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PRIMARY 5 · ENGLISH · GRAMMAR

Grammar

Theory and worked examples

Tenses and Their Clue Words

A tense tells us WHEN an action happens. The verb (the action word) changes its form to show the time. In a grammar question, first look for a clue word that tells you the time, then choose the tense that matches it.

KEY IDEA

Underline the clue word first. The clue word decides the tense, not the verb that "sounds right".

Tense	When we use it	Clue words	Example
Simple present	habits, facts, timetables	every day, always, usually, often, never	Dad usually takes the MRT to work.
Present continuous	happening right now	now, Look!, Listen!, at the moment, currently	Look! The cat is chasing a butterfly.
Simple past	finished at a time in the past	yesterday, last week, ago, in 2020, just now	We visited Pulau Ubin last June.
Past continuous	in the middle of happening in the past (often cut by another action)	while, at 8 p.m. last night, at that moment (when + simple past often interrupts it)	I was bathing when the phone rang.
Simple future	will happen later	tomorrow, next week, soon, later	The school concert will start at 7 p.m.

QUICK REMINDER

Clue words decide the tense: "every Saturday" takes the simple present; "at this moment" takes the present continuous. Example: At this moment, Dad is washing the car.

WORKED EXAMPLE

While Grandma _____ (cook) dinner, the lights went out.

1. Find the clue word: "While". It tells us one action was in the middle of happening.
2. "the lights went out" is in the past, so the cooking was going on in the past.
3. Past continuous: was / were + -ing. Grandma is one person, so "was cooking".

While Grandma was cooking dinner, the lights went out.

TRY THIS T1 · answer in the Answer Key at the back

Listen! The choir _____ (sing) in the school hall.

Answer: _____

Present Perfect and Present Perfect Continuous

The present perfect (has / have + past participle) joins the past to the present. Use it for an action that has just finished, or for an experience when the exact time is not given. The present perfect continuous (has / have been + -ing) shows an action that started in the past and is STILL going on.

KEY IDEA

Do not use the simple past with "since". "I knew her since Primary 1" is wrong. Say "I have known her since Primary 1."

- Present perfect: just, already, yet, ever, never, so far, recently. "Mei has already finished her homework."
- Present perfect continuous: since (a starting point) or for (a length of time). "Uncle Ali has been selling satay since 2005."
- since + a point in time: since Monday, since 9 a.m., since he was six.
- for + a length of time: for two hours, for three years, for a long time.
- Verbs such as know, like, own and have (= own) do not take -ing: "I have known her since Primary 1." "live" can take both: "has lived / has been living".

QUICK REMINDER

Present perfect with "for" + a length of time or "since" + a starting point. Example: We have known each other for six years, since Primary 1.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Choose the correct answer: The children _____ in the pool for an hour and they still do not want to come out.
(1) swim (2) swam (3) have been swimming (4) had swum

1. Clue words: "for an hour" and "still do not want to come out".
2. The swimming started in the past and is still going on now.
3. That is the present perfect continuous: have been + -ing. "The children" is plural, so "have".

(3) have been swimming

TRY THIS T2 · answer in the Answer Key at the back

Jun Kai _____ (wait) for the bus since 7 a.m., and it is now 7.40 a.m.

Answer: _____

Past Perfect and Future Perfect

The past perfect (had + past participle) is used when TWO actions happened in the past. The action that happened FIRST takes "had". The future perfect (will have + past participle) tells us an action will be finished before a time in the future.

KEY IDEA

"had" goes with the EARLIER past action. Draw a time line: the action further back gets "had".

- By the time / before + simple past, ... had + past participle: "By the time we reached the stall, the char kway teow had sold out."
- After + had + past participle, ... simple past: "After Priya had packed her bag, she went to bed."
- By the end of next month / By next year / By 2030 + will have + past participle: "By the end of next month, the workers will have built the new playground."

WORKED EXAMPLE

When Aunt Rosie arrived at the airport, her flight _____ (leave).

1. Two past actions: Aunt Rosie arrived, and the flight left.
2. Which happened first? The flight left before she arrived, so she missed it.
3. The earlier action takes had + past participle: "had left".

When Aunt Rosie arrived at the airport, her flight had left.

TRY THIS T3 · answer in the Answer Key at the back

By the end of this year, Kumar _____ (read) fifty storybooks.

Answer: _____

Verb Forms: Irregular Verbs

Irregular verbs do not add -ed, so learn all three forms. Use the past participle after has, have, had, will have and in the passive (was taken).

KEY IDEA

Lie (rest): lie, lay, lain. lie (tell an untruth): lie, lied, lied. lay (put down): lay, laid, laid.

Verb	Past	Past participle	Verb	Past	Past participle
begin	began	begun	lie (rest)	lay	lain
break	broke	broken	raise (lift)	raised	raised
bring	brought	brought	ride	rode	ridden
buy	bought	bought	ring	rang	rung
catch	caught	caught	rise (go up)	rose	risen
choose	chose	chosen	run	ran	run
come	came	come	see	saw	seen
draw	drew	drawn	shake	shook	shaken
drink	drank	drunk	sing	sang	sung
eat	ate	eaten	sink	sank	sunk
fall	fell	fallen	speak	spoke	spoken
fly	flew	flown	steal	stole	stolen
forget	forgot	forgotten	swim	swam	swum
give	gave	given	take	took	taken
go	went	gone	teach	taught	taught
grow	grew	grown	tear	tore	torn
hide	hid	hidden	throw	threw	thrown
hold	held	held	wake	woke	woken
know	knew	known	wear	wore	worn
lay (put down)	laid	laid	write	wrote	written

TRY THIS T4 · answer in the Answer Key at the back

Fill in the past participle: Dinesh has _____ (swim) ten laps of the pool already.

