



# **The Tense Tutorial**

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Tense is a method that we use in English to refer to time - past, present and future. It is basically a form of a verb used to indicate the time, and sometimes the continuation or completeness, of an action in relation to the time of speaking.

There are 3 major tenses in the English language – Past, Present & Future.

**Note:** *If you are a grammar whiz you might contradict us by saying there are actually only 2 and not 3 tenses. We agree!*

*There are no future tenses in English. The word 'will' is called a modal auxiliary verb and future tenses are sometimes called "modal tenses". However for practical purposes (and to avoid getting too technical) we'll consider 'Future' tense to be an actual tense form.*

*So the grammar whiz may please excuse us. (On second thoughts a grammar whiz shouldn't need to be going through this document anyway).*

### **There are 4 variations of each of these three tenses:**

**The Simple Tense** - The simple tenses are used to show permanent characteristics of people and events or what happens regularly, habitually or in a single completed action.

**The Continuous Tense** - Verbs in Continuous Tenses always express "actions" that are in progress during the time framework indicated: present, past, future, or any of the perfect timeframes.

**Note:** *The Continuous tense is sometimes referred to as the Progressive tense. The two are exactly the same.*

**The Perfect Tense** - The perfect tenses are used when an action or situation in the present is linked to a moment in the past. It is often used to show things that have happened up to now but aren't finished yet or to emphasize that something happened but is not true anymore. When they end determines which of them you use (past or present perfect).

**The Perfect Continuous Tense** - Used to denote an ongoing action either starting and ending in the past or starting in the past and continuing into the present.

### **So altogether we have the following 12 tenses**

1. Simple Present

2. Present Continuous
3. Present Perfect
4. Present Perfect Continuous
5. Simple Past
6. Past Continuous
7. Past Perfect
8. Past Perfect Continuous
9. Simple Future
10. Future Continuous
11. Future Perfect
12. Future Perfect Continuous

## 1) The Simple Present Tense

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The simple present tense is used to discuss permanent situations and the frequency of events.

### i) Repeated Actions



Use the Simple Present to express the idea that an action is repeated or usual. The action can be a habit, a hobby, a daily event, a scheduled event or something that often happens. It can also be something a person often forgets or usually does not do.

#### Examples:

- I **play** cricket.
- **Does** he like tennis?
- The bus **leaves** every morning at 10 AM.
- The train **does not leave** at 9 AM.
- He always **forgets** his keys.
- He never **forgets** his wallet.
- Every twelve months, the Earth **circles** the Sun.

### ii) Facts or Generalizations



The Simple Present can also indicate the speaker believes that a fact was true before, is true now, and will be true in the future. It is not important if the speaker is correct about the fact. It is also used to make generalizations about people or things.

#### Examples:

- Dogs **like** bones.

- Birds **do not like** bones.
- **Do** humans **like** milk?
- Sydney **is** in Australia.
- Doors **are** made of glass.
- Windows **are not** made of wood.

### iii) Scheduled Events in the Near Future



Speakers occasionally use Simple Present to talk about scheduled events in the near future. This is most commonly done when talking about public transportation, but it can be used with other scheduled events as well.

Examples:

- The bus **arrives** tonight at 8 PM.
- The bus **does not arrive** at 8 AM, it **arrives** at 8 PM.
- When **do** we **board** the bus?
- The movie **starts** at 9 o'clock.
- When **does** class **begin** tomorrow?

### iv) Now (Non-Continuous Verbs)



Speakers sometimes use the Simple Present to express the idea that an action is happening or is not happening now. This can only be done with Non-Continuous Verbs and certain Mixed Verbs.

Examples:

- I **am** here now.
- She **is not** here now.

- He **needs** help right now.
- He **has** his license in his hand.
- **Do** you **have** your license with you?

## 2) The Present Continuous Tense

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**Form - [am/is/are + present participle]**

Examples:

- You are watching TV.
- Are you watching TV?
- You are not watching TV.

### i) Ongoing Action



Use the Present Continuous with Normal Verbs to express the idea that something is happening now, at this very moment. It can also be used to show that something is not happening now.

