Thoroughly Revised and Updated

# General ENGLISH

*For*

# GATE • PSUs

**Comprehensive Theory with Solved Examples**
*and* **Previous Solved Questions of GATE**

*Also useful for*

SSC, Bank (PO), NDA, CDS, State Public Services Commissions, various Public Sector Units and other Competitive Exams conducted by UPSC

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# Preface

The General English Section is an important section of GATE and various PSUs' entrance tests. The book is designed to test the candidate's understanding of English and workmanlike use of words. It is unique in the way that it provides concrete content review for the test as well as strategies for tackling the tricky questions.

## Features of this book :

- Strategies and tricks on how to understand evaluate and manipulate Comprehension Passages and Vocabulary. You'll be able to articulate the passage in your own words.

- Techniques to eliminate 3 wrong choices confidently even if you can't fully comprehend a question or a passage.

- Gist of ten types of grammar errors and help you develop a strong sense of both grammar and the conventions of English language.

- Keywords searching tips to find what you need to look for when you are answering the questions. You will not waste time re-reading the whole passage. Techniques to locate facts, trace an author's line of logic, and map the structure of a passage.

- This book briefs you on the different aspects of Grammar, Vocabulary-in-context and Reading comprehension questions giving you key tips on how to tackle these important types of questions.

- Made Easy book on General English offers you enough material for a year-long study program as well as for a short duration preparation module so that you don't have to settle for last-minute cram sessions. Pace yourself as you work your way through the wealth of practice exercises designed for you.

- It contains high-frequency word list, incorporating vocabulary from various exam of last 10 years' papers.

- Practice questions with explained answers to prepare you for the spotting the errors, sentence completion and reading comprehension questions. Practice exercises have been organized according to level of difficulty with dozens of clear, helpful pointers and several new questions modelled closely on questions appearing in various exams.

- MADE EASY Book on General English takes you through the very basics of General English to the toughest questions that might be tested in GATE and PSUs papers.

This latest edition of Made Easy Book on General English is a sign of MadeEasy's on-going commitment to make this book India's outstanding guide for various competitive exams. It has benefited from the dedicated labours of the editorial staff of Made Easy, and from the research and writing skills of our authors. We are greatly indebted to them.

## We wish you all the best for your preparation!!!

# How to use this book?

1.  The book is divided in Units which deal with particular problems coming under one category so start your preparation in the same order.

2.  Every Section has been divided into Chapters covering different topics from that particular segment.

3.  Once you have completed a particular chapter; do the practice exercises given in it and then take the tests. Analyse your score and re-read the questions that you went wrong with.

4.  Once you have completed all the units and feel confident about taking model papers then you can confidently attempt the five mock papers provided at the end of the book.

5.  Take full advantage of the questions from the previous years papers which have been discussed in every chapter. Understand the paper pattern and trends of exam.

6.  Once again revise the fundamentals before your exam.

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# Orientation to Verbal Ability Section of GATE & PSUs

The verbal ability section of the GATE is designed to test a candidate's ability to reason with words in solving problems. Reasoning effectively in a verbal medium depends primarily upon the ability to discern, comprehend, and analyse relationships among words or groups of words and within larger units of discourse such as sentences and critical reasoning arguments.

The verbal ability of the GATE usually consists of four question types: **Analogies, Antonyms/ Synonyms, Sentence Completion, and Critical Reasoning.**

The conceptual framework along with the practice questions which have been provided in every chapter of this book are organized by content category and represent the types of questions included in GATE. The purpose of these questions is to provide some indication of the range of topics covered in the test as well as to provide some additional questions for practice purposes.

## Analogies

Analogy questions test the ability of the candidate to recognize the relationship that exists between the words in a word pair and to recognize when two word pairs display parallel relationships. To answer an analogy question, you must formulate the relationship between the words in the given word pair and then must identify the answer choice containing words that are related to one another in most nearly the same way. Some examples of relationships that might be found in analogy questions are relationships of kind, size, spatial contiguity, or degree.

**Approaches for answering Analogy Questions:**
- Before looking at the answer choices, try to establish a precise relationship between the words in the given pair. It is usually helpful to express that relationship in a phrase or sentence.
- Next, look for the answer choice with the pair of words whose relationship is closest to that of the given pair and can be expressed in a similar fashion.

- Occasionally, more than one of the answer choices may seem at first to express a relationship similar to that of the given pair. Try to state the relationship more precisely or identify some aspect of the relationship between the given pair of words that is paralleled in only one choice pair.
- Remember that a single word can have several different meanings. Check to be sure you have not overlooked a possible second meaning for one of the words.
- Never decide on the best answer without reading all the answer choices.
- Practice recognizing and formulating relationships between word pairs. You can do this with the following sample questions.

**Sample Questions**
**Directions: The question below consists of a pair of related words followed by four pairs of words. Select the pair that best expresses the relation in the original pair.**

1. COLOR: SPECTRUM
   (a) Tone: Scale
   (b) Sound: Waves
   (c) Verse: Poem
   (d) Dimension: Space

**Solution:** The relationship between *color* and *spectrum* is not merely that of part to whole, in which case (c) might be defended as correct. A *spectrum* is made up of a progressive, graduated series of *colors*, as a *scale* is of a progressive, graduated sequence of *tones*. Thus, (a) is the correct answer choice. In this instance, the best answer must be selected from a group of fairly close choices.

2. HEADLONG: FORETHOUGHT
   (a) Barefaced: Shame
   (b) Mealy-mouthed: Talent
   (c) Heartbroken: Emotion
   (d) Level-headed: Resolve

**Solution:** The difficulty of this question probably derives primarily from the complexity of the

relationship between *headlong* and *forethought* rather than from any inherent difficulty in the words. Analysis of the relationship between *headlong* and *forethought* reveals the following: an action or behaviour that is *headlong* is one that lacks *forethought.* Only answer choice (A) displays the same relationship between its two terms.

## Synonyms / Antonyms

Although synonym / antonym questions test knowledge of vocabulary more directly than do any of the other verbal question types, the purpose of the synonym / antonym questions is to measure not merely the strength of your vocabulary but also the ability to reason from a given concept to its opposite. Synonyms / Antonyms may require only rather general knowledge of a word, or they may require you to make fine distinctions among answer choices. Synonyms / Antonyms are generally confined to nouns, verbs, and adjectives; answer choices may be single words or phrases.

**Approaches for answering Synonym / Antonym questions:**
* Remember that you are looking for the word that is the most nearly *similar / opposite* to the given word; since many words do not have a precise synonym / opposite, you must look for the answer choice that expresses a concept *most nearly* same / opposite to that of the given word.
* In some cases more than one of the answer choices may appear at first to be similar / opposite to the given word. Questions that require you to make fine distinctions among two or more answer choices are best handled by defining more precisely or in greater detail the meaning of the given word.
* It is often useful, in weighing answer choices, to make up a sentence using the given word or words. Substituting the answer choices in the phrase or sentence and seeing which best "fits," in that, may help you determine the best answer.
* Remember that a particular word may have more than one meaning.
* Use your knowledge of root, prefix, and suffix meanings to help you determine the meanings of words with which you are not entirely familiar.
* The practice questions will help you prepare for your test in many ways. First, completing the practice exercises will make you familiar with the question format. They will also get you thinking of words in terms of other words with similar or opposite meanings.
* For example, a word may be familiar to you—you may have seen it in print and have a general sense of what it means—but when tested, you may discover that you do not know the word's precise meaning. These exercises will help you pinpoint those familiar words for which you need to learn the exact definition. In addition, you will probably encounter words that are totally unfamiliar.
* By memorizing their definitions, you can add these words to your vocabulary and call upon them at test time to improve your score.
* Third, many of the questions in your Aptitude Test of GATE test your ability to discern nuances of meaning. The question may ask you to identify the synonym for a secondary definition of a common word—for example, "inclination or natural ability" is a secondary definition of the word "bent." Also, the direction for these exercises usually ask you to identify the word that is "*most* similar" or "*most* dissimilar" in meaning to the word in the question. This means that you may be asked to pick between degrees of meaning. For example, "atrocious" means "utterly revolting"; in this case, "revolting" would be a more accurate synonym than "unpleasant"
* Make a list of all the words that you missed and their definitions. Then study this list as a quick and concentrated method to improve your vocabulary. In some cases, you will also benefit from looking up the definitions of the words that you selected incorrectly to ensure that you know the precise meaning of these words. Then add these words to your study list as well.

**Sample Questions**
**Directions:** Each question below consists of a word printed in capital letters followed by five lettered words or phrases. Choose the lettered word or phrase that is most nearly *opposite* in meaning to the word in capital letters. Since some of the questions require you to distinguish fine shades of meaning, be sure to consider all the choices before deciding which one is best.

1.  **DIFFUSE**
    (a) Contend
    (b) Concentrate
    (c) Imply
    (d) Pretend

**Solution:** The best answer is (b). *Diffuse* means to permit or cause to spread out; only (b) presents an idea that is in any way opposite to *diffuse.*

2. **MULTIFARIOUS**
    (a) Deprived of freedom
    (b) Deprived of comfort
    (c) Lacking space
    (d) Lacking diversity

**Solution:** *Multifarious* means having or occurring in great variety, so the best answer is (d). Even if you are not entirely familiar with the meaning of *multifarious,* it is possible to use the clue provided by "multi-" to help find the right answer to this question

### Sentence Completion

The purpose of the sentence completion questions is to **measure the ability to use the various kinds of cues provided** by syntax **and grammar to recognize the overall meaning of a sentence.** In deciding which of five words or sets of words can best be substituted for blank spaces in a sentence, you must analyse the relationships among the component parts of the incomplete sentence. You must consider each answer choice and decide which completes the sentence in such a way that the sentence has a logically satisfying meaning and can be read as a stylistically integrated whole.

Sentence completion questions provide a context within which to analyse the function of words as they relate to and combine with one another to form a meaningful unit of discourse.

### Approaches for answering Sentence Completion Questions:

- **Read the entire incomplete sentence carefully before you consider the answer choices.** Be sure you understand the ideas expressed and examine the sentence for possible indications of tone (irony, humour, etc.)
- Before reading the answer choices, you may find it helpful to fill in the blanks with a word or words of your own that complete the meaning of the sentence. Then examine the answer choices to see if any of them parallels your own completion of the sentence.
- Pay attention to grammatical clues in the sentence. For example, words like although and nevertheless indicate that some qualification or opposition is taking place in the sentence,

whereas moreover implies an intensification or support of some idea in the sentence.
- **If a sentence has two blanks, be sure that both parts of your answer choice fit logically** and **stylistically into the sentence.**
- When you have chosen an answer, read the complete sentence through to check that it has acquired a logically and stylistically satisfying meaning

## Sample Questions

**Directions:** Each sentence below has one or two blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Beneath the sentence are five lettered words or sets of words. Choose the word or set of words for each blank that *best* fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

1. Early ------- of hearing loss is ------- by the fact that the other senses are able to compensate for moderate amounts of loss, so that people frequently do not know that their hearing is imperfect.
    (a) Discovery ... Indicated
    (b) Development ... Prevented
    (c) Detection ... Complicated
    (d) Treatment ... Facilitated

**Solution:** The statement that the other senses compensate for partial loss of hearing indicates that the hearing loss is not *prevented* or *corrected*; therefore, choice (b) can be eliminated. Furthermore, the ability to compensate for hearing loss certainly does not facilitate the early *treatment* (d) or the early *discovery* (A) of hearing loss. It is reasonable; however, that early *detection* of hearing loss is *complicated* by the ability to compensate for it. The best answer is (c).

2. The ------- science of seismology has grown just enough so that the first overly bold theories have been -------.
    (a) Magnetic ... Accepted
    (b) Fledgling ... Refuted
    (c) Tentative ... Analysed
    (d) Predictive ... Protected

**Solution:** At first reading, there may appear to be more than one answer choice that "makes sense" when substituted in the blanks of the sentence. (a), (c), and (d) can be dismissed fairly readily when it is seen that *accepted, tentative,* and *protected* are not compatible with *overly bold* in the sentence.

## Critical Reasoning

Critical Reasoning questions are designed to gauge your ability to think critically and analytically — more specifically:

- To recognize reasoning errors and unstated assumptions
- To follow an argument's line of reasoning
- To draw reasonable inferences from stated premises

**Each Critical Reasoning question provides a paragraph-length argument, along with a question pertaining to that argument.** Each question will require you to perform one of the following seven tasks:

1. Recognizing how to undermine (weaken) an argument. ("Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument above?")
2. Recognizing how to support (strengthen) an argument. ("Which of the following, if true, would provide most support for the conclusion of the argument above?")
3. Identifying unstated assumptions. ("The foregoing argument depends on which of the following assumptions?")
4. Drawing an inference from a series of stated premises. ("If all of the statements above are true, which of the following is most strongly supported by them?")
5. Making valid deductions based on a series of premises and/or a conclusion. ("If all of the statements above are true, which of the following must also be true?") ("Which of the following statements must be true in order for the conclusion in the argument above to be inferable?")
6. Recognizing patterns of reasoning. ("Which of the following demonstrates a pattern of reasoning most similar to the reasoning contained in the argument above?") ("The flawed reasoning above is most similar to the flaw in which of the following?")
7. Recognizing the main point, or final conclusion, of an argument. ("Which of the following best expresses the main point of the passage above?")
8. The best approach to the question often depends on the question type. Thus you should always read the question before reading the argument, so that you know how to think

about the argument as you read it. On the other hand, you won't gain any insight by reading the answer choices beforehand; you'll just be wasting precious time by doing so.

