

The system of tenses in English

Forms / Types/ Uses

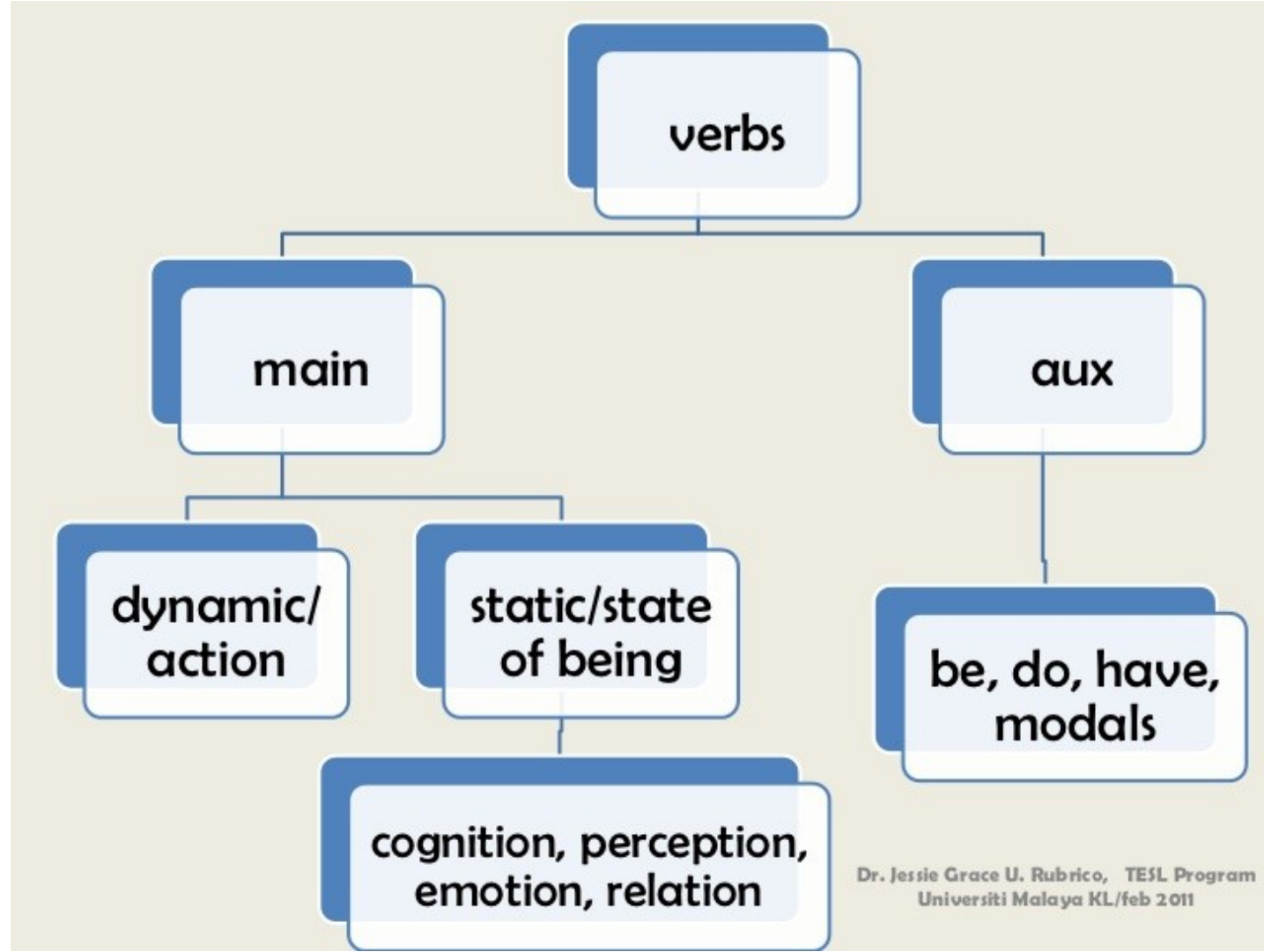
ENGLISH VERBS

- A word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence, and forming the main part of the predicate of a sentence, such as hear, become, happen.