Examples:

- You **are learning** tenses now.
- You **are not playing** now.
- **Are** you **sleeping**?
- I **am sitting**.
- They **are reading** their books.
- They **are not watching** the movie.
- What **are** you **doing**?
- Why **aren't** you **doing** your work?

### ii) Longer Actions in Progress Now





In English, "now" can mean right now, today, this month, this year, this century, and so on. Sometimes, we use the Present Continuous to say that we are in the process of doing a longer action which is in progress; however, we might not be doing it at this exact second.

Examples: (All of these sentences can be said while watching movie with your friend)

- I am studying to become an engineer.
- I am not studying to become a doctor.
- I am reading the book 'Emma'.
- I am not reading any reports right now.
- Are you working on any special projects?
- Aren't you teaching at the college now?

### iii) Near Future



Sometimes, speakers use the Present Continuous to indicate that something will or will not happen in the near future.

Examples:

- I **am meeting** some relatives after work.
- I **am not going** to the movie this weekend.
- **Is** he **visiting** his parents tonight?
- **Isn't** he **coming** with us tonight?

### iv) Repetition with "Always"



The Present Continuous with words such as "always" or "constantly" expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happens. Notice that the meaning is like Simple Present, but with negative emotion. Remember to put the words "always" or "constantly" between "be" and "verb+ing."

Examples:

- She **is always coming** to work late.
- He **is constantly talking**.
- I don't like them because they **are always complaining**.

### 3) The Present Perfect Tense

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**FORM** - [has/have + past participle]

Examples:

- You **have seen** that movie many times.
- **Have** you **seen** that movie many times?
- You **have not seen** that movie many times.

#### i) Unspecified Time Before Now



We use the Present Perfect to say that an action happened at an unspecified time before now. The exact time is not important. You **CANNOT** use the Present Perfect with specific time expressions such as yesterday, one year ago, last week, when I was a child, one day, etc.

We **CAN** use the Present Perfect with unspecific expressions such as: ever, never, once, many times, several times, before, so far, already, yet, etc.

Examples:

- I **have seen** that play twenty times.
- I think I **have met** him once before.
- There **have been** many earthquakes in Japan.
- People **have traveled** to the North pole.
- People **have not traveled** to Mars.
- **Have** you **read** the book yet?
- Nobody **has** ever **climbed** that mountain.

#### ii) Experience

You can use the Present Perfect to describe your experience. It is like saying, "I have the experience of..." You can also use this tense to say that you have

never had a certain experience. The Present Perfect is NOT used to describe a specific event.

Examples:

- I **have been** to Alaska.
- I **have** never **been** to Japan.
- I think I **have seen** that movie before.
- He **has** never **traveled** by an aeroplane.

### iii) Change Over Time

We often use the Present Perfect to talk about change that has happened over a period of time.

Examples:

- You **have grown** since the last time I saw you.
- The government **has become** more interested in poverty removal.
- Mandarin **has become** one of the most popular language courses at the university since the Asian studies program was established.
- My English **has** really **improved** since I moved to America.

### iii) Accomplishments

We often use the Present Perfect to list the accomplishments of individuals and humanity. Remember, though, that you cannot mention a specific time.

Examples:

- Man **has walked** on the Moon.
- John **has learned** how to read.
- Doctors **have cured** many deadly diseases.
- Scientists **have split** the atom.

#### iv) An Uncompleted Action You Are Expecting

We often use the Present Perfect to say that an action which we expected has not happened. Using the Present Perfect suggests that we are still waiting for the action to happen.

Examples:

- Tina **has not finished** her assignment yet.
- Jerry **hasn't mastered** French, but he can communicate.
- The package **has** still **not arrived**.
- The rain **hasn't stopped**.

#### v) Multiple Actions at Different Times

We also use the Present Perfect to talk about several different actions which have occurred in the past at different times. Present Perfect suggests the process is not complete and more actions are possible.

Examples:

- The army **has attacked** that city five times.
- I **have had** four quizzes and five tests so far this semester.
- We **have faced** many problems while working on this project.
- She **has talked** to several specialists about her problem, but nobody knows why she is sick.

