

ENGLISH

Grammar: Tenses



Tenses

What are Tenses?

Tense is something which tells us **when** the action expressed by the verb **took place**. There are three main divisions of tenses.

- Past Tense: The **past tense** is used to talk about actions which took place in the past.

Manjula studied in this school.
Gretel was cleaning her house.
Raman had perfected the art of hospitality.
Harsh had been touring the country this time last year.

- Present Tense: The **present tense** is used to talk about actions which take place in the present.

Sarita lives with her parents.
Yamini is preparing dinner for her family.
I have finished my work.
The company has been functioning well.

- Future Tense: The **future tense** is used to talk about actions which will take place in the future.

Geeta will return the book.
I shall be travelling to Munich.
Rajat will have completed his chores in some time.
Beena will have been working with us for ten years.

Present Tense

The present tense can be divided into four categories:

1. Simple
2. Continuous
3. Perfect
4. Perfect continuous

Simple Present Tense

Examples of sentences in the **simple present tense**:

Habitual action	I <u>exercise</u> every day. Mala <u>visits</u> her mother on Tuesdays.
Ability	Manish <u>plays</u> the flute. Rishi <u>can drive</u> cars.
Events of the near future	We <u>leave</u> tonight. They <u>move</u> to their new apartment this week.
Facts	Mr Prasad <u>is</u> the CEO of this company. Man <u>is</u> a social animal.
Non-factual beliefs	The pen <u>is</u> mightier than the sword. I <u>trust</u> you more than I trust myself.

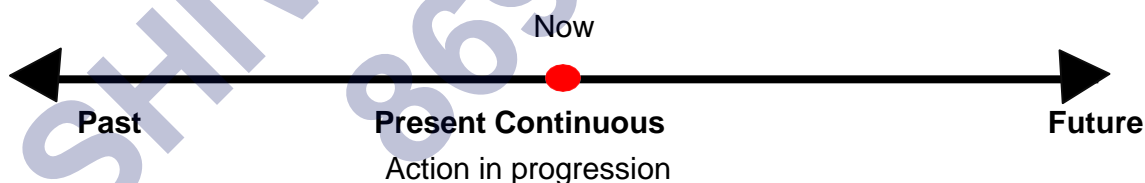
Present Continuous Tense

- The **present continuous tense** is used to express actions which are currently in progress.
- Progressive helping verbs (**is, am, are**) are used along with the „-ing‘ form of the verb.

Helping Verbs	Main Verb (-ing form)
is	working
are	packing

Examples of sentences in the present continuous tense:

Present continuous tense on a timeline:



Present Perfect Tense

- The **present perfect tense** is used to express an action which may have happened at a specific time before now.
- Perfect helping verbs (**has, have**) are used with the past participle form of the verb.

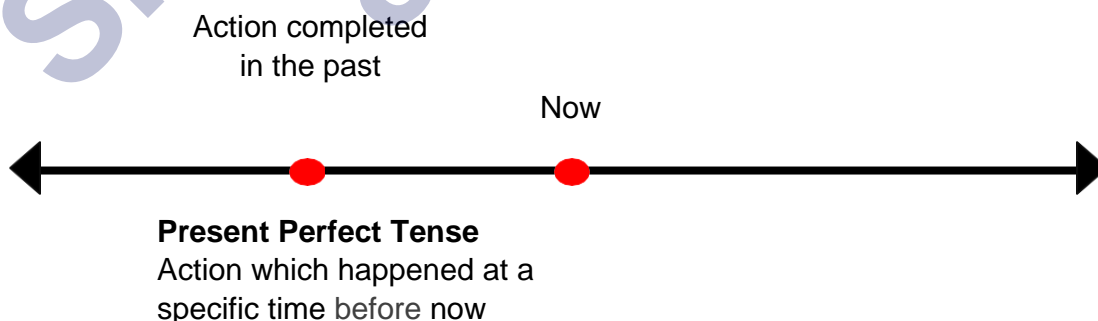
Helping Verbs	Main Verb (Past Participle)
has	frozen
have	moved

- The present perfect tense is never used when the time or date of the action is mentioned.
 - Frieda has visited us in 1999. *Incorrect*
 - Frieda visited us in 1999. *Correct*

Examples of sentences in the present perfect tense:

Recently completed action	Bob <u>has released</u> the birds from their cage. The train <u>has halted</u> at the station.
When the time of completion is unspecified	This <u>has happened</u> before. Jennifer <u>has met</u> you once.
A past action which is still in continuation	We <u>have believed</u> every word you said. Meera <u>has always</u> used the best cosmetics.
Changes which have happened over time	The despot <u>has led</u> the country to ruins. Pooja <u>has turned</u> into a high-flying socialite.
When the consequences are more important than the action itself	Manoj <u>has eaten</u> the last biscuit on the plate. The rebels <u>have ended</u> the rule of the autocratic king.
A past action whose benefits can be felt to this day	I have <u>learnt how</u> to speak in Mandarin. Ratna <u>has set up</u> an automatic burglar alarm.

