Present Tenses

CEFR C1 · Aspect, discourse function and register in the present

WS1 Aspect & Subtle Contrasts · WS2 Discourse Uses of the Present · WS3 Perfect: Continuing & Resultative · WS4 Critical Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Aspect & Subtle Contrasts

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Aspect Encodes Viewpoint

Tense locates in time; **aspect** shapes how the situation is viewed — as complete (simple), in progress (continuous/progressive), or as relevant-to-now (perfect). At C1, the continuous also conveys temporariness, incompleteness, repetition with irritation (*always doing*), and politeness/tentativeness (*I was hoping…*, or *I'm wondering…*).

Nuance	Form	Example
Temporary vs permanent	continuous vs simple	He'**s living** with friends (for now).
Irritation / frequency	always + continuous	She'**s always losing** her keys.
Incompletion	continuous	I'**m reading** a great novel. (not finished)
Tentative / polite	continuous	I'**m hoping** you can help.
Emphatic result	perfect simple	Prices **have risen** sharply.

Part A – Identify the Nuance

Name the shade of meaning the continuous adds.

#	Sentence	Nuance
1	"You're always interrupting me!"	
2	"I'm working in Rome this year."	
3	"I'm wondering whether to accept the offer."	
4	"He's forever complaining about the food."	

Part B – Simple or Continuous for the Nuance

1. (temporary) These days I _____ (take) the bus to work.
2. (permanent fact) Light _____ (travel) faster than sound.
3. (polite request) I _____ (wonder) if you could spare a moment.
4. (irritating habit) My neighbour _____ (constantly / play) loud music.

Score: ____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Discourse Uses of the Present

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: The Present Does Rhetorical Work

Beyond real-time reference, present forms structure discourse. The **historic present** makes past narration vivid; the **present simple** reports enduring claims (*Orwell argues…*) and stage directions; **performatives** (*I promise, I declare*) enact the act they name; headlines and captions compress with the simple present.

Function	Example	Effect
Historic present	So I **walk** in, and there **she is**…	immediacy, drama
Reporting (enduring)	Darwin **claims** that…	timeless authority
Performative	I **hereby declare** the session open.	the saying is the doing
Headline / caption	Bank **raises** rates.	compression
Instructions / demos	You **click** here, then it **opens**.	generalised procedure

Part A – Name the Discourse Function

1. "In Chapter 3, the narrator reveals his secret." _____
2. "I now pronounce you partners." _____
3. "Minister resigns amid scandal." _____
4. "He looks at me, he smiles, and then he just leaves." _____

Part B – Convert to the Historic Present

Rewrite this past narrative in the historic present for immediacy.

She opened the door, saw the mess, and knew at once what had happened.

_____

Part C – Reporting Verbs in the Present

Complete a book-review sentence using the present simple to report each idea.

1. The author / argue / that cities / shape / behaviour _____
2. The study / suggest / a link / between sleep and memory _____

Score: ____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Perfect — Continuing & Resultative

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Two Readings of the Perfect

The present perfect has a **continuative** reading (a situation that began in the past and continues: *I've known her for years*) and a **resultative/experiential** reading (a past event with present relevance: *I've lost my passport*). Choice of adverb, verb type, and simple vs continuous disambiguates. Note the AmE tendency to use the past simple where BrE uses the perfect (*Did you eat yet?* vs *Have you eaten yet?*).

Reading	Signal	Example
Continuative	for/since + stative	We'**ve lived** here since 2010.
Resultative	result now	I'**ve broken** my glasses. (can't see)
Experiential	ever/never/before	She'**s never flown** before.
Recency (hot news)	just/recently	They'**ve just landed**.
BrE vs AmE	perfect vs past	Have you finished? / Did you finish?

Part A – Continuative, Resultative or Experiential?

#	Sentence	Reading
1	I've had this watch since my graduation.	
2	He's cut his hand — it's bleeding.	
3	Have you ever ridden a horse?	
4	The committee has just announced the results.	

