

Tense is the form taken by a verb to indicate time and continuance or completeness of an action or event.

Tenses are of three main types viz. Present Tense, Past Tense and Future Tense. Further, each of these is sub-divided into four categories i.e. Simple Tense, Continuous Tense, Perfect Tense and Perfect Continuous Tense.

### **(I) PRESENT TENSE**

It expresses an action that is currently going on or habitually performed, or a state that currently or generally exists.

Examples: She *plays* hockey and then *goes* home.

He *goes* to dance classes.

I *get up* every day at four o'clock in the morning.

Sun *rises* in the east.

**(1) Simple Present Tense** – It is used to describe universal truths, habits, unchanging situations and scheduled activities.

Examples for repeated or regular actions in the present time period:

- I *take* the tram to the office.
- Prakash *works* eight hours every day.
- The train to Mumbai *leaves* at 10 P.M.

**Examples for facts:**

- We *belong* to India.
- Sun *sets* in the west.
- The president of the USA *lives* in the White House.

**Examples for habits:**

- They *travel* to their farmhouse every weekend.
- She *brushes* her teeth twice a day.
- I *get up* early every day.

**Formation of Simple Present Tense:**

- The first person (I) takes the first form of verb like- I *go* and I *work* there etc.
- The second person (You) takes the first form of verb like- You *come* and You *run* etc.
- In the third person singular number, the verb always ends with 's' like- He *wants*, She *gives*, She *thinks* and She *runs* etc. In case the verb is ending with 'y', it changes to 'ies' like- She *flies* and He *cries* etc.
- In the third person plural number, the first form of verb is used like- They *come* and They *go* etc.

**(2) Present Continuous Tense** – It is used for those actions which are happening now or are unfinished. This tense is also used when the action is temporary and it is also known as Present Progressive Tense.

**Examples:**

- He is *weeping*.
- She is *talking* with the guests.
- The baby is *sleeping* in the crib.

Present Continuous Tense is also used to express something not happening right now or will not happen in the near future, for example- You are not *watching* the game, She is not *sitting* over there and I am not *going* to the meeting after work etc. Moreover, The Present Continuous Tense is also used in questions as well, for example- Is he *laughing*?, Are you *coming*? and Are they *listening* to the teacher? etc.

**(3) Present Perfect Tense** – It is used to indicate the completion of an activity or an action that occurred at some point in the past. Though, the time of the action is not exactly known, this tense is mostly used to refer to actions completed in the immediate past (not a very long time ago).

**Examples:**

- I *have eaten* my meal.
- I *have finished* cooking.
- He *has bought* a car.

**Note:**

In the present perfect sentences, the past participle of 3rd form of verb is used with the auxiliary verbs 'has' or 'have' depending upon the subject of the sentence. For example, if the subject of the sentence is 'She, He, It or a singular noun' then the auxiliary verb 'has' is used and when the subject of the sentence is 'They, You or a plural noun' then the auxiliary verb 'have' is used.

**Examples:**

- She *has qualified* the exam.
- They *have helped* us.
- You *have done* a good job.
- He *has not started* a business.
- It *has come*.

**(4) Present Perfect Continuous Tense** – It is used for an action which started in the past and is continuing at the present time. A time reference is also used in the sentence to show the time of action. The specific words 'since' and 'for' are used to show the time of action.

'Since' is used if the exact starting time of action is known like - since Sunday and since 6 A.M etc. and on the other hand, 'For' is used to express the amount of time like - for 10 days and for six months etc.



The auxiliary verbs 'have been' or 'has been' is used depending upon the subject of the sentence. If the subject of the sentence is 'She, He, It or a singular noun' then the auxiliary verb 'has been' is used and if the subject of the sentence is 'They, You or a plural noun' then the auxiliary verb 'have been' is used.

Structure: Subject + Auxiliary verb + Main verb + Time-reference and Subject + Have been/ Has been + Present Participle (verb+ing) + Time-reference

**Examples:**

- He *has been living* in the USA *since* 1990.
- She *has been working* in this company *since* 2002.
- He *has been studying* this book *for* three months.
- They *have been waiting* for me *for* three hours.
- Ravi *has been writing* for this newspaper *since* 25th May, 2007.
- I *have been watching* the movie *for* two hours.

**Some examples of interrogative sentences are:**

- Has *she been working* as a professor *for* five years?
- Have *they been making* a noise *for* two hours?
- Has *she been writing* the report *since* 1st March, 2016?
- Has *your mother been teaching* you *since* 2001?

## (II) PAST TENSE

It expresses an action or event that has happened or a state that previously existed.

**Examples:**

- He *went* home yesterday.
- The work *was finished* on 4th June.
- She *worked* in a sugar factory.
- My father *believed* in superstitions.

**(1) Simple Past Tense** – It is used to talk about a completed action in a time before now. The time of the action can be in the recent past or the distant past.

Examples for an action completed in the past:

- The steamer *sailed* yesterday.
- He *went* home some time back.
- She *used to* carry an umbrella.

**(2) Past Continuous Tense** – It is used to mention an ongoing action of the past or an action that continued sometime in the past. It is also known as Past Progressive Tense. In these sentences, 1st form of the verb + ing and auxiliary verbs 'was' or 'were' is used depending upon the subject of the sentence. If the subject of the sentence is 'I, She, He or a singular noun' then the auxiliary verb 'was' is used and if the subject of the sentence is 'You, They or a plural noun' then the auxiliary verb 'were' is used.

