



Present tenses

A Sample sentences

The logistics department dispatches finished goods to our customers and receives raw materials from our suppliers. Delivery documentation is enclosed with the consignment, but the shipping papers aren't prepared in this department. In this area here the goods are loaded onto trucks; and over there incoming goods which have just arrived are unloaded. A consignment is just being delivered over there. We have been using plastic packaging for many years; however, next year we are moving to more environmentally-friendly materials.

B Form

Present simple and Present continuous

	Positive	Negative	Question
<i>Present simple active</i>	We <i>receive</i> raw materials from our suppliers.	The supervisor <i>doesn't prepare</i> the papers.	Where <i>do you store</i> finished goods?
<i>Present simple passive</i>	All goods <i>are received</i> at this depot.	The bill of lading <i>isn't dispatched</i> .	Where <i>are</i> the goods stored?
<i>Present continuous active</i>	The supervisor <i>is checking</i> the delivery.	I <i>am not sending</i> out a bill of lading with this shipment.	When <i>are we moving</i> to the new depot?
<i>Present continuous passive</i>	Goods <i>are being unloaded</i> over there.	At present the pallets <i>are not being reused</i> .	Why <i>are</i> those crates <i>being moved</i> ?

Present perfect

	Positive	Negative	Question
<i>Present perfect simple active</i>	Our contractor <i>has built</i> a supporting wall.	They <i>have not drained</i> the water yet.	How many tunnels <i>have</i> they <i>dug</i> ?
<i>Present perfect simple passive</i>	The walls <i>have been built</i> .	The water <i>has not been drained</i> .	<i>Has</i> the cable <i>been laid</i> ?
<i>Present perfect continuous active</i>	The supervisor <i>has been checking</i> the walls today.	I <i>have not been working</i> on that site since last year.	How long <i>have</i> they <i>been excavating</i> at the site?

Note: the *present perfect continuous passive* is very rare

C Uses

The *present tenses* are used to express a range of meanings.

The *present continuous* describes:

- 1 an activity at or around the time of speaking
At present we are using plastic packaging.
- 2 a fixed future plan
Next year we are building a new depot.

The *present simple* describes:

a regular or characteristic happening
How often do you receive shipments?

The *present perfect* describes:

- 1 an activity at a non-specific time in the past
Our contractor has built a new supporting wall.
- 2 an activity which started in the past and continues to the present
We have been working on this project since last year.

- 1 Choose the correct verb form in each of the following.
 - 1 In this process, the mixture is heated/is heating to 120°C.
 - 2 Once the salts are dissolving/have dissolved, the heat is reduced.
 - 3 Several people have survived/are surviving the earthquake and are treating/are being treated in hospital at the moment.
 - 4 For security purposes the employees change/are changing their passwords regularly.
 - 5 Up until now people in this area have taken/take waste plastic to recycling centres, but at present we have tried/are trying a curbside collection system.

- 2 A journalist is asking some questions. Complete the answers by putting the verb in brackets into the appropriate present tense in the active or passive.

- 1 A: Do you normally hold these products in stock?
B: No. They are normally made to order. (make)
- 2 A: Is the chief engineer here at the moment?
B: I'm afraid not. He isn't currently inspecting the plant in the north of Scotland. (inspect)
- 3 A: Can I see the new design?
B: Yes, of course. It is just coming off the production line. (come)
- 4 A: How many units do you produce a month?
B: We produce 5,000 units a month and only a very small number are rejected. (produce) (reject)
- 5 A: How long have you been using imported raw materials?
B: We have been importing rayon for many years but we only just began using imported polyester. (import) (begin)
- 6 A: Is this the natural colour of the fabric?
B: No, this fabric is dyed. (dye)
- 7 A: And how long will it be kept in store?
B: Not long at all. We will be dispatching this load tomorrow afternoon. (dispatch)

- 3 Complete the following text with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

Over the past ten years, this area (a) has experienced (experience) severe flooding. Houses (b) have been damaged (damage) and roads (c) have been destroyed (destroy). The local authority (d) has decided (decide) to introduce a flood control system. At present our workforce (e) is building (build) a dam on the west side of the town and dikes along the river bank (f) are being heightened (heighten). We must complete the work within two months, so at present we (g) are working (work) 24 hours a day. We (h) believe (believe) that these measures will solve the problem in the short term but on 1st May we (i) will start (start) work on a new watercourse. The plans (j) have been drawn up (draw up) already and we (k) will be (be) ready to start next week.

