

Comprehensive Guide to Verb Forms, Tenses, Passives, and Modals

This expanded guide provides detailed explanations, examples, and rules for mastering verb forms, tenses, passive constructions, and modals. A summary table at the end consolidates key points for quick reference.

1. Verb Forms

English verbs typically have five forms:

1. **Base Form:** Used in the infinitive and imperative (e.g., walk, eat, play).
 2. **Third Person Singular:** Used with "he/she/it" in the simple present tense (e.g., walks, eats, plays).
 3. **Past Form:** Indicates completed actions in the past (e.g., walked, ate, played).
 4. **Present Participle:** Ends in **-ing**, used in continuous tenses (e.g., walking, eating, playing).
 5. **Past Participle:** Used in perfect tenses and passives (e.g., walked, eaten, played).
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2. Tenses and Their Functions

Present Tenses

A. Simple Present

- **Usage:** Regular actions, habits, general truths, and schedules.
- **Structure:**
 - Affirmative: Subject + base verb (+ s/es for third person singular).
 - Negative: Subject + do/does not + base verb.
 - Question: Do/Does + subject + base verb?
- **Examples:**
 - He **walks** to school every day.

- She **does not eat** meat.
 - **Does he play** tennis?
-

B. Present Continuous

- **Usage:** Actions happening now, temporary situations.
 - **Structure:** Subject + am/is/are + verb-ing.
 - Examples
:
 - They **are studying** for their exams.
 - She **is not working** today.
 - **Is he reading**?
-

C. Present Perfect

- **Usage:** Actions completed at an unspecified time, experiences, or actions continuing to the present.
 - **Structure:** Subject + have/has + past participle.
 - Examples
:
 - We **have visited** France several times.
 - He **has not finished** his homework.
 - **Have you ever eaten** sushi?
-

D. Present Perfect Continuous

- **Usage:** Actions that started in the past and are still continuing or have recently stopped.
- **Structure:** Subject + have/has been + verb-ing.
- Examples
:

- She **has been running** for an hour.
 - They **have not been studying** lately.
 - **How long have** you **been waiting**?
-

Past Tenses

A. Simple Past

- **Usage:** Completed actions in the past.
 - **Structure:** Subject + past verb.
 - Examples
:
 - I **saw** a movie yesterday.
 - They **did not visit** the museum.
 - **Did** you **go** to the park?
-

B. Past Continuous

- **Usage:** Ongoing actions in the past, interrupted actions.
 - **Structure:** Subject + was/were + verb-ing.
 - Examples
:
 - She **was reading** when the phone rang.
 - They **were not sleeping** at midnight.
 - **Was** he **working**?
-

C. Past Perfect

- **Usage:** Actions completed before another past action.
- **Structure:** Subject + had + past participle.

- Examples

:

- The train **had left** before we arrived.
 - They **had not finished** their homework.
 - **Had** she **eaten** before coming?
-

D. Past Perfect Continuous

- **Usage:** Ongoing past actions completed before another past event.
- **Structure:** Subject + had been + verb-ing.
- Examples

:

- He **had been working** for two hours before dinner.
 - She **had not been studying** all day.
 - **Had** they **been waiting** long?
-

Future Tenses

A. Simple Future

- **Usage:** Decisions made now, predictions, promises.
- **Structure:** Subject + will/shall + base verb.
- Examples

:

- I **will call** you later.
 - They **will not attend** the meeting.
 - **Will** she **come** tomorrow?
-

B. Future Continuous

- **Usage:** Ongoing actions at a specific time in the future.
- **Structure:** Subject + will be + verb-ing.
- Examples

:

- She **will be working** at 8 PM.
 - They **will not be studying**.
 - **Will** he **be attending** the event?
-

C. Future Perfect

- **Usage:** Actions completed before a specific time in the future.
- **Structure:** Subject + will have + past participle.
- Examples

:

- We **will have finished** by next Monday.
 - She **will not have completed** the report.
 - **Will** they **have left** by then?
-

D. Future Perfect Continuous

- **Usage:** Ongoing actions up to a point in the future.
- **Structure:** Subject + will have been + verb-ing.
- Examples

:

- By next year, I **will have been working** here for ten years.
 - They **will not have been studying** for hours.
 - **Will** she **have been waiting** long?
-

3. Passive Voice

Structure

Object of active voice + be (in the correct tense) + past participle.

