

Lesson One: English Tenses

Simple Present

The present tense is used to describe things that are happening right now.

Form

Just use the base form (V): (I take, you take, we take, and they take). The 3rd person singular takes an -(e)s at the end (he takes, she takes).

Add -es to verbs ending in: -ss, -x, -sh, -ch: such as he passes, she catches, he fixes, and it pushes.

The third person changes -y to -ies in verbs ending in -y. But if there is a vowel before the -y, it does not change.

Consonant + y: fly = flies, cry = cries

Vowel + y: play = plays, pray = prays

Affirmative	Interrogative	Negative
I think	Do I think?	I do not think.
You think	Do you think?	You don't think.
he, she, it thinks	Does he, she, it think?	He, she, it doesn't think.
we think	Do we think?	We don't think.
you think	Do you think?	You don't think.

Common Uses of This Tense

To express habits, general truths, repeated actions, or unchanging situations, emotions, and wishes

I smoke. I drink coffee at breakfast. (Habit)

I work in Paris. (Unchanging situation)

I go to school every day by bus. They drive to work all days. (Repeated actions)

Berlin is a large city. Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. (General truth)

To give instructions or directions (in imperative sentences)

Open the door and turn off the TV.

You walk for two hundred meters, then you turn left.

To express fixed arrangements, present or future

Your exam starts at 09.00.
She arrives tomorrow morning.

To express future time, after some conjunctions: after, when, before, as soon as, until

He'll give it to you when you come next Saturday.
She will visit the doctor before he lives.

Adverbs Commonly Used