Past tenses

- A** Last year we began a study of airbags on our four wheel drive vehicles. First we analysed the results of the tests that we had carried out. After the results had been compiled, we used modelling software to evaluate the performance of the airbags. This showed how well they had performed under different conditions. While we were evaluating the physical performance, another study was assessing the materials that we were using. All the results were then recorded into a database.

B Form

Past simple and Past continuous

	Positive	Negative	Question
Past simple active	Last year we <i>began</i> a new study.	We <i>didn't develop</i> the software ourselves.	Where <i>did</i> you <i>record</i> the results?
Past simple passive	The performance of the air bags <i>was assessed</i> .	The results <i>weren't recorded</i> .	Where <i>were</i> the findings <i>published</i> ?
Past continuous active	While the analyst <i>was carrying</i> out the test the other technicians <i>were not recording</i> the results.	What <i>were</i> you <i>doing</i> during the test phase?
Past continuous passive	While the test <i>was being</i> carried out the results <i>were not being</i> recorded.	Why <i>were</i> the findings <i>being written</i> down?

Past perfect

	Positive	Negative	Question
Past perfect simple active	After we <i>had compiled</i> the results ...	Because they <i>had not recorded</i> the data ...	<i>Had</i> they <i>carried out</i> all the tests?
Past perfect simple passive	... after the results <i>had been compiled</i> because the data <i>had not been recorded</i> .	<i>Had</i> all the tests <i>been carried out</i> ?
Past perfect continuous active	The analyst <i>had been checking</i> the walls yesterday ...	We <i>had not been evaluating</i> the physical characteristics ...	How long <i>had</i> you <i>been working</i> on the project?

Note: the *past perfect continuous active* is quite unusual and the *past perfect continuous passive* is very rare

C Uses

All the *past tenses* are used to express activities at a definite time in the past.

The *past simple* describes:

an activity at a definite time in the past

The study of airbags was started last year.

The *past continuous* describes:

an activity which is a time frame for another activity

While we were studying the airbags, we made a significant discovery.

While our team was studying performance, another team was looking at the characteristics.

The *past perfect* describes:

an activity that happened earlier than another activity in the past

Our studies showed how well the equipment had performed.

Notes:

We use the *past tenses* with these expressions:

yesterday *yesterday morning/afternoon/evening*

last *last night/week/month/year*

ago *one hour/two weeks/three months/four years ago*

in *in 2005/the 1990's/the 19th century*

1 Six of the following sentences contain mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them.

- 1 Sydney Harbour Bridge was building in 1932.
- 2 While they were carrying out tests in the laboratories, researchers were analysing past results.
- 3 The first real road builders in Britain was the Romans.
- 4 The Romans built roads of layers of broken stones of various sizes and were covering them with flat stones.
- 5 The system didn't working because the loudspeaker had been wrongly connected.
- 6 Before factories were told to stop polluting the environment, waste was being dumped in rivers and in the sea.
- 7 Louis Pasteur was discovering the action of germs while he was studying fermentation in wines.
- 8 The production process had already been shut down when the leak in the fuel tank was found.
- 9 Nuclear energy began to be used from the mid-1950s.
- 10 In the second half of the 20th century, the electronics industry transforming the way we work in factories.

2 Make past tense questions and answers using the words given.

1: *When were fibre optics first developed?*

- 1 When / be / fibre optics / first / develop?
- 2 The boxes / break / because they / make / of low quality materials.
- 3 The power supply / cut off / because / cables / come down / during the storm.
- 4 They / not complete / the foundations / by the time the building materials / arrive.
- 5 When / they / install / the solar panels?
- 6 be / this / the first hydroelectric scheme/ in Scotland?
- 7 They / not use / wood chip / for heating / when the engineer / visit / the factory.
- 8 How / they / produce / gas / before they / discover / North Sea gas?
- 9 be / the oil pollution along the coastline / cause / by an oil tanker spillage?
- 10 How / they prepare access to this mine?

3 Complete the following report of an accident which happened in a factory with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

On Friday morning at 9.25 a worker in the chemical plant (a) _____ (find) by a female colleague. He (b) _____ (lie) on the floor. His colleague (c) _____ (check) that he (d) _____ still _____ (breathe) and then (e) _____ (call) the emergency services. The injured man (f) _____ (take) to hospital where he later (g) _____ (recover). An investigation at the factory (h) _____ (find) that a bottle containing a dangerous chemical liquid (i) _____ (leave) open. Vapour from the liquid (j) _____ (escape) into the air. While he had been working in the room he (k) _____ (become) unwell. He (l) _____ (become) drowsy and then (m) _____ (fall) unconscious. Investigating officers are interviewing everyone who (n) _____ (work) in the factory that morning.