- Although some grammars identify anywhere between twelve and sixteen English tenses, the nineteen finite, or conjugated, verb forms in English express more than just tense. To be more precise, English has:
 - ✓ **Two tenses:** present and past.
 - ✓ **Four aspects:** simple, progressive, perfect, perfect-progressive.
 - ✓ **Three moods:** indicative, subjunctive, imperative.
 - ✓ **Two voices:** active and passive.





TENSE

- Tense is the expression of location in time of an action or state. Grammatical tense only roughly relates to time. English has only two verb tenses: **present and past**. The general formula for forming the simple present tense in English is:

SIMPLE PRESENT		NUMBER	
		SINGULAR	PLURAL
PERSON	FIRST	BASE	BASE
	SECOND	BASE	BASE
	THIRD	BASE (L)	BASE



ASPECT

- Aspect is the expression of the temporal structure of an action or state. Aspect in English expresses ongoing actions or states with or without distinct end points. English has four aspects: **simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect-progressive.**
- Although not always identified, the **simple aspect** is the default aspect of the simple present and simple past tenses. The simple aspect expresses single actions, habits, and routines.



ASPECT

SIMPLE

CONTINUOUS

PERFECT

PERFECT CONTINUOUS

PROGRESSIVE ASPECT

- The **progressive aspect** expresses incomplete or ongoing actions or states at a specific time. For example, the use of the progressive aspect in "*I am floating the book*" indicates that I started floating the book in the past and am still floating the book in the present and presumably the future.
- The formula for forming the **present progressive** is [**simple present "to be" + present participle**].
- The formula for forming the **past progressive** is [**simple past "to be" + present participle**].




PERFECT ASPECT

- The **perfect aspect** expresses the consequences resulting from a previous action or state. For example, the use of the perfect aspect in I have floated the book focuses on the end result of my floating the book (my having floated the book) as opposed to the process of floating the book.
- The formula for forming the **present perfect** is [simple present "to have" + past participle].
- The formula for forming the **past perfect** is [simple past "to have" + past participle].



PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE ASPECT

- The **perfect-progressive aspect** expresses incomplete or ongoing actions or states that began in the past and continue to a specific time. For example, the use of the perfect-progressive aspect in I had been floating the book indicates that I started floating the book in the past and continued to float the book until a specific point in time at which I stopped floating the book.
 - The formula for forming the **present perfect-progressive** is [simple present "to have" + past participle "to be" + present participle].
 - The formula for forming the **past perfect-progressive** is [simple past "to have" + past participle "to be" + present participle].
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○ **Present participles**, or -ing forms, are formed by adding the suffix -ing to the base form of a verb.

For example, the present participles of eat and read are eating and reading.

○ **Past participles**, or -en forms, are formed

1.) identically to the -ed past tense.

2.) by adding the suffix -en to the base form, or.

3.) with a stem change. For example, the past participles of study, take, and begin are studied, taken, and begun.



MOOD

- **indicative** mood expresses a simple statement of fact, which can be positive (affirmative) or negative.

I like coffee.

I don't like coffee.

- **imperative** mood expresses a command.

Sit down!

- **subjunctive** mood expresses what is imagined or wished or possible

The President ordered that he attend the meeting.



VOICE

- Voice is the expression of relationships between the predicate and nominal functions. English has two voices: **active and passive**.
- In the active voice, the subject performs the action of or acts upon the verb and the direct object receives the action of the verb. In the passive voice, the subject receives the action of the transitive verb.
- For example, the sentence **I read** the book is in the active voice because **the subject I performs the action of reading and the direct object the book receives the action of reading**.
- The sentence The book **was read** [by me], on the other hand, is in the passive voice because **the subject The book receives the action of reading**.



MAIN VERBS

- Main verbs have meaning on their own (unlike helping verbs). There are thousands of main verbs, and we can classify them in several ways:
- **Transitive and intransitive verbs.**
- **Linking verbs.**
- **Dynamic and stative verbs.**
- **Regular and irregular verbs.**



TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS.

- A **transitive** verb takes a direct object: Somebody killed the President. An **intransitive** verb does not have a direct object: He died. Many verbs, like speak, can be transitive or intransitive. Look at these examples:

- **Transitive: You need to use an object.**

- I **saw** an elephant.
- We are **watching** TV.
- He **speaks** English.

- **Intransitive: I can use it alone in the verb phrase or with adverbial.**

- He has **arrived**.
- John **goes** to school.
- She **speaks** fast.