#### vi) Time Expressions with Present Perfect

When we use the Present Perfect it means that something has happened at some point in our lives before now. Remember, the exact time the action happened is not important.

Sometimes, we want to limit the time we are looking in for an experience. We can do this with expressions such as: in the last week, in the last year, this week, this month, so far, up to now, etc.

Examples:

- **Have you been** to New York **in the last two years**?
- I **have seen** that movie three times **in the last fortnight**.

- They **have had** three tests **in the last week**.
- My car **has broken** down three times **this week**.

## IMPORTANT

"Last year" and "in the last year" are very different in meaning.

"Last year" means the year before now, and it is considered a specific time which requires Simple past tense.

"In the last year" means from 365 days ago until now. It is not considered a specific time, so it requires Present Perfect Tense.

Examples:

- I **went** to New York **last year**.
- I **have been** to New York **in the last year**.

### vii) Duration From the Past Until Now (Non-Continuous Verbs)



With non-continuous verbs and non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, we use the Present Perfect to show that something started in the past and has continued up until now. "For five minutes," "for two weeks," and "since Tuesday" are all durations which can be used with the Present Perfect.

Examples:

- I **have had** a flu for two weeks.
- She **has been** in Sydney for six months.
- Sheena **has loved** chocolate since she was a little girl.

## 4) The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

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**FORM - [has/have + been + present participle]**

Examples:

- You **have been waiting** here for two hours.
- **Have** you **been waiting** here for two hours?
- You **have not been waiting** here for two hours.

### i) Duration from the Past Until Now



We use the Present Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and has continued up until now. "For five minutes," "for two weeks," and "since Tuesday" are all durations which can be used with the Present Perfect Continuous.

Examples:

- They **have been arguing** for the last hour.
- John **has been working** with that company for five years.
- What **have** you **been doing** for the last one week?
- We **have been waiting** here for over two hours!

### ii) Recently, Lately

You can also use the Present Perfect Continuous without a duration such as "for two weeks." Without the duration, the tense has a more general meaning of "lately." We often use the words "lately" or "recently" to emphasize this meaning.

Examples:

- Recently, I **have been feeling** really depressed.
- She **has been watching** too much theatre lately.
- **Have** you **been exercising** lately?



## 5) The Simple Past Tense

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### FORM - [ VERB + ed ] or irregular verbs

Examples:

- You **called** Debbie.
- **Did** you **call** Debbie?
- You **did not call** Debbie.

### i) Completed Action in the Past



Use the Simple Past to express the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past. Sometimes, the speaker may not actually mention the specific time, but they do have one specific time in mind.

Examples:

- I **saw** a play yesterday.
- I **did not see** a movie yesterday.
- Last year, I **traveled** to India.
- Last year, I **did not travel** to Japan.
- **Did** you **have** dinner last night?

### ii) A Series of Completed Actions



We use the Simple Past to list a series of completed actions in the past.

Examples:

- I **finished** work, **walked** my dogs, and **found** a nice book to read.
- He **arrived** from the airport at 8:00, **checked** into the hotel at 9:00, and **met** the members at 10:00.

### iii) Duration in Past



The Simple Past can be used with a duration which starts and stops in the past. A duration is a longer action often indicated by expressions such as: for two years, for five minutes, all day, all year, etc.

Examples:

- I **lived** in Amsterdam for two years.
- Shaun **studied** literature for five years.
- They **sat** at the cleaners all day.

### iv) Habits in the Past

The Simple Past can also be used to describe a habit which stopped in the past. It can have the same meaning as "used to." To make it clear that we are talking about a habit, we often add expressions such as: always, often, usually, never, when I was a child, etc.

Examples:

- I **played the guitar** when I was a child.
- He **studied** French in college.
- **Did** you **play** a musical instrument when you were a kid?

### v) Past Facts or Generalizations



The Simple Past can also be used to describe past facts or generalizations which are no longer true. As in the earlier case, this use of the Simple Past is quite similar to the expression 'used to'.

Examples:

- He **was** shy as a child, but now she is very social.
- Tina **did not like** capsicum before.
- **Did** you **live** in Ohio when you **were** a kid?