Present perfect tense on a timeline:



Present Perfect Continuous Tense

- The **present perfect continuous tense** is used to express an action which may have happened in the past and has continued up to this very moment.
- It is formed out of the addition of perfect helping verbs (**has, have**) to the participle form of progressive helping verbs (**been**) and finally to the „-ing‘ form of the main verb.

Helping Verb (Perfect)	Helping Verb (Participle)	Main Verb (-ing)
has	been	speaking
have	been	playing

Examples of sentences in the present perfect tense:

Actions of the past which continue to the present moment

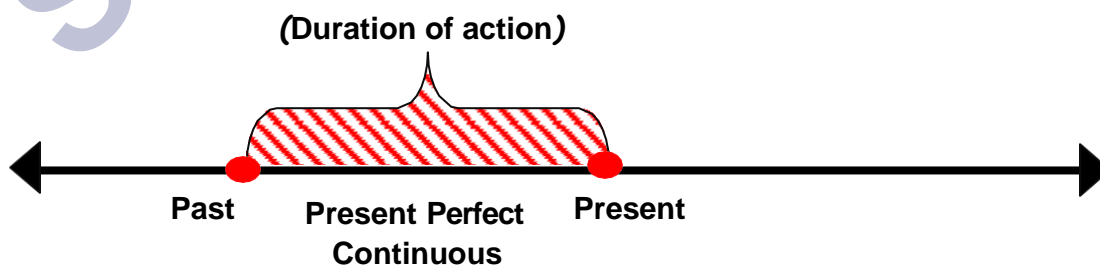
Lionel **has been writing** his assignment since 6 o'clock.

Meera **has been waiting** for you at the reception.

Points to remember

- The words „**for**‘ and „**since**‘ are used with the present perfect continuous tense to indicate the duration of the action.
- Use „for“ to talk about the duration of the action.
 - The Principal has been lecturing us **for one hour**.
 - It has been pouring **for four hours**.
- Use „since‘ to indicate when the action began.
 - Ram Singh has been working in this company **since 1980**.
 - Both the men have been toiling in the field **since morning**.

Present perfect continuous on a timeline:



Past Tense

The **past tense** can be divided into four categories:

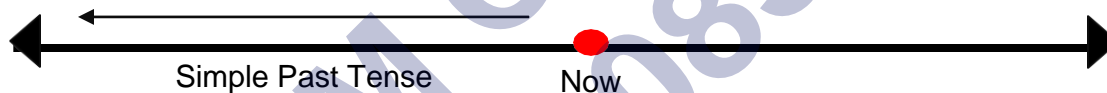
1. Simple
2. Continuous
3. Perfect
4. Perfect continuous

Simple Past Tense

- The **simple past tense** is used to express an action which was completed at one point of time in the past.

Completed actions	I appeared for the interview yesterday. Meera paid her bills.
Habitual actions of the past	Usha taught at a college nearby. The princes practised archery by the river.
Past facts or generalisations	Queen Cleopatra was married to Julius Caesar. We lived only on bread and water.

Simple past tense on a timeline:



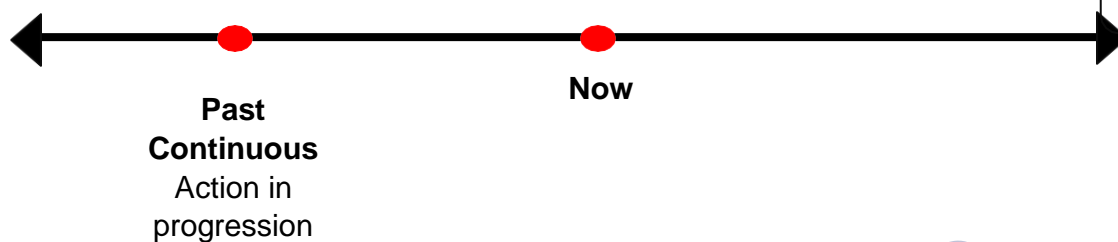
Past Continuous Tense

- The **past continuous tense** is used to express actions which were in progression at one point of time in the past.
- It is formed when progressive helping verbs (was, were) are added to the „-ing' form of the main verb.