Future forms

A Sample sentences

A: When are we going to treat the first patients with the new drug?

B: The results from the tests won't be available before next year.

A: When is PharEurop going to register the drug?

B: They are preparing the preliminary forms next month. So they'll be ready before the summer.

A: And when are you going to publish that paper on the results?

B: I am submitting it to the medical journal after the summer.

B Form

1 There is no *to* after *will* or *shall*:

The results of the tests will be ready after the summer.

2 You need the verb *to be* with the *present continuous* and the *going to* forms:

I am submitting it to the medical journal after the summer.

When is PharEurop going to register the drug?

C Uses

Look at the differences in meanings between the following pairs of sentences:

I am going to upload the new web page next week. (I intend to do it: future with *going to*)

I am uploading the new web page next week. (It is my fixed plan to do it: future with *present continuous*)

We are going to digitize the pictures so that we can upload them to our website. (We intend to digitize them: future with *going to*)

The digital pictures will be uploaded to our website on 1st June. (The upload date is a fact: future with *will*)

Now look at this mini-dialogue. Notice the different shades of meaning between the three future forms:

A: When will the hardware be installed?

B: We are going to lay the network cables next Tuesday.

A: I'm seeing the electrical contractor tomorrow. We're going to review the site plan.

B: Good. So when do you think the system will go live.

A: The file server will be delivered on Friday.

B: And the work stations?

A: They're coming at the beginning of the following week.

Notes:

1 The *present continuous* needs an expression of future time to give it a future meaning.

The work stations are coming. (now)

The work stations are coming at the beginning of next week. (in the future)

2 Typical expressions of future time are:

tomorrow morning/afternoon/evening but tonight

next week/month/year

in two weeks/months/years

in the short/medium/long term

3 The negative of *will* is *won't*:

The results won't be ready this week.

1 Match these present tense situations with the future intention.

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| 1 The building materials are being delivered. | a We're going to replace the faulty machine. |
| 2 There is a backlog of orders. | b We're going to build a new warehouse. |
| 3 We're shutting down production. | c The assembly line is going to be inspected. |
| 4 The workers need different interesting jobs to do. | d We're going to automate it in the near future. |
| 5 This is a very slow manual process. | e The workers are going to work overtime. |
| 6 There have been too many faulty goods recently. | f We're going to introduce job rotation. |

2 In the following situations choose the correct sentence, a) or b).

- 1 You are reminding a colleague about the programme for tomorrow.
 - a Remember that you'll meet the supplier at 12 o'clock.
 - b Remember that you're meeting the supplier at 12 o'clock.
- 2 Two colleagues are discussing the future visit by inspectors.
 - a The inspectors won't allow us to store chemicals in this cupboard.
 - b The inspectors are not allowing us to store chemicals in this cupboard.
- 3 Designers are discussing the car models with airbags.
 - a The use of airbags is going to save more lives in the future.
 - b The use of airbags is saving more lives in the future.
- 4 Two managers need the results from some research before November.
 - a They won't be able to complete the research before November.
 - b They aren't completing the research before November.
- 5 A senior manager isn't looking forward to next week because he's worried about the tests.
 - a Tests will be carried out next week.
 - b Tests are being carried out next week.

3 A salesman is describing a new product to a customer. Complete what they say with *will* or *won't* and a verb from the box.

give • operate • deal • take • be • contact
install • provide • need • revolutionize • warm • see

S: This is an excellent new material which (a) _____ the use of solar panels.

C: I see, and how many hours of sunshine (b) _____ we _____ to produce energy?

S: It (c) _____ necessary to have sunshine. It (d) _____ in daylight only.

C: (e) _____ it _____ enough energy to warm the building in winter?

S: It (f) _____ the building but you may need additional heating when it is very cold.

C: What about installation?

S: We (g) _____ it for you. It (h) _____ long and you (i) _____ soon _____ how effective it is. We (j) _____ you a three year guarantee and if there are any problems we (k) _____ with them immediately.

C: When will you be able to install it?

S: As soon as we receive your order we (l) _____ you to discuss a suitable date.