TENSE	ACTIVE VOICE	PASSIVE VOICE
Present Simple	She writes a letter.	A letter is written by her.
Past Simple	He completed the project.	The project was completed by him.
Present Continuous	They are building a house.	A house is being built by them.
Present Perfect	She has finished the report.	The report has been finished by her.
Future Simple	They will start the work soon.	The work will be started soon.

4. Modals

Common Modal Verbs

- Can/Could
: Ability or permission.
 - She **can play** the piano.
- May/Might
: Possibility.
 - It **may rain** later.
- Must
: Obligation or necessity.
 - You **must wear** a helmet.
- Shall/Should
: Suggestions or advice.
 - You **should study** more.
- Will/Would
: Future certainty or polite requests.

- I **will call** tomorrow.

5. Summary Table

TENSE	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE
Present Simple	Subject + base verb (+ s/es)	She plays tennis.
Past Simple	Subject + past verb	He visited Paris.
Future Simple	Subject + will + base verb	They will arrive tomorrow.
Present Continuous	Subject + am/is/are + verb-ing	I am reading a book.
Past Continuous	Subject + was/were + verb-ing	She was studying when I called.
Future Continuous	Subject + will be + verb-ing	He will be working at 6 PM.
Present Perfect	Subject + have/has + past participle	We have seen this movie before.
Past Perfect	Subject + had + past participle	She had left before he arrived.
Future Perfect	Subject + will have + past participle	They will have finished the task by then.
Present Perfect Continuous	Subject + have/has been + verb-ing	She has been working all day.
Passive Voice	Object + be + past participle	The book was written by her.

Expanded Guide: Verb Forms, Tenses, Usages, Restrictions, and Common Mistakes

In this section, we delve deeper into when and where each tense is used, situations where a tense **cannot** be used, and common mistakes learners make.

1. Present Tenses

A. Simple Present

Usage:

1. **Habits:** I brush my teeth twice a day.
2. **Facts and General Truths:** Water boils at 100°C.
3. **Schedules or Timetables:** The train leaves at 8 AM.
4. **Instructions:** Open the door and walk in.

Restrictions:

- Not for Actions Happening Now
: Instead, use the present continuous.
 - **Incorrect:** I eat dinner right now.
 - **Correct:** I **am eating** dinner right now.

Common Mistakes:

1. Forgetting the
-s/-es
for third person singular.
 - **Incorrect:** She walk to school.
 - **Correct:** She **walks** to school.
 2. Using the wrong auxiliary verb for negatives or questions.
 - **Incorrect:** She do not play tennis.
 - **Correct:** She **does not** play tennis.
-

B. Present Continuous

Usage:

1. **Actions Happening Now:** She is reading a book.
2. **Temporary Situations:** They are staying at a hotel this week.
3. **Future Plans:** We are meeting them tomorrow.

Restrictions:

- Not for Permanent States or Facts
: Use the simple present instead.
 - **Incorrect:** She is knowing the answer.
 - **Correct:** She **knows** the answer.

Common Mistakes:

1. Using stative verbs incorrectly in the continuous form.
 - **Incorrect:** I am liking this movie.
 - **Correct:** I **like** this movie.
 2. Forgetting the auxiliary verb
is/are/am
.
 - **Incorrect:** She going to school.
 - **Correct:** She **is going** to school.
-

C. Present Perfect

Usage:

1. **Actions with Present Relevance:** I have already eaten.
2. **Life Experiences:** She has traveled to Spain.

3. **Unfinished Actions:** I have lived here for five years.

Restrictions:

- Not for Specific Past Time
: Use the simple past instead.
 - **Incorrect:** I have gone to the park yesterday.
 - **Correct:** I **went** to the park yesterday.