Helping Verb	Main Verb (-ing)
was	having
were	thinking

Continuing actions of the past	Gerald was painting on a huge canvas. Sangeeta was talking in her sleep.
To mention the action of longer duration while comparing two actions	The bomb was ticking as they spoke. Lalith was sleeping when he heard the alarm bell.
To talk about a progressive action in a narrative	The mice were following the Pied Piper. The queen was listening to the minstrel's songs.

Past continuous tense on a timeline:



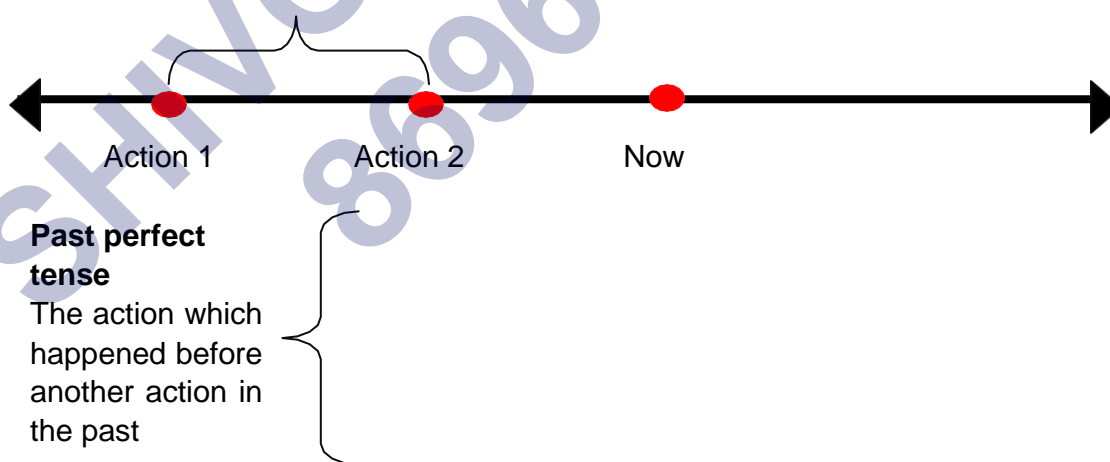
Past Perfect Tense

- The **past perfect tense** is used to express an action which may have happened at a specific time before another action began in the past.
- The perfect helping verb 'had' is used with the past participle form of the verb.

Helping Verbs	Main Verb (Past Participle)
had	begun
had	insisted

- The past perfect tense is never used when the time or date of the action is mentioned.
 - Kirk had graduated in 2007. *Incorrect*
 - Kirk graduated in 2007. *Correct*

Past perfect tense on a timeline:



Past Perfect Continuous Tense

- The **past perfect continuous tense** is used to express an action which may have started at a particular point of time in the past and may have ended at another point of time in the past.
- It is formed out of the addition of the perfect helping verb **had** to the participle form of the progressive helping verb **been** and finally to the „-ing' form of the main verb.

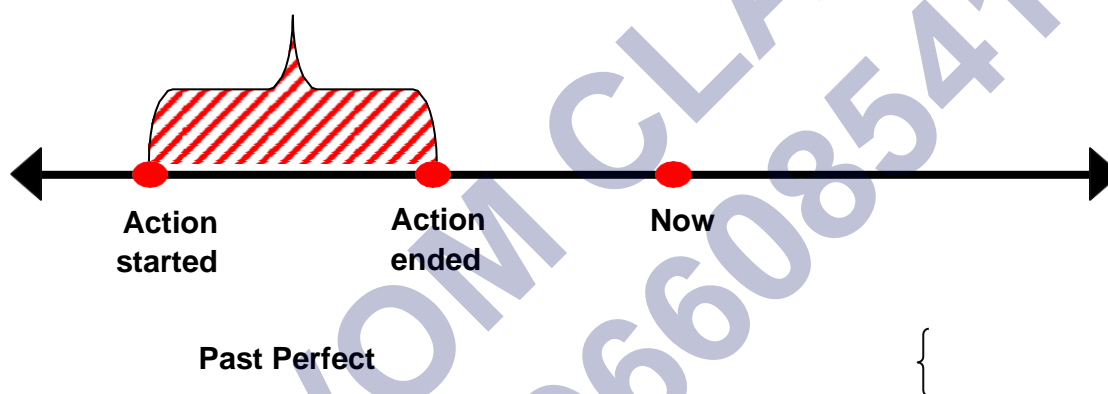
Helping Verb	Helping Verb (Participle)	Main Verb (-ing)
had	been	sleeping
had	been	talking

Examples of sentences in the **past perfect continuous tense**:

An action which may have started and may have gone on for a while in the past

Krishna had been talking to himself in a stupor.
William had been sleeping during the lecture.

