

University of Mosul
college of Political science

Headway

Fourth stage

2024-2025

Assistant lecturer: Nawar Basil

- What are the different types of verb tenses?
- ~~The three main verb tenses are the past, present, and future,~~ but there are also four grammatical aspects: simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous. When you combine the three time periods with the four aspects, you get twelve unique verb tenses.

What are some examples of the different verb tenses?

The simple tenses show actions happening at different times, while the perfect tenses show completed actions that relate to different time periods. The continuous tenses are for ongoing actions that take a while to complete. The perfect continuous tenses combine the perfect and continuous tenses to describe ongoing actions that happen over a period of time.

Use the simple future for actions that have not happened yet but will later. To form the simple future, just place the modal verb *will* before the root form of the main verb. (Note that if the action will happen in the **near future**, you can use the present continuous instead.)

*She **will be** president one day.*

*I **will not go** to the wedding without a date!*

Future perfect continuous

[will] + [have] + [been] + [present participle]

The future perfect continuous depicts future ongoing actions that continue up until a certain point. Like the future perfect and future continuous, it's used with a specified time.

In ten minutes, my parents will have been waiting in traffic for four hours.

I will have been eating healthy for a whole year by September.

[will] + [have] + [past participle]

The future perfect shows an action that will be completed in the future by a specified time. Because it depends on another time, the future perfect is often used with words like by, before, at, or when.

By the time you read this, I will have already left.

She will have eaten lunch before her sister even wakes up.

- Past perfect continuous

- [had] + [been] + [present participle]
- The past perfect continuous tense is used just like the past perfect tense, except it describes ongoing actions that happened in the past instead of a one-time occurrence. It's often used with the words when, until, and before to connect it to another past action.

Present tenses

Simple present

The simple present is the most basic of the English tenses. It's used for individual actions or habitual actions in the present.

Often the simple present is just the root verb with no changes or additions. The main exception to this is when the subject is third person and singular. In this case you add the suffix –s. If the verb ends in o, ch, sh, th, ss, gh, or z, you add –es. If the verb ends in a consonant and y (and the subject is **third-person singular**), drop the y and add –ies.

Today I feel like a million bucks!

Present perfect

[have/has] + [past participle]

Although it's quite common, the present perfect is one of the most difficult English verb tenses. It is used to describe a few different types of actions, including:

an ongoing action started in the past that is not yet completed

the same action completed multiple times in the past and likely to be completed again

an action completed very recently (usually with just or now)

an uncompleted action that is expected to be finished (in the negative

Additionally, the present perfect can be used to emphasize the significance of a completed action, especially one that happened over time.

We have tricked him every April Fool's Day since we were kids.

My niece has grown so much this year!

Present continuous

[am/is/are] + [present participle]

Use the present continuous to show an action happening right now or in the near future.

I am reading The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy for the fifth time!

We are eating pizza tonight. ■

Present perfect continuous

[have/has] + [been] + [present participle]

The present perfect continuous shows an ongoing action in the present that was started in the past. It is often used to emphasize the length of time.

We have been waiting for over an hour!

The team has been practicing nonstop for the tournament.

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- Continuous tense

- We use the continuous tenses (also known as the progressive tenses) for ongoing actions or actions that happen a while before completion. For example, *They are studying all night* means the studying lasts many hours before it's finished.
- Please note that **you usually do not use the continuous tense with stative verbs** like *want, love, have, and need*.
- The continuous tenses use a conjugation of the auxiliary verb *be* along with the main verb's present participle, or *-ing* form

Perfect continuous tense

When you combine the perfect and continuous tenses, you get the perfect continuous tense. It's typically used just like the perfect tense, except it describes ongoing actions that happen over a period of time.

The construction of the perfect continuous tense uses a conjugation of the auxiliary verb *have*, the auxiliary verb *been* (the past participle of *be*), and the present participle of the main verb.

Past tenses

Simple past

We use the simple past to show actions completed in the past, with no extra emphasis.

For regular verbs, you form the simple past tense by adding the suffix *-ed* to the end of the verb (or just *-d* if the past tense verb already ends in an *e*).

Be careful of irregular past tense verbs, however. These don't follow the normal rules and use their own unique forms for the past tense. For example, the past tense of the irregular verb *go* is *went*.

Regular verbs: *I **picked** up the glass, but it **dropped** from my hand.*

Irregular verbs: *This morning I **went** to the store, but I **forgot** the milk.*

Past perfect

[*had*] + [past participle]

What if you're talking about two different actions in the past and want to show that one happened before the other? The past perfect, also known as the pluperfect, shows that one past action happened earlier than another one.

*She **had arrived** at the office before she realized it was Sunday.*

*I ran to my car when I noticed my wife **had left** already.*

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Past continuous

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

Use the past continuous to show an ongoing action in the past, especially if the action was interrupted by another action. It's also used for habitual actions that occurred in the past but not in the present. It's usually used with adverbs like *always* or adverb phrases like *all the time*.

*My dog **was whimpering in his sleep** when the TV woke him up.*

*As kids, my friends and I **were always getting** into trouble.*

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- Past, present, and future tenses
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- The past, present, and future are the central divisions of time in English. The present represents actions happening now, while the past represents actions that happened earlier, and the future describes actions that will happen later.

Simple tense

The simple tense is a grammatical aspect that refers to the normal forms of the past, present, and future tenses—nothing fancy! Unlike the other aspects, it doesn't add any new information. True to its name, simple tenses are the easiest to form and have the fewest rules.

Perfect tense

The definition of the perfect tense is a little more complicated. It's used for actions that relate to other points in time, either completed or ongoing.

For example, in the sentence *I have played soccer since I was a child*, the perfect tense indicates that the action occurred continuously in the past and still happens in the present. By contrast, in the sentence *I played soccer when I was a child*, the simple past tense indicates that the action occurred **only** in the past, and has no relation to the present.

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What is a verb tense?

Verb tenses show when an action took place, as well as how long it occurred. The main verb tenses are the past, present, and future.

There are also additional aspects that give extra details, such as the length of time the action occurred, which actions happened first, or whether a past action has an impact on the present. These grammatical aspects are the simple tense, perfect tense, continuous tense, and perfect continuous tense.

Verb tenses list: How many tenses are there in English?

The standard tense in English is the present tense, which is usually just the root form of the verb. The past and future tenses often require changes or additions to the root form, such as the suffix *-ed* for the past tense and the modal verb *will* for the future.

However, for each of the past, present, and future tenses, there are four different aspects that add additional details. For example, the continuous tense shows that an action is ongoing. It can be used in the present (*she is sleeping*), past (*she was sleeping*), or future (*she will be sleeping*).

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In ten minutes, my parents will have been waiting in traffic for four hours.

I will have been eating healthy for a whole year by September.

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Future continuous

[will] + [be] + [present participle]

Use the future continuous tense for future actions happening over a period of time, especially when a specific time is mentioned. The future continuous tense also shows more certainty and likelihood than the simple future.

By this time tomorrow, I will be drinking margaritas on the beach.

We will be attending a meeting from noon until 3 p.m.

Future perfect continuous

[will] + [have] + [been] + [present participle]

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In ten minutes, my parents will have been waiting in traffic for four hours.

I will have been eating healthy for a whole year by September.

Verb tense FAQs

What are verb tenses?

Verb tenses are changes or additions to verbs to show when the action took place: in the past, present, or future. The phrase *verb tense* is also used for grammatical aspects, which show how long an action occurs.

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