

TOEFL PREP for Spanish Speakers

VTF

STEP TWO

QUICK CHECK Grammar Problem Areas

STEP ONE

MC (Main Clause)

SC (Subordinate Clause)

STEP TWO

S=V (Subject-Verb Agreement)

S=P (Subject-Pronoun Agreement)

>VTF (Verb Tense or Form)



· Time Markers

· Irregular Verbs

VERBS and PRONOUNS, Agreement, Tense, and Form

PFR (Pronoun Form or Reference)

STEP THREE

VBL (Verbal)

WF (Word Form)

STEP FOUR

WO (Word Order)

PS (Parallel Structure)

UR (Unnecessary Repetition)

STEP FIVE

CU (Correct Usage)

EXERCISE SWE-26

Directions: Using the abbreviations that identify each type of error, classify the following ten errors, then try to correct the errors. Only ten of the twelve types of errors are listed.

S=P 1. Both Horacio and Gilberto are doing his homework.

VTF 2. The club president will led tonight's discussion on upcoming community projects.

CU 3. The team doctor has all ready rushed to the sidelines to examine the injured player.

WO 4. Under the table three boxes of books are.

SC 5. Mexico City has been testing an alarm system will alert residents of earthquakes approaching from the Pacific coast.

UR 6. Due to the rising cost of paper, the prices of books have increased by nearly 25% more.


VBL 7. Juan and I are very interested in the apartment advertising in today's paper.


S=V 8. Either the Amazon or the Nile are the world's longest river.

PS 9. *Carmen*, *The Barber of Seville*, and the music of *The Marriage of Figaro* are popular among opera fans.

MC 10. Playing Ping-Pong it is good exercise for violinists.

While subject-verb agreement is important, it is also useful to spend a little time reviewing the **tense** and **form** of verbs (**VTF** errors). It might be useful to also review the reference lists in **A. Irregular Verbs** and **H. Verb Tense Modals** in the Appendices.

We'll begin with tense errors. Tense errors involve **time markers** which control the verb tense. A time marker can be one word or a phrase that specifies the time—the verb should be in logical agreement with the time marker. This is grammatical, but also logical.  You would not want to say that you *did* something *tomorrow*, or that you're *going to do* something *yesterday*.

 This works the same in Spanish. You wouldn't say that *mañana hizo algo*, or *ayer voy a hacer algo*.

If your **time marker** clearly indicates *past activity*, make sure your verb is in the past tense. If your time marker indicates *future activity*, make sure your verb is in a future tense. If your time marker indicates that the subject of the sentence is *dead*, make sure your verb is “*dead*”. In other words, don’t use an active verb with a dead subject.


Most students do not have great difficulty in using correct tenses with time markers. There are, however, two groups of “**special**” **time markers** that might cause confusion. The first group includes time markers such as: *up until now...*, *for some time now...*, *since...*, *so far...* All of these time markers have the same basic meaning: “until this moment in time”, *hasta ahora*. They indicate that an activity has started in the past, continued into the present, but without completion—the activity continues.

When you have a time marker indicating this type of activity you’ll need to use the **present perfect or present perfect continuous tense**. The formula for constructing the **present perfect** tense is:

has / have + participle.

The formula for constructing the **present perfect continuous** tense is:

has / have + been + present participle.

F o r e x a m p l e :  Ana has been studying the TOEFL *since last month*.

The time marker in this sentence is *since last month*, which indicates present perfect activity. Notice *has* is used because *Ana* is singular (*have* is used for plural subjects.)



This equates in Spanish to *Ana ha estado estudiando desde...*

The second group includes time markers that begin with *by*, such as: *by the end of this year* and *by this time next year*. These time markers mark a specified time in the future in order to speculate about completed activity *by* a certain time. *A fin de año, por estos días en el próximo año.*


These types of time markers are used to speculate about past, completed activity in the future. The activity has not been completed at this moment in time, but will be completed *by* a certain time. *From a point of view in the present* you're speculating about **completed** activity in the **future**.

When you have a time marker indicating this type of activity you'll need to use the **future perfect or future perfect continuous tense**. The formula for constructing the **future perfect** tense is:


will + have + past participle.

The formula for constructing the **future perfect continuous** tense is:

will + have + been + present participle.

For example:  Ana will have learned many things *by the end of the class*.

The time marker in this sentence is *by the end of the class*, which indicates future perfect activity. Notice there is no distinction between singular and plural; *have* is always used, not *has*. Also, only the *past participle* (not the present participle) is used.

 This equates in Spanish to *Ana habrá aprendido muchas cosas nuevas antes que termine su clase*.

