving

IV. Use any appropriate tense for the verbs in parentheses.

1. My grandfather (*fly, never*) _____ in an airplane, and he has no intention of ever doing so.
2. Jane isn't here yet. I (*wait*) _____ for her since noon, but she still (*arrive, not*) _____.
3. In all the world, there (*be*) _____ only 14 mountains that (*reach*) _____ above 8,000 meters (26,247 feet).

4. I have a long trip ahead of me tomorrow, so I think I'd better go to bed. But let me say good-bye now because I won't see you in the morning. I (*leave, already*) _____ by the time you (*get*) _____ up.
5. Right now we (*have*) _____ a heat wave. The temperature (*be*) _____ in the upper 90s (upper 30s Celsius) for the last six days.
6. Last night I (*go*) _____ to a party. When I (*get*) _____ there, the room was full of people. Some of them (*dance*) _____, and others (*talk*) _____. One young woman (*stand*) _____ by herself. I (*meet, never*) _____ her, so I (*introduce*) _____ myself to her.
7. About three yesterday afternoon, Jessica (*lie*) _____ in bed reading a book. Suddenly she (*hear*) _____ a loud noise and (*get*) _____ up to see what it was. She (*look*) _____ out the window. A truck (*back, just*) _____ into her new car!
8. Next month I have a week's vacation. I (*plan*) _____ to take a trip. First, I (*go*) _____ to Madison, Wisconsin, to visit my brother. After I (*leave*) _____ Madison, I (*go*) _____ to Chicago to see a friend who (*study*) _____ at the university there. She (*live*) _____ in Chicago for three years, so she (*know*) _____ her way around the city. She (*promise*) _____ to take me to many interesting places. I (*be, never*) _____ in Chicago, so I (*look*) _____ forward to going there.
9. Yesterday while I (*sit*) _____ in class, I (*get*) _____ the hiccups. The person who (*sit*) _____ next to me told me to hold my breath. I (*try*) _____ that, but it didn't work. The instructor (*lecture*) _____ and I didn't want to interrupt him, so I just sat there trying to hiccup quietly. Finally, after I (*hiccup*) _____ for almost five minutes, I (*raise*) _____ my hand and (*excuse*) _____ myself from class to go get a drink of water.
10. The weather has been terrible lately. It (*rain*) _____ off and on for two days, and the temperature (*drop*) _____ drastically. It (*be*) _____ really cold today. Just three days ago, the sun (*shine*) _____ and the weather (*be*) _____ pleasant. The weather certainly (*change*) _____ quickly here. I never know what to expect. Who knows? When I (*wake*) _____ up tomorrow morning, maybe it (*snow*) _____.

V. Complete the sentences with the verbs in parentheses. Use any appropriate tense.

On June 20th, I returned home. I (*be*) _____ away from home for two years. My family (*meet*) _____ me at the airport with kisses and tears. They (*miss*) _____ me as much as I had missed them. I (*be*) _____ very happy to see them again. When I (*get*) _____ the chance, I (*take*) _____ a long look at them. My little brother (*be*) _____ no longer little. He (*grow*) _____ a lot. He (*be*) _____ almost as tall as my father. My little sister (*wear*) _____ a green dress. She (*change*) _____ quite a bit, too, but she (*be, still*) _____ mischievous and inquisitive. She (*ask*) _____ me a thousand questions a minute, or so it seemed. My father (*gain*) _____ some

weight, and his hair (*turn*) _____ a little grayer, but otherwise he was just as I had remembered him. My mother (*look*) _____ a little older, but not much. The wrinkles on her face (*be*) _____ smile wrinkles.

VI. Complete the sentences with the verbs in parentheses. Use any appropriate tense.

PART I:

A: What (*seem*) _____ to be the trouble, Ms. Jones?

B: I (*send*) _____ in my money for a subscription to your magazine, *Computer Data*, two months ago, but to date I (*receive, not*) _____ any issues.

A: I'm sorry to hear that. Unfortunately, one of our main computers (*function, not*) _____ at the moment. However, our computer specialists (*work*) _____ very hard to fix it at the present time. We (*start*) _____ your new subscription as soon as possible.

B: Thank you.

PART II:

A: Where's Sonia? I (*see, not*) _____ her lately.

B: She (*recuperate, at home*) _____.

A: Oh? What (*she, recuperate*) _____ from?

B: She (*hurt*) _____ her back while she (*play*) _____ volleyball last week in the game against South City College.

A: What happened? How (*she, hurt*) _____ her back?

B: She (*try*) _____ to spike a ball when she (*collide*) _____ with another player and (*fall*) _____ to the ground. She (*land*) _____ hard and (*twist*) _____ her back.

