ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

English Tenses Advanced Level MCQs Test With Answers 1

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Explanations

1. Last Saturday, my father _____ that his dinner suit was too small, so now he _____ a strict diet.
✔ **C) discovered / is following**
Last Saturday is a finished past time, so the first gap needs the past simple **discovered**. **Now** shows a temporary action happening at present, so the second gap needs the present continuous **is following**. Not **has discovered**: the present perfect cannot be used with a finished time like **last Saturday**.

2. Helen _____ her driving test five times so far without success, but she _____ yet.
✔ **B) has taken / hasn't given up**
So far signals the present perfect: **has taken** counts the attempts up to now. **Yet** in a negative sentence also takes the present perfect: **hasn't given up**. Not **took**: the past simple does not connect the attempts to the present.

3. Most of the time, John and his friends _____ football matches at their local café, but this Saturday, they _____ to the stadium, and so they're all very excited.
✔ **A) watch / are going**
Most of the time describes a habit, so we use the present simple **watch**. **This Saturday** is a fixed future arrangement, so we use the present continuous **are going**. Not **are watching / have gone**: a habit is not shown with the continuous form here.

4. Kate _____ a vegetarian for eleven years now, and she _____ meat at all during this time.
✔ **D) has been / hasn't eaten**
For eleven years now describes a state that began in the past and continues today, so we need the present perfect **has been**. **During this time** refers to the same unfinished period, so the second gap is **hasn't eaten**. Not **is / doesn't eat**: the present simple cannot be used with **for ... now**.

5. Last year, Richard _____ his bicycle to work every day, but he _____ the bus since the accident.
✔ **C) rode / has been taking**
Last year is finished time, so the past simple **rode** is needed. **Since the accident** shows an action continuing from a past point until now, so the present perfect continuous **has been taking** fits. Not **has ridden**: the present perfect cannot go with **last year**.

6. I _____ glasses when I was younger, but now I _____ contact lenses.
✔ **E) wore / have**
When I was younger is a finished past period, so we use the past simple **wore**. **Now** describes a present state, so we use the present simple **have** (= possess); **have** in this meaning is not used in continuous forms. Not **was wearing**: this is a past habit, not an action in progress.

7. About a month ago, I _____ a brochure about your hotel, but I _____ it yet.
✔ **D) requested / haven't received**
About a month ago is a finished past time, so we use the past simple **requested**. **Yet** in a negative sentence takes the present perfect: **haven't received**. Not **have requested**: the present perfect cannot go with **ago**.

8. The conditions in our office _____ more and more unbearable, so quite often recently I _____ quitting it and looking for a new job.
✔ **C) are getting / have considered**
More and more describes a changing situation, which takes the present continuous: **are getting**. **Quite often recently** refers to repeated actions in a period up to now, so the present perfect **have considered** fits. Not **was getting**: the situation is happening now, not in the past.

9. Because I _____ a long way from my work, I _____ lots of time going to and from work.
✔ **A) live / waste**
The sentence describes a general, permanent situation and a regular result, so both verbs take the present simple: **live** and **waste**. Not **am living / had been wasting**: the past perfect continuous needs a past reference point, and there is none here.

10. In the USA, the twenty largest newspaper chains _____ for almost half of the circulation, reflecting a trend that _____ in the 1970s.
✔ **A) account / started**
A present fact or statistic takes the present simple; the subject **chains** is plural, so **account** (not **accounts**). **In the 1970s** is finished past time, so the trend **started**. Not **has started**: the present perfect cannot be used with a finished past time.

11. Clean snow _____ as much as 87 per cent of the sunlight that _____ on it.
✓ **E) reflects / shines**
This is a scientific fact that is always true, so both verbs take the present simple: **reflects** and **shines**. Not **is reflecting**: the continuous form is for actions happening now, not general truths.

12. More than two hundred people _____ the tower when the first firework _____ above the river.
✓ **B) were visiting / exploded**
The past continuous **were visiting** describes a longer action in progress, and the past simple **exploded** describes a short event that happened during it. Not **visited**: the past simple would suggest two separate, completed actions.

