

UNIT 1

Chronology and Sequences

| Learning Targets | Importance on the iBT |
|---|---|
| Present tenses —simple —progressive Past tenses —simple —progressive | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• iBT Reading and Listening: recognize and understand these tenses to follow main ideas and supporting details• iBT Writing and Speaking: control tenses for improved accuracy scores |
| Time signposts Process signposts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• iBT Writing and Speaking: organize ideas using signposts• iBT Listening: put the steps of a process in order; separate past from present events and states• iBT Reading: insert sentences in a logical place; understand historical texts with dates, times, and sequences |
| Contractions Endings with <i>-ed</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• iBT Speaking: use contractions and pronounce <i>-ed</i> endings correctly to improve the delivery score |

Getting Started

Discuss these questions with a partner or friend, or freewrite your answers. **Freewriting** means writing for a fixed time (for example, five minutes) without stopping. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Just write your ideas in any order. This will improve your fluency and writing speed.

1. What did you do last weekend? Say or write everything you can remember!
2. What are you thinking about right now? (Be honest!)
3. What do you usually do on a weekday morning?



Grammar You Can Use

Simple Present and Present Progressive Tenses

The present tenses describe actions, feelings, and states that are **here and now**. Present tense verbs happen in the present, are true in the present, or are important in the present.

“Herbal medicine **is** perhaps the fastest growing category of complementary and alternative medicine. Most patients **do not tell** their physicians about the use of dietary supplements, and relatively few physicians presently **inquire** about such use or are versed in herbal medicine.”

—*The Michigan Guide to English for Academic Success and Better TOEFL® Test Scores*, p. 35

Most academic writing is in the **simple present** tense. You will see this tense in iBT reading passages, and you should use it in the iBT writing section. Verbs in the simple present are **usually**, **generally**, or **always** true.

The **present progressive** is common in speaking, so you will hear it in conversations on the TOEFL® listening section. It describes the current situation. Verbs in

the present progressive are true **right now** but could change soon. You can also use the present progressive in the independent speaking tasks to describe events that you think will happen soon (see also Unit 4).

| Simple Present | Present Progressive |
|---|---|
| I <u>am</u> a high-school student. She <u>describes</u> problems with dormitories. Story <u>is</u> not the same as plot. Doctors <u>do not tell</u> their patients' secrets. | I <u>am thinking</u> about graduate school. The problem <u>is growing</u> . <u>He's going</u> to the cafeteria. The professor <u>is not going</u> to stop. |



Watch Your Step!

- When you’re writing and speaking, remember the *-s* on simple present verbs that have third person (*he/she/it*) subjects (see Unit 7).
- In TOEFL® writing or speaking, do not use these verbs in the present progressive: *appear, seem, like, want, need, believe, know*. Because these words describe situations that are **always** or **generally** true and do not change, the simple present is better.
- A verb like *smell* (or *taste, think, consider*, etc.) can have one meaning in the simple present and a slightly different one in the present progressive. Compare *I think you are great* with *I am not thinking clearly*.
- See Appendix B for contractions that are used in conversation and informal writing.



Exercise 1.1

Underline the simple present verbs in these sentences. Circle the present progressive verbs. The first sentence has been done for you as an example.

1. Meteorology is the study of weather. Forecasters are getting better at predicting the weather.
2. My favorite place is our basement. My band is using it to practice. When we're playing our music, my parents don't hear us!
3. Although English is the most widely spoken language in the U.S., the number of Spanish speakers is growing fast.
4. Today, we're talking about changes in beliefs about science. Are you all looking at page 125 in your textbook?
5. "I'm taking Econ 120 this semester, and I'm looking for the textbook. Where do you keep the Economics books?"

Step Up Note: On the iBT, you can only listen one time. However, for practice, you can listen more than once to the exercises in this book.



EXERCISE 1.2

Track 2. Listen to the conversation between two students about their study habits. Take notes as you listen. Use your notes to answer the questions. Choose the best answer.



1. What is the man doing?
 - a. He's studying at the library.
 - b. He's going to the coffee shop.
 - c. He's going to the library.
 - d. He's going to a biology class.
2. What is the woman doing?
 - a. She's going to a coffee shop.
 - b. She's going to the library.
 - c. She's researching on the Internet.
 - d. She's reading a book.