EXERCISE SWE-27

Directions: Underline the time markers and put parenthesis () around the verbs in the following sentences.

If the verb is in the correct tense write OK in the blank. If the verb is in the wrong tense put an X.

- OK 1. From time to time every car (needs) a tune up.
- _____ 2. The government is planning for some time now to devalue its currency.
- _____ 3. The stadium is under reconstruction since the end of the football season.
- _____ 4. So far no decisions have been reached concerning the proposal.
- _____ 5. No cure for Aids has been found up until now.
- _____ 6. When she died, Princess Diana has been in her thirties.
- _____ 7. By the end of the class most students will had finished the assignment.
- _____ 8. In the early seventies, Donna Summer is recording numerous disco hits.
- _____ 9. The temperature has been dropping quickly since this morning.
- _____ 10. By the time we get home the guests will had arrive for the birthday party.

That concludes our work on verb tense. Now we'll continue our **VTF** study by working with verb form errors. As you know, many verbs in English have irregular past and past participle forms (again, it might be useful to refer to Appendix A.) It is necessary that you have a good working knowledge of these irregular verb forms.

It will be useful to begin reviewing these if you don't know them well. Besides reviewing lists, it might be helpful to make flash cards or listen to recorded cassettes with irregular forms. This is, unfortunately, a question of rote memorization. There is no magical way to learn them. Some grammar books categorize these verbs into groups that follow certain spellings. This might only make matters more confusing, however. It is also not recommended to write them over and over (sometimes called *planas* in Spanish) in an attempt to learn them.

EXERCISE SWE-28

Directions: All of the following sentences are incorrect. Circle the verb that is in the wrong tense and write the correct verb in the blank.

- made 1. Global communications have been make easier thanks to e-mail.
- _____ 2. The first triathlon was hold in Hawaii in February, 1978.
- _____ 3. Dick Francis has wrote many books with a horse racing theme.
- _____ 4. In general, cats will lived longer than dogs.
- _____ 5. Tattoos, while offensive to some, have became quite popular.
- _____ 6. It was recently discovering that there are ice formations on the moon.
- _____ 7. The longest symphony, Number Three in D Minor, was wrote by Gustav Mahler.
- _____ 8. A good upholsterer can made an old couch just like new.
- _____ 9. The development of electric cars has gave new hope for reducing air pollution.
- _____ 10. This pocket watch was give to me by my great grandfather.
- _____ 11. Only 1,116 Stradivarius violins were make of which some 700 can be accounted for today.
- _____ 12. The mosaic on the UNAM campus library in Mexico City is know as the largest mosaic in the world.
- _____ 13. The postman was bit by the ferocious dog.
- _____ 14. At the trial, the defendant sworn to tell the truth.
- _____ 15. For several hours, no one knew what had became of the lost child.

Before we continue our study of other pronoun errors, let's end this section with a **MINI TOEFL** practice exercise.

MINI TOEFL-9

Directions: In questions 1-5, choose the one word or phrase that best completes the sentence. In questions 6-10, identify the underlined word(s) that should be changed to correct the sentence.

Time: 6 minutes

_____1. For some time now, cigarette advertising _____ tightly controlled by the United States government.

- (A) has been (B) have been (C) was (D) is

_____2. Emilio _____ his doctorate by the end of next year.

- (A) will have finished (B) will has finished (C) has finished (D) finished

_____3. The book club _____ a new book during the first week of each month.

- (A) always sending (B) always send (C) always (D) always sends

_____4. The choir director will _____ the presentation of Handel's *Messiah*.

- (A) led (B) lead (C) leads (D) have lead

_____5. My sister has _____ quite fluent in Spanish while living in Chile.

- (A) become (B) became (C) becoming (D) having become

_____6. Many of the passengers that were killed in the airplane crash are flying to

A

B

C

Tokyo to attend a conference on business administration.

D

_____ 7. After the mischievous little boy had threw a rock through the neighbor's

A B C

window he was severely punished by his parents.

D

_____ 8. Steven Spielberg has became one of the most popular film

A B

directors after directing the widely successful movie *ET*.

C D

_____ 9. Although the development of the artificial language Esperanto was an

A B

extreme important achievement, it no longer remains very popular.

C D

_____ 10. The incredibly advance of English across the face of the globe is a

A B

phenomenon without parallel in the history of language.

C D



POP QUIZ

Can you translate the following sentences into English?

Juan ha estado estudiando el TOEFL por tres semanas.

María habrá aprendido muchas cosas nuevas antes que termine la clase.

Do you know the past and past participle forms of the these verbs?

Become

Swing

Swear

Begin

Lose

Feel

Fall