Common Mistakes:

1. Misusing time expressions with the present perfect.
 - **Incorrect:** I have seen him two days ago.
 - **Correct:** I saw him two days ago.
 2. Using the wrong auxiliary verb.
 - **Incorrect:** She has saw the movie.
 - **Correct:** She **has seen** the movie.
-

D. Present Perfect Continuous

Usage:

1. **Actions Started in the Past and Continuing Now:** She has been working all morning.
2. **Recently Completed Actions:** They have been playing soccer.

Restrictions:

- Not for Completed Actions
: Use the present perfect instead.
 - **Incorrect:** He has been writing three books.
 - **Correct:** He **has written** three books.

Common Mistakes:

1. Using it for non-continuous actions.

- **Incorrect:** I have been knowing him for years.
 - **Correct:** I **have known** him for years.
-

2. Past Tenses

A. Simple Past

Usage:

1. **Completed Actions in the Past:** I visited Paris last summer.
2. **Sequential Past Events:** He got up, brushed his teeth, and left.

Restrictions:

- Not for Ongoing or Unfinished Actions
: Use the past continuous or perfect.
 - **Incorrect:** I was in the middle of my homework when he called.
 - **Correct:** I **was doing** my homework when he called.

Common Mistakes:

1. Using the wrong verb form for irregular verbs.

- **Incorrect:** She **goed** to the park.
 - **Correct:** She **went** to the park.
-

B. Past Continuous

Usage:

1. **Ongoing Actions at a Specific Past Time:** She was cooking at 6 PM.
2. **Interrupted Actions:** I was reading when the phone rang.

Restrictions:

- Not for Completed Actions
: Use the simple past instead.
 - **Incorrect:** I was eating breakfast this morning.
 - **Correct:** I **ate** breakfast this morning.

Common Mistakes:

1. Forgetting the auxiliary verbs
was/were
.
 - **Incorrect:** He playing football.
 - **Correct:** He **was playing** football.
-

C. Past Perfect

Usage:

1. **Actions Completed Before Another Action:** By the time I arrived, he had left.
2. **Sequence of Past Actions:** She had already eaten before the meeting.

Restrictions:

- Not for the First Action in a Sequence
: Use the simple past.
 - **Incorrect:** I had entered the room and saw the mess.
 - **Correct:** I **entered** the room and **saw** the mess.

Common Mistakes:

1. Overusing the past perfect when not needed.
 - **Incorrect:** She had visited France last year.
 - **Correct:** She **visited** France last year.
-

3. Future Tenses

A. Simple Future

Usage:

1. **Predictions:** It will rain tomorrow.
2. **Spontaneous Decisions:** I'll answer the phone.

Restrictions:

- Not for Planned Actions
: Use the present continuous or "going to."
 - **Incorrect:** I will meet him at 5 PM.
 - **Correct:** I **am meeting** him at 5 PM.
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4. Passive Voice

Usage:

1. **Focus on the Action, Not the Doer:** The book was written by J.K. Rowling.
2. **When the Doer Is Unknown:** The window was broken.

Restrictions:

- Not for All Intransitive Verbs
(verbs without an object).
 - **Incorrect:** She was slept by him.
 - **Correct:** She slept.
-

5. Modals

Common Errors:

1. Using
to
after modals.
 - **Incorrect:** You must to go.
 - **Correct:** You must go.
 2. Using double modals.
 - **Incorrect:** He might can help.
 - **Correct:** He might help.
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6. Summary Table

TENSE	USAGE	WHEN NOT TO USE
Present Simple	Facts, habits, schedules	Actions happening now.

TENSE	USAGE	WHEN NOT TO USE
Present Continuous	Ongoing or temporary actions	Permanent states (e.g., I am knowing).
Present Perfect	Unspecified past or ongoing actions	Specific past time (e.g., I have seen him yesterday).
Past Simple	Completed past actions	Ongoing actions in the past.
Past Continuous	Ongoing past actions	Completed past actions.
Future Simple	Predictions, promises	Planned actions (use present continuous or "going to").
Passive Voice	Focus on the action or receiver	Intransitive verbs (e.g., The dog was run).