

By the Time

Viewing relative progress or completion



By the time vs. when (future)

BY THE TIME
<p>By the time relates a future time that is the "window" for viewing the progress or completion of the activity in the main clause. The window is the time-frame for comparing whether the other activity is ongoing or completed. The activity in the by the time clause has duration and an end-point: "possibly before and up to X time".</p>
FUTURE PROGRESSIVE
<p>The sun will be setting by the time I get home.</p>
FUTURE PERFECT
<p>The sun will have set by the time I get home.</p>

~Awkward sounding; *by the time* is more commonly used

WHEN
<p>When relates a future point in time for viewing the progress or completion of the activity in the main clause. The point of time is the time for comparing whether the other activity is ongoing or completed. The activity in the when clause does not have duration (is relatively short) or its duration is of little importance, "at X time".</p>
FUTURE PROGRESSIVE
<p>The sun will be setting when I get home.</p>
FUTURE PERFECT
<p>~The sun will have set when I get home.</p>

By complements

BY + NOUN PHRASE
<p>By is followed by a noun or noun phrase with a specific point in time such as <i>now</i>, <i>then</i> or a calendar date.</p>
SPECIFIC TIME
<p>by tomorrow by this time next year by the end of the day by noon / midnight by 2020 by then / now</p>

* incorrect usage / ~ questionable usage, but possible.

BY THE TIME + CLAUSE
<p>By the time is followed by a clause with a relative time that specifies an end or completion time.</p>
RELATIVE COMPLETION TIME
<p>by the time (that) you wake up by the time (that) you are / were awake. by the time (that) you were fully awake ~by the time (that) you are waking up *by waking up time (no gerunds) *by the time you will wake up (no future modals)</p>

Tense Agreement — Progressive v. Perfect

PROGRESSIVE
A present or future progressive tense in the main clause is followed by a present tense verb form in the <i>by-the-time</i> clause. A past progressive tense is followed by past verb in the <i>by-the-time</i> clause.
FUTURE PROGRESSIVE
They will be eating dinner by the time we arrive . *They will eat dinner by the time we arrive. *They will be eating dinner by the time we will arrive .
PRESENT PROGRESSIVE
They are usually eating by the time we arrive . *They eat dinner by the time we arrive. *They are usually eating dinner by the time we are arriving .
PAST PROGRESSIVE
They were eating dinner by the time we arrived . *They ate dinner by the time we arrived. *They were eating dinner by the time we arrive.

* incorrect usage / ~ questionable usage, but possible


PERFECT
<i>By the time</i> is followed by a present tense verb form when the main clause includes a present or future perfect verb. A past perfect clause, however, is paired with a past verb in the <i>by-the-time</i> clause.
FUTURE PERFECT
They will have eaten dinner by the time we arrive .
PRESENT PERFECT
They have always eaten by the time we arrive .
PAST PERFECT
They had eaten by the time we arrived .

Future Perfect vs. Passive Future Perfect


FUTURE PERFECT
The future perfect expresses a predicted time for the agent(s) of an activity to be completed. The “active voice” focuses on the agent or doer of the activity.
WILL HAVE VERB+ED
We will be digitizing classic films this year and next year. We will have digitized all the classic films by this time next year .
We will be restoring classic animation. We will have restored all the animated films by this time next month .
We will be rescuing the complete film archive. We will have rescued the complete film archive by this time next year .

PASSIVE FUTURE PERFECT
The passive future perfect expresses a predicted time for an activity to be completed. The “passive voice” focuses on the person or thing receiving or benefitting from the action.
WILL HAVE BEEN VERB+ED
All the classic films will have been digitized by this time next year .
All the animated films will have been restored by this time next month .
The complete film archive will have been rescued by this time next year (by our restoration team).

Punctuation of a “by” clause or phrase

COMMA
A comma separates the by-the-time clause or phrase from the main clause when it is placed initially (before). 
INITIAL PLACEMENT
By this time next year , we will have digitized all the classic films.
By 2020 , we will have restored all the animated films.
By the time you return , we will have rescued the complete film archive.

digitize (v.) – to convert to a digital form for use on a computer
archive (n.) – a collection of historical records or film

NO COMMA
No comma is needed when the by-the-time clause or phrase follows the main clause. 
FINAL PLACEMENT
We will have digitized all the classic films by this time next year .
We will have restored all the animated films by 2020 .
We will have rescued the complete film archive by the time you return .