Past perfect continuous tense on a timeline:



Future Tense

The future tense can be divided into four categories:

1. Simple
2. Continuous
3. Perfect
4. Perfect continuous

Simple Future

- The **simple future tense** is formed by adding the modal auxiliaries „**will**‘, „**would**‘, „**may**‘, „**shall**‘ and „**might**‘ to the simple present tense of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Main Verb
will	leave
would	come
may	stay
shall	bring
might	rain

Events of the future	The lunch will be ready in 10 minutes. Dr Paranjpe will preside over the meeting.
Consequences of present actions	You will regret if you are hasty. Children would get the wrong message.
Expressing promise or a plan	I will travel to Ireland someday. Prince Dhruva will be the heir to the throne.
Future facts or habitual actions	Our child will study in this school. Nagma will report the matter to me.

Simple future tense on a timeline:



Future Continuous Tense

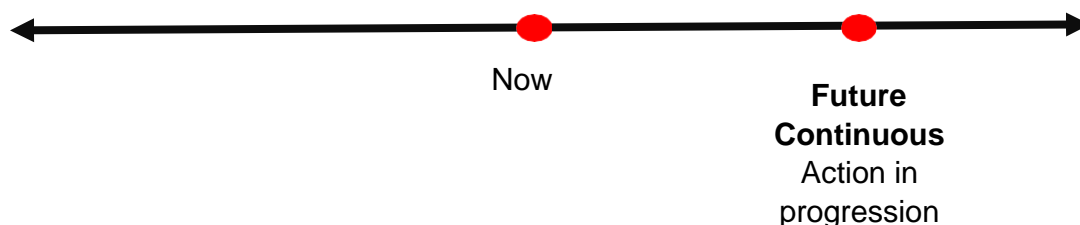
- The **future continuous tense** is formed by adding the modal auxiliaries „**will**“ or „**would**“ and the progressive helping verb „**be**“ to the „**-ing**“ form of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Progressive Helping Verb	Main Verb
will	be	going
would	be	breaking

Examples of sentences in the future continuous tense:

Future events which will be in continuation	Future events or plans
Rita will be travelling to Mumbai at this time tomorrow. George would be listening to music at night.	I will be studying in the National Institute of Technology. Falguni and I will be accompanying Sheetal to her house.

Future continuous tense on a timeline:



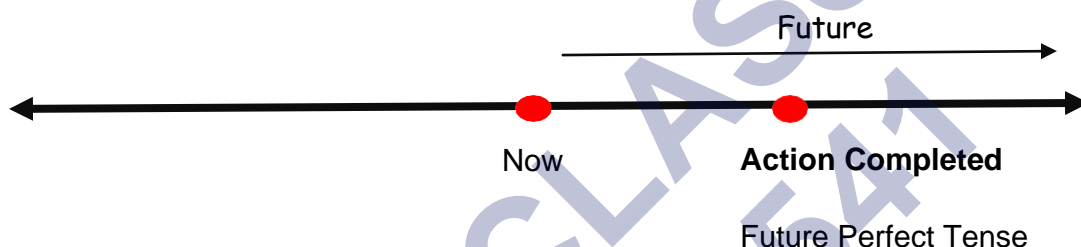
Future Perfect Tense

- The future continuous tense is formed by adding the modal auxiliaries „**will**’ or „**would**’ and the perfect helping verb „**have**’ to the participle form of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Perfect Helping Verb	Participle Form of Main Verb
will	have	eaten
would	have	taken

Future events which will be completed on or by a particular time

Manish will have cleaned the room by the time we return.
The authorities will have arrested him by daybreak.



Future Perfect Continuous Tense

- The **future perfect continuous tense** is formed by the addition of the modal auxiliaries will or would; perfect helping verb have; the past participle form of progressive helping verbs (**been**); and the present participle (**-ing**) form of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Perfect Helping Verb	Helping Verb (Past Participle)	Main Verb (Present Participle)
will	have	been	talking
would	have	been	sleeping

Examples of sentences in the future perfect continuous tense:

A cause for something in the future

Jatin will have left as he will have been waiting for two hours by then.
Anuja will have slept as she will have been awake for two hours.

Future perfect continuous tense on a timeline:

