

Chapter 1

Time Travel: Identifying the Verb and Choosing the Correct Tense

In science fiction films, a character can zoom into the past or hop into the future, usually with the help of a machine resembling a giant vacuum cleaner. You time travel too, when you choose verbs for your sentences. Verbs express action or state of being in the past, present, and future. In this chapter you practice locating the verb and selecting the appropriate tense. You also tackle singular and plural forms, plugging the right one into every sentence.

The Questions You'll Answer

Here you find sentences that allow you to sharpen your verb skills in these ways:

- ✓ Locating the verb(s) in a sentence
- ✓ Selecting simple past-, present-, or future-tense verbs to fit the meaning of a sentence
- ✓ Choosing progressive verb forms to indicate ongoing action
- ✓ Placing past perfect, present perfect, or future perfect forms where they're needed
- ✓ Finding the right tense to summarize speech and discuss literary or artistic works
- ✓ Expressing unchangeable facts in present tense
- ✓ Determining whether you need a singular or plural form

What to Watch Out For

Verb tense can be tricky, as can *agreement* — the matching of singular verbs to singular subjects and plural verbs to plural subjects. When you work through these questions, watch out for these issues:

- ✓ Zero in on the time period(s) covered in the sentence.
- ✓ Establish a timeline if more than one action or state of being is expressed in the sentence.
- ✓ Stay in the same tense unless the meaning of the sentence justifies a shift.
- ✓ Check whether the subject is singular or plural and match the verb to the subject.
- ✓ Ignore words that resemble verbs but function as descriptions or nouns.

Locating the Verb

1–15 Identify the verb(s) in the sentence.

1. Eric and his band played five songs by the Beatles, to the delight of the audience.
2. Maria slipped out of the room quietly at the end of the lecture on the causes of World War I.
3. The twins will be happy on their birthday when they receive your present!
4. Perhaps because of my brother's illness, my dog Tweet seems sad today.
5. The child searched for a tissue but found only a dirty candy wrapper.
6. The screaming figure at the left of the painting represents a mother's grief.
7. Glenn has always carried the sizzling pizza in a special, heat-proof box.
8. The puppies, along with the kittens, were displayed in the shop window for all to see.
9. The last meeting of the council was bittersweet, as the members were now scattering for distant destinations.
10. To go faster, try not to look at the keyboard as you type.
11. Smiling, Barbara wrestled with the math problem until she calculated the correct answer.
12. Daniel's pen, having run out of ink, sat on the shelf, unused and forgotten.
13. While copying the letter, Mike stuck his finger in the moving paper tray.

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14. Norman has been judged “normal” by his doctor, but his friends view him differently.

15. Sliding down the mountain, the ski instructor guided his students.

Choosing Simple and Perfect Tense Verb Forms

16–55 Select the tense and form of the verb in parentheses that fits the meaning of the sentence.

16. I ____ (to start) my blog a year ago, and I do not intend to stop now.

17. Sheryl and her friend always ____ (to shop) on a Tuesday, when the store offers double discounts.

18. Next year, four boys ____ (to compete) for a single spot on the wrestling team.

19. Emma ____ (to snap) a picture of her brother Eric every year on his birthday, including today.

20. Last week I tossed a bit of my dinner under the table because the dog ____ (to beg) for scraps while I ate.

21. Start working on your lab report as soon as you ____ (to arrive) home.

22. Mr. Martin ____ (to trim) the tree after he had watered it.

23. While Harry ____ (to wash) the clothes, Oliver was brushing the dog’s matted fur.

24. Jackie ____ (to learn) Arabic when she lived in Tunisia.

25. Carla ____ (to fill) the gas tank before she realized that her credit card was not in her wallet.

26. By the time George gets home, Maria ____ (to gobble) all the cookies, and George hates all the other snacks.

27. When I ____ (to bake) the cookies, I placed them on the dining room table.
28. Although the king commands instant obedience, his followers sometimes ____ (to disobey).
29. Marlene ____ (to lecture) for two hours before she noticed that several audience members were asleep.
30. I ____ (to live) in this neighborhood for about a year, and despite its problems, I still love my home.
31. The yellow and brown leaves began to fall; the autumn soon ____ (to end).
32. No one ____ (to work) harder than Ellen, who spent eight or nine hours a day on this project for the first two weeks and is now allotting ten or twelve hours a day to it!
33. Jared ____ (to jog) four miles every day as soon as he wakes up.
34. From now on, David ____ (to complete) his homework on time, to avoid detention and poor grades.
35. Elliot always ____ (to return) his library books late, so he pays many fines.
36. While Meredith ____ (to paint) the ceiling, a dog jumped on the ladder.
37. Place the dough in a warm spot, and in a few hours it ____ (to double) in size.
38. It ____ (to rain) every day for a month, including today, but tomorrow's forecast calls for sunshine.
39. The soda had soaked into the carpet by the time the janitor ____ (to arrive) with a mop.
40. Right now, Catherine's friends ____ (to gather) for her surprise party.

41. Once George _____ (to chop) down the cherry tree, the fruit was lost.
42. I paid the electric bill on the 17th, so I _____ (to receive) the next bill in about a week.
43. Although Eddie _____ (to dance) happily, Shirley turned off the music.
44. Clancy never _____ (to brush) his teeth by himself, even though he is five years old now.
45. As we speak, our enemies _____ (to attack) with great force, but we will not surrender.
46. The teacher _____ (to staple) the drawings on the bulletin board so that the parents could admire their children's artwork.
47. By the time Eleanor and Henry are satisfied with the renovation, they _____ (to exceed) their budget by a wide margin.
48. Where the tulips _____ (to bloom), weeds eventually covered every inch of the garden.
49. In Maya's fantasy novel, a wizard's curse _____ (to turn) a little boy into a frog.
50. Amanda and her friends _____ (to study) Chinese for four years by the time they travel to that country.
51. Joe _____ (to practice) karate for many years and still takes an advanced class every Saturday.
52. In Shakespeare's *Othello*, the title character wrongly _____ (to trust) Iago, one of the most evil villains in literature.
53. LGA Manufacturing has an old-fashioned policy; the company _____ (to market) its products only in a store, not on the Internet.
54. If my dog buries a bone every three days, how many _____ (to bury) by the end of the month?

55. In Dickens's classic novel *Great Expectations*, Pip _____ (to learn) the identity of his benefactor in a chilling scene.

Consistently Choosing the Right Verb Tense

56–65 Select the tense and form of the verb in parentheses that fits the meaning of the sentence. Take care to avoid unnecessary shifts from one tense to another.

56. In my dream, a giant dinosaur ran into my dining room, and then he _____ (to stroll) around the room.
57. Perhaps because the president _____ (to campaign) for the mayor, the mayor won by a huge margin.
58. Linda _____ (to enter) the cafeteria and sits next to the most hated teacher in the entire school!
59. The orchestra _____ (to insure) the instruments every year, so no one ever worries about storm damage after the hurricane.
60. Last year I traveled to Europe, but next year I _____ (to tour) Asia.
61. In response to the reporter's question, the zookeeper said that the lion _____ (to be) very friendly.
62. Morty declared that eight added to ten _____ (to equal) eighteen.
63. Arthur told me that he _____ (to need) a loan until payday and asked me to give him \$10.
64. Shana reported that at the end of every show, the ballet dancers _____ (to bow) and ignored the boos from the audience.
65. The astronomer told the youngsters that the earth _____ (to revolve) around the sun.