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# AEIS English

## Grammar Focus 1 — Verb Tenses

*Keeping a narrative in the past tense*

Secondary · Student

Free AEIS English grammar practice for the Secondary intake.  
Master verb tenses in narrative writing with a clear rule,  
worked examples and 30 practice questions.

AEIS Secondary · English grammar practice

Aligned to MOE AEIS (Secondary) · Part 2 language use

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AEIS ENGLISH · GRAMMAR FOCUS

Grammar Focus 1 — Verb Tenses

Keeping a narrative in the past tense

语法专项 1 动词时态：让记叙文保持过去时

In narrative (story) writing, the verbs should stay in the **past tense** from start to finish. Slipping into the present is one of the most common errors in AEIS Secondary writing — this sheet drills the fix.

写记叙文（故事）时，动词要从头到尾保持过去时。不小心换成现在时是 AEIS 中学写作最常见的错误之一。本页专门练习如何改正。

The rule · 语法要点

- A narrative is usually written in the **past tense**. Keep every verb in the past unless there is a clear reason not to.
- Present becomes past: *think/thought, know/knew, play/played, stand/stood, look/looked, promise/promised, is/was*.
- The past of **can** is **could**; the past of **will** is **would**.
- When two actions happen together, keep **both** verbs in the past: *He rubbed his forehead and looked up* — not *and looking*.

记叙文通常用过去时。除非有明确理由，句中每个动词都用过去式。can 的过去式是 could，will 的过去式是 would。两个同时发生的动作，两个动词都要用过去式。

Common mistakes to avoid · 常见错误

| Common mistake                                    | Correct                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| She <b>think</b> she <b>is</b> ready.             | <b>She thought</b> she <b>was</b> ready.            |
| He <b>walk</b> to school and <b>take</b> the bus. | He <b>walked</b> to school and <b>took</b> the bus. |
| They <b>can</b> not finish in time.               | They <b>could</b> not finish in time.               |
| I knew a boy who <b>play</b> very well.           | I knew a boy who <b>played</b> very well.           |
| He rubbed his eyes and <b>looking</b> at me.      | He rubbed his eyes and <b>looked</b> at me.         |

Practice — 30 questions · 练习

Rewrite each verb in brackets in the PAST tense.

1. When the whistle blew, I \_\_\_\_\_ (run) to the net.
2. She \_\_\_\_\_ (think) she was ready, but she \_\_\_\_\_ (be) nervous.
3. The coach \_\_\_\_\_ (tell) me the rules \_\_\_\_\_ (have) changed.
4. I knew no one who \_\_\_\_\_ (play) faster than me.
5. He \_\_\_\_\_ (stand) up, \_\_\_\_\_ (look) at the board and \_\_\_\_\_ (sigh).
6. I promised I \_\_\_\_\_ (will) win, so I \_\_\_\_\_ (can) not give up.
7. My hands \_\_\_\_\_ (shake) as the match \_\_\_\_\_ (begin).
8. Grandmother \_\_\_\_\_ (light) the candles and \_\_\_\_\_ (hold) one out.

9. We \_\_\_\_\_ (walk) home slowly because the bags \_\_\_\_\_ (be) heavy.
10. The puppy \_\_\_\_\_ (stop) shaking and \_\_\_\_\_ (wag) its tail.
11. She \_\_\_\_\_ (find) the wallet and \_\_\_\_\_ (carry) it inside.
12. He \_\_\_\_\_ (rub) his forehead and \_\_\_\_\_ (look) at me strangely.
13. I \_\_\_\_\_ (feel) a cold sweat as I \_\_\_\_\_ (realise) my mistake.
14. The other players \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive) early and \_\_\_\_\_ (warm) up.
15. She \_\_\_\_\_ (give) a sincere apology, and everyone \_\_\_\_\_ (forgive) her.
16. The bridge \_\_\_\_\_ (become) so weak that it \_\_\_\_\_ (have) to close.
17. He \_\_\_\_\_ (train) every morning until his legs \_\_\_\_\_ (burn).
18. I \_\_\_\_\_ (tell) my parents that I \_\_\_\_\_ (will) do my best.
19. The crowd \_\_\_\_\_ (cheer) as he \_\_\_\_\_ (cross) the line.
20. My stomach \_\_\_\_\_ (tie) in knots as I \_\_\_\_\_ (wait).
21. He \_\_\_\_\_ (know) the answer but \_\_\_\_\_ (choose) to stay quiet.
22. We \_\_\_\_\_ (build) the kite and \_\_\_\_\_ (fly) it in the field.
23. The teacher \_\_\_\_\_ (pause) beside my desk and \_\_\_\_\_ (frown).
24. I \_\_\_\_\_ (grip) my racket so hard that my knuckles \_\_\_\_\_ (turn) white.
25. She \_\_\_\_\_ (rise) to her feet and \_\_\_\_\_ (begin) to clap.
26. The storm \_\_\_\_\_ (come) suddenly and \_\_\_\_\_ (catch) us outside.
27. He \_\_\_\_\_ (take) a deep breath and \_\_\_\_\_ (step) onto the court.
28. I \_\_\_\_\_ (lose) the first game but \_\_\_\_\_ (win) the next two.
29. They \_\_\_\_\_ (laugh) at me, so I \_\_\_\_\_ (decide) to prove them wrong.
30. When the lights \_\_\_\_\_ (go) out, everyone \_\_\_\_\_ (fall) silent.