Common Mistakes — Errors and Solutions

ERROR
*By the time I will arrive , they will be eating dinner.
*You will have been giving the best education available by the time you graduate four years from now.
*By leaving time , we will have better traffic conditions.

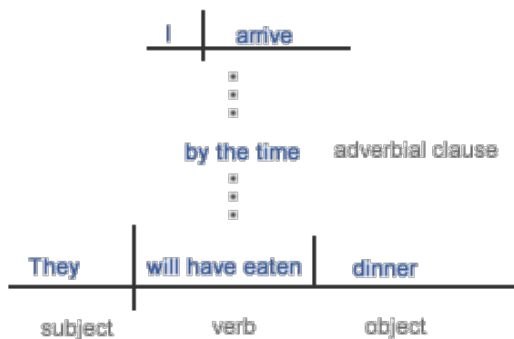
SOLUTION
By the time I arrive , they will be eating dinner. Omit "will" in the by-the-time clause. See Future Statements - when, before, after, by the time
You will have been given the best education available by the time you graduate four years from now. "will have been giving" is not a verb form. See passive forms.
By the time we leave , we will have better traffic conditions. (our departure is the end-point) By leaving on time , we will have better traffic conditions. (not being late)

Grammar Notes — Traditional and Linguistic Description

TRADITIONAL

In traditional grammar, *when* and *by the time* are adverbs that introduce clauses of relative time. The clause *when I arrive* is called an adverbial clause. It is adverbial because it tells "when" the activity occurs. (Azar 17-2)

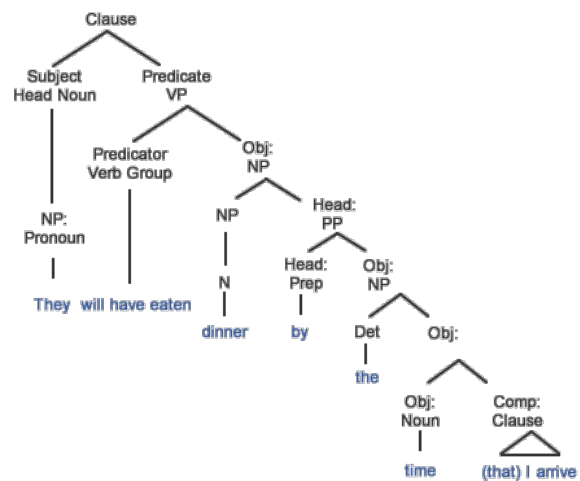
PARSE DIAGRAM — REED-KELLOGG



LINGUISTIC

In linguistic description of temporal location expressions, *by the time* is a prepositional phrase (PP); that is, *by* (P) has as its complement— the time (NP); which has as an adjunct— a clause. (In current linguistic description, a preposition can be complemented by a wide variety of structures unlike traditional grammar in which a preposition is complemented by an object. See Prep Complements) *When* denotes a point of time whereas *by* denotes an interval of time. *by:time* "not later than" (Swan 117.1) (Huddleston 8.6.3-4)

TREE DIAGRAM



CATEGORIES: NP –noun phrase; N – noun; VP – verb phrase; V – verb; Det – determiner; PP – prepositional phrase; P – preposition; AdvP – adverb phrase; Adv – adverb; AdjP– adjective phrase; Adj – adjective FUNCTIONS: Subject: Subject, Predicate: Predicator (V) Complements: (elements required by verb) Object, Indirect Object, Predicative Complement Adjuncts: (optional modifiers) Adj, Adv

Resources

Azar, Betty Schramper, and Stacy A. Hagen. *Understanding and Using English Grammar*. White Plains, New York: Pearson Longman, 2009. Print.

Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey K. Pullum, et al. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.

Swan, Michael. *Practical English Usage*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.

Practice 1

Imagining Future Events



Complete the sentence with "perfect" tenses.

- Select (circle) your response from the options given in the sentence.
- Compare your response to the answer.