AUXILIARIES (HELPING VERBS)

- Auxiliary verbs are verbs that are used together with the main verb of the sentence to express the action or state.
- **Main verb + auxiliary verb = complete idea**
- The main auxiliary verbs are:
- be, am, is, are, was, were, do, did, have, has, had.
- (They don't have meaning)

Example sentences (the auxiliary verb is in **bold**, and the main verb is underlined):

They **are** jogging.

She **was** sitting.

We **were** waiting for hours.

Is she sleeping?

He **didn't** know the answer.

We **have** gone a long way.

Has she received any of my letters?

Do you smoke?

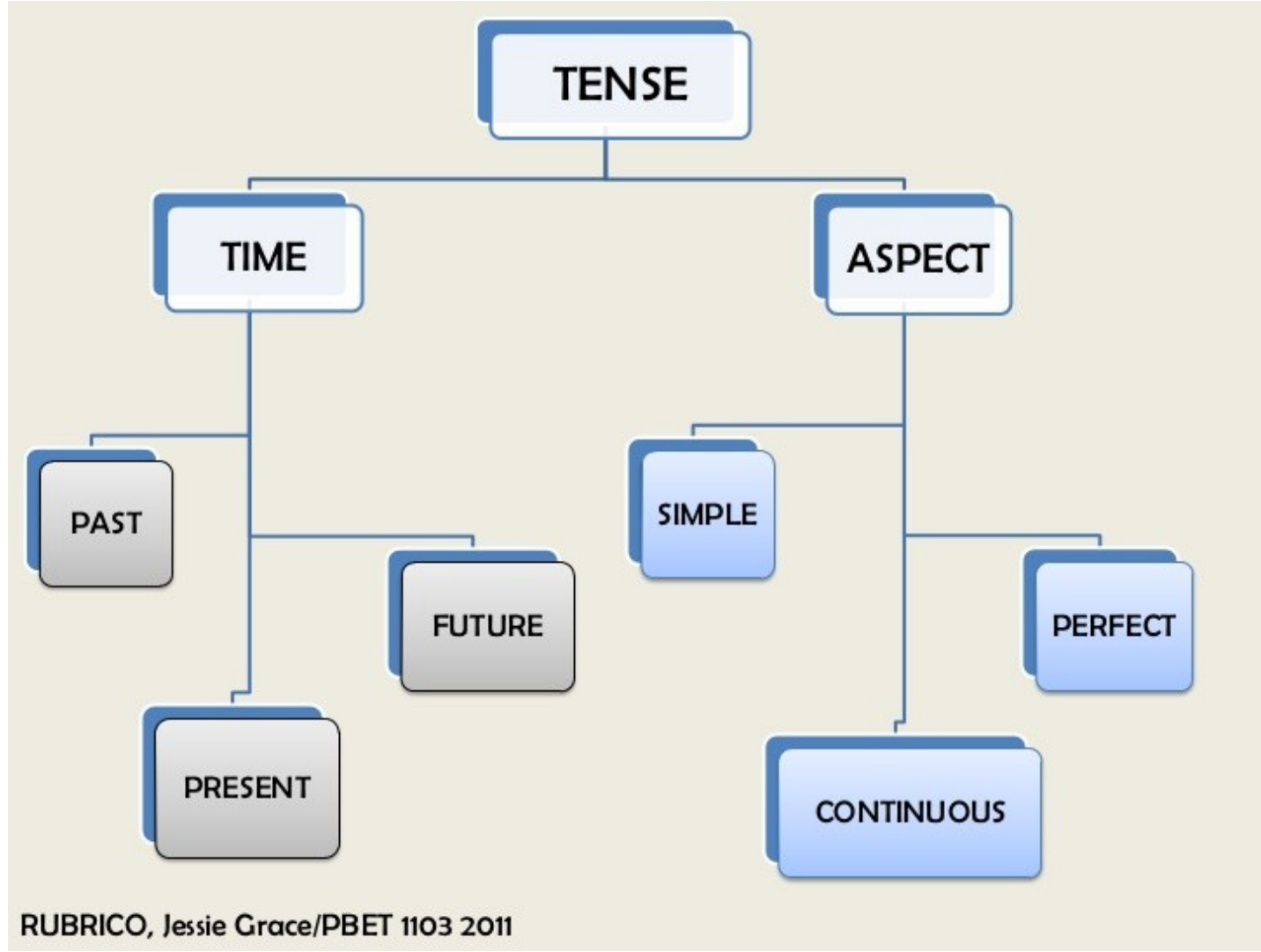
Will she help?