## 6) The Past Continuous Tense

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**FORM - [ was/were + present participle ]**

Examples:

- You **were studying** when she called.
- **Were** you **studying** when she called?
- You **were not studying** when she called.

### i) Interrupted Action in the Past



Use the Past Continuous to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the Simple Past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

Examples:

- I **was watching** the news when she fell.
- When the phone rang, she **was singing** a song.
- While we **were having** lunch, it started to rain.
- I **was listening** to loud music, so I didn't hear the bell ring.

You can also use a specific time as an interruption.

Examples:

- Last night at 6 PM, I **was eating** dinner.
- At midnight, we **were** still **driving** through the desert.
- Yesterday at this time, I **was sitting** at my desk at work.

## ii) Parallel Actions



When you use the Past Continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions were happening at the same time. The actions are parallel.

Examples:

- I **was studying** while he **was watching television**.
- While Tina **was making** dinner, John **was fixing** the sink.
- **Were** you **listening** while he **was talking**?

## iii) Repetition with "Always"



The Past Continuous with words such as "always" or "constantly" expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happened in the past. The concept is very similar to the expression 'used to' but with negative emotion. Remember to put the words "always" or "constantly" between "be" and "verb+ing."

Examples:

- She **was always coming** to class late.
- He **was constantly talking**.
- I didn't like them because they **were always complaining**.

## While vs. When

Some clauses begin with the word "when" such as "when she called" or "when it bit me." Other clauses begin with "while" such as "while she was sleeping" and "while he was surfing."

When you talk about things in the past, "when" is most often followed by the verb tense **simple past**, whereas "while" is usually followed by **past continuous**. "While" expresses the idea of "during that time."

Examples:

- I was studying **when she called**.
- **While I was studying**, she called.

## 7) The Past Perfect Tense

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### FORM - [had + past participle]

Examples:

- You **had studied** English before you moved to New York.
- **Had** you **studied** English before you moved to New York?
- You **had not studied** English before you moved to New York.

### i) Completed Action Before Something in the Past



The Past Perfect expresses the idea that something occurred before another action in the past. It can also show that something happened before a specific time in the past.

Examples:

- I **had** never **seen** such a beautiful place before I went to Zurich.
- I did not have any money because I **had lost** my wallet.
- **Had** John ever **studied** German before he moved to Germany?
- She only understood the movie because she **had read** the book.

### ii) Duration Before Something in the Past (Non-Continuous Verbs)

With non-continuous verbs and some non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, we use the Past Perfect to show that something started in the past and continued up until another action in the past.

Examples:

- We **had had** that stereo for ten years before it broke down.
- By the time Alex finished his studies, he **had been** in London for over eight years.

- They felt bad about selling the house because they **had owned** it for more than forty years.

### Important - Specific Times with the Past Perfect



Unlike with the present perfect, it is possible to use specific time words or phrases with the Past Perfect. Although this is possible, it is usually not necessary.

Example:

- She **had visited** her friend once in 2005 before she moved in with them in 2007.

Also if the Past Perfect action did occur at a specific time, the Simple Past can be used instead of the Past Perfect when "before" or "after" is used in the sentence. The words "before" and "after" actually tell you what happens first, so the Past Perfect is optional. For this reason, both sentences below are correct.

Examples:

- She **had visited** her friend once in 2005 before she moved in with them in 2007.
- She **visited** her friend once in 2005 before she moved in with them in 2007.

However, if the Past Perfect is not referring to an action at a specific time, Past Perfect is not optional. In the example below, Past Perfect is referring to a lack of experience rather than an action at a specific time. For this reason, Simple Past cannot be used.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** She never **saw** a bear before she moved to Alaska.
- **Correct:** She **had** never **seen** a bear before she moved to Alaska.



## 8) The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

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**FORM** - [had been + present participle]

Examples:

- We **had been waiting** for more than three hours when she finally arrived.
- **Had** you **been waiting** for more than three hours when she finally arrived?

### i) Duration Before Something in the Past



We use the Past Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and continued up until another time in the past. "For five minutes" and "for two weeks" are both durations which can be used with the Past Perfect Continuous. Notice that this is related to the Present Perfect Continuous; however, the duration does not continue until now, it stops before something else in the past.

