

ALL 12 ENGLISH TENSES MADE SIMPLE

1. Simple Present

The present simple is used to talk about **habits**, **routines**, **general facts**, and **permanent situations**.

When to Use the Present Simple:

- **Habitual Actions:** Things you do regularly.
- **Routines:** Daily, weekly, or monthly routines.
- **General Truths or Facts:** Facts that are always true.
- **Permanent Situations:** Things that are not likely to change.

Examples:

- **Habits:** “I drink coffee every morning.”
(This is something you do every day as a habit.)
- **Routines:** “She goes to the gym three times a week.”
(This is part of her regular routine.)
- **General Truths:** “The Earth revolves around the Sun.”
(This is a scientific fact that never changes.)
- **Permanent Situations:** “He lives in Kinshasa.”
(This is where he lives, and it’s a long-term situation.)

Other uses:

- **Scheduled Events:** When talking about fixed events, like a timetable. “The train leaves at 8 AM.” (This is a scheduled event in the present.)

TIP

Present Simple: Think of this tense as your “everyday” tense. It describes what you do regularly and what is true for you now.

2. Present continuous

The present continuous, is used to talk about actions **happening right now**.

When to Use the present continuous:

- When talking about **temporary actions** or **ongoing situations**.
- When talking about **planned future actions**.
- Changes taking place now.

Examples:

- “I am teaching English” (We use the auxiliary **BE** [**am, is, are**] followed by the main verb with **ING** at the end.)

- “I am stay**ing** with my friend for a few days.” (My stay is temporary but it will change)
- “I am meet**ing** my uncle tomorrow.” (Non-distant future action)
- “My English-speaking skills are impro**ving** every day.”

3. Present perfect tense

This connects the past to the present

When to Use the Present perfect:

- When talking about **life experiences** or things that happened at some point before now.
- Recent actions or events

Examples:

- I have finished my homework. (The action happened in the past, but the result is still relevant in the present.)
- I have visited Paris (Life experience.)
- She has lost her key.

4. Present perfect continuous tense

This is used for actions that started in the past and are still happening.

Examples:

- We have been studying English in PEL Family for 10 months. (We started in the past and we are still learning.)
- They have been dating since 2023. (It points the exact moment they started dating until now.)
- He has been playing piano since he was a child for 17 years

5. Past Simple

The past simple is used to talk about completed actions that happened at a specific time in the past. It's often accompanied by **time expressions** like yesterday, last week, two days ago, etc.

When to Use the Past Simple:

- **Completed Actions:** Actions that started and finished at a specific time in the past.
- **Past Habits or Routines:** Things you used to do in the past, but no longer do.
- **Stories or Narratives:** When telling a story about something that happened in the past.

Examples:

- **Completed Actions:** “I watched a movie last night.”
(The action of watching the movie is finished and happened last night.)
- **Past Habits:** “When I was a child, I played soccer every weekend.”
(This was a habit in the past, but you no longer do it.)
- **Stories:** “She visited Paris last year and saw the Eiffel Tower.”

(This tells the story of what she did during her trip to Paris.)

Other uses:

- **Sequences of Events:** When talking about actions that happened one after the other in the past.
- “He came home, ate dinner, and then went to bed.”
- (Each action is completed, and they happened in sequence.)

TIP

Past Simple: Use this tense when you want to tell someone what you’ve done and when it happened.

6. Past continuous tense

This is used for actions that were happening at a specific time in the past.

When to Use the past continuous tense:

- When describing background events in a story.
- Unfinished on-going action in the past corrupted by a finished action

Examples:

- We **were eating** and the dog **was barking** outside, when it suddenly started to rain.
- I **was reading** a book when my sister called. (The action of reading was in progress when my sister called.)
- I **was having** dinner with my family when the doorbell rang

7. Past perfect tense

This shows that one action happened before another.

When to Use the past perfect tense:

- To make the sequence of events clear to avoid confusions.
- when there are two or more actions

Examples:

- She had already left when I arrived. (First, she left, and then I arrived.)
- Many people had died in Goma before the government agreed to negotiate with the M23 rebels.

8. Past perfect continuous

This is used for actions that were happening for a duration before another in the past.

Examples:

- He had been working at the company for five years before he got promoted.

- I felt really tired because I had been driving all day.

9. Future Simple

The future simple is used to talk about actions that will happen in the future. It is often used with the words will or going to.

When to Use the Future Simple:

- **Future Intentions or Plans:** Things you intend to do in the future.
- **Predictions:** Things you think will happen in the future.
- **Promises or Offers:** When you make a promise or offer to do something.
- **Decisions Made on the Spot:** Things you decide to do at the moment of speaking.

Examples:

- **Future Intentions:** “I’ll visit my grandmother next weekend.”
(This is something you plan to do in the future.)
- **Predictions:** “It will rain tomorrow.”
(This is a prediction based on evidence or belief.)
- **Promises:** “I’ll help you with your homework.”
(This is a promise to help.)
- **On-the-Spot Decisions:** “I’m tired. I think I’ll go to bed.”
(You’ve just decided to go to bed in the moment.)

Other uses:

- **Predetermined Facts:** Facts that are sure to happen in the future, often with timetables.
- “The plane will depart at 8 AM.”
(This is a scheduled fact about the future.)

TIP

Future Simple: Use this tense to talk about things that haven’t happened yet but will happen at some point in the future.

10. Future continuous tense

This is used for actions that will be happening at a specific time in the future.

When do we use the Future continuous tense:

- Ongoing actions in the future
- Fixed arrangements

Examples:

- This time tomorrow, we will be having a debate. (Tomorrow by the same time, our debate will be in progress.)
- At 8AM on Sunday, I will be driving to church
- These holidays, I will come to Goma and I will be staying at my house.

11. Future perfect tense

This is used to shows that an action will be completed before a certain point in the future.

Examples:

- By the end of this lesson, I will have known how to express any idea using different tenses. (This means before the teach says; that's all about tenses, I will have been able to use any tense correctly.)
- By August, Caleb will have saved \$500

12. Future perfect continuous tense

This is used for actions that will have been happening for a period of time before a future moment.

Examples:

- By the time you arrive, I will have been waiting for two hours.
- By August, Caleb will have been saving money for three months.