13. Because you _____ half of the ingredients as I _____ dinner, you probably aren't hungry at all now.
✓ **D) ate / was preparing**
The eating is a completed past action, so it takes the past simple **ate**. **As I ... dinner** describes a longer background action in progress at that time, so it takes the past continuous **was preparing**. Not **have eaten / prepared**: the present perfect does not combine with a finished past time clause.

14. She _____ strictly since Christmas and so far she _____ eight kilos.
✓ **E) has been dieting / has lost**
Since Christmas shows an activity continuing up to now, so we use the present perfect continuous **has been dieting**. **So far** shows a result up to now, so we use the present perfect simple **has lost**. Not **is dieting / lost**: neither form connects the past to the present.

15. Cindy's family _____ chains in this area for over three centuries and now her father _____ this traditional craft at the county museum twice a day as well.
✓ **E) have been making / demonstrates**
For over three centuries describes an activity that started in the past and still continues, so we use the present perfect continuous **have been making**. **Twice a day** shows a present routine, which takes the present simple **demonstrates**. Not **have made / has demonstrated**: the present perfect does not describe a daily routine.

16. He _____ to unlock the door to his flat because the telephone _____.
✓ **C) hurried / was ringing**
The past simple **hurried** is the main completed action in this past story. The past continuous **was ringing** shows that the phone was still ringing at that moment, which is why he hurried. Not **was hurrying / has rung**: the present perfect **has rung** does not fit a past story.

17. There _____ economies since the dawn of civilisation, but as a field of study, economics _____ only recently.
✓ **B) have been / has developed**
Since the dawn of civilisation needs the present perfect: **there have been**. **Only recently** describes a development with a present result, so we use **has developed**. Not **were**: the past simple cannot be used with **since**.

18. John Deere _____ his farm machinery business, which _____ tractors today, in the 19th century.
✓ **D) founded / still produces**
In the 19th century is finished past time, so we use the past simple **founded**. **Today** describes a present fact about the company, so we use the present simple **still produces**. Not **has founded**: the present perfect cannot go with a finished past time.

19. I _____ my French lately; consequently, I _____ more and more of it.
✓ **B) haven't been practising / am forgetting**
Lately refers to a period up to now, so we use the present perfect continuous **haven't been practising**. **More and more** describes a changing situation, which takes the present continuous **am forgetting**. Not **am not practising / forget**: these do not show the period up to now.

20. The old lady's health _____ day by day until she _____ smoking.
✓ **A) was deteriorating / gave up**
Day by day shows a gradual process in progress in the past, so we use the past continuous **was deteriorating**. **Until she gave up** marks the completed action that stopped it, so we use the past simple. Not **has deteriorated**: the story is finished and in the past.

21. The managing director _____ Sid to sales manager and ever since then, he _____ everybody around.
✓ **A) promoted / has been bossing**
The promotion is a completed past event, so it takes the past simple **promoted**. **Ever since then** shows behaviour continuing from that point up to now, so we use the present perfect continuous **has been bossing**. Not **has promoted**: the promotion is the starting point, not an action continuing to now.

22. Problems with the hotel, coupled with this awful weather, _____ our holiday miserable, so we _____ before the scheduled time.
✓ **D) are making / are leaving**
This awful weather shows the speaker is still on holiday, so the situation is happening now: **are making**. The present continuous **are leaving** is used for a decided future arrangement. Not **have made / had left**: the past perfect needs a past reference point.

23. The fact that more people _____ ozone-friendly products nowadays _____ that the media can positively increase public awareness.
✓ **E) are using / shows**
Nowadays describes a current, developing trend, so we use the present continuous **are using**. The subject of the main verb is **the fact**, which is singular and states a general truth, so we use the present simple **shows**. Not **has been showing**: the present perfect continuous is not used for a general conclusion like this.

24. My sister _____ from severe backaches lately and I think it's because, last month, she _____ to work in a shop where she has to pick up heavy things.
✓ **C) has been suffering / started**
Lately shows a situation continuing up to now, so we use the present perfect continuous **has been suffering**. **Last month** is finished past time, so we use the past simple **started**. Not **has started**: the present perfect cannot go with **last month**.

25. Though she _____ dancing, Sonia _____ to the disco with her friends last night just in order to be with them in a different atmosphere.
✓ **B) doesn't like / went**
Her dislike of dancing is a general, permanent state, so we use the present simple **doesn't like**. **Last night** is finished past time, so we use the past simple **went**. Not **doesn't like / goes**: the second verb must be in the past.

