



APSU Writing Center

Verb Tenses - Simple Tense

Simple Tense

Present: I learn

Past: I learned

Future: I will learn

Present Simple - indicates that an action is taking place at the time you express it, or an action that occurs regularly. (facts, current actions)

- **verb, verb+s (for he, she, it).**
 - Example: He *writes* a letter today.
 - Example: I *go* to school every day.
 - Example: The bus *leaves* in an hour.
 - Narrative Example: He *steps* through the open portal, and he *finds* himself in another dimension.
 - Scientific Writing Example: Many creatures in the natural world, such as frogs, still *experience* the stages of evolution.
 - Literary Analysis Example: I *am* proud of Harper Lee for using her skilled voice as a writer to speak out against racial injustice.

Past Simple - indicates that an action is completed and has already taken place. (historical events)

- **verb + ed**
 - Example: I *wrote* a letter yesterday.
 - Example: As a girl, she *wondered* how her college degree would help her career.
 - Narrative Example: The charred wallpaper peeling mournfully from the walls indicated that a fire *had broken out* sometime overnight.
 - Literary Essay Example: Inspired by her own childhood, Harper Lee *crafted* Jean Louise “Scout” Finch in close resemblance to herself.
 - Research Paper Example: When Disney World first *opened* in 1971, tickets *were* only \$3.50.

Future Simple - indicates that an action will or is likely to take place.

- **will + verb**
 - Example: I *will write* a letter tomorrow.
 - Example: The prices *will go* up.
 - Example: Later today I *will rinse* the dishes.
 - Narrative Example: He has no idea that his decision *will lead* to his tragic downfall.



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Verb Tenses - Perfect Tense

Perfect Tense

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|---|
| <p>Present Perfect: I have learned</p> <p>Past Perfect: I had learned</p> <p>Future Perfect: I will have learned</p> |
|---|

- **past participle** - defined as a word that can be used as an adjective to form perfect verb tenses. Irregular verbs ending in (-en, -n, -ne, -t). Regular verbs ending in (-ed). examples: excited, left.

Present Perfect - indicates that an action is taking place at the time you express it, or an action that occurs regularly.

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

Past Perfect - indicates an action occurring before a certain time in the past.

- **had + past participle**
 - Example: Sasha *had written* several observation reports by the time they were accepted to graduate school.
 - Example: By 1995, Doctor Harvey *had built* the first artificial brain.

Future Perfect - indicates that an action will be finished by a certain time

- **will + have + past participle**
 - Example: Etenia *will have written* their dissertation before the school year ends.
 - Example: By Wednesday, the owner *will have apologized* for their mistakes.

Verb Tenses - Progressive or Continuous Tense

Progressive Tense - indicates that events are in progress at a particular time.

| |
|--|
| <p>Present Progressive: I am learning Past Progressive: I was learning Future Progressive: I will be learning</p> |
|--|

Present Progressive - indicates that something is happening at the time you express it.

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

Past Progressive - indicates two kinds of past action

- **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.
 - Example: We *were planning* this event for many weeks.

Future Progressive - indicates a continuing in the future.

- **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.

Verb Tenses - Perfect Progressive Tense

Perfect Progressive Tense

Present Perfect Progressive: I have been learning

Past Perfect Progressive: I had been learning

Future Perfect Progressive: I will have been learning

Present Perfect Progressive - Indicates action continuing from the past into the present and possibly into the future.

- **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 went on until another occurred.

- **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 until a certain future time.

- **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

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.

| Tense | Meaning |
|---|--|
| Present Simple verb verb + s (for, he, she,it) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a completed action or state in the past• an activity that took place regularly in the past |
| Future Simple will + verb | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a prediction about a future event• a decision at the time of speaking (unplanned) |
| Present Progressive am/is/are + verb+ing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an action that will be in progress at a particular time in the future |




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| Tense | Meaning |
|--|---|
| Present Perfect Progressive have/has + been + verb+ing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an action that occurred before another action in the past |
| Future Perfect Progressive will + have + been + verb+ing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a long action that is taking place in relation to another future event |
| Present Perfect have/has + past participle | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an action that occurred before another time or another action in the past |
| Future Perfect will + have + past participle | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a future action that will happen before a particular time or action in the future |

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Verb Tenses

References

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