

Verb Tenses

APSU Writing Center Handout

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.

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.

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

References

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