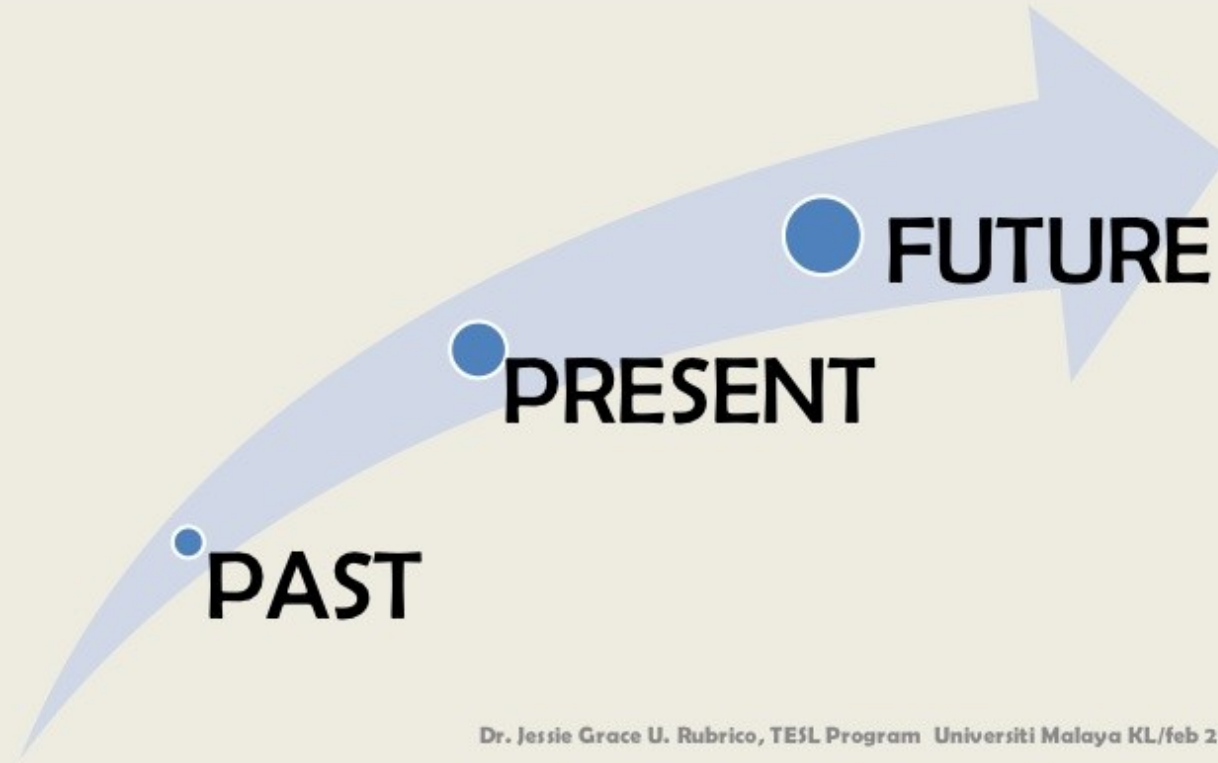
Modal	Example	Uses
Can	They can control their own budgets. We can't fix it. Can I smoke here? Can you help me?	Ability / Possibility Inability / Impossibility. Asking for permission. Request.
Could	Could I borrow your dictionary? Could you say it again more slowly? We could try to fix it ourselves. I think we could have another Gulf War. He gave up his old job so he could work for us.	Asking for permission. Request. Suggestion. Future possibility. Ability in the past.

May	May I have another cup of coffee? China may become a major economic power.	Asking for permission. Future possibility.
Might	We'd better phone tomorrow, they might be eating their dinner now. They might give us a 10% discount.	Present possibility. Future possibility.
Must	We must say good-bye now. They mustn't disrupt the work more than necessary.	Necessity / Obligation. Prohibition.
Ought to	We ought to employ a professional writer.	Saying what's right or correct
Shall (More common in the UK than the US)	Shall I help you with your luggage? Shall we say 2.30 then? Shall I do that or will you?	Offer Suggestion. Asking what to do.