## 6-Step Approach for Critical Reasoning Questions

The 6-step approach for handling any unstated-assumption, undermining-evidence, or supporting-evidence question is as follows:

1. **Read the question stem** (the question itself, but not the answer choices) **before you read the argument.**
2. As you read the argument, **identify the premises and the conclusion.** Doing so will help you follow the argument's line of reasoning. Keep in mind that the conclusion will not always appear last.
   *Look at this example:*
   During the past year consumers have clearly become less concerned about their health and level of fitness. After all, during the past year nationwide membership in fitness clubs has declined by about fifteen percent, while sales of fast-food products widely known to contribute to health problems, have risen by about the same percent.
3. Ask yourself: What relevant conditions must be assumed equal, or unchanged over time, in order for the conclusion to be strongly inferable from the premises? Try to formulate at least one or two assumptions — but don't dwell on it too long. If nothing occurs to you after a few seconds, go on to step 4.
4. **Scan the answer choices** for one that reflects any of the unstated assumptions that have already occurred to you. Chances are you'll find one of them among the choices.
5. If your predetermined assumption is not among the answer choices, then consider each answer choice more carefully, in turn. Having taken a highly active approach to the question, you're far more likely to recognize the best response when you see it.
6. If you're unable to determine the best response, look for answer choices that accomplish the opposite of what the question asks for, and answer choices that are irrelevant to the argument. Eliminate them in order to increase your odds of responding correctly to the question.

Broadly the questions can be divided into the following categories:
• Unstated-assumption questions
• Undermining-evidence questions
• Supporting-evidence questions

For any of these three question types, your task is essentially the same: to recognize a particular unstated assumption — a certain fact or condition not explicitly provided but which must be assumed in order for the argument's conclusion to be readily inferable.

To help you appreciate how similar your approach should be for all three types, let's follow what should be your basic train-of-thought for each type:

**Unstated-assumption question:** As you read the argument ask yourself, "In addition to the stated premises, what must be assumed true here in order for the argument to leap to its conclusion?" Then look for that missing link among the answer choices; that choice will be the best one.

**Undermining-evidence question:** As you read the argument ask yourself, "In addition to the stated premises, what must be assumed true here in order for the argument to leap to its conclusion?" Then scan the answer choices, looking for one that refutes, contradicts, or rules out that unstated assumption. That choice will be the best response to the question.

**Supporting-evidence question:** As you read the argument ask yourself, "In addition to the stated premises, what must be assumed true here in order for the argument to leap to its conclusion?" Then look for the answer choice that provides, or affirms, the missing link; that choice will be the best response to the question.

Consider the following argument. The argument's first sentence contains two premises, while the second sentence states the argument's conclusion:

During the past year nationwide membership in fitness clubs has declined by about fifteen percent, while sales of fast-food products widely known to contribute to health problems have risen by about the same percent. These statistics clearly show that during the past year consumers have become less concerned about their health and level of fitness.

This same argument could be used for any of the three question types. Regardless of the question, your analysis — as you go from the premises to the conclusion — is the same: Ask yourself what the missing link is. Did any assumptions occur to you? If not, let's do some brainstorming. Doesn't the argument depend on all of the following assumptions?
• People join fitness clubs because they are concerned about their health.
• Membership in fitness clubs is the only means by which consumers demonstrate their concern for fitness.
• Renewal rates at fitness clubs are not increasing.
• The fitness-club membership decline is not due to factors such as: (1) memberships becoming prohibitively expensive or (2) the discontinuation of operations by a large nationwide fitness-club chain.

Additional unstated assumptions might occur to you as well. You can take any one of these assumptions and draft it as the best answer choice for any of the three question types.

For each of the three question types, here's a sample question along with a viable best answer choice:

**Unstated Assumption**
Question:
The argument above depends on which of the following assumptions about the most recent one-year period?

Best answer choice:
Concern about health is the primary reason that consumers join fitness clubs.

**Undermining Evidence**
Question:
Which of the following statements about the most recent one-year period, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument above?
Best answer choice:
People join fitness clubs for the primary purpose of socializing with other club members.

**Supporting Evidence**
Question:
Which of the following statements about the most recent one-year period, if true, provides most support for the conclusion drawn above?
Best answer choice:
Most consumers who join fitness clubs do so for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing their level of health and fitness.