A: Gosh, that's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that. How's she doing?

B: Well, she's pretty uncomfortable. She (*wear*) _____ a special brace on her back for the last five days. Needless to say, she (*be, not*) _____ able to play volleyball since her injury. She (*not, probably, be*) _____ able to play again for at least a month.

A: (*Her doctor, allow*) _____ her to play in the national tournament at the end of the summer?

B: She (*have*) _____ the brace on her back for more than seven weeks by then, so I think he will.

A: I hope so. I know how much she likes to compete in volleyball games. And the team really needs her.

Part III:

A: Hi, Jim. How's it going?

B: Great.

A: (*You, enjoy*) _____ the rock concert last night?

B: You bet! I had a terrific time.

A: Tell me about it. I (*go, never*) _____ to a rock concert.

B: Well, *I (go, never)* _____ to a rock concert before either, so I (*know, not*) _____ what to expect. I've been to symphony concerts lots of times, but never a rock concert. Ten minutes before the concert was supposed to start, hundreds of teenagers (*try, still*) _____ to find their seats. The place was a madhouse. I thought that things would settle down once the concert began. Boy, was I wrong! As soon as the lead singer (*appear*) _____ on the stage, everyone (*start*) _____ screaming at the top of their lungs. I couldn't hear myself think. But after a while things calmed down. And the music was great. At one time during the concert, while the lead singer (*sing*) _____ a famous hit song, many people in the audience knew the song so well that they sang along with him. All in all, the concert (*be*) _____ a lot of fun, but very noisy.

A: It does sound like it was a lot of fun!

PART IV:

Mark Twain, the author of the *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, is one of America's best loved storytellers. He (*grow up*) _____ in a small town on the Mississippi River. As a young boy, he (*admire, greatly*) _____ the pilots of the riverboats and dreamed about being a riverboat pilot on the mighty river. He pursued his dream, and by the age of 22, he himself (*become*) _____ a riverboat pilot. Later in life, when he (*become*) _____ a writer, many of his stories (*contain*) _____ elements of his own experiences. He wrote many humorous stories and articles about life on the Mississippi River before he (*die*) _____ in 1910 at the age of 74. Sadly, Twain (*work*) _____ on a new story for several months before his death, but he (*finish, never*) _____ it. Over the years since his death, his boyhood home in Hannibal, Missouri, _____ (*become*) a favorite place for Americans to visit to learn about Twain and life on the Mississippi at the turn of the 19th century.

VII. Choose the correct answer.

Example: I've been in this city for a long time. I C here sixteen years ago.

A. have come B. was coming C. came D. had come

1. "Hurry up! We're waiting for you. What's taking you so long?"

"I _____ for an important phone call. Go ahead and leave without me."

A. wait B. will wait C. am waiting D. have waited

2. "Robert is going to be famous someday. He _____ in three movies, already."

"I'm sure he'll be a star."

A. has been appearing B. had appeared C. has appeared D. appeared

3. "Where's Polly?"

"She _____."

A. is in her room studying B. in her room is studying
C. studies in her room D. has in her room studied

4. "Hello? Alice? This is Jeff. How are you?"
"Jeff? What a coincidence! I _____ about you when the phone rang."
A. was just thinking B. just thought C. have just been thinking D. was just thought
5. "What _____ about the new simplified tax law?"
"It's more confusing than the old one."
A. are you thinking B. do you think C. have you thought D. have you been thinking
6. "When is Mr. Fields planning to retire?"
"Soon, I think. He _____ here for a long time. He'll probably retire either next year or the year after that."
A. worked B. had been working C. has been working D. is working
7. "Why did you buy all this sugar and chocolate?"
"I _____ a delicious dessert for dinner tonight."

A. make B. will make C. am going to make D. will have made
8. "Let's go! What's taking you so long?"
"I'll be there as soon as I _____ my keys."
A. found B. will find C. find D. am finding
9. Next week when there _____ a full moon, the ocean tides will be higher.
A. is being B. is C. will be D. will have been
10. While I _____ TV last night, a mouse ran across the floor.
A. watch B. watched C. was watching D. am watching
11. Fish were among the earliest forms of life. Fish _____ on earth for ages and ages.
A. existed B. are existing C. exist D. have existed
12. The phone _____ constantly since Jack announced his candidacy for president this morning.
A. has been ringing B. rang C. had rung D. had been ringing
13. The earth _____ on the sun for its heat and light.
A. is depend B. depending C. has depend D. depends
14. I don't feel good. I _____ home from work tomorrow.
A. am staying B. stay C. will have stayed D. stayed
15. Today there are weather satellites that beam down information about the earth's atmosphere. In the last two decades, space exploration _____ great contributions to weather forecasting.
A. is making B. has made C. made D. makes
16. On July 20, 1969, Astronaut Neil Armstrong _____ down onto the moon, the first person ever to set foot on another celestial body.