Should	<p>We should sort out this problem at once.</p> <p>I think we should check everything again.</p> <p>Profits should increase next year.</p>	<p>Saying what's right or correct.</p> <p>Recommending action.</p> <p>Uncertain prediction.</p>
Will	<p>I can't see any taxis so I'll walk.</p> <p>I'll do that for you if you like.</p> <p>I'll get back to you first thing on Monday.</p> <p>Profits will increase next year.</p>	<p>Instant decisions.</p> <p>Offer.</p> <p>Promise.</p> <p>Certain prediction.</p>
Would	<p>Would you mind if I brought a colleague with me?</p> <p>Would you pass the salt please?</p> <p>Would you mind waiting a moment?</p> <p>"Would three o'clock suit you?" - "That'd be fine."</p> <p>Would you like to play golf this Friday?</p> <p>"Would you prefer tea or coffee?" - "I'd like tea please."</p>	<p>Asking for permission.</p> <p>Request.</p> <p>Request.</p> <p>Making arrangements.</p> <p>Invitation.</p> <p>Preferences.</p>



TIME

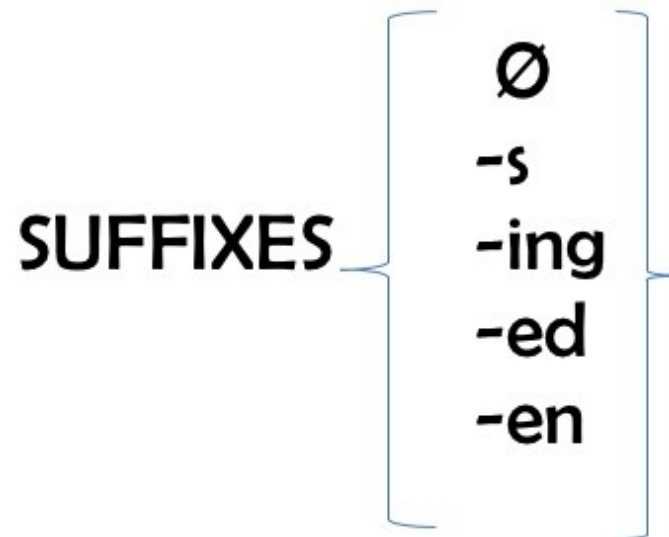


TENSES IN ENGLISH			
	T I M E		
ASPECT	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
SIMPLE	Simple Past	Simple Pres	Simple Fut
CONTINUOUS	Past Cont	Pres Cont	Future Cont
PERFECT	Past Perf	Pres Perf	Future Perf
PERFECT CONTINUOUS	Past Perfect Continuous	Pres Perf Continuous	Future Perf Continuous

Source: Master, P. (1996), p.48.

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Inflections of verbs



Inflection: number (Subj-V agr); tense

Simple Tenses

- **SIMPLE PRESENT**
- **SIMPLE PAST**
- **SIMPLE FUTURE**

Simple Present Tense

Usage

- habitual action; recurring action

Structure: Verb_{base} $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} -s \\ -\emptyset \end{array} \right\}$

> adverbs of frequency: often, always, frequently, usually, sometimes, seldom, rarely, never, etc.

Simple Future Tense

- Usage: action/states in a future time

- Structure  + Verb_{base}

Simple Pres + future time expression:

We leave for Kelantan tomorrow.

Will or Be going to?

Making prediction

- will : for general prediction
 - > It will rain tomorrow
- be going to: linking prediction to present circumstance
 - > They are going to find it difficult to get tickets to Manila.


Will or Be going to?

