# Verb tenses — free worksheet

Put the verb in brackets into the right tense.

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## 1. Time After Time: Mastering Verb Tenses

*Verb tenses · Verb tenses across everyday life, work, health, technology, relationships, money, the environment and travel*

For questions 1–8, complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. My neighbour Tom _____ (drill) through the wall since early this morning, and the noise still hasn't stopped, so I can't concentrate on my report.

2. By the time the manager arrived, the team _____ (rehearse) the presentation for the third time, so they felt confident about the meeting.

3. David's hands were covered in paint because he _____ (paint) the fence for two hours when the sudden rain forced him to stop halfway through.

4. It was the first time the company's servers _____ (breach) by such a sophisticated virus, so the IT team had never dealt with anything like it.

5. So far, I _____ (save) exactly half of the money I need for my new laptop, so with a bit of luck I'll have the rest by December.

6. By the time the new regulations take effect in 2030, scientists _____ (assess) the full impact of plastic pollution on marine ecosystems.

7. While Sam _____ (text) a long message to his girlfriend, his phone suddenly died, leaving the text unsent in his drafts folder.

8. Before Maria _____ (go) to the gym tomorrow morning, she will stretch for ten minutes to warm up.

# Answer Key

## 1. Time After Time: Mastering Verb Tenses

1. has been drilling (also: 's been drilling)
2. had rehearsed (also: 'd rehearsed)
3. had been painting (also: 'd been painting)
4. had been breached (also: 'd been breached)
5. have saved (also: 've saved)
6. will have assessed (also: 'll have assessed, will've assessed, 'll've assessed)
7. was texting
8. goes

*1. "Since early this morning" marks when the action began, and "still hasn't stopped" confirms it is continuing right now, so the present perfect continuous (has been drilling) is needed rather than the present perfect simple, which would suggest the action is already complete.*

*2. "For the third time" marks a completed, countable action finished before the manager's arrival, and the resulting confidence shows the rehearsing was already over, so the past perfect simple (had rehearsed) is required rather than a continuous form, which would describe practice still in progress at that moment.*

*3. "Forced him to stop halfway through" shows the painting was still incomplete when the rain began, so the past perfect continuous (had been painting) is required to highlight the unfinished action leading up to that moment; the past perfect simple would wrongly imply the two hours of painting were already a completed job.*

*4. The fixed pattern 'It was the first time + subject + had + past participle' always takes the past perfect to describe something never experienced before that point; the passive is needed because the servers did not breach themselves — a virus breached them.*

*5. 'So far' signals an action continuing up to now with present relevance, so the present perfect simple (have saved) is required rather than the past simple, which would need a finished time expression like 'last month'.*

*6. 'By the time the new regulations take effect' sets a definite future point before which the assessment is expected to be complete, so the future perfect simple (will have assessed) is required rather than a simple future form, which would describe an action not yet finished at that time.*

*7. 'While' introduces an action already in progress when a second, shorter action interrupted it, so the past continuous (was texting) is required; the unfinished, unsent message confirms the texting was still happening at that exact moment, not completed beforehand.*

*8. After 'before' introducing a future time clause, English uses the present simple (goes) rather than 'will go', even though 'tomorrow morning' points to the future; the future meaning is carried instead by 'will stretch' in the main clause.*

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