

## Tenses in English

### What is a Tense?

A tense is a form of a verb that allows us to express time. Tense communicates an event's location in time.

### Why Learning the Tenses in English Is Important?

There are several reasons why you should know how to use the English tenses.

- **English is a chronological language.**

English needs all its tenses in order to locate an action in time or express the relationship between two different actions.

For example:

*She **arrived** yesterday.* (The action happened in the past.)

*She **will arrive** tomorrow.* (The action will happen in the future.)

*I **was having** a bath when the telephone **rang**.* (There is a relationship between the two actions. Me having a bath was an action going on for some time in the past. The telephone ringing interrupted my bath.)

- **Tenses can help you say what you actually want to say.**

Each tense in English is used for one or more specific purposes.

*I **drink** water every day.* (Repeated action.)

*I **am drinking** water at the moment.* (Action happening at the moment of speaking.)

*I **will drink** water later.* (Action in the future.)

*Yesterday I **drank** a lot of water.* (Action in the past.)

- **English is a world language.**
- **Tenses will help you get fluent.**
- **Learning tenses can improve all your language skills.**

### **What are the Tenses in English?**

English has 12 tenses. They are divided into three groups (present, past and future). Each group is further broken down into simple, continuous (progressive), perfect and perfect continuous tenses.

	Simple	Progressive	Perfect	Perfect Progressive
Present	S + V <sub>1</sub> + O	S + is/am/are/+ V + ing + O	S + have/has + V <sub>3</sub> + O	S + have/has + been + V <sub>3</sub> + ing + O
	He drives a car	He is driving a car	He has driven a car	He has been driving a car
Past	S + V <sub>1</sub> + O	S + was/were/+ V + ing + O	S + had + V <sub>3</sub> + O	S + had + been + V <sub>3</sub> + ing + O

	He drove a car	He was driving a car	He had driven a car	He had been driving a car
Future	S + will + V <sub>1</sub> + O	S + will + be + V + ing + O	S + will + have + V <sub>3</sub> + O	S + will + have + been + V <sub>3</sub> + ing + O
	He will drive a car	I will be driving a car	He will have driven a car	He will have been driving a car

### Tenses and their functions

Tense	Function	Example
<b>Present Simple</b>	Used for facts, generalizations, and truths that are not affected by the passage of time	"She writes a lot of papers for her classes."
<b>Past Simple</b>	Used for events completed in the past	"She wrote the papers for all of her classes last month."
<b>Future Simple</b>	Used for events to be completed in the future	"She will write papers for her classes next semester."
<b>Present Continuous</b>	Used to describe currently ongoing (usually temporary) actions	"She is writing a paper for her class."
<b>Past Continuous</b>	Used to describe ongoing past events, often in relation to the occurrence of another event	"She was writing a paper for her class when her pencil broke."
<b>Future Continuous</b>	Used to describe future events that are expected to continue over a period of time	"She will be writing a lot of papers for her classes next year."
<b>Present Perfect</b>	Used to describe events that began in the past and are expected to continue, or to emphasize the relevance of past events to the present moment	"She has written papers for most of her classes, but she still has some papers left to write."
<b>Past Perfect</b>	Used to describe events that happened prior to other events in the past	"She had written several papers for her classes before she switched universities."
<b>Future Perfect</b>	Used to describe events that will be completed between now and a specific point in the future	"She will have written many papers for her classes by the end of the semester."
<b>Present Perfect Continuous</b>	Used to describe events that started in the past and continue into the present or were recently completed, emphasizing their relevance to the present moment	"She has been writing a paper all night, and now she needs to get some sleep."
<b>Past Perfect Continuous</b>	Used to describe events that began, continued, and ended in the past, emphasizing their relevance to a past moment	"She had been writing a paper all night, and she needed to get some sleep."
<b>Future Perfect Continuous</b>	Used to describe events that will continue up until a point in the future, emphasizing their expected duration	"She will have been writing this paper for three months when she hands it in."

Some examples:

1. I'm sorry the house is not available any longer. It \_\_\_\_\_ to a timber tycoon.

- a) was being sold
- b) is sold
- c) will be sold
- d) has been sold**

2. The problem of free will \_\_\_\_\_ philosophers for centuries.

- a) is vexed
- b) was vexed
- c) has vexed**
- d) have vexed

3. We \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ he interviews before analyzing the results.

- a) transcribed, coded**
- b) had transcribed, had coded
- c) have transcribed, coded
- d) will transcribe, code