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Basics. Expressing the Future in the Past

Hard | B2 | Upper Intermediate | Future tense | Indirect speech | Infinitive | Inversion | Modal verb | Past tense | Verb | Passive voice | Verb tense | Progressive tense

1. Look back at the humble beginnings of the terrible rock band "The Screaming Turnips." Select ALL the sentences that correctly use the "future in the past" to describe their eventual rise to stardom and their early plans.

Select all that apply.

A) Little did they know, their awful garage rehearsals would eventually lead to a platinum record.
B) The drummer, who was to become a global icon, couldn't even keep a steady beat back then.
C) They were playing their first real gig the following week, so they practiced day and night.
D) Little did they know, their awful garage rehearsals were going to eventually leading to a platinum record.
E) The drummer, who would becoming a global icon, couldn't even keep a steady beat.

2. Complete the frustrated time traveler's log entry.

According to my original calculations, I _____ the 19th century on Tuesday. The machine _____ me directly to the year 3024. However, after the core overheated, I realized with horror that I _____ the next decade stuck in Victorian London without Wi-Fi!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1
A) was leaving
B) am leaving
C) will leave

Blank 2
A) was going to transport
B) is going to transport
C) has transported

Blank 3
A) would be spending
B) will be spending
C) am to spend

3. Read this dramatic diary entry about a ruined vacation. Select ALL the sentences that correctly use "future in the past" forms to describe what was *supposed* to happen.

Select all that apply.

A) We were leaving for the Bahamas the next morning, but a sudden hurricane grounded all flights.
B) I was going to relax on the beach all week until I realized I had packed my winter coat by mistake.
C) The resort was to have sent a luxury shuttle for us, but it never arrived.
D) We would leave for the Bahamas the next morning, but a sudden hurricane grounded all flights.
E) I was about to relaxing on the beach when the storm hit.

4. Complete the galactic commander's disappointed diary entry by choosing the correct verb phrase.

We _____ Earth on Tuesday, but the Supreme Leader called it off because of a mild drizzle in London.

Select one.

A) would invade
B) will be invading
C) were going to invade
D) have invaded

5. Help the clumsy time traveler complete his diary entry by choosing the correct future-in-the-past expressions for the gaps.

I _____ press the temporal reset button when the laboratory's alarms suddenly started blaring. Little did I know that this minor five-second delay _____ alter the entire course of the 23rd century. Originally, my expedition _____ remain a complete secret, but now I've practically announced my arrival to the universe!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** was about to
- **B)** would have
- **C)** am going to

Blank 2

- **A)** would
- **B)** will
- **C)** were to

Blank 3

- **A)** was to
- **B)** was about to
- **C)** would have

6. Help the biographer complete the dramatic turning point of the inventor's life. Choose the correct phrase.

Arthur confidently unveiled his self-buttering toaster to the investors, completely unaware that this spectacular malfunction _____ him his entire career.

Select one.

- **A)** will cost
- **B)** would cost
- **C)** was costing
- **D)** has cost

7. Piece together the retired actor's dramatic memoir by dragging the appropriate past-future forms into the text.

I _____ deliver my heartbreaking opening monologue when a rather plump stray cat wandered onto the stage. I was absolutely terrified that the critics _____ tear my performance to shreds in the morning papers. However, as fate would have it, that furry little intruder _____ the most celebrated star of our entire theater season!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** was just about to
- **B)** was to
- **C)** would just

Blank 2

- **A)** would
- **B)** will
- **C)** were to

Blank 3

- **A)** was to become
- **B)** would have become
- **C)** is going to become

8. Complete the story about a chronic overpacker by selecting the grammatically correct word.

When she packed three giant suitcases for a simple weekend trip, Clara firmly believed she _____ need at least fourteen different outfits.

Select one.

- **A)** will
- **B)** would
- **C)** ought
- **D)** used to

9. Help the spy agency director complete the incident report! Select ALL the grammatically correct sentences that describe Agent Bob's failed mission using the "future in the past."

Select all that apply.

- **A)** Agent Bob was going to steal the microchip, but he accidentally locked himself in the bathroom.
- **B)** He was to have disabled the laser grid at midnight, but he fell asleep.
- **C)** He was about to escape through the air duct when his trousers snagged on a screw.
- **D)** He would steal the microchip, but he accidentally locked himself in the bathroom.
- **E)** He was to disabling the laser grid at midnight.

10. Complete the frantic wedding planner's apology email by dragging the correct phrases into the blanks.

I know I promised that the majestic white doves _____ fly over the altar exactly at noon. We _____ use the highly trained birds from the sanctuary, but they unfortunately escaped their cages last night. The backup pigeons _____ delivered this morning by a local farmer, but his truck broke down on the highway.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** would
- **B)** will
- **C)** are going to

Blank 2

- **A)** were going to
- **B)** would have
- **C)** are to

Blank 3

- **A)** were to be
- **B)** was to be
- **C)** would have been

11. Help the detective finish her dramatic incident report.

The suspect _____ his flight to the Bahamas when we finally caught up with him. He genuinely believed he _____ justice entirely. Little did he know, his grand getaway _____ in handcuffs before he even reached the duty-free shop!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** was about to board
- **B)** would board
- **C)** is about to board

Blank 2

- **A)** would escape
- **B)** will escape
- **C)** was escaped

Blank 3

- **A)** was to end
- **B)** will end
- **C)** is ending

12. Complete the party planner's tragic diary entry.

I always knew that one day Gary _____ a surprise, but I didn't think it would be today. We _____ out from behind the sofa when the birthday girl opened the door, but Gary accidentally bumped into the light switch too early. What started as a fun celebration _____ the most awkward evening of my life.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** would ruin
- **B)** will ruin
- **C)** would have ruined

Blank 2

A) were about to jump
B) are about to jump
C) would jump

Blank 3

A) was to become
B) is to become
C) would be becoming