- A. was stepping B. stepped C. has stepped D. was step
17. The plane's departure was delayed because of mechanical difficulties. When the weary passengers finally boarded the aircraft, many were annoyed and irritable because they _____ in the airport for three and a half hours.
A. are waiting B. were waiting C. have been waiting D. had been waiting
18. If coastal erosion continues to take place at the present rate, in another fifty years this beach _____ anymore.
A. doesn't exist B. isn't going to exist C. isn't existing D. won't be existing
19. Homestead High School's football team _____ a championship until last season, when the new coach led them to win first place in their league.
A. has never won B. is never winning C. had never been winning D. had never won
20. Non-native speakers need many years of intensive language study before they can qualify as interpreters. By the end of this year, Chen _____ English for three years, but he will still need more training and experience before he masters the language.
A. will be studying B. has studied C. will have been studying D. has been studying

VIII. Choose the correct answer.

Example: I've been in this city for a long time. I C here sixteen years ago.
A. have come B. was coming C. came D. had come

1. "May I speak to Dr. Paine, please?"
"I'm sorry, he _____ a patient at the moment. Can I help you?"
A. is seeing B. sees C. has been seeing D. was seeing
2. "When are you going to ask your boss for a raise?"
" _____ to her twice already! I don't think she wants to give me one."
A. I've talked B. I've been talking C. I was talking D. I'd talked
3. "Do you think Harry will want something to eat after he gets here?"
"I hope not. It'll probably be after midnight, and we _____ "
A. are sleeping B. will be sleeping C. have been sleeping D. be sleeping
4. Paul, could you please turn off the stove? The potatoes _____ for at least thirty minutes.
A. are boiling B. boiling C. have been boiling D. were boiling
5. "Is it true that spaghetti didn't originate in Italy?"
"Yes. The Chinese _____ spaghetti dishes for a long time before Marco Polo brought it back to Italy."
A. have been making B. have made C. had been making D. make

6. "I once saw a turtle that had wings. The turtle flew into the air to catch insects."
"Stop kidding. I _____ you!"
A. don't believe B. am not believing C. didn't believe D. wasn't believing
7. "Could someone help me lift the lawnmower into the pickup truck?"
"I'm not busy. I _____ you."
A. help B. will help C. am going to help D. am helping
8. My family loves this house. It _____ the family home ever since my grandfather built it 60 years ago.
A. was B. has been C. is D. will be
9. Here's an interesting statistic: On a typical day, the average person _____ about 48,000 words. How many words did you speak today?
A. spoke B. was speaking C. speaks D. is speaking
10. I know you feel bad now, Tommy, but try to put it out of your mind. By the time you're an adult, you _____ all about it.
A. forget B. will have forgotten C. will forget D. forgot
11. It's against the law to kill the black rhinoceros. They _____ extinct.
A. became B. have become C. become D. are becoming
12. After ten unhappy years, Janice finally quit her job. She _____ along with her boss for a long time before she finally decided to look for a new position.
A. hadn't been getting B. isn't getting C. didn't get D. hasn't been getting
13. The National Hurricane Center is closely watching a strong hurricane over the Atlantic Ocean. When it _____ the coast of Texas sometime tomorrow afternoon, it will bring with it great destructive force.
A. reaches B. will reach C. is reaching D. reaching
14. At one time, huge prehistoric reptiles dominated the earth. This Age of Dinosaurs _____ much longer than the present Age of Mammals has lasted to date.
A. lasted B. was lasting C. has lasted D. had lasted
15. Jim, why don't you take some time off? You _____ too hard lately. Take a short vacation.
A. worked B. work C. were working D. have been working
16. The city is rebuilding its dilapidated waterfront, transforming it into a pleasant and fashionable outdoor mall. Next summer when the tourists arrive, they _____ 104 beautiful new shops and restaurants in the area where the old run-down waterfront properties used to stand.
A. will found B. will be finding C. will have found D. will find

17. A minor earthquake occurred at 2:07 A.M. on January 3. Most of the people in the village _____ at the time and didn't even know it had occurred until the next morning.
A. slept B. had slept C. were sleeping D. sleep
18. The little girl started to cry. She _____ her doll, and no one was able to find it for her.
A. has lost B. had lost C. was losing D. was lost
19. According to research reports, people usually _____ in their sleep 25 to 30 times each night.
A. turn B. are turning C. have turned D. turned
20. Jane's eyes burned and her shoulders ached. She _____ at the computer for five straight hours. Finally, she took a break.
A. is sitting B. has been sitting C. was sitting D. had been sitting