

## Tenses

Tenses are a set of grammatical characteristics that are used in languages to show time. Here you will learn all how to use tenses in English language.

### What Do We Mean by Tense?

Tense refers to the form of a verb that indicates *when* an action takes place, whether in the past, present, or future. The tense of a verb helps to clarify the timeline of actions and events.

## Different Tenses in English

There are three main tenses in English, as follows:

- present
- past
- future

## Can One Tense Indicate More than One Time?

A particular tense can describe two different actions in two different periods of time. Therefore, it is important to understand the usage of each tense in order to use them correctly. Here are some examples to help illustrate this concept.

I **go** swimming tomorrow.

I **go** to school every day.

## Combination of Aspects and Tenses

Every verb has two characteristics. One is **the tense** and the other is **the aspect**. A verb is not meaningful unless it has both aspect and tense together. **Tense** alone has no significance.

To better understand the relationship between **tense** and **aspect**, let us consider them together in a table.

	Peresent	Past	Future
Simple	<u>present simple</u>	<u>past simple</u>	<u>future simple</u>
Progressive	<u>present progressive</u>	<u>past progressive</u>	<u>future progressive</u>
Perfect	<u>present perfect</u>	<u>past perfect</u>	<u>future perfect</u>

	Present	Past	Future
Perfect Progressive	<u>present perfect progressive</u>	<u>past perfect progressive</u>	<u>future perfect progressive</u>

Let us learn them one by one.

## Use of the Simple Present Tense

The 'simple present tense' (also known as 'the present simple tense'), is used to express *actions* that are happening repeatedly, or *how often* something happens. Another use is to describe actions that are happening in a chain of series. We can also use the present simple tense to describe actions in general.

It is really important to know that we can use 'the present tense' to describe the timetable in the *future*. Check out the examples.

Suddenly she **calls** me and **tells** me that the store is on fire.

The Jimmy Fallon show **is** at 11:34 pm.

## Use of the Simple Past Tense

The 'simple past tense' (also known as 'the past simple tense') is used to describe actions that began and ended in the past without any connection to the present. Here are a few examples:

She **got** her license three years ago.

I **slept** well last night.

## Use of the Future Simple

The 'simple future' (also known as 'the future simple') is used to talk about events that have not happened yet. The important point to keep in mind is that these structures are not technically considered tenses. That is why we do not call them 'tenses'. For example:

I **will be** there for you.

She **is going** to get married



**I go to school every day.**

using the present simple to talk about routines

## Use of the Present Progressive Tense

The 'present progressive tense' (also known as the 'present continuous tense'), is used to describe an action that is occurring at the same time as the speaking or around it. In some cases, we can also use 'the present progressive' to express a fixed plan or date or to describe something that has already been decided. Check out the examples:

**I am quitting** smoking.

She **is trying** hard to loose weight.

## Use of the Past Progressive Tense

We use the 'past progressive tense' (also known as the 'past continuous tense'), to talk about an unfinished action that started to happen in the past. In some cases, we can use the past progressive tense to indicate that an event happened in *the middle of* another incident.

She **was studying** English two years ago.

Alice and Sam **were talking** in the conference the whole time he was giving his speech.

## Use of the Future Progressive Tense

The 'future progressive tense' is used to describe an action that will be in progress at a specific time in the future or to express an action that is expected to occur based on previous patterns or routines.

**I will be raising** my prize up, when you are fettering me.

He **will be waiting** for you from dust till dawn.

## Use of the Present Perfect Tense

The '**present perfect tense**' is used to express actions that started in the past but have continued up to the present time or at least have a connection to the present. These are a few examples that may help you:

They **have been** in China for three years.

We **have been** married for 37 years.

## Use of the Past Perfect Tense

The '**past perfect tense**' is used to describe an action that occurred before another action in the past or to serve as 'the past form' of 'the present perfect tense'. When describing a series of events in the past, the action that occurred earlier than another is expressed in '**the past perfect tense**'. For example:

They **had talked** to the manager and he changed his mind.

She **had been** in Tokyo before leaving for London

## Use of the Future Perfect Tense

The '**future perfect tense**' is used to express an action that will already have happened before a certain time in the future. Here are a few examples that may help you understand the concept:

We **will have arrived** to Sydney by Monday.

I **won't have been** married by next year.

## Use of the Present Perfect Progressive Tense

The '**present perfect progressive**' tense is used to express that an action began in the past and has continued up to the present moment, with an emphasis on the *duration* of the action. This means that the action could still be ongoing at the present moment or may have just finished. Check out the examples:

I **have been working** on this essay for over five hours.

I **have been acting** on set for two days. I am really tired.

## Use of the Past Perfect Progressive Tense

The '**past perfect progressive**' tense is used to describe an action that was ongoing in the past and continued up until another point in time in the past. This tense emphasizes the *duration* of the action and its relationship to another event in the past. Check these examples out for more clarification.

We **had been painting** the house the last two days.

They **had been playing** hockey for years.

## Use of the Future Perfect Progressive Tense

The '**future perfect progressive**' tense is used to describe an ongoing action that will continue up until a certain point in the future, at which time it will be completed. This tense emphasizes the *duration* of the action up to a specific point in the future. For example:

She **will have been dancing** for three years, by then.

When I come back home from the military, Samuel **will have been studying** math for one year.

## Review

There are three different tenses in English that are used in four different aspects. Here are the tenses and the aspects in English.

- *present simple, present progressive, present perfect, present perfect progressive*
- *past simple, past progressive, past perfect, past perfect progressive*
- *future simple, future progressive, future perfect, future perfect progressive*

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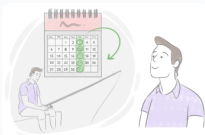
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## Present Simple



In this lesson, you will learn all the grammatical features of the Present simple tense in the English language and get familiar with its uses.