Making prediction

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Simple Past Tense

- Usage: actions that happened in the past that has no connection to the present

- Structure: Verb_{base} 

Subject-Verb Agr > NIL, except for BE

CONTINUOUS TENSES

- **PRESENT CONTINUOUS**
- **PAST CONTINUOUS**
- **FUTURE CONTINUOUS**

Present Continuous Tense

- **STRUCTURE:**
 - BE {am, is, are} + Verb-ing
- **USAGE:** ongoing actions

Past Continuous Tense

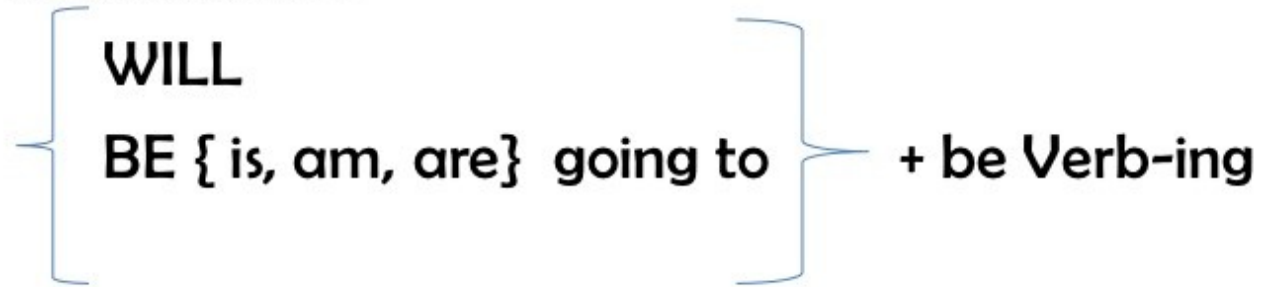
- **STRUCTURE:**
 - BE {was, were} + Verb-ing

USAGE: V_1 was happening when
 V_2 happened

V_2 > simple past: reference time

Future Continuous Tense

- **STRUCTURE:**

**WILL**
BE { is, am, are} going to } **+ be Verb-ing**

- **USAGE:** X will be happening when
Y takes place

PERFECT TENSES : completed action

- **Present Perfect:** Action is completed vis-à-vis the present. > I have read it.
- **Past Perfect:** Action is completed vis-à-vis the past. > I had read it.
- **Future Perfect:** Action is completed vis-à-vis the future. > I will have read it.

Present Perfect Tense

- **Structure : {has/have} + Verb_{en}**
- actions that occurred sometime in the past but have relevance in the present
- Verb_{en} - past participle of the verb

USAGE -

1. To talk about experiences.

- *Examples*

I have been to Spain.

She has never visited us.

Have you ever tried crabs?

- ***never* and *ever*** -often used with the Present Perfect Tense to talk about experiences.

2. To talk about an action which started in the past and continues up to now.

- *Examples*

I have been a teacher for more than ten years.

We haven't seen the President since Friday.

How long have you been in UM?

- ***since and for***

- express how long the action has lasted.

3. To talk about a past action that has an effect in the present.

Examples

- ***I have lost my card.***
 - ***I don't have it now.***
- ***June has gone to London.***
 - ***She isn't here now.***

Present Perfect & Past Simple tenses

Past Simple tense - definite finished time in the past. For example: *yesterday, last week, when I was abroad, then, after etc.*

- *Examples*

I finished college twenty years ago.

Where did they first meet?

I didn't study Mandarin then.

Present Perfect tense - time references that refer to the time up to now.

For example: *today, this week, this month, ever, never, already, recently, yet, etc.*

- ***Examples***

I haven't seen Tom today.

Have you ever smoked a cigar?

I have never been abroad.

Future Perfect Tense

- Structure:

will have + Verb_{en}

- Usage: V₁ will have happened
before V₂ happens

PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSES

- **PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS**
- **PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS**
- **FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS**

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

- **STRUCTURE**

have {has, have} + been + Verb-ing

- **USAGE :**

X began happening and
has continued until **NOW**

Examples: Present Perfect Continuous

- They have been waiting at the Café for over an hour.
- I have been working here for two years.
- She has not been reporting to work since Monday.
- Peter and Nona have been quarreling over money lately.

Past Perfect Continuous Tense

- **STRUCTURE**

had been + Verb-ing

- **USAGE**

X (past perfect continuous) started happening and continued to happen before Y happened (simple past)

Future Perfect Continuous Tense

- **STRUCTURE:** will have been + Verb-ing
- **USAGE:**
X will continue to happen until
Y happens at a particular future time

resources

<https://www.brighthubeducation.com/english-homework-help/39260-the-english-verb-system-for-esl-students/>

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/english-grammar-reference/verbs>

- The base form of a verb in English is the infinitive without the preposition to functioning as an infinitive marker.
- Despite popular belief, English does not have a future tense. Futurity is, instead, expressed through modal verbs, specifically will and shall.



Communication in the past

COMMUNICATION IN THE FUTURE

COMMUNICATION IN THE PRESENT