

IIT Madras

BSc Degree

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TENSES and ASPECTS in ENGLISH

RAJESH KUMAR

TENSE and VERB FORMS

- Actions and events happen in time.
- A verb expresses time of action, event or state.

Present – now

Ramu is in Chennai.

Past – a while ago

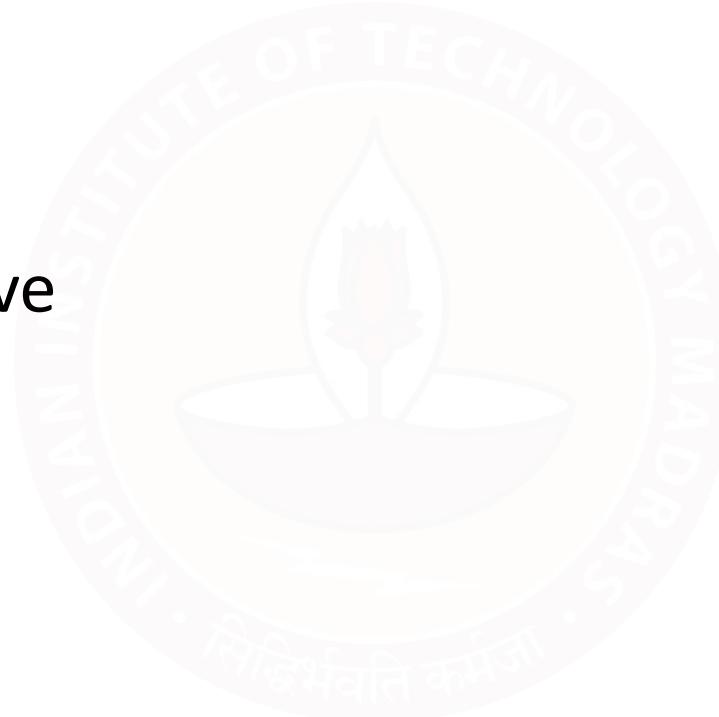
Ramu was in Chennai.

Future – sometime from now

Ramu will come to Chennai.

Aspects

- Indefinite/Habitual
- Continuous/Progressive
- Perfect
- Perfect Continuous



Indefinite/Habitual

There are four main forms which English verbs take, in order to indicate state of the action.

PRESENT INDEFINITE

I see a car in front of that building.

I am tired.

PAST INDEFINITE

I saw a car in front of that building.

I felt tired.

FUTURE INDEFINITE

I will go home now.

We shall meet tomorrow.

Continuous/Progressive

- PRESENT CONTINUOUS

The girls are playing in the ground.

I am typing a mail now.

- PAST CONTINUOUS

The girls were playing in the ground.

I was typing a mail now.

- FUTURE CONTINUOUS

The girls will be playing in the ground.

I will be typing a mail now.

Perfective

- PRESENT PERFECT

The girls have played effectively.

I have typed a mail now.

- PAST PERFECT

The girls had played effectively.

I had typed a mail.

- FUTURE PERFECT

The girls will have played nicely.

I will have typed a mail.

Perfect Continuous

- PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

The girls have been playing effectively.

I have been typing a mail now.

- PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

The girls had been playing effectively.

I had been typing a mail.

- FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS

The girls will have been playing nicely.

I will have been typing a mail.

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERB FORMS

- In case of most verbs in English, the past and the participle forms are formed by adding /d/ or /ed/ to the base verb. Such verbs are known as regular verbs.

Present	Past	Past Participle
Act	Acted	Acted
Live	Lived	Lived
Hope	Hoped	Hoped

- In case of other verbs in English, the past tense and past participle forms are got, not in the regular way mentioned above (i.e. by adding /d/ or /ed/), but in various other ways. These verbs are called Irregular verbs.

Present	Past	Past Participle
Am	Was	Been
Are	Were	Been
Bear	Bore	Borne

Present	Past	Past Participle
Become	Became	Become
Begin	Began	Begin
Come	Came	Come
Cut	Cut	Cut
Dream	Dreamed/Dreamt	Dreamed/Dreamt
Go	Went	Gone
Lend	Lent	Lent
Rise	Rose	Risen
Sew	Sewed	Sewn
Shine	Shone/Shined	Shone/Shined
Spin	Span/ Spun	Spun
Strike	Struck	Struck/Stricken
Wake	Woke/Waked	Woke/Waked/Woken
Wear	Wore	Worn
Write	Wrote	Written

Questions

- What are the differences between Tense and Aspects?
- How do they add to what we want to say?
- What is the relationship between verb as lexical category and Tense and Aspect as functional category?