Regardless of whichever type of question you are dealing with, most of the remaining wrong-answer choices will simply be irrelevant to the argument. In other words, even if true they accomplish nothing toward either weakening or strengthening the argument. Here are three examples, which could easily be used together as answer choices for any of the three types of questions involving my health-and-fitness argument:

- Last year consumers spent less money on fitness-club memberships than on fast food. [Irrelevant; the argument seeks to explain changes in two spending patterns, not to compare total spending in one area with total spending in another.]

- The overall level of health and fitness among consumers declined last year. [Irrelevant; the argument's conclusion involves a trend in concern among consumers about health and fitness, not in their actual health and fitness.]

- Consumers having a low level of health and fitness tend to spend more money on fast food than other consumers do. [Irrelevant; the argument's conclusion involves a trend in concern among consumers about health and fitness, not in their actual health and fitness.]

- Preparing for Critical Reasoning questions should involve developing skills — along with consistent practice

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# Verbs & Tenses

**Undoubtedly this is one of the most important areas to be tested under spotting the errors questions of the General English.** A verb is a word that is used in a sentence to express an action. An error that frequently appears in Spotting Errors in General English Section when a verb is used in the wrong tense related to the rest of the sentence. The most common tense errors involve using the present, past and future tenses at inappropriate times.

## TRADITIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF TENSES

The conventional grammar divides tenses according to the different time segments. **(Present, past, and future)** and by category **(simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous tense).**

## 1. Present Tense

Verbs in the *present tense* indicate an action that is going on at the current moment, of it is taking place right now. A present tense verb also denotes unchanging states of being or action, or repeated actions.

➢ I **am satisfied** with my job right now.

Here, the present tense verb "am" indicates something happening right now: the speaker is satisfied at this present moment in time.

➢ I **am a** happy person.

In this sentence, the present tense verb "am" indicates an unchanging state: the speaker is generally a happy person, or that his state of being is one of unchanging happiness.

➢ I **work on** my project assignment for two hours every day.

Here, the present tense verb "work" indicates a repeated action: the speaker works once a day, every day.

➢ I **am** busy with my work these days.

➢ He **goes** to his school daily.

➢ We **have been living** in Delhi for the last ten years.

➢ Rohit **is preparing** for his final semester exams.

Present tense sentences are constructed by using the first form of the verb which is found by removing "to" from the infinitive form: for example, the present tense *read* from the infinitive *to read,* the present tense *learn* from the infinitive *to learn,* or the present tense *eat* from the infinitive *to eat.*

## 2. Past Tense

The *past tense verbs* indicate an action that took place in the past: that is, at some point prior to the present moment.

➢ **I used to** work in a departmental store.

Here, the past tense verb "used to" indicates an action that took place in past, and is no longer happening.

➢ We **had been living** in Delhi for around ten years.

➢ We **went** for a movie last night.

➢ He **had finished** his dinner by the time I entered.

Past Indefinite Tense verbs are usually formed by using the second form of the verb: for example, study becomes studied, walk becomes walked and talk becomes talked.

## 3. Future Tense

Verbs in the **future tense** indicate an action that is yet to take place, i.e., will take place in the future: that is, at some point *after* the present moment.

➢ **I will take** my food at 2'o clock.

Here, the future tense verb "will take" indicates an action that *will* occur, in its completion, in future.

> My son **will have** his tuition class at 6 pm today.

> He **will have reached** by now.

> My mother **will be coming** from her office.

> She **will have left** from her office.

Future tense verbs are usually used in the sentences by using *will* or *shall* before the first form of the verb: for example, talk becomes will talk *or* shall talk, walk becomes will walk *or* shall walk, eat becomes will eat or shall eat.Fill in the blank with the appropriate choice.

## Sample Questions from The Last Few Years:

1. Usually I   am eating lunch   in my office.   No error
   (a)              (b)                  (c)              (d)

2. The Prime Minister's speeches   focuses on   health-care issues.   No error
              (a)                        (b)              (c)                  (d)

3. In Noida, all the new rental apartments   had come with   all the major kitchen appliances.   No error
                    (a)                              (b)                        (c)                          (d)

4. The Nile is   one of the few major river in the world   flowing south to north.   No error
      (a)                        (b)                                (c)                  (d)

5. We usually,   locked our doors   when we go to bed.   No error
      (a)              (b)                  (c)              (d)

6. Low interest rates are tempting   many consumers to take on   too much debt.   No error
              (a)                              (b)                        (c)          (d)

7. Sometimes we have gone   for long walks   on the weekend.   No error
              (a)                  (b)              (c)              (d)

8. All too often,   debates about global warming   totally ignores all the scientific evidence.   No error
      (a)                        (b)                              (c)                          (d)

9. They   rarely   watch TV.   No error
    (a)      (b)      (c)          (d)

10. Indian food has   too much fat   and salt for foreigners.   No error
        (a)              (b)                  (c)                  (d)

## Answers

1. (b)

   The correct sentence should be, "Usually I **eat** lunch in my office". Since this is a habitual action so it should use Simple Present Tense.