3. Where does the woman usually study?
 - a. in her dorm room
 - b. at the library
 - c. at the coffee shop
 - d. in a bookstore

Step Up Note: You will usually see a question like Question 4 on the iBT.



4. Track 3. Listen again to part of the conversation. Where does the man usually study?
 - a. in his dorm room
 - b. at the library
 - c. at the coffee shop
 - d. at the student union
5. Why is the man going to the library?
 - a. There's no Internet access at the coffee shop.
 - b. He's meeting his biology study group.
 - c. He doesn't like the taste of coffee.
 - d. He needs books for his research paper.

Step Up Note: You could see similar questions on the iBT speaking test. You could also use some of the ideas in Exercise 1.3 in an independent writing task.



EXERCISE 1.3

Write a sentence to answer the questions. Use the correct tense (simple present or present progressive) in your sentence.

1. Where do you like to study?

2. Where are you studying today?

3. How do you usually go to school/work?

4. What are you doing later today?

5. What is happening in your town this week?



Now, practice saying your sentences aloud.

Simple Past and Past Progressive Tenses

The past tenses usually describe actions, states, and feelings that are **distant**, or not here and now. This usually means that they happened at a time in the past and are now finished. You will see past tenses in TOEFL® reading and listening passages when the speaker or writer wants to stress the past time of an event or make a contrast between the past and the present.

The **simple past** is quite common in listening, speaking, reading, and writing: it describes an action, state, or feeling that began and finished in the past.

The **past progressive** is less common in TOEFL® reading, but it is used in speaking, newspapers, and fiction. It often gives background descriptions for events that are described in the past simple.

*Professor: “Okay, we **were talking** about the Corn Belt . . . so I **went** through identifying the area and I **was talking** about the physical environment. Remember what I **talked** about in class? It **was** . . .”*

—The Michigan Guide to English for Academic Success and Better TOEFL® Test Scores, p. 270

| Simple Past | Past Progressive |
|---|---|
| I <u>was</u> excited about my birthday. She <u>studied</u> in the library. The war <u>was</u> not popular. Video <u>did not kill</u> cinema. | I <u>was eating</u> when you called. In Europe, tensions <u>were growing</u> . The plan <u>was not working</u> . I <u>was going</u> to call you, but my cell phone was broken. |



Watch Your Step!

- Many common verbs have irregular simple past forms. It is very important to learn them! A list of the most useful verbs appears in Appendix A.
- See Appendix B for contractions that are used in conversation and informal writing.



The Next Step

- The last past progressive example in the chart involves an action that you planned but did not do. The speaker planned to call, but it didn't happen because her phone was broken.



Exercise 1.4

Read the passage about Roanoke Island.

When the first European explorers arrived in America, many people were already living there. They were the Native Americans, or American Indians. Christopher Columbus in 1492 was probably the first European to officially “discover” North America. After Columbus, there was a lot of trade between Europe and the Native Americans, but few Europeans moved to America. In 1587, more than 100 people from England started a village on Roanoke Island. Three years later, they were all dead. Perhaps while they were living on Roanoke Island, some Native Americans attacked and killed them. Today, many tourists visit Roanoke Island in North Carolina.

Read the sentences about the passage.

- a. Perhaps Native Americans attacked the people on Roanoke Island.
- b. Columbus “discovered” America in 1492.
- c. Native Americans began living in North America.
- d. Many tourists visit Roanoke Island.
- e. There was a lot of trade between America and Europe.
- f. In 1587, 100 people went from England to Roanoke Island.
- g. All the English people died.
- h. They lived on Roanoke Island for three years.

Complete the chart by putting Sentences a–h in the correct order of time (from the earliest event to the most recent):

1. _____
2. Columbus “discovered” America in 1492. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. They lived on Roanoke Island for three years. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Step Up Note: On the iBT integrated writing section, part of your task is to summarize what you heard.



EXERCISE 1.5

Track 4. Listen to the beginning of a class on American history.



Take notes as you listen. Write sentences summarizing this classroom discussion. Use the information in parentheses and your notes to help you. Choose the correct tense (simple past or past progressive). The first sentence has been done for you.