Examples:

- They **had been talking** for over an hour before John arrived.
- She **had been working** at that company for three years when it went out of business.
- How long **had** you **been waiting** to get on the bus?

### ii) Cause of Something in the Past

Using the Past Perfect Continuous before another action in the past is a good way to show cause and effect.

Examples:

- Jack was tired because he **had been jogging**.
- Sam gained weight because he **had been overeating**.

- Betty failed the final test because she **had not been attending** class.

### **Important: Past Continuous vs. Past Perfect Continuous**

If you do not include a duration such as "for five minutes," "for two weeks" or "since Friday," many English speakers choose to use the Past Continuous rather than the Past Perfect Continuous.

Be careful because this can change the meaning of the sentence. Past Continuous emphasizes interrupted actions, whereas Past Perfect Continuous emphasizes a duration of time before something in the past.

Examples:

- He was tired because he **was exercising** very hard. *(This sentence emphasizes the fact that he was tired because he was exercising at that exact moment)*
- He was tired because he **had been exercising** very hard. *(This sentence emphasizes the fact that he was tired because he had been exercising over a period of time. It is possible that he was still exercising at that moment or that he had already finished exercising)*

## 9) The Simple Future Tense

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Simple Future has two different forms in English: "will" and "be going to." Although the two forms can sometimes be used interchangeably, they often express two very different meanings. These different meanings might seem too abstract at first, but with time and practice, the differences will become clear. Both "will" and "be going to" refer to a specific time in the future.



**FORM** - [will + verb]

Examples:

- You **will meet** him later.
- **Will** you meet him later?
- You **will not meet** him later.

**FORM** - [am/is/are + going to + verb]

Examples:

- You **are going to meet** John tomorrow.
- **Are** you **going to meet** John tonight?
- You **are not going to meet** John tonight.

### i) "Will" expresses a Voluntary Action

"Will" often suggests that a speaker will do something voluntarily. A voluntary action is one the speaker offers to do for someone else. Often, we use "will" to respond to someone else's complaint or request for help. We

also use "will" when we request that someone help us or volunteer to do something for us. Similarly, we use "will not" or "won't" when we refuse to voluntarily do something.

Examples:

- I **will send** you the book when I get it.
- I **will confirm** the appointment.
- **Will** you **help** me move this heavy table?

## ii) "Will" expresses a Promise

"Will" is usually used in promises.

Examples:

- I **will call** you when I arrive.
- I promise I **will not tell** him about the surprise.
- Don't worry, I'**ll be** careful.
- I **won't tell** anyone your secret.

## iii) "Be going to" expresses a Plan

"Be going to" expresses that something has been planned. It expresses the idea that a person intends to do something in the future. It does not matter whether the plan is realistic or not.

Examples:

- He **is going to spend** his vacations with his parents.
- He **is not going to spend** his vacation in Hawaii.
- I'**m going to be** a doctor when I grow up.
- Michelle **is going to begin** business school next year.

#### iv) "Will" and "Be Going to" can both express a Prediction

Both "will" and "be going to" can express the idea of a general prediction about the future. Predictions are guesses about what might happen in the future. In the following examples, there is no difference in meaning.

Examples:

- John's new book **will be** a very interesting one.
- John's new book **is going to be** a very interesting one.
- John Smith **will be** the next winner.
- John Smith **is going to be** the next winner.
- The movie "Avatar" **will win** several Academy Awards.
- The movie "Avatar" **is going to win** several Academy Awards.

#### IMPORTANT

In the Simple Future, it is not always clear which USE the speaker has in mind. Often, there is more than one way to interpret a sentence's meaning.

Also, like all future forms, the Simple Future cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of Simple Future, Simple Present is used.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** When you **will arrive** tonight, we will go out for dinner.
- **Correct:** When you **arrive** tonight, we will go out for dinner.

## 10) The Future Continuous Tense

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Future Continuous has two different forms: "will be doing " and "be going to be doing." Unlike Simple Future forms, Future Continuous forms are usually interchangeable.

**FORM -** [will be + present participle]

Examples:

- You **will be waiting** for him when he arrives tonight.
- **Will** you **be waiting** for him when he arrives tonight?