1. By the time the semester ends, I —will be completing / will have completed— all my assignments.
2. By the time the semester ends, I —will be thinking / will have thought— about which university or college I would like to attend.
3. By the time I finish college, I —will be earning / will have earned— an MBA degree.
4. By the time I finish college, I —will be looking / will have looked— for a better job with my new degree.
(ongoing)
5. I —will be earning /will have earned— enough to put an initial payment on a house by the time I am 30.
6. I—will be considering / will have considered —who(m) I would like to marry by the time I am 30.
7. I hope I —will be enjoying / will have enjoyed —more vacation time by the time I reach 35. (ongoing)
8. By the time I am 35, I —will be gaining /will have gained —a few years of work experience.
9. By age 45, I —will be moving / will have moved —toward becoming a manger or CEO.
10. By age 45, I —will have understood / will be understanding —the essential aspects (things) of managing a company.
11. By the time I reach the age of sixty-five, my hair —will be turning will have turned gray . (completed)
12. By the time I reach the age of sixty-five, I —will be working / will have worked —for more than forty years.
13. By the time I reach seventy, I —will retire / will have retired.
14. I —will be enjoying / will have enjoyed —"the fruits of my labor" by the time I retire.
15. Perhaps, I —will be playing / will have played— with my great-grandchildren by the time I reach age ninety.
(ongoing)

"the fruits of my labor" (expression) – the rewards of my career

Practice 2

High-Speed Rail — Still Waiting

Read for Errors

California has been trying to build a high-speed rail (train) as a clean-energy alternative for travel within the state. As of November, it will be four years since the voters approved a proposition to build the project. The original estimate for building the high-speed rail was around 40 billion. By the time the train is actually built in 2030, the cost will have rose to five times that amount. The system will extend from San Francisco and Sacramento, via the Central Valley, to Los Angeles and San Diego via the Inland Empire. The state expects to complete a 130-mile initial construction segment from Merced to Bakersfield in the Central Valley by 2017. By then, it hopes to have been made a final selection for a route to the San Francisco Bay Area.

alternative (n.) – another option
 block (v.) – stop
 disturb (v.) – bother, disrupt
 estimate (n.) – calculation of cost
 extend (v.) – reach
 has come up with (v.p.) – has planned

Some concerned people in towns such as Palo Alto have tried to block the train from passing through their neighborhoods. The High-Speed Rail Authority has come up with various solutions, raised and tunnel,



so that communities will not be disturbed by the passing of the train. Many hope that these problems will have been solving so that the project can continue. Getting so many people to agree has been a difficult task. Many people joke, "By the time that train is finished, I will have passed away!"

pass away (v. phrase) – die
 proposition (n.) – a project requiring a vote of the people
 segment (n.) – part of the rail line
 solve (v.) – find an answer to a problem
 task (n.) – small project or job within a larger one
 various (adj.) – differing

Correct or Incorrect?

Select and circle your response—correct or incorrect.

16. **Correct / Incorrect:**
California has been trying to build a high-speed rail (train) as a clean-energy alternative for travel within the state. By November, it will be four years since the voters approved a proposition to build the project
17. **Correct / Incorrect:**
The original estimate for building the high-speed rail was around 40 billion. By the time the train is actually built in 2030, the cost will have rose to five times that amount.
18. **Correct / Incorrect:**
The state expects to complete a 130-mile initial construction segment from Merced to Bakersfield in the Central Valley by 2017. By then, it hopes to have been made a final selection for a route to the San Francisco Bay Area.
19. **Correct / Incorrect:**
Some concerned people in towns such as Palo Alto have tried to block the train from passing through their neighborhoods. The High-Speed Rail Authority has come up with various solutions, raised and tunnel, so that communities will not be disturbed by the passing of the train. Many hope that these problems will have been solving so that the project can continue.
20. **Correct / Incorrect:**
Getting so many people to agree has been a difficult task. Many people joke, "By the time that train is finished, I will have passed away!"

Practice 3

The year 2100 – what will it be like?



Read for Errors

What picture do you have of the future? Will life in the future be better, worse, or the same as now? Will this hot, flat, and crowded world be "standing room only"? People hope that by the year 2100, many of our current problems will have being solved.

Clean water will be one of the most valuable resources. Demand for water will have been increased ten times. In fact, there could be a serious shortage. Will water be more valuable than oil? Will we have found a way to preserve our most precious resource by 2100?

Energy will come from a variety of sources: wind, air, solar, hydrogen fuel, and nuclear fusion. Cars will have stopping using gasoline and will be using far more efficient means of getting around. Public transit is expected to play a larger part in our daily lives.

The boundaries between **entertainment** and **education** will disappear. "Edutainment" will have took over as the preferred system of learning. Parents stories of having carried backpacks with 60 pounds of books will be a source of amusement for children.

aircraft (n.) – general term for planes; singular or plural
 artisanal – a marketing buzz word for being hand made or produced
 boundaries (n. pl.) – dividing lines, limitations
 crowded (adj.) – filled with too many people or things
 despair (n.) – misery, loss of hope
 efficient (adj.) – functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort
 focus (adj.) – limit to a smaller circle of attention
 on demand (p.p.) – available, easy to get when someone wants it

Learning will be "on demand" and focused to specific needs in the world job market.

Air travel will be safer and faster. Computers will operate aircraft with sensors, which will make them incapable of having collisions with other aircraft or phenomena of nature. Problems that grounded the Concorde (SST) will have being resolved by engineers, and passenger aircraft will travel at a speed of Mach 0.1.

Robots will continue to replace people in manufacturing; however, personal services will be in high demand. However, by 2100, companies have replaced phone trees with human operators. Local items such as food, clothing, and furniture with an "artisanal" touch will again be preferred over more polished, less expensive items produced by robots.

What experts cannot predict is whether we will be kinder, more caring **people**. Will we have understood that violence and war only cause pain and despair? Will we be able to share earth's resources? Will we have stopped looking at our differences and start seeing our common goals?

play a part (v. phrase) – be included in a larger plan
 public transit (n.) – transportation for everyone (not private)
 resource (n.) – a supply of something or a support or aid that can easily be used when needed
 sensor (n.) – a mechanical device that is sensitive to light, temperature, radiation level, or movement, and which transmits a signal to a measuring or control instrument
 SST – Super Sonic Transport (Air France Concorde)
 valuable (adj.) – bringing a high price

Edit for Errors

21. What picture do you have of the future? Will life in the future be better, worse, or the same as now? Will this hot, flat, and crowded world be "standing room only"? People hope that by the year 2100, many problems will have being solved.

22. Clean water will be one of the most valuable resources. Demand for water will have been increased ten times. In fact, there could be a serious shortage. Will water be more valuable than oil? Will we have found a way to preserve our most precious resource by 2100?
23. Energy will come from a variety of sources: wind, air, solar, hydrogen fuel, and nuclear fusion. Cars will have stopping using gasoline and will be using far more efficient means of getting around. Public transit is expected to play a larger part in our daily lives.
24. The boundaries between entertainment and education will disappear. "Edutainment" will have took over as the preferred system of learning. Parents stories of having carried backpacks with 60 pounds of books will be a source of amusement for children. Learning will be "on demand" and focused to specific needs in the world job market.
25. Air travel will be safer and faster. Computers will operate aircraft with sensors, which will make them incapable of having collisions with other aircraft or phenomena of nature. Problems that grounded the Concorde (SST) will have being resolved by engineers, and passenger aircraft will travel at a speed of Mach 0.1.
26. Robots will continue to replace people in manufacturing; however, personal services will be in high demand. However, by 2100, companies have replaced phone trees with human operators. Local items such as food, clothing, and furniture with an "artisanal" touch will again be preferred over more polished, less expensive items produced by robots.
27. What experts cannot predict is whether we will be kinder, more caring people. Will we have understood that violence and war only cause pain and despair? Will we be able to share earth's resources? Will we have stopped looking at our differences and start seeing our common goals?

Answers

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. will have completed (done) | 18. Incorrect. it hopes to HAVE MADE a final selection... |
| 2. will be thinking (ongoing) | 19. Incorrect. Many hope that these problems will have BEEN SOLVED... |
| 3. will have earned (done) | 20. Correct. |
| 4. will be looking (ongoing) | 21. People hope that by the year 2100, many of our current problems will have BEEN solved. |
| 5. will be earning (ongoing) | 22. Demand for water will have [been] increased ten times. (Remove "been".) |
| 6. will be considering (ongoing) / will have considered (done) | 23. Experts predict that cars will have STOPPED using gasoline... |
| 7. will be enjoying (ongoing) | 24. "Edutainment" will have TAKEN over as the preferred system of learning. |
| 8. will have gained (done) | 25. Problems that grounded the Concorde (SST) will have BEEN resolved by engineers... (passive future perfect) |
| 9. will be moving (ongoing) | 26. However, by 2100, companies WILL have replaced phone trees with human operators. |
| 10. will have understood (static verb) | 27. Will we have stopped looking at our differences and STARTED seeing our common goals? |
| 11. will have turned (done) | |
| 12. will have worked (done) | |
| 13. will have retired (done) | |
| 14. will be enjoying (ongoing) | |
| 15. will be playing (ongoing) / will have played (completed if they have already grown up) | |
| 16. Incorrect . it will HAVE BEEN four years since the voters approved... | |
| 17. Incorrect . the cost will have RISEN to five times that amount. | |