SENTENCE TENSE EXAMPLE SHEET

PRESENT TENSE

Present tense describes an event or feeling that is happening at the present time.

I am walking to the store.

I am dancing to K-pop.

NOTE The "am" and "ing" on the action words are indicative of present tense.

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PAST TENSE

Past tense describes an event or feeling that happened in the past.

I played with my dog.

I ran two miles.

NOTE Some verbs have an established past tense version (ran), while other verbs require an "ed."

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FUTURE TENSE

Future tense describes an event or feeling that will happen in the future.

I will read a book about robots.

I would practice calligraphy.

NOTE The "will" (and sometimes "would) are indicative of future tense.

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PRESENT PERFECT

Present perfect describes an event or feeling that happened in the past but at an undisclosed time.

I *have finished* washing the dishes.

I *have brought* the ice cream, and they *have provided* the birthday cake.

NOTE Present perfect tense requires two verbs—one present and one past.

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PAST PERFECT

Past perfect describes an event or feeling that happened in the past.

I had damaged my car.

I had struggled with math.

NOTE Past perfect tense requires two verbs—both of which are past tense.

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FUTURE PERFECT TENSE

Future perfect describes an event that will happen in the future.

Two months from now, I will have seen the movie.

I will have gotten a shot.

NOTE Future perfect tense requires three verbs—one future, one present, and one past.

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PAST vs. PRESENT TENSE

(1) Present tense is typically the go-to for college-level and professional writing, but using past tense to describe something that has already happened is acceptable.

I love animals, and I want to adopt a cat. My friend got her cat from The Humane Society. It is my goal to adopt a rescue cat, and The Human Society has plenty of those.

NOTE The second sentence is written using past tense because it describes an event that happened solely in the past. This is appropriate even if the other sentence are in present tense.

(2) If something transpired in the past but is still relevant to the present, present tense is appropriate.

Freud's definition of psychoanalysis is the process of uncovering the secrets our minds keep from us.

NOTE Freud founded psychoanalysis in the 1890s, so even though this definition was created in the past, it is still used in present day. Therefore, present tense is appropriate.

(3) It's also acceptable to use both past tense and present tense in the same sentence, depending on how the sentence is structured.

I remember, at eight years old, I watched *The Never-ending Story.*"

NOTE The verb "remember" is present because the subject is currently remembering, but "watched" is in past tense because the subject viewed a movie years prior.