

Verb Tenses in the Song "Tucson Train" by Bruce Springsteen

A. Bruce Springsteen is a songwriter, singer, and guitarist. Imagine that a reporter is interviewing him. Read the reporter's questions and Springsteen's answers. Notice the tenses he uses in his answers.

Reporter's Question	Springsteen's Answer	Verb tense
1. How often do you play the guitar?	I play the guitar every day.	Simple present
2. What are you doing right now?	I am (<i>or I'm</i>) playing the guitar.	Present progressive
3. What did you do yesterday?	I played the guitar.	Simple past
4. How long have you played the guitar?	I have (<i>or I've</i>) played the guitar for many years.	Present perfect
5. When will you play the guitar in a concert?	I will (<i>or I'll</i>) play the guitar in a concert next week.	Future

B. Work with a partner. One person reads the reporter's questions aloud. The other person reads Springsteen's answers aloud.



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C. Write the missing verbs in the song lyrics below. Use the correct verb tense.

1. (*get*, simple past) I _____ *got* _____ so down and out in San Francisco.
2. (*pick*, simple past) I _____ up, and
3. (*head*, simple past) I _____ for the sunshine.
4. (*leave*, simple past) I _____ a good thing behind.
5. (*seem*, simple past) It _____ all of our love was in vain.
6. (*come*, simple past) I _____ here looking for a new life, one I wouldn't have to explain
7. (*keep*, simple present) to that voice that _____ me awake at night.
8. (*fight*, simple past) We _____ hard over nothing.
9. (*remain*, simple past) We fought until nothing _____.
10. (*carry*, present perfect) I _____ that nothing for a long time.
11. (*carry*, simple present) Now I _____ my operator's license.
12. (*spend*, simple present) I _____ my days just running this crane.
13. (*clear*, future) Hard work _____ your mind and body.
14. (*burn*, future) The hard sun _____ out the pain.
15. (*look*, present progressive) If they _____ for me, tell them
16. (*wait*, present progressive) I _____ down at the station.
17. (*come*, present progressive) My baby _____ in on the Tucson train.



Lyrics: from "Tucson Train" by Bruce Springsteen
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Answer Key

1. got
2. picked
3. headed
4. left
5. seemed
6. came
7. keeps
8. fought
9. remained
10. have carried
11. carry
12. spend
13. will clear
14. will burn
15. are looking
16. am waiting
17. is coming

D. Complete questions 1, 4, and 5. (There are many possible ways to complete the questions.) Then ask a partner the questions below.

1. How often do you _____?
2. What are you doing right now?
3. What did you do yesterday?
4. How long have you _____?
5. When will you _____?