

Common Tenses in Academic Writing **EXAMPLE**

Aim: To support students in their understanding, use and practice of the four most common tenses in academic writing.

Time: 60 minutes & homework task.

Delivery: This lesson can be delivered face-to-face or online. For online delivery, each worksheet could be placed in a class document on OneDrive.

Lead in

- Distribute or project **worksheet 1**. Students complete **task 1**: paragraph analysis.
- Feedback¹: nominate one or two students to share ideas.
- Feedback²: distribute or project **worksheet 1 task 1 ANSWERS**.

Language Review

- Students read and discuss the four most common tenses in academic English.

Guided Practice

- Distribute or project **worksheet 2**. Students complete **task 1**: discussion.
- Feedback¹: nominate one or two students to share ideas.
- Feedback²: distribute or project the criteria if you have one and point out where grammar is assessed.
- Option¹: students complete **tasks 2-6** and then feedback on all tasks.
- Option²: students complete each **task** and teacher conducts feedback before moving on to the next task.
- Distribute or project **worksheet 3**. Students complete **task 1**: gap fill activity.
- Feedback¹: nominate students to answer.
- Feedback²: distribute or project **worksheet 3 task 1 ANSWERS**.
- Students complete **task 2**: identify the errors.
- Feedback¹: nominate students to answer.
- Feedback²: distribute or project **worksheet 3 task 2 ANSWERS**.

Freer Practice

- Distribute or project **worksheet 4**. Students complete **task 1**: write a paragraph on **topic**.
- Feedback: distribute or project **worksheet 4 task 1 MODEL ANSWER**.

Homework

- Students choose a topic connected to their studies and write a paragraph paying careful attention to the four tenses from the session.
- Feedback option¹: students conduct peer feedback using the checklist provided.
- Feedback option²: teachers take in and mark. Use our error correction code:
<https://www.academic-englishuk.com/correction-code>

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Worksheet 1: Text Analysis

Task 1

- Read the following paragraph on Saturday jobs for teenagers and underline the different tenses.
- Why has the writer used those particular tenses? Discuss with a partner.

Saturday jobs for teenagers

A recent study by *Resolution* [redacted] of a Saturday job for teenagers is in decline. It claims that the percentage of 16- to 17-year-[redacted] by [redacted] to 2019 (Busby, 2020). One of the reasons for this decrease may be the need for adolescents to focus [redacted] for university have become more and more stretched. It could also be argued that the traditional posts of shelf [redacted] young people, [redacted] extra money, such as online bloggers and influencers, are far more attractive and easier to achieve. These [redacted] far more [redacted] schoolwork and completed at home. In light of the current global pandemic, it is predicted that fewer and fewer teenagers will [redacted]. Instead, they are [redacted] on the Internet.

Busby, E. 2020 Number of teenagers doing Saturday [redacted] finds. [online] Available at [https://\[redacted\]-teenagers-school-work-students-resolution-foundation-report-a9270206.html](https://[redacted]-teenagers-school-work-students-resolution-foundation-report-a9270206.html) [Accessed 31 March 2021].

Language Review

- According to corpus research, in academic writing, the four tenses used the most often are **present simple**, **past simple**, **present perfect simple** and **future simple (will)** (Biber et al., 1999; Caplan, 2012).
- Read the rules on these common tenses in academic writing. Are any of these new to you?

Tense	Use	Examples
Present Simple	To make statements that are generally true at the time of writing.	<i>Many students apply to university during their A Levels.</i>
	[redacted] about findings of current or previous research.	[redacted] boys in science.
	To show the aim of an essay or report etc.	<i>This [redacted] spreads.</i>
	[redacted] graphs.	<i>The table shows the number of Twitter users in the UK.</i>
Past simple	To [redacted] your or another's research that have now been replaced.	<i>The theory of maternal impression suggested [redacted] mother's mental state.</i>
	To report findings of a previous study at a specific point in the past in order [redacted] finding in your or another's research.	<i>There was a rise in puppy sales in the COVID [redacted] 41% increase between 2020 and 2021.</i>

