**Tenses**

**Definition**

**Tenses** demonstrate the time of an action in a sentence usually performed by or centered around the subject of the sentence. The actions are called verbs. Verbs change according to tenses and other issues. As verbs are the most important elements of English sentences, tenses also carry paramount importance in English grammar.

**Tenses** are mainly categorized into three types.

#### [1. Present Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/present-tense)

#### [2. Past Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/past-tense)

#### [3. Future Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/future-tense)

## 

## Present Tense

Each of the types of tenses has four different forms.

* [Present Indefinite Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/present-tense#indefinite)
* [Present Progressive (Continuous) Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/present-tense#continuous)
* [Present Perfect Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/present-tense#perfect)
* [Present Perfect Progressive (Continuous)](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/present-tense#perfectcon)

[**Examples of Present Tense**](https://www.learngrammar.net/a/examples-of-present-tense)

### Present Indefinite Tense

The **present indefinite** tense, also known as simple present tense, denotes a stative or habitual or eternally true action.

Generally simple present tense is used to indicate an action which happens – always, regularly, every day, daily, normally, generally, usually, occasionally, sometimes, often, rarely, frequently, nowadays, naturally, seldom, constantly, never, every a week, every year, once a year, on a week, at times, at present, now and then, or all the time.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject (third person singular number) + verb in simple present form + s/es + . . . . .** |
| **Subject (all other kinds) + verb in simple present form + . . . . .** |

**Note**: When ‘be’ verbs work as the main verb in a sentence, they are different from the above structures.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Person/Number** | Singular | Plural |
| First | I am a good cricket player. | We are good cricket players. |
| Second | You are an irresponsible person. | You all are always irresponsible. |
| Third | The earth is smaller than Jupiter. | Junk foods are not good for health. |

There are some stative verbs which are usually used in simple tenses whether present or past or future.

The stative verbs are:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Have  Understand  Know  Believe | Hate  Need  Hear  Love | Appear  See  Like  Seem | Smell  Want  Taste  Wish | Sound  Own |

**Examples:**

* I know Billy Bob.
* He understands it.
* They love swinging in the park.
* Some people do not believe in God.
* I usually wake up at 6.00 AM.
* He plays cricket, but his brother plays football.
* Earth is bigger than Mercury.
* The heat of the sun is the least in the polar.

### Present Progressive (Continuous) Tense

The **present progressive** is used to indicate the ongoing time (now). However, the stative verbs do not usually take the form of present progressive even though they refer to the present time.

Now, continually, perpetually, at this moment, at the moment, right now, This season, this year, forever, etc. are usually the signs of a verb to take present progressive tense. However, these signs are not necessary all the time for a verb to present progressive tense.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + am/is/are + verb + ing + . . . . . . . . .** |

**Example:**

* I am going to the college field.
* He is coming here for some tips.
* They are making a basketball ground.
* Why are you working in that horrible place?
* Four teams are playing at this moment.

This structure is also used to demonstrate future time.

**Example:**

* Alex is leaving for Portugal tomorrow.
* I am going to complete my task tomorrow.
* Our bus is leaving at 6.00 PM.
* They are flying to Australia next month.

### Present Perfect Tense

The **present perfect tense** is used when one intends to indicate:

* an action that occurred at a time which is indefinite and has its effect on the subject
* **or** an action that occurred many times and has the possibility to occur in the present/future
* **or** an action that began in the past and still going on in the present.

**Structure**:

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + have/has + verb in the past participle form + . . . . . . .** |

**Example:**

* Alex has read the book through. (No time is indicated)
* I have read this poem many times. (Not habitual but occurred many times in the past)
* He has lived in this apartment for 15 years. (Still going on)

Just, already, yet, just now, ever, lately, recently, etc. are some of the signs for present perfect tense.

**Note:**Already comes between have/has and the past participle; yet appears with a negative form at the end of the sentence.

**Example:**

* Alex has already reached there.
* Alex has not reached yet.
* I have already cleaned the house.
* I have not cleaned the house yet.

### Present Perfect Progressive (Continuous)

It is the least used form of present tense. **Present perfect progressive** is used to indicate an action that began in the past and is still occurring in the present. Both present perfect and present perfect continuous can be used to indicate this type of action.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + have/has + been + [verb + ing] + . . . . . .** |

**Example:**

* Alex has been reading for 3 years.
* I have been sleeping since 10.00 AM
* Robert has been working in that shop for 6 years.
* We have been living together for four years.