**FORM -** [am/is/are + going to be + present participle]

Examples:

- You **are going to be waiting** for him when he arrives tonight.
- **Are** you **going to be waiting** for him when he arrives tonight?

Remember that it is possible to use either "will" or "be going to" to create the Future Continuous with little difference in meaning.

### i) Interrupted Action in the Future



Use the Future Continuous to indicate that a longer action in the future will be interrupted by a shorter action in the future. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

Examples:

- I **will be watching** TV when he *arrives* tonight.
- I **am going to be staying** at the Radisson Hotel, if anything *happens* and you *need* to contact me.

Notice in the examples above that the interruptions (*marked in italics*) are in simple present rather than simple future. This is because the interruptions are in time clauses, and you cannot use future tenses in time clauses.

Further, in addition to using short actions as interruptions, you can also use a specific time as an interruption.

Examples:

- Tonight at 8 PM, I **am going to be eating** dinner.
- At midnight tonight, we **will still be driving** through the forest.

## REMEMBER

In the Simple Future, a specific time is used to show the time an action will begin or end. In the Future Continuous, a specific time interrupts the action.

Examples:

- Tonight at 8 PM, I **am going to eat** dinner. (*I am going to start eating at 8 pm*)
- Tonight at 8 PM, I **am going to be eating** dinner. (*I am going to start eating earlier and I will be in the process of eating dinner at 8 pm*)

## ii) Parallel Actions in the Future



When you use the Future Continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions will be happening at the same time. The actions are parallel.

Examples:

- I **am going to be studying** and he **is going to be making** dinner.

- Tonight, they **will be eating** dinner, **discussing** their plans, and **having** a good time.

### **REMEMBER No Future in Time Clauses**

Like all future tenses, the Future Continuous cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of Future Continuous, Present Continuous is used.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** While I **am going to be finishing** my homework, she is going to make dinner.
- **Correct:** While I **am finishing** my homework, she is going to make dinner.



## 11) The Future Perfect Tense

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Future Perfect has two different forms: "will have done" and "be going to have done." Unlike Simple Future forms, Future Perfect forms are usually interchangeable.

**FORM - [will have + past participle]**

Examples:

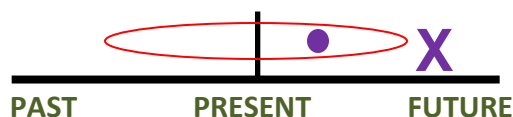
- You **will have perfected** your English by the time you come back from the U.S.
- **Will** you **have perfected** your English by the time you come back from the U.S.?

**FORM - [am/is/are + going to have + past participle]**

Examples:

- You **are going to have perfected** your English by the time you come back from the U.S.
- **Are** you **going to have perfected** your English by the time you come back from the U.S.?

### i) Completed Action Before Something in the Future



The Future Perfect expresses the idea that something will occur before another action in the future. It can also show that something will happen before a specific time in the future.

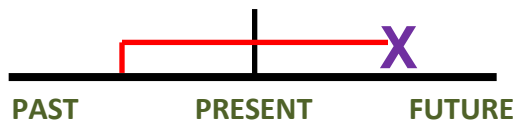
Examples:

- By next September, I **will have received** my promotion.
- By the time he gets home, she **is going to have finished** the entire assignment.

- I **am not going to have finished** this work by 5 o'clock.

Notice in the examples above that the reference points (*marked in italics*) are in simple Present rather than Simple Future. This is because the interruptions are in time clauses, and you cannot use future tenses in time clauses.

## ii) Duration Before Something in the Future (Non-Continuous Verbs)



With non-continuous verbs and some non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, we use the Future Perfect to show that something will continue up until another action in the future.

Examples:

- I **will have been** in New York for six months by the time I leave.
- By Monday, John **is going to have had** my car for a month.

## REMEMBER No Future in Time Clauses

Like all future forms, the Future Perfect cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of Future Perfect, Present Perfect is used.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** I am going to see a movie when I **will have finished** my homework.
- **Correct:** I am going to see a movie when I **have finished** my homework.