Part B – Refine the Choice

1. (duration, ongoing) They _____ (negotiate) for weeks and still disagree.
2. (completed result) The team _____ (deliver) all the modules.
3. (life experience) I _____ (never / meet) anyone quite like her.

Part C – BrE / AmE

Give the standard BrE form and note the AmE alternative.

1. "Did you already eat?" → BrE: _____
2. "I just saw him." → BrE: _____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Critical Analysis & Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Critical Reading

> The present tense is doing more work in English than its name implies. It anchors us in the now, yes — but it also narrates the past, as any storyteller knows: "So he walks in, and everyone goes quiet." It reports what a dead author still, in a sense, maintains: Austen observes, Orwell warns. It even reaches into the future, in the timetable that says the train leaves at nine whether or not nine has come. What unites these uses is not time but a kind of vividness — a claim that something holds, here, before us, on the page.

1. Identify each non-deictic (not "now") use of a present form and classify it (historic, reporting, scheduled future, generic).
2. "Austen observes, Orwell warns": explain why the present simple, not the past, is conventional for citing authors.
3. The writer says the uses are united by "vividness" rather than time. Evaluate this claim against the grammatical account of tense and aspect.
4. Rewrite the historic-present example in the past simple. What is gained and lost?

Part B – Extended Analytical Writing

Write a formal analytical paragraph of 160–200 words on: "In English, the 'present' tense is poorly named." You must include and underline: (1) one **historic present**; (2) one **reporting present** (e.g. citing a source); (3) one present form with **future** reference; (4) one deliberate **simple/continuous** aspectual contrast; (5) two **epistemic hedges** calibrated to claim strength.

#	Line
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Features: _____ / 5 Word count: _____ Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C1 Level, Present Tenses

Worksheet 1 – Part A

1 irritation / frequency (always + continuous) · 2 temporary situation · 3 tentative / polite deliberation · 4 irritation (forever + continuous)

Worksheet 1 – Part B

1 am taking · 2 travels · 3 was wondering / am wondering · 4 is constantly playing

Worksheet 2 – Part A

1 reporting present (summarising a text) · 2 performative · 3 headline compression · 4 historic present (vivid narration)

Worksheet 2 – Part B (model)

She opens the door, sees the mess, and knows at once what has happened. (accept "…what happened" for the embedded past)

Worksheet 2 – Part C (model)

1 The author argues that cities shape behaviour. · 2 The study suggests a link between sleep and memory.

Worksheet 3 – Part A

1 continuative · 2 resultative · 3 experiential · 4 recency / hot news (resultative)

Worksheet 3 – Part B

1 have been negotiating · 2 has delivered · 3 have never met

Worksheet 3 – Part C

1 Have you eaten yet? (AmE: Did you eat yet?) · 2 I've just seen him. (AmE: I just saw him.)

The BrE/AmE split is a tendency, not an absolute — flag it as register awareness, not a correctness rule.

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 "he walks in… everyone goes quiet" (historic); "Austen observes, Orwell warns", "the author still maintains" (reporting); "the train leaves at nine" (scheduled future); "something holds… before us" (generic/timeless). · 2 Convention treats a text's claims as permanently "live": the work still makes the argument each time it is read, so the present simple frames it as an enduring, timeless proposition. · 3 A fair answer notes that the grammatical account (tense = time, aspect = viewpoint) explains the forms, but the writer's "vividness" captures the shared pragmatic effect — presenting a situation as immediate/valid — that cuts across the temporal labels. · 4 Past simple ("So he walked in, and everyone went quiet") is more conventional and distanced but loses the dramatic immediacy and sense of unfolding.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Historic present	Used for vivid narration, controlled	0–5

Reporting present	Cites a source/idea in the present	0–5
Future reference	Present form with future meaning, correct	0–5
Aspectual contrast	Simple/continuous contrast is meaningful	0–5
Argument & length	160–200 words; developed with hedges	0–5