

APSU Writing Center
Verb Tense - Simple Tense

Simple Tense Forms

- **Present:** I learn
- **Past:** I learned
- **Future:** I will learn

Present Simple

Indicates that an action is taking place now, occurs regularly, or expresses general facts.

- **Forms:** verb (I, you, we, they), verb + s (he, she, it)
 - **Example:** He writes a letter today.
 - **Example:** I go to school every day.
 - **Example:** The bus leaves in an hour.

Past Simple

Indicates that an action is completed and has already taken place. (historical events)

- **Form:** verb + -ed (for regular verbs)
 - **Example:** I wrote a letter yesterday.
 - **Example:** As a girl, she wondered how her college degree would help her career.

Future Simple

Indicates that an action **will** or is **likely** to take place.

- **Form:** will + verb
 - **Example:** I will write a letter tomorrow.
 - **Example:** The prices will go up.
 - **Example:** Later today I will rinse the dishes.

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Verb Tense - Perfect Tense

Perfect Tense Forms

- **Present Perfect:** I have learned
- **Past Perfect:** I had learned
- **Future Perfect:** I will have learned

Past Participle

A past participle is a verb form used to create perfect tenses and can also function as an adjective.

- **Regular verbs:** end in -ed
 - **Examples:** excited, learned
- **Irregular verbs:** often end in -en, -n, -ne, -t, or change form completely
 - **Examples:** written, left, broken, built

Present Perfect

Indicates an action that began in the past and continues to the present or an action that occurred at an unspecified time before now.

- **Form:** have/has + past participle
 - **Example:** We have worked here since eleven.
 - **Example:** Tarrah has already read the handout.

Past Perfect

Indicates an action that occurred before another action or time in the past.

- **Form:** had + past participle
 - **Example:** By 1995, Doctor Harvey had built the first artificial brain.

Future Perfect

Indicates that an action will be completed before a specific time or event in the future.

- **Form:** will have + past participle
 - **Example:** Etenia will have written their dissertation before the school year ends.

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Verb Tense - Progressive Tense

Progressive Tense Forms

- **Present Progressive:** I am learning
- **Past Progressive:** I was learning
- **Future Progressive:** I will be learning

Progressive Tense

Indicates actions that are ongoing, in progress, or continuing at a particular time.

Present Progressive

Indicates that something is happening right now or over a current period of time.

- **Form:** am/is/are + verb+ing
 - **Example:** I am working in the writing center this week.
 - **Example:** They are running around the campus right now.

Past Progressive

Indicates an action that was in progress at a particular time in the past or an action that was interrupted by another event.

- **Form:** was/were + verb+ing
 - **Example:** I was playing chess when the phone rang.
 - **Example:** The fans cheered to Harry Styles while he was running on stage.

Future Progressive

Indicates an action that will be ongoing at a specific time in the future.

- **Form:** will + be +verb+ing
 - **Example:** Jordan will be writing his newsletter over the summer.
 - **Example:** The professor will be monitoring the class during the exam.

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Verb Tense - Perfect Progressive Tense

Perfect Progressive Tense Forms

- **Present Perfect Progressive:** I have been learning
- **Past Perfect Progressive:** I had been learning
- **Future Perfect Progressive:** I will have been learning

Perfect Progressive Tense

Indicates actions that are ongoing over a period of time and show duration.

Present Perfect Progressive

Indicates an action that began in the past and continues into the present and may continue into the future.

- **Form:** have/has + been + verb+ing
 - **Example:** I have been waiting for almost two hours.
 - **Example:** The teacher has been grading since yesterday afternoon

Past Perfect Progressive

Indicates that a past action was ongoing until another past action occurred.

- **Form:** had + been +verb+ing
 - **Example:** Ashley had been writing for a year before her article was published.
 - **Example:** Before her promotion, Nico had been working on restoring open space on campus.

Future Perfect Progressive

Indicates that an action will continue up to a specific point in the future.

- **Form:** will + have + been +verb+ing
 - **Example:** On Tuesday I will have been working on this paper for five days.
 - **Example:** Josh will have been writing for thirty minutes by the time we have to go to the store.

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Verb Tenses

Tense	Meaning
Present Simple verb verb + s (for, he, she,it)	• a fact that is true now • a recurring event (happening usually) • state or condition • a planner future action (with a future time word), scheduled events
Past Simple verb + ed the past verb form for irregular verbs	• a completed action or state in the past • an activity that took place regularly in the past
Future Simple will + verb	• a prediction about a future event • a decision at the time of speaking (unplanned)
Present Progressive am/is/are + verb+ing	• an action happening now • an action happening this (week, month, etc.) • a future action (with a future time word)
Past Progressive was/were + verb+ing	• an action in the past that was interrupted in the past by another action • a repeated past action (activity taking place a long time ago)
Future Progressive will + be + verb+ing	• an action that will be in progress at a particular time in the future

The following table is from the George Mason University Writing Center and shows a quick guide on verb tenses. It adapted from Folse, K. S. (2009). *Keys to teaching grammar to English language learners: A practical handbook*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

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Verb Tenses

Tense	Meaning
Present Perfect Progressive have/has + been + verb+ing	- an action that began in the past, has continued in the present, and may continue in the future - an action that began in the past and has recently ended
Past Perfect Progressive had + been + verb+ing	an action that occurred before another action in the past
Future Perfect Progressive will + have + been + verb+ing	a long action that is taking place in relation to another future event
Present Perfect have/has + past participle	- an action that occurred "before now," at some unspecified time in the past - a recent action that is important to the current situation or conversation - an action that began in the past but continues in the present - activities that were repeated several or many times in the past
Past Perfect had + past participle	an action that occurred before another time or another action in the past
Future Perfect will + have + past participle	a future action that will happen before a particular time or action in the future

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References

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