1. (when / finish last class / talk about Liberty Bell)

When the professor finished the last class, she was talking about the
Liberty Bell.

2. (professor / give quiz / but / wait until next week)

3. (Liberty Bell / gift from England)

4. (when / bell arrive in Philadelphia / crack appear)

5. (another crack appear later / bell ring for Washington's birthday)

6. (governor of Pennsylvania / try to create a free state)

7. (people come to America / because / want freedom of religion)



Vocabulary You Need

Time Signposts

A **signpost** is a phrase that a writer or speaker uses to point the reader or listener to the answer or to more understanding. Recognizing signposts can help you understand the organization of a TOEFL® reading or lecture. If you can use signposts correctly, your writing and speaking will be clear and easy to follow.

Time signposts tell you the order of events and also mark changes between the past and present. Study these common past and present time signposts:

| Specific Dates & Times | General Time Markers | Order of Events | Adjectives | Length of Time |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| at 8 AM | in the past | before | following | day |
| in 1587 | previously | after | previous | week |
| today | these days | during | next | month |
| on Monday | nowadays | while | last | year |
| in the spring | today | when | former | decade |
| (summer / fall / autumn / winter) | later | | | century |
| | earlier | | | era |
| | still | | | period |



Watch Your Step!

- We say **during** a conversation but **while** they were talking.



Exercise 1.6

Choose the best word from the choices in parentheses to complete the sentences. Hint: Look at the tense of the verbs to help you decide.

1. (Previously / Nowadays), the Internet was too expensive to install in most homes.
2. Louis XV became the king of France after the death of the (former / next) king, his father.
3. The 1960s was a (decade / century) of change in the United States.
4. (In / At) 1942, *Oklahoma!* began a record-breaking run on Broadway.
5. After a short (era / period) of time, the researcher measures the rat again.

Step Up Note: Some of the reading passages on the iBT have a chart to complete.



EXERCISE 1.7

Read the passage about the history of musical theater. *Oklahoma!* is the name of a 1942 musical.

The musical *Oklahoma!* marked a turning point in the history of American musical theater. Before *Oklahoma!* musicals were collections of songs and dances without a real story. Sometimes, there was a song only for a star singer that did not fit the show. However, *Oklahoma!* was the first musical with a real story, like a play. The songs and dances helped to tell the story. Later musicals began to have more complicated stories. A new era in musical theater began, and musicals became a serious art form.

Place a check (✓) in the correct column in the chart to show the differences between musicals before and after *Oklahoma!*

| | Before <i>Oklahoma!</i> | After <i>Oklahoma!</i> |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Collections of songs and dances | | |
| 2. No story | | |
| 3. A story like a play | | |
| 4. Songs and dances helped to tell the story | | |
| 5. More complicated stories | | |
| 6. A song for a star singer | | |
| 7. Musicals were a serious art form | | |

Process Signposts

Processes are very important in all areas of academic language—the stages of change in history, the plot of novels and plays, the procedure for a science experiment, or instructions for an assignment. These process signposts help you recognize or explain the order of the stages of a process:

| | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| <i>The</i> | <i>first</i> | <i>stage is . . .</i> |
| | <i>second</i> | <i>step</i> |
| | <i>next</i> | <i>point</i> |
| | <i>last</i> | <i>procedure</i> |
| | <i>final</i> | <i>part</i> |

Here are some other useful time signposts for describing a process:

Initially,
In the meantime / meanwhile,
At the same time,

Immediately,
Eventually,



Watch Your Step!

- Most of these words are **adverbs** (see Unit 5).

Finally, here are two useful verbs that talk about processes:

start out = to begin *arrive at* = end



Exercise 1.8

Add process and time signposts to the paragraph. Do not use the same word twice!

Most dramas follow a similar structure. The characters _____ by introducing themselves and their situation. In the next _____, we learn about the major conflict, or problem. _____, the conflict builds to a climax. The minor characters are acting out smaller conflicts, or sub-plots. These plots are resolved in the _____ stage of the drama, called the “falling action.” The _____ part is the resolution, when the plot ends and all the characters _____ at a satisfying conclusion.