26. Somebody _____ three times this morning asking for Pete, but nobody called Pete _____ here.
✓ **A) has phoned / has ever lived**
This morning (still in progress) and the number of calls take the present perfect simple: **has phoned**. **Ever** with a period up to now also takes the present perfect: **has ever lived**. Not **has been phoning**: we don't use the continuous form when we count how many times something happened.

27. Joey _____ just _____ stubborn when he refused to go to the cinema today and he only did so because we _____ to go bowling yesterday.
✓ **E) was / being / didn't want**
Was being (past continuous of **be**) describes temporary behaviour at one moment in the past: **he was being stubborn** when he refused. **Yesterday** is finished past time, so we use **didn't want**. Not **is being**: the refusal is already in the past.

28. My mother _____ her optician tomorrow because her eyesight _____ worse since she got this computing job.
✓ **D) is visiting / has become**
Tomorrow with a planned appointment takes the present continuous **is visiting**. **Since she got this job** shows a change from then until now, so we use the present perfect **has become**. Not **visits / becomes**: the present simple is not used for a personal arrangement or for a change since a past point.

29. As the President _____ the hall, all the guests _____ to their feet to welcome him.
✓ **B) entered / rose**
The sentence describes two completed past actions happening one right after the other, so both take the past simple: **entered** and **rose**. Not **have risen**: the present perfect does not fit a past narrative.

30. She _____ interested in health ever since she was a young girl and now that the medical college _____ her as a student, it seems that she will be able to work in the medical field.
✓ **B) has been / has accepted**
Ever since she was a young girl needs the present perfect: **has been interested**. **Now that** refers to a recent event with a present result, so we use the present perfect **has accepted**. Not **was**: the past simple cannot go with **ever since**.

31. Bob _____ with us tonight as he _____ an appointment with the dentist.
✓ **E) isn't going to train / has made**
Tonight shows a future plan, so **isn't going to train** expresses what Bob has decided. The appointment was arranged before now and is still valid, so the present perfect **has made** fits. Not **won't have trained**: the future perfect is about something completed before a future time.

32. Yesterday, we _____ football for two hours and _____ to a restaurant for a meal afterwards.
✓ **C) played / went**
Yesterday is finished past time, and the sentence describes two completed actions in sequence, so both take the past simple: **played** and **went**. Not **have played**: the present perfect cannot be used with **yesterday**.

33. Environmental pollution _____ ever since people _____ to congregate in towns and cities.
✓ **D) has existed / began**
Ever since introduces a starting point in the past, so the main clause takes the present perfect **has existed**. The starting point itself is a finished past event, so it takes the past simple **began**. Not **had existed**: the situation still continues today.

34. I heard that you _____ about the boys all day, so I just rang to tell you that Matthew _____ from a payphone a couple of hours ago and they are both fine. The weather is fine and they will be home on Sunday evening.
✓ **B) have been worrying / phoned**
All day describes an activity continuing up to now, so we use the present perfect continuous **have been worrying**. **A couple of hours ago** is finished past time, so we use the past simple **phoned**. Not **had been worrying / will phone**: the call has already happened, so the future is impossible.

35. Although he _____ the first round in record time, he _____ in the second, and so finished tenth overall.
✓ **D) had finished / slipped**
The first round happened before the second, so the past perfect **had finished** shows the earlier action. The past simple **slipped** describes the later completed event that explains the final result. Not **had been finishing**: **finish** describes a single completed moment, not a continuing activity.

36. The petrol warning light _____ for half an hour before we _____ a petrol station.
✓ **A) had been flashing / reached**
For half an hour before shows an action continuing up to a past moment, so we use the past perfect continuous **had been flashing**. The moment itself is a completed past event: **reached**. Not **was flashing / were reaching**: these do not show the duration before the later event.

37. Up until the tap water _____ back on yesterday evening, we _____ water back and forth for three days.
✓ **A) came / had been carrying**
Yesterday evening is a completed past event, so we use the past simple **came**. **For three days** up until that moment needs the past perfect continuous **had been carrying**. Not **have been carrying**: the activity ended in the past, not now.