## 12) The Future Perfect Continuous Tense

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Future Perfect Continuous has two different forms: "will have been doing " and "be going to have been doing." Unlike Simple Future forms, Future Perfect Continuous forms are usually interchangeable.

**FORM - [will have been + present participle]**

Examples:

- You **will have been waiting** for more than two hours when his train finally arrives.
- **Will** you **have been waiting** for more than two hours when his train finally arrives?

**FORM - [am/is/are + going to have been + present participle]**

Examples:

- You **are going to have been waiting** for more than two hours when his train finally arrives.
- **Are** you **going to have been waiting** for more than two hours when his train finally arrives?

### i) Duration Before Something in the Future



We use the Future Perfect Continuous to show that something will continue up until a particular event or time in the future. "For five minutes," "for two weeks," and "since Friday" are all durations which can be used with the Future Perfect Continuous.

Notice that this is related to the Present Perfect Continuous and the Past Perfect Continuous; however, with Future Perfect Continuous, the duration stops at or before a reference point in the future.

Examples:

- They **will have been talking** for over an hour by the time Thomas *arrives*.
- She **is going to have been working** at that company for three years when it finally *closes*.
- James **will have been teaching** at the university for more than a year by the time he *leaves* for Asia.

Notice in the examples above that the reference points (*marked in italics*) are in Simple Present rather than Simple Future. This is because these future events are in time clauses, and you cannot use future tenses in time clauses.

## ii) Cause of Something in the Future

Using the Future Perfect Continuous before another action in the future is a good way to show cause and effect.

Examples:

- Jason will be tired when he gets home because he **will have been jogging** for over an hour.
- Claudia's English will be perfect when she returns to Germany because she **is going to have been studying** English in the United States for over two years.

## Future Continuous vs. Future Perfect Continuous

If you do not include a duration such as "for five minutes," "for two weeks" or "since Friday," many English speakers choose to use the Future Continuous rather than the Future Perfect Continuous.

Be careful because this can change the meaning of the sentence. Future Continuous emphasizes interrupted actions, whereas Future Perfect Continuous emphasizes a duration of time before something in the future. Study the examples below to understand the difference.

Examples:

- He will be tired because he **will be exercising** so hard. *(This sentence emphasizes that he will be tired because he will be exercising at that exact moment in the future)*
- He will be tired because he **will have been exercising** so hard. *(This sentence emphasizes that he will be tired because he will have been exercising for a period of time. It is possible that he will still be exercising at that moment or that he will have already finished)*

### **REMEMBER No Future in Time Clauses**

Like all future forms, the Future Perfect Continuous cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of Future Perfect Continuous, Present Perfect Continuous is used.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** You won't get a promotion until you **will have been working** here as long as Tim.
- **Correct:** You won't get a promotion until you **have been working** here as long as Tim.

## How to refer to Future in the Past

Like Simple Future, Future in the Past has two different forms in English: "would" and "was going to." Although the two forms can sometimes be used interchangeably, they often express two different meanings.

### **FORM - [would + VERB]**

Examples:

- I knew you **would help** him.
- I knew you **would not help** him.

### **FORM - [was/were + going to + VERB]**

Examples:

- I knew you **were going to go** to the party.
- I knew you **were not going to go** to the party.

### **i) Future in Past**



Future in the Past is used to express the idea that in the past you thought something would happen in the future. It does not matter if you are correct or not. Future in the Past follows the same basic rules as the simple Future.

"Would" is used to volunteer or promise, and "was going to" is used to plan. Moreover, both forms can be used to make predictions about the future.

Examples:

- I told you he **was going to come** to the party. *PLAN*
- I knew Julie **would make** dinner. *VOLUNTARY ACTION*

- Jane said Sam **was going to bring** his sister with him, but he came alone. *PLAN*
- I had a feeling that the vacation **was going to be** a disaster. *PREDICTION*
- He promised he **would send** a postcard from Egypt. *PROMISE*

### REMEMBER No Future in Time Clauses

Like all future forms, Future in the Past cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of using Future in the Past, you must use Simple Past.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** I already told Mark that when he **would arrive**, we would go out for dinner.
- **Correct:** I already told Mark that when he **arrived**, we would go out for dinner.