Answer: _____

Subject-Verb Agreement: Find the Real Subject

The subject is the person or thing doing the action. A singular subject (one) takes a singular verb (is, was, has, plays). A plural subject (more than one) takes a plural verb (are, were, have, play). Sometimes the real subject is far from the verb, or extra words are added to it.

KEY IDEA

Cover the extra words with your finger. Read the subject and the verb together: "The box ... is".

- Distant subject: "The box of crayons is on the table." The subject is "box", not "crayons".
- as well as / together with / along with / including: the words after them are extra information. Cover them up and look at the first subject.
- "Mrs Lee, together with her pupils, is planting herbs." Cover "together with her pupils": "Mrs Lee is".

WORKED EXAMPLE

Gwen, as well as her cousins, _____ at the beach when the storm began.
(1) was (2) were (3) is (4) are

1. Find the subject. "as well as her cousins" is extra information, so the subject is "Gwen".
2. "Gwen" is one person: singular.
3. "when the storm began" is past, so we need the past tense: singular past is "was".

(1) was

TRY THIS T5 · answer in the Answer Key at the back

The keys to the music room _____ (is / are) in the top drawer.

Answer: _____

QUICK REMINDER

Find the real subject: "One of" + plural noun still takes a singular verb, because the subject is "one". Example: One of the lights is flickering.

CHAPTER 1

Practice Questions

Part 2: Grammar



In the practice questions

62 questions, 62 marks. Read each question carefully and write your answers in the spaces given. The answers are on page 325.

- Section A: Grammar MCQ: 17 questions, 17 marks
- Section B: Correct Form of the Word: 10 questions, 10 marks
- Section C: Sentence Correction: 10 questions, 10 marks
- Section D: Question Tags: 7 questions, 7 marks
- Section E: Verb Patterns, the Passive, used to, wish and if: 10 questions, 10 marks
- Section F: Challenge: Two Rules in One: 8 questions, 8 marks

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

PRIMARY 5 · ENGLISH · GRAMMAR

Grammar

Section A: Grammar MCQ

For each question, four options are given. One of them is the correct answer. Choose the correct answer and write its number (1, 2, 3 or 4) in the brackets.

1 Mrs Tan, as well as her two sons, _____ going to watch the dragon boat race at Bedok Reservoir this Sunday. ( ) [1]

(1) is (2) are (3) were (4) have

2 Neither the coach nor the players _____ ready when the bus arrived at the stadium. ( ) [1]

(1) was (2) were (3) is (4) are

3 The number of visitors to the Botanic Gardens _____ risen sharply this year. ( ) [1]

(1) are (2) have (3) is (4) has

4 By the time Aisyah reached the MRT station, the last train _____. ( ) [1]

(1) leaves (2) has left (3) had left (4) will leave

5 Mr Rahman _____ fried noodles at this hawker centre since 1998, and he still enjoys it. ( ) [1]

(1) cooks (2) is cooking (3) had cooked (4) has been cooking

6 Wei Jie seldom forgets to bring his homework, _____? ( ) [1]

(1) doesn't he (2) does he (3) isn't he (4) is he

7 The girl _____ bicycle was stolen made a report at the police post. ( ) [1]

(1) who (2) whom (3) whose (4) which

8 Our form teacher asked Farid and _____ to collect the worksheets. ( ) [1]

① me ② I ③ myself ④ mine

9 There was _____ milk left in the carton, so Mum bought a new one on her way home. ( ) [1]

① few ② a few ③ many ④ little

10 _____ the long queue, the family waited patiently for their chicken rice. ( ) [1]

① Although ② Despite ③ However ④ Because

11 Meena's grandmother is famous _____ the softest kueh lapis in the whole neighbourhood. ( ) [1]

① for making ② for make ③ of making ④ to make

12 You _____ an umbrella this morning. Now your uniform is soaking wet! ( ) [1]

① should bring ② must have brought
③ should have brought ④ should have bring

13 The coach was unhappy with the team's effort, so he _____ them run five extra laps after the match last Friday. ( ) [1]

① let ② makes ③ allowed ④ made

14 If Jun Hao and his sister _____ every day before last month's competition, they would have won a prize. ( ) [1]

① has practised ② had practised ③ practised ④ have practised

15 All the new furniture for the library _____ by the workers last Monday. ( ) [1]

① is delivered ② were delivered ③ was delivered ④ was delivering

16 Of all the stalls at the food centre, Uncle Lim's sells the _____ satay. ( ) [1]

① better ② more good ③ most best ④ best

17 Siti's model was _____ than any other model at the Science Fair, so she won first prize. ( ) [1]

(1) more impressive
(2) most impressive
(3) the most impressive
(4) impressiver

Section B: Correct Form of the Word

Write the correct form of the word in the brackets in the space given.

18 By the time we arrived at the cinema, the film _____ (start). [1]

19 Listen! Someone _____ (knock) on the front door. [1]

20 Grandpa _____ (live) in this flat in Toa Payoh since 1995. [1]

21 By the end of next month, Kavya _____ (finish) reading all seven books in the series. [1]

22 The tired puppy _____ (lie) down on its mat and fell asleep at once. [1]

23 The children had _____ (hide) the present under the bed before Mum came home. [1]

24 The sun _____ (rise) at 7 a.m. yesterday. [1]

25 Thank you for _____ (help) me with my Science project. [1]

26 Five kilometres _____ (be) a long way to walk in the hot sun. [1]

27 If it _____ (rain) tomorrow, Sports Day will be postponed. [1]