**Past tense**

**Past tense** also has four forms.

* [Past Indefinite Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/past-tense#indefinite)
* [Past Progressive (Continuous) Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/past-tense#continuous)
* [Past Perfect Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/past-tense#perfect)
* [Past Perfect Progressive Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/past-tense#perfectcon)

### Past Indefinite Tense

The past indefinite tense, also known as simple past tense, is used to indicate a **finished or completed** action/task that occurred/happened at **a specific point in time** in the past. ‘A specific time’ can be diverse and can cover a long period of time but it cannot be undeterminable.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + verb in the past form + . . . . . + adverb of time + . . . . .** |

Note: [Adverb](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/adverb) of time can also be at the beginning of the [sentence](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/sentence-definition-n-types). Other sentences can also refer to that adverb and can use simple past tense.

**Example:**

* Alex went to Mexico last year.
* I ate a mango a few minutes ago.
* He had an exam yesterday.
* I used to travel around the world when I was fit. (It can also indicate a habit of the past which is not a habit in the present.)

### Past Progressive (Continuous) Tense

The **past progressive tense** is used to demonstrate an action that **was happening** in the past for a period of time in a particular context. The context can be a specific time or another action.

**Structures:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + was/were + verb + ing + . . . . . a specific time** |
| Alex was sleeping yesterday at 6.30 AM  I was cleaning the dishes at around 5.30-6.30 yesterday. |

|  |
| --- |
| **When + subject + simple past tense + subject + was/were + verb+ing . . . .** |
| When I went out, you were shouting from behind.  When Alex came, I was sleeping. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject +  was/were + verb+ing + when + subject +  simple past tense . . . .** |
| You were shouting from behind when I went outside.  I was sleeping when Alex came home. |

|  |
| --- |
| **While + subject + was/were + verb+ing + subject + was/were + verb+ing . . . .** |
| While I was sleeping, you were making noises.  While Alex was playing, I was sleeping. |

Note: While can also be placed between the two clauses, and one of the [clauses](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/clauses) can be of simple past tense.

### Past Perfect Tense

The past perfect is used to demonstrate an action that occurred before another action in the past. There are usually two completed actions in the sentence; one happens before the other.

**Structures:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + had + past participle form of the main verb + before + subject + simple past tense . . . .**  Alex had completed the task before the teacher asked.  I had bought a phone before you came here. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Before + subject + simple past tense + subject + had + past participle form of the verb +. . . .**  Before I went to the office, I finished some business with her.  Before she went home, she had taken a test. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + simple past tense + after + subject + had + past participle . . . .**  Mark ate after I had bought him a bat.  I went to the office after I had finished some business with her. |

|  |
| --- |
| **After + subject + had + past participle + subject + simple past tense . . . .**  After I had bought a phone, she came to the shop.  After she had gone, I came in. |

Note: **When** can be used in place of **before** or **after** in any of the above structures.

### Past Perfect Progressive Tense

The **past perfect progressive tense** is an extension to the past perfect tense and its structures. Past perfect progressive is used to demonstrate an action which continued for a specific period of time but stopped before another action.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + had + been + verb+ing + . . . . . + for/since + . . . . .+ before + subject + past simple tense**  Alan had been playing cricket for 18 years before he retired.  Jack had been living in Sydney since 2010 before he moved to Melbourne. |

**Note:**This tense can be replaced by the past perfect tense withdrawing **for/since**.

**Future tense**

**Future tense** also has four forms. However, one of the forms has no practical use.

* [Simple Future (Future Indefinite) Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/future-tense#indefinite)
* [Future Continuous Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/future-tense#continuous)
* [Future Perfect Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/future-tense#perfect)
* [Future Perfect Continuous Tense](https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/future-tense#perfectcon)

### Simple Future (Future Indefinite) Tense

The **simple future tense** is used when an action is promised/thought to occur in the future.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + shall/will + verb +  . . . . . . . .** |

**Example:**

* We shall move to another city.
* He will come to New York tomorrow.
* They will make a phone which has artificial intelligence.

**Note:** The structure of the present progressive tense also can be used when an action is promised/arranged/planned to take place in the near future.

**Example:**

* We are moving to Texas next week.
* The bus is leaving at 6.00 PM.

**Future Continuous Tense**

The future continuous tense is used when an action is promised/thought to be going on at a specific time/context in the future.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + shall/will + be + verb+ing . . . . . . . .** |

**Example:**

* I shall be sleeping at around 6.00 AM tomorrow.
* They will be playing at this time tomorrow.
* She will be watching TV when I come home.
* I will be working in the office while you watch a movie.

### Future Perfect Tense

The future perfect tense is used to demonstrate an action which is promised to be done by a certain time in the future.

**Structure:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Subject + shall/will + have + verb in the past participle . . . . . . . .** |

**Example:**

* I shall have completed the assignment by Monday.
* She will have cleaned the house before her father comes.
* Alex will have submitted the tender by tomorrow.
* Before I go to see her, she will have left the place.
* They will have finished making the bridge by January.

### Future Perfect Continuous Tense

**Note:**There is no practical use of this tense.