### **Examples:**

- He *was waiting* for his mother.
- She *was riding* a bike.
- The dog *was barking* at them.
- I *was planning* for the holidays.
- They *were eating* their meal.
- You *were not preparing* for the exam.

**(3) Past Perfect Tense** – It is used to show that something happened before another action in the past or simply, it is used to express two actions that happened in the past. Moreover, in this case, it is necessary to show which action/event happened earlier than the other.

### **Examples:**

- I *had done* my homework when Hari *came* to see me.
- They *lost* many games because *they had* not practised enough.
- You *had studied* French before you *moved* to Italy.
- When I *reached* the station, the train *had departed*.
- I *had just gone* out when it *started* raining.

**(4) Past Perfect Continuous Tense** – It is used when an action/event that began before a certain point of time in the past and was continuing at the given point of time in the sentence. The sentence includes a ‘time-reference’ i.e. ‘since’ and ‘for’ to show when the action started in past or for how long the action was continued in the past.

### **Sentence structure:**

Subject + Auxiliary verb + Main verb + Time-reference

Subject + Had been + Present Participle + Object + Time-reference

### **Examples:**

- She *had been watching* the game *for* two hours.
- He *had been working* for a newspaper *for* seven years.
- I *had been applying* for jobs *since* May 2013.
- She *had been teaching* *since* October, 2010
- Had *she been waiting* for her husband *for* three years.

## **(III) FUTURE TENSE**

It expresses an action/event that has not yet happened or a state that does not yet exist.

### **Examples:**

- I *will* go there.
- They *will* not play football.
- I *shall* meet him if he calls me.



**(1) Simple Future Tense** – It is used to express an action that will occur or happen in the future.

**Examples:**

- I *will* buy a laptop at the end of this month.
- We *will* shift to a new apartment the next week.
- My father *will* buy me a bicycle on my birthday.
- He *will* leave for Canada day after tomorrow.
- She *will* get admission in a new school.

**(2) Future Continuous Tense** – It is used to express an on-going or continued action which will occur at some time in the future. In these sentences, the first form of the verb + ing is used along with the auxiliary verbs ‘will be’ or ‘shall be’.

**Examples:**

- He *will be singing* a song for the audience.
- I *shall be reading* the paper then.
- He *will be meeting* us next week.
- I *will be writing* a report.

**(3) Future Perfect Tense** – It is used to indicate the completion of an action/event in the future. In these sentences, the third form of the verb is used with the auxiliary verbs ‘will have’ or ‘shall have’.

**Examples:**

- I *shall have written* my exercise by that time.
- He *will have completed* his project by Sunday.
- I *will have taken* my lunch.
- He *would have finished* his task.

**(4) Future Perfect Continuous Tense** – It is used to indicate an action represented as being in progress over a period of time that will end in the future. Time period is generally mentioned along with it. ‘Since’ or ‘for’ is used in the sentence for time-reference. In these sentences, first form of the verb + ing is used along with the auxiliary verbs ‘will have been’ or ‘shall have been’.

**Examples:**

- By next July, we shall have been living here for four years.
- The child will have been sleeping since 10 P.M.
- The doctor will have been treating patients for three years.
- You will have been using my bike for six months.
- The company will not have been advertising posts for two years.

## TENSES IN A NUTSHELL:

Tenses		Present	Past	Future
Simple	Rule :	Subject + V1 Form	Subject + V2 Form	Subject + will + V1 Form
	When to be used :	Universal Truths, planned and scheduled activities, description of routines.	Activity started in the past, got over in the past.	Only when there is possibility of the activity happening, not certainty.
	Rule :	Subject + is/am/are + ING Form	Subject + was/were + ING Form	Subject + Will be + ING Form
Continuous	When to be used :	When an Activity started some time ago, is still continuing while speaking.	An activity is going on. Before it is over, it is interrupted by another activity.	There is a certainty of the Activity happening in the future.
Perfect	Rule :	Subject + Has/Have + V3 Form	Subject + has + V3 Form	Subject + Will have + V3 Form
	When to be used :	When an Activity is over but it still has an effect on the present.	An activity started in the past and was concluded. Another Activity also happened. REFERS TO ACTIVITY 1.	Refers to Activity 1, which will have been completed, by the time Activity 2 happens.
Perfect Continuous	Rule :	Subect + has been + ING Form + Since/for	Subject + had been + ING Form + since/for	Subject + Will have been + ING Form + since/for
	When to be used :	An Activity started in the past but we are not sure when it will conclude/end.	NOT USED IN CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH	NOT USED IN CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH

### Additional notes:

- Events occurring at the same time must be given in the same tense.

### Examples

When he *fainted*, his brother *was* with him; When he *was writing* his report, his mother *was preparing* meal for him, etc.

- Will or Shall can't be used twice in the same sentence even if both the actions refer to future tense.

### Examples

I shall come if he will call me. (WRONG)

I shall come if he calls me. (RIGHT)

- With the phrase 'as if' or 'as though', the past tense and plural form of the verb should be used.

**Examples** - He behaves *as if* he *were* the owner.

It looks *as if* they *have had* a shock.

It looks *as though* you've not *met* him before.

- With the word 'wish', four verbs are used namely, *were*, *had*, *could* and *would*.

'*Were*' is used when the wish seems to be unrealizable like, I wish I were a king.

'*Had*' is used when our wish is lament over the past happening like, I wish I had accepted that offer.

'*Would*' is used when we refer to the future like I wish I would get a ticket.

'*Could*' is used when we wish that something which has already happened should have happened otherwise like, He did not go because he was busy yesterday, I wish he could go with you.