ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Tenses – Passives (Intermediate / Upper-Intermediate) Test 1

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Explanations

1. When I last talked to him, he _____ English.
✔ **C) was studying**
Use the **past continuous** (**was studying**) for an action that was in progress at a time in the past. Here the time is **when I last talked to him**. Not **studied**, because that describes a finished action, not an ongoing activity at that moment.

2. I met her at yesterday's party, but I _____ her by sight for years before that.
✔ **A) had known**
Use the **past perfect** (**had known**) for a state that lasted up to a point in the past. The clue is **for years before that**, which refers to the time before yesterday's party. Not **have known**, because the present perfect connects to now, not to a past moment.

3. By 2050, scientists surely _____ a cure for cancer.
✔ **C) will have discovered**
Use the **future perfect** (**will have discovered**) for an action that will be completed before a time in the future. The clue is **By 2050**. Not **had discovered**, because the past perfect refers to a time before a past moment.

4. Since the day he _____ ill he _____ a lot of reading.
✔ **C) was / has done**
After **since**, use the past simple for the starting point (**was ill**). The main clause uses the **present perfect** (**has done**) because the period continues up to now. Not **had done**, because the reading is connected to the present, not to an earlier past time.

5. A: What's the time? B: I'm sorry, I _____. My watch _____.
✔ **C) don't know / has stopped**
Don't know is present simple because the speaker doesn't know the time now. **Has stopped** is present perfect because a past action has a result now: the watch isn't working. Not **had stopped**, because the past perfect needs another past moment as a reference.

6. He _____ in the library every night for the last two months.
✔ **D) has been studying**
Use the **present perfect continuous** (**has been studying**) for a repeated activity that started in the past and continues until now. The clue is **for the last two months**. Not **has been studied**, which is passive: he is the one doing the studying.

7. Last Sunday we _____ out of the house where we _____ for five years.
✔ **C) moved / had lived**
Last Sunday needs the past simple (**moved**). The five years of living there came before the move, so we use the **past perfect** (**had lived**). Not **had moved / lived**, because the order of the tenses is reversed.

8. Ten years ago, at our school reunion, we spent hours talking about what we _____ since we left school.
✔ **B) had been doing**
The conversation happened in the past (**Ten years ago, at our school reunion**). The activities went on from leaving school up to that reunion, so we use the past perfect continuous (**had been doing**). Not **have been doing**, because the present perfect connects to now, not to a moment in the past.

9. They _____ married but in the end they changed their mind.
✔ **C) were going to get**
Was/were going to describes a plan in the past that did not happen. The clue is **but in the end they changed their mind**. Not **are going to get**, because the plan is in the past and has already been cancelled.

10. A: Would you like me to give Mike a message for you?

B: Oh, I don't want to trouble you.

A: It's no trouble, really. I _____ Mike tomorrow anyway.
✔ **A) am seeing**
Use the **present continuous** (**am seeing**) for a fixed arrangement in the future. The clue is **tomorrow**, and the meeting is already arranged. Not **would see**, which is used for hypothetical situations.

11. When I counted my change I realized they _____ me $3 too much.
✔ **B) had given**
Use the **past perfect** (**had given**) for an action that happened before another past action. They gave the change first; then I counted it and realized. Not **had been given**, which is passive: **they** did the giving.

12. When he'd counted his change he _____ it in his pocket.
✔ **B) put**
The first action is already in the past perfect (**he'd counted**), so the next action is in the **past simple** (**put**). Not **had put**, because putting the change away came after counting it, not before.

13. As soon as she _____ out of bed she got dressed.
✓ **A) had got**
Use the **past perfect** (**had got**) after **as soon as** to show that one past action was finished before the next (**she got dressed**). Not **has got**, because the present perfect doesn't fit a past story.

14. In a fortnight's time they _____ their exams.
✓ **B) will have taken**
Use the **future perfect** (**will have taken**) for an action that will be finished at a point in the future. The clue is **In a fortnight's time** (in two weeks). Not **will have been taken**, which is passive: **they** take the exams.

15. They were very rude to us. We _____ there again.
✓ **A) won't go**
Use **will/won't** for a decision made at the moment of speaking. They were rude, so we decide now: **We won't go there again**. Not **didn't go**, because the decision is about the future, not the past.

16. In about forty years' time we'll probably _____ on pills.
✓ **A) be living**
Use the **future continuous** (**will be living**) for a situation that will be in progress at a time in the future. The clue is **In about forty years' time**. Not **have been living**, because there is no period of time (**for…**) up to that point.

17. A: Why have you set your alarm clock to go off at 5.30?

B: Because I _____ then. I have to catch the early train.
✓ **C) am going to get up**
Use **be going to** for a plan or intention already decided. Setting the alarm shows the plan is already made: **I am going to get up** at 5.30. Not **was going to get up**, because that suggests the plan has changed.

18. A: I've planned my future for the next five years.

B: That is very clever of you. What _____ when you retire?
✓ **B) are you going to do**
Use **be going to** to ask about someone's plans and intentions. Speaker A says they have planned their future, so B asks **What are you going to do**. Not **do you do**, because the present simple is for habits, not future plans.

19. You'll feel a lot better after you _____ a rest.
✓ **B) have had**
In time clauses after **after**, **when** or **as soon as**, we don't use **will**. We use the **present perfect** (**have had**) to show that the rest will be finished first. Not **will have**, because **will** is not used after **after** in a future time clause.

20. Next August, while you _____ for your exams, I _____ on a Mediterranean beach.
✓ **A) are preparing / will be**
In a future time clause after **while**, we use a present tense, not **will**. The **present continuous** (**are preparing**) shows an activity in progress then, and the main clause uses **will be**. Not **will prepare**, because **will** is not used after **while** in a time clause.

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