38. The neighbours _____ so loudly last night that they _____ us all awake until after midnight.
✓ **E) were shouting / kept**
The past continuous **were shouting** describes an activity in progress **last night**. The past simple **kept** gives the completed result: we stayed awake until after midnight. Not **have been shouting**: the present perfect cannot go with **last night**.

39. Man's use of pictures to tell stories and to record experiences _____ prehistoric times, when he _____ the walls of caves.
✔ **B) began / drew**
Prehistoric times is a finished past period, so both verbs take the past simple: **began** and **drew**. Not **has begun**: the present perfect cannot be used with a specific past time.

40. My team _____ a match for a month, so currently the manager _____ resigning if they lose one more match.
✔ **C) hasn't won / is considering**
For a month up to now takes the present perfect: **hasn't won**. **Currently** shows a process happening now, so we use the present continuous **is considering**. Not **hadn't won**: the past perfect needs a past reference point.

41. My brother _____ past the post office every morning and I _____ him all week to post a letter for me, but he keeps forgetting, so I'm going to post it myself tomorrow.
✔ **C) goes / have been asking**
Every morning shows a habit, so we use the present simple **goes**. **All week** shows a repeated action continuing up to now, so we use the present perfect continuous **have been asking**. Not **is going**: the present continuous does not describe a regular routine.

42. The football team that _____ last year's championship _____ little chance of winning it again this year.
✔ **E) won / stands**
Last year's championship is finished past time, so we use the past simple **won**. The team's chances now are a present state, so we use the present simple **stands** (**stand little chance** = be unlikely). Not **has won**: the present perfect cannot go with **last year**.

43. Freedom of the press _____ an issue between people and their governments since the time individuals _____ newspapers independent of government control for the first time.
✔ **D) has been / published**
Since the time introduces a past starting point, so the main clause takes the present perfect **has been**. The starting point is a completed past event, so it takes the past simple **published**. Not **had been**: the issue still exists today.

44. The hikers _____ so tired by the time they _____ the top of the hill that I'm sure they'll first want to sit down for a rest.
✔ **A) will have got / reach**
By the time + future reference takes the future perfect **will have got** for something completed before that point. After **by the time** we use the present simple for the future: **reach**. Not **will have reached**: future forms are not used in time clauses.

45. When the young scouts _____ the top of the hill, they _____ for more than an hour.
✔ **B) reach / will have been walking**
The future perfect continuous **will have been walking** shows how long an activity will have lasted at a future moment. In the time clause with **when**, we use the present simple **reach** for the future. Not **had reached / were walking**: these refer to the past.

46. Modern exploration of the undersea world had its beginning in June 1943, when Jacques Cousteau _____ his first dive with a revolutionary breathing device which he _____ with Emile Gagnan, a French engineer.
✔ **E) made / had developed**
In June 1943 is finished past time, so we use the past simple **made**. The device was developed before that dive, so we use the past perfect **had developed**. Not **was making / has developed**: the present perfect does not fit a historical narrative.

47. She says that she _____ the eight o'clock train tomorrow, but I'm sure she _____ it, as usual.
✔ **D) is going to catch / will miss**
Is going to catch reports her intention or plan for tomorrow. **I'm sure** introduces the speaker's prediction, which takes **will**: **will miss**. Not **is catching / is missing**: the present continuous is for arrangements, not for a prediction about what will go wrong.

48. The fishermen _____ more fish in one night than ever before, so when they anchored in the harbour, they _____ with joy at the thought of their reward.
✔ **C) had caught / were singing**
The catch happened before they anchored, so we use the past perfect **had caught**. The past continuous **were singing** describes what was in progress when they anchored. Not **had been catching**: the result (**more fish than ever**) needs the simple form.

49. On my friend's farm, they _____ an alarm clock because the cockerel _____ at five o'clock every morning without fail.
✔ **A) don't need / crows**
Every morning without fail shows a routine, so both verbs take the present simple: **don't need** and **crows**. Not **is crowing**: the present continuous is for actions happening now, not habits.

50. The Continental Congress _____ the US Postal Service in 1775 and the first federal government _____ the service in the Constitution.
✔ **E) founded / included**
In 1775 and the time of the Constitution are both finished historical times, so both verbs take the past simple: **founded** and **included**. Not **had founded**: the sentence just lists past events in order, and no past perfect is needed.