

## Tense Contrast Exercises

### A. Complete the sentence using a suitable form of the verb in brackets.

1. 'What exactly ..... when you saw the smoke?' 'I pressed the fire alarm'.  
(do)
2. We got to the stadium the match ..... (start)
3. "How long ..... here for?" "I don't know I haven't decided yet." (stay)
4. Jackson ..... the Nobel Prize but says she is still hoping for recognition.  
(win)
5. If you happen to see anyone in the garden, don't worry. It most certainly ..... the  
gardener. (be)
6. I'm sorry to be late. I hope you ..... long. (wait)
7. Anna didn't understand why the mysterious stranger ..... her such a letter.  
(send)
8. Tom sends his apologies but he ..... a few minutes late (be).
9. I don't like this bed. It ..... uncomfortable. (feel)
10. There ..... a strike this morning, but it has been cancelled (be).
11. It's really unfair! You (always) ..... me! (criticize)
12. I'm glad I've run into you. I ..... to get in touch with you for ages. (mean)

### B. Complete the text with the appropriate form of the verb in brackets.

A 32-year-old man (get) ..... home from work on Friday to find that someone  
..... (steal) the shed from his back garden. Martin Graham, who (live)  
..... in Francis Road, Darnely (tell) ..... us he couldn't  
believe his eyes. There was simply nothing there. I thought I (go) ..... into the  
wrong garden. A neighbor, who (notice) ..... the men while they (disassemble)  
..... the shed (assume) ..... that Mr Graham (ask)  
..... them to do it. The two men (drive off) ..... in a white  
van. Police (investigate) ..... and (issue) ..... a  
description of the two men.

### C. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of the verb in brackets.

Our country (go) ..... through a period of accelerating change. Today there (be)  
..... around 3.7 million people aged over 60 in this country but the large numbers  
of people who (belong) ..... to the baby-boom generation (produce)  
..... an explosion in the number of elderly people since 2011. By 2030 there (be)  
some 8.8 million and because the birth rate in the period in the period after the postwar baby-boom (decline)  
..... sharply, these elderly people (represent) ..... a much  
larger share of the countries population than ever before in our history. In 1966 when we (introduce)  
..... our national pension scheme there (be) ..... about  
eight working-age people for every retired person, whereas today, there (be) .....  
about five and in 2030 there (be) ..... only three. There (be)  
..... another dramatic change which also (affect) ..... this  
situation, as thanks to medical advances and higher living standards life expectancy (increase)  
..... and (continue) ..... to increase in future years. Today  
people can expect to live three years longer than in 1966. By 2030, they (live) .....  
an average of 4.5 years longer.

### D. Write a new sentence with the same meaning containing the word in capitals.

1. There's a party at our house on Friday. WE  
*We* .....

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| 2. My first trip to Siberia.                                   | BEFORE |
| 3. What's your job exactly?                                    | DO     |
| 4. Karen's hair was short once.                                | HAVE   |
| 5. I'm leaving in a minute so I can't talk now.                | JUST   |
| 6. It's a long time since I last went to the theatre.          | FOR    |
| 7. When was the invasion of Britain by the Romans?             | INVADE |
| 8. I'm sure it won't rain tomorrow.                            | CAN'T  |
| 9. Is this your suitcase?                                      | DOES   |
| 10. When I have enough money, I'm going to buy a new computer. | SAVED  |

**E. Complete the text with the appropriate form of the verb in brackets.**

**Child employment in Victorian Britain**

In Victorian London, mud larks were children who (search) ..... for valuable bits and pieces on the shores of the river Thames. They (not do) .....this from boats but (wait) ..... until the tide (go) ..... out and then (crawl) ..... about in the river mud looking for anything valuable. Henry Mayhew, a Victorian writer (interview) ..... a mud lark in his book about poor working people in London in the 1850s.

‘My family is Irish though I was born in London. My father (work) ..... at London Docks. He is a strong bodied man of 34. I (go) ..... to school with my brothers for about three years and (learn) ..... reading and writing and arithmetic. One of my brothers (be) ..... at sea for the past five years. I (work) ..... in the neighbourhood of Millwall picking up pieces of coal and iron copper and bits of canvas on the surface. When bargemen (carry) ..... coal to the shore some of it fall in the mud and we (pick it up) ..... The most I (ever see) ..... my companions find is one shilling's worth a day. There are usually 13 or 14 mud larks, boys and girls around Limehouse in the summer and six boys steadily in the winter. When a bargeman (get hold) ..... of one, he generally (throw) ..... them into the river. The police boat (chase) ..... me two or three times. One night I (see) ..... a large piece of copper drop down where they (repair) ..... a ship. That evening as a ship (come) ..... out of the docks I (strip off) ..... my clothes and (dive) ..... down several feet, (seize) ..... the piece of copper and later (sell) ..... it to a marine dealer.’