2. (b)

   The subject of the sentence is "Prime minister's speeches" which is plural and as per the rule of Simple Present Tense, there should be no s/es in the verb form in case of plural subjects. So the correct sentence should be, "Prime minister's speeches **focus** on health care issues".

3. (b)

   The incorrect part is "had come". It should be in present tense. You can say, all the new apartments in Noida **have come / are coming** with all the major kitchen appliances.

As you can see from this chart, Tenses play quite an important role in the formation the English Language. However, there are some basic rules that will help you easily classify any verb construction.

1.  The first verb, and only the first verb, determines the time of the entire verb construction. For example, if the first verb is in the present-tense form, then the entire construction is present tense. The future tense requires a modal verb (most commonly *will*) followed by a second verb in the base form. Example:

    ➢  I am planning to go abroad.

2.  Perfect verbs always contain the helping verb has/ have/ had in some form followed by a verb in the III form. Example:

    ➢  He has finished the assignment.

3.  Continuous verbs always contain the helping verb be (*is*/ *am*/ *are*) in some form followed by a verb in the I form and ing. Example:

    ➢  He is playing cricket.

4.  The combination of Continuous Tense and Perfect Tense leads to Perfect Continuous form. Example:

    ➢  My family has been living in Delhi for some time now.

    Here are some more examples of the four rules applied to sentences.

    **Example 1: My mother has called me a dozen times today.**
    Can you identify which tense it is?
    It is a present perfect construction.

    **Example 2: I will be working from home all this week.**
    The second example uses Future Continuous Tense in it.

    **Example 3: The kids had been watching cartoons all afternoon.**
    The entire verb construction 'had been watching' is a past perfect continuous tense.



**Read the sentences given below and identify the tense used in the sentences. Write it in the space provided:**

1.  They will have finished the work by now.

    ..................................................................................................................................................

2.  They have charged my credit card the full amount.

    ..................................................................................................................................................

3.  Will you tell him?

    ..................................................................................................................................................

4.  We have already made a reservation at the restaurant.

    ..................................................................................................................................................

5.  We painted our house on this Diwali.

    ..................................................................................................................................................

We will now explain the usage of some of the commonly asked tenses, the differences existing among different types and where and how they are used.

## The different usages of Simple Present Tense

One of the most confusing features of the **Present Indefinite tense** is that the present tense verb form does not actually mean present time. The two most common uses of the present tense are for making **timeless factual statements** and for describing **habitual actions.** The present tense is used to state **timeless** (that is, not bound or limited by time) **objective facts.** For example:

> ➤ In the Fahrenheit scale, water boils at 212 degrees.

This statement is not tied to any moment of time. It is a universal generalization that is valid forever. Here is another example in which the **timeless nature of the factual statement** is not so obvious:

> ➤ My grandmother lives at my uncle's home.

Grandmother has not always lived at uncle's home, and at some point in the future, she will not be living at uncle's home. The use of the present tense signals that for the foreseeable immediate future, the speaker's grandmother is expected to stay in uncle's home. If the speaker had used the present continuous tense:

> ➤ My grandmother is living in my uncle's home.

It would change the meaning completely. The sentence is now tied to the present moment. The grandmother is at uncle's home now, but there is no implication that she is expected to stay there indefinitely. Here are more examples of timeless factual statements in the present tense:

> ➤ Diwali **falls** on Sunday this year.
> ➤ The moon and the earth **rotate** around a common centre of gravity.
> ➤ My son **lives** in Bangalore.

The present tense is also used for making **timeless generalizations, assertions, and observations.** For example,

> ➤ Smoking **causes** cancer.

> ➤ Everyone **hates** Mondays.
> ➤ Airplanes **get** more crowded **every** day.
> ➤ My kids **watch** too much TV.

The present tense is used to describe habitual or repeated actions. For example, in the following sentence:

> ➤ Anita checks her e-mail first when she gets into the office.

The use of the present indefinite tense signals that the sentence is describing Anita's habitual or normal activity—not what she is doing at this present moment of time. The sentence does not mean that Anita is checking her e-mail now. The present-tense sentence would still be valid even if Anita has been on vacation and hasn't looked at her e-mail for a month. Typically we use adverbs of frequency (like usually, always, every day, normally) in present-tense sentences used for habitual actions. Here are some more examples of this use of the present tense:

> ➤ I **take** paranthas for breakfast **every morning**.
> ➤ He always returns his **calls** promptly.
> ➤ They **usually stay** at the five star hotels.
> ➤ We don't **eat** out very **often**.

## Present Continuous Tense:

They fly first class. (Simple Present Tense)
They are flying first-class. (Present Continuous Tense)

In the first sentence, the use of the present tense indicates that it is their normal custom to fly first-class (habitual action). It does not mean that they are flying first-class at the moment. The use of the present continuous in the second sentence means that they are flying first-class on the particular flight we are talking about at the moment. We do not know whether they regularly fly first-class or not.

Not all verbs can be used in the present continuous (or any other continuous tense, for that matter). Of particular importance is a group of verbs called **Stative Verbs.** We think of a verb as a word used to express action. This is certainly true of most verbs. However, this is not true of stative verbs. Stative verbs do not express action. Instead, stative verbs describe an on-going condition or "state," which is where the name *stative* derives from. To see the difference, compare the following two sentences:

17. The entire staff **co-operate/ is cooperating** with the study.

18. Her new hairstyle **suits/ is suiting** her very well.

19. The minister **conveys/ is conveying** his respects to the convention.

20. We **wait/ are waiting** for the meeting to start.

## Perfect Tense

The perfect tenses consist of some form of the helping verb "have" followed by a verb in the present perfect (III) form. The **present perfect** uses the present tense (*has* or *have*). The **past perfect** uses the past-tense form had. The **future perfect** uses the future-tense form *will have.*

What's so perfect about the perfect tenses? Nothing. The term *perfect* comes from a Latin phrase *per factus,* which means "completely done." The action or event is finished ("perfected") at or before that limiting time or event.

The **present perfect** is used for the actions that took place long time ago in past. Past-time actions or events whose action or consequences continue up to the present moment of time. The **past perfect** is for past-time actions or events that were finished before some more recent time or event. The **future perfect** is for future time actions or events that will be finished before some later time or event.

The present perfect is formed by the present tense of *have* (*has* or *have*) followed by a verb in the past participle form. Here are some examples:

➢ I **have known** him all my life.
➢ We **have always shopped** at Big Bazar.
➢ He **has just returned**.
➢ Thanks, but I **have already had** dinner.

To understand the meaning of the present perfect, we must contrast it with the meaning of the simple past tense. Compare the following examples:

**Past tense:** I **lived in** Patna for five years. (I don't live there anymore.)

**Present perfect:** I **have lived** in Patna for five years. (I still live there today.)

The use of the past tense in the first example signals that the speaker no longer lives in Patna. The action

was completed at some point in the past that no longer touches the present. The use of the present perfect in the second example tells us just the opposite—that the speaker is still living in Patna today.

In general, the past tense emphasizes that the actions or events described through the use of the past tense are over with; they do not directly impact the present. The present perfect is just the opposite: it emphasizes the on-going connection between the past and the present. In the second example sentence above, the speaker has lived in Tampa continuously for the last five years, right up to the present moment. Here are some more examples of the present perfect for events that have spanned an unbroken period of time up to the present moment:

➢ She has studied English since she came to the university.

➢ They have shown the same cartoon for the last three weeks.

➢ As long as I can remember, I have always hated spinach.

➢ The company has never missed paying a dividend in its history.

A less obvious use of the present perfect is for single events, even unique ones that continue to directly impact the present. For example, compare the use of the past tense and the present perfect in the following sentence:

Last year, Zahir had an accident that has totally changed his life.
The accident was a one-time only event in the past. The accident is over and done with, so it was reported in the past tense. However, the consequences of the accident have not remained in past, they continue till present moment. Therefore, the present perfect is appropriate to describe the on-going nature of the consequences.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE 3

Fill in the blank with the correct option. Select either the past tense or the present perfect form in the following sentences.

The children **behaved/have behaved** well since they stopped watching so much TV.
Answer: have behaved.

1.   Mr. Verma **left / has left** last week for a business trip.

2.   Sameer **lost / has lost** his car keys and can't get home.

3.   The choir **sang / has sung** that song a hundred times.

4.   The garage **had / has had** my car for a week now, and it still isn't fixed.

5.   We **moved / have moved** there ten years ago.

6.   We **lived / have lived** there ever since.

7.   We **lost / have lost** the power about noon.

8.   Let's go to the arrival section—the plane **landed / has landed** a few minutes ago.

9.   **I went / have gone** to Delhi University a few years ago.

10.   The city **permitted / has permitted** parking on that street for years.

11.   After the interview, the personnel director **showed / has shown** me the cafeteria.

12.   **I complained / have complained** about that problem a dozen times.

13.   Last winter, my grandmother **fell / has fallen** and broke her hip.

14.   Since the train strike began, **I drove / have driven** to work every day.

15.   **I drove / have driven** my wife's car to work this morning.

## Past Perfect

The past perfect consists of **had** followed by a verb in the past participle form. The past perfect is used to emphasize that a past-time action or event was completed prior to some more recent (but still past) action or event. Here are some examples:

➢   They **had already graduated** before they got married.

➢   I **had left** by the time I got their message.

➢   I **had been** an intern with them for a year before they made me a permanent offer.

➢   They **had had** a big fight before they broke up.

In all the examples that we have looked at so far, the verb in the past perfect form has preceded the verb in the past-tense form. This sequence seems perfectly logical since the past perfect event has to occur before the second past-tense event occurs.
Logical it may be, but that is not the way English works. In fact, the two events can be presented in either order. Here is an example of the same sentence in both orders:

➢   He **had taken** out a life insurance policy before he died.

➢   Before he died, he **had taken** out a life insurance policy.

The fact that we cannot count on the past perfect event being presented before the more recent past time event makes using the past perfect a great deal more difficult.

**PRACTICE EXERCISE 4**

In the following sentences, the verbs are used to describe two past-time events, one of which precedes the other. Change the verb whose action takes place first into the past perfect form. Change the verb whose action takes place later into the past-tense form. Remember that the two events can occur in either order in the sentence.

The audience **take** their seats before the curtain **go** up.
Answer: The audience *had taken* their seats before the curtain *went* up.

1.   Apparently, the driver **suffer** a heart attack before the automobile accident **happen.**

2.   After the play **receive** a bad review, the playwright **decide** to make some revisions.

3.   I **make** plans before they **call** with their invitation.

4.   Zahir **write** up each case after CID **solve** the crime.

5.   After the snow **stop,** we immediately **shovel** off the driveway.

6.   After the plane **experience** a sudden drop in cabin pressure, the pilot **request** an unscheduled landing.

7. Apparently, Javed Akhtar **write** his first movie before he **ever go** to Mumbai.

8. I **continue** doing that for some time until I finally **get** some new instructions.

9. We **vacation** in Kerala every summer for years until we **have** children.

10. I **wait** until the office **close** that night at five.

11. We **be** able to start the game after the ground crew **remove** the cover from the field.

12. Before we **settle** on my current job, they **offer** me several other assignments.

## Future Perfect

The future perfect consists of *will have* (the future tense of *have*) followed by a verb in the past participle form. The action or event described by the future perfect tense must be completed prior to some other future time or event. The future time can be expressed as an adverb of time.

For example:
**Future Perfect**

➢ I **will have finished** everything by noon.

**Future Perfect**

➢ By noon, we will have already finished.

The future time can also be expressed in another clause, which can be in the present tense or present perfect (Present Perfect). For example:
Present Tense- Future Perfect

➢ By the time you get this message, I **will already have** left.

**Present Perfect Future Perfect**

➢ By the time you have gotten this message, I **will already have** left.

The two clauses can occur in either order:

**Future Perfect Present Perfect**

➢ He **will have packed** all the boxes before she has printed all the labels.

**Present Perfect Future Perfect**

➢ Before she has printed all the labels, he will have packed all the boxes.

Replace one of the base-form verbs with the future perfect. Replace the other base-form verb with either the present or present perfect, as appropriate.

The train **leave** the by the time we **reach** to the station.

The train will have left the station by the time we reach there.

1. The cement **harden** before we **get** it all poured.

2. Hopefully, the snow plows **clear** the roads before we **leave** the freeway.

3. We **starve** to death before the waiter **bring** us our order.

4. Sania **walk** back home before the bus **arrive.**

5. The audience **forget** the details by the time the speaker **finish.**

6. They **lock** the gates after they **clear** the parking lot.

7. The crowd **wonder** what **cause** the delay in getting started.

8. He **fill** his gas tank as soon as he **locate** the nearest filling station.

9. The whole group **complete** the test by the time the class **finish.**

10. The landlord **furnish** the apartment by the time we **move** in.

## Simple Past tense

The past tense is used to refer to events that were completed in the past. The key to using the past tense is to remember that the use of the past tense emphasizes that the events are over and done with *before* the present moment of time. Often the use of the past tense implies that what was true then is not true now. For example, consider the following sentence:

➢ When I was a little boy, I **hated** girls.

The use of the past tense tells us that the speaker's childhood attitude toward girls is confined to the past.