	To describe the data gathered, the [redacted] completed study.	<i>The subjects were asked to decide if the word [redacted]</i>
Present perfect	To connect information from some time in the past with the present.	<i>House prices in [redacted] the last ten years.</i>
	To [redacted]	<i>[redacted] a second language can delay the onset of Alzheimer's.</i>
	To show emphasis of what has been [redacted] true.	<i>Scientists have developed a new technique to [redacted] other.</i>
	To introduce a new topic.	<i>The issue of wet markets has grown in [redacted]</i>
	[redacted] research.	<i>The current study has only examined the impacts of Covid-19 on wealthier nations.</i>
	To draw conclusions.	<i>[redacted] against the death penalty.</i>
Future with will	To predict with certainty future [redacted]	<i>[redacted] will cease trading.</i>
	[redacted] especially in an introduction.	<i>[redacted] augmented reality in the retail sector.</i>

Note: all four tenses can be used in the active or the passive forms.

Present Simple Active	<i>The table shows the number of Twitter users in the UK.</i>
Present Simple Passive	[redacted]
[redacted]	<i>The RSPCA reported [redacted] 2020-2021.</i>
Past Simple Passive	[redacted] <i>by the RSPCA.</i>
[redacted] Active	<i>This essay has discussed the reasons for and against the death penalty.</i>
Present Perfect Simple Passive	<i>The [redacted] discussed in this essay.</i>
[redacted] Active	<i>This essay [redacted] reality in the retail sector.</i>
Future Simple Passive	<i>The [redacted] will be discussed in this essay.</i>

For more information on active vs passive forms go here: www.academic-englishuk.com/passive-grammar-basics

Worksheet 2: Guided Practice

Task 1

- Discuss these questions in a small group.
- I. What mistakes do you commonly make with the four tenses from the language review?
 - II. What feedback [redacted] of tenses?
 - III. How will your [redacted] you're currently on?

Task 2

Present simple vs past simple

- Identify the mistakes in the following sentences. Not all are incorrect.
1. The online payment system Stripe was a trustworthy payment processor.
 2. In the UK, the [redacted]
 3. *Google, YouTube and Facebook* [redacted] visits per month.
 4. [redacted] study, all participants are asked [redacted] 'fourth floor' answer.
 5. UNESCO state [redacted] between 1950 and 2010.

Task 3

Present simple vs present perfect

- Highlight the correct form of the verb.
1. According to the BBC, almost 24,000 students apply/have applied to study medicine at UK universities next September.
 2. Homeopathy uses/has used [redacted] itself.
 3. Approximately [redacted] is believed/has been believed to be left-handed.
 4. The findings do not support/have not supported [redacted]
 5. Computer [redacted] always/have always been a source of contention.

Task 4

Past simple vs present perfect

- Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets.
1. Green tea _____ a significant trend in the West. (become)
 2. [redacted] _____ the first [redacted] (set up)
 3. PayPal _____ charging [redacted] (begin)
 4. Since [redacted] and more people _____ running in the UK. (take up)
 5. According [redacted] UK economy _____ by [redacted] last year. (shrink)

Task 5**Present simple vs future simple with 'will'**

- Highlight the correct option. If both are correct, highlight them both.
1. This essay argues/will argue that physical banks will disappear completely in the next decade.
 2. In 2025, [redacted] health approaches.
 3. These findings suggest that more in- [redacted] be required.
 4. [redacted] evidence [redacted].
 5. [redacted] are predicted/will be predicted to [redacted] t decade.

Task 6**Tense review**

- Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets. Use only active or passive structures of past simple / present simple / present perfect simple / future simple.
1. Government income _____ from indirect taxation such as import duties (derive).
 2. Unemployment _____ when economic growth outstrips productivity growth. (fall)
 3. Over the last five years, [redacted] bribing [redacted] to win contracts (prosecute).
 4. Once the new [redacted] land, sea or air [redacted] luxury goods. (require).
 5. The findings are based [redacted] who _____ fewer than 100 employees. (have)
 6. Every year, member states _____ more [redacted]. (demand)
 7. [redacted] _____ and now IBM is estimating profits of over 30%. (double)
 8. Recently, [redacted] _____ even to areas [redacted] been relatively cheap. (expand)
 9. Generally, [redacted] practices _____ to have a common theoretical perspective. (not appear)
 10. In 2019, researchers at Harvard University _____ a risk analysis and [redacted] motorists [redacted] year. (do)
 11. In developing countries, food waste _____ usually a [redacted] and [redacted] systems. (be)
 12. Ever since the [redacted] Critics _____ about the [redacted] criminal charges against any major Wall Street players. (complain)
 13. For _____ years, [redacted] who _____ greater [redacted] and more legal protections for consumers. (call for)
 14. In the next few weeks, these principles _____ as [redacted] with [redacted] activities (clarified)
 15. Over the last few years, McDonald's _____ to [redacted] challenging [redacted] world. (struggle)

Worksheet 3: Guided Practice

Task 1

- Complete the gaps in the paragraph with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Exams versus coursework

The most effective way to assess students _____ (*long debate*) _____ examinations and coursework. On the one hand, examinations _____ (*allow*) teachers to assess _____ same content. Exams are also seen by some as more flexible in relation to content, timing and question types. _____ University _____ (*show*) that male students _____ (*achieve*) higher scores with _____ questions _____ (*enable*) female students to perform better. On the other hand, coursework _____ learners as more effort _____ (*require*) on their part to research and evaluate the material _____. In addition, _____ (*claim*) that coursework is less stressful than exams, especially for _____ those who do _____. Although it is unlikely that one _____ (*supersede*) by the other, it _____ (*remain*) _____ (*involve*) several _____ cannot be fulfilled by one unique method.

Stanford Education. 2018 _____. _____ tests, Stanford study finds. [online]. Available at <https://www.stanford.edu/news/academic-affairs/2018/08/01/academic-grammar-tests-stanford-study-finds> [Accessed March 31 2021].

Task 2

- Read the following paragraph on newspaper paywalls and see if you can identify the five errors.

Newspaper paywalls

Due to the decline in readership of _____ chose to add a _____ newspapers to charge readers to access certain content, usually through a subscription. According to _____ undertaken at Harvard Business School in 2019, online paywalls were successful _____ further _____ which can generate content with a certain degree of uniqueness and have an established reputation. The _____, as a result of a fall in profits from digital advertising, which offsets digital subscriptions (Senz, 2019). Thus, _____, _____ However, it appeared that this effect will ultimately depend on the size of the media company _____ ent.

Senz, K. 2019 *Why paywalls aren't _____*. [online] Available at <https://www.boston.com/news/business/2019/08/01/why-paywalls-arent-al> [Accessed 31 March 2021].

Worksheet 4: Freer Practice

Task 1

- Write a paragraph on  from the session.
- Compare with your partner.
- Compare with the model answer.

Write your paragraph here...

Worksheet 5: Homework

Task 1

- Select [REDACTED]
- Write a short paragraph using a range of tenses.
- [REDACTED]
- Use the peer feedback form to check your partner's writing.

Write your paragraph here...

Peer feedback form

Has your partner....	Yes/No/Not Sure
written a coherent paragraph?	
[REDACTED]	
used past simple accurately?	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	

Common Tenses **ANSWER KEY**

Worksheet 1: Text Analysis

Task 1

A recent study by Resolution Foundation **has revealed** that the once popular custom of a Saturday job for teenagers **is** in decline. It **claims** that the percentage of 16- to 17-year-olds with weekend jobs **fell** by almost half in between 1997 to 1999 and 2017 to 2019 (Busby, 2020). One of the reasons.....

ALL ANSWERS ARE INCLUDED IN PAID VERSION...