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Writing Lab Independent Project

Verb Tense Cheat-sheet

Learning verb tense is one of the most difficult challenges anyone learning English will face. That's why I decided to create a cheat-sheet that gives you an at-a-glance guide to how certain tenses convey certain ideas, states, times, and actions. The three major tense categories and the easiest to distinguish are: Past, Present and Future. If tense stopped there learning English would be easier. However, although it doesn't stop there, this guide should make figuring out which verb to use easy the next time your stumped.

Here are examples of a few of the tenses used in English followed by examples:

The tenses of GO

Simple Present: They go

Present Perfect: They have gone

Simple Past: They went

Past Perfect: They had gone

Some verb tenses are created through the use of irregular verb forms such as: **I go to the store (Present Perfect) vs I went to the store (Past).**

When this change is not sufficient for the context, auxiliaries can be and are often used before the verb to modify its form. These include: **be, can, do, may, must, ought, shall, will, has, have, and had.**

Ex: They go (Present Perfect) VS They may have gone (Past Perfect)

To make this just a little easier to understand, here are some standard definitions of each of the four tenses this worksheet discusses:

- **Simple present** is, just as its name indicate, simple. This is used to describe actions that are happening **at that moment**. Even more often though this tense is used for **habitual actions**.
- **Present perfect** is still describing what's **happened in the past** but is **important now**. (Not to be confused with perfect progressive)
- **Simple Past** is used to describe verbs that denote actions that **occurred in the past**.
- **Past Perfect** signifies an action that was done **in the past before another action**.

Below is an exercise to help you use your new understanding of verb tenses: past, past perfect, present and present perfect.

Here are some examples of how the tense of a verb changes the time which the sentence is referring to:

Past: I went camping last week.

Past Perfect: I had gone camping before we went last week.

Present: I go camping often.

Present Perfect: I have gone camping recently.

Now it's your turn to decide which tense is correct in each of the following conversation pairs:

Circle the correct word choice based on the context:

1.)

A. Have you ever gone camping before?

B. Yes, I (Have / Had) gone camping

2.)

A. Was that last camping trip you're first?

B. No, I (Had / Have) gone camping before that trip, which is why I knew to bring bug spray!

3.)

A. Did you enjoy camping in the woods?

B. Yes, I (Enjoy / Enjoyed) camping in the woods very much.

4.)

A. What do you like most about camping.

B. I (Like / Liked) falling asleep to the sound of the river nearby.

5.)

A. Was there a fishing contest during the camping trip?

B. Yes, there (Was / is) a fishing contest during the trip and I won!

6.)

A. Is it normal to get bitten by bugs while you're camping?

B. It (Was / Is) normal before the park renovation committee dealt with the standing water, which attracted mosquitoes.

7.)

A. When was the last time you went horseback riding while camping?

B. I (Go / Went) every time I camp near horse trails.

Answer Key:

1. Have

2. Had

3. Enjoyed

4. Like

5. Was

6. Was

7. Go

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