



CLASS IX-X
ENGLISH GRAMMAR
PART II
CHAPTER 5
THE SEQUENCE OF TENSES

NOTES

In a sentence, where there is a subordinate clause, there is a relation of the tenses of the verbs in the **Principal clause** and the **Subordinate clause**. The tense of the Subordinate clause is influenced by the tense of the Principal clause. This process is generally referred to as the **Sequence of Tenses**.

Example: We *found* that the bus *had left*.

Some important points to be noted while constructing sentences with different clauses are:

Normally, a **Present Tense** in the **Principal clause** does not affect the **tense** in the **subordinate clause**. It may be followed by different tense forms.

Examples:

The boy *thinks* that mathematics *is* difficult.

She *says* that she *helped* him.

I *tell* them that I *shall teach* them English.

When the tense in the **Principal clause** is in the **Past**, it is generally followed by a **Subordinate clause** in the **Past tense**.

Example:

John *thought* that it *would rain*.

Certain expressions which are treated as universal truth or habitual action are not affected by the rule.

Examples:

The boy *said* that he *studies* every day.

The sage *said* that honesty *is* the best policy.

Also note that the rule does not affect infinitives and gerunds.

Examples:

I *want to go* to Egypt.

I *wanted to go* to Egypt.

I *like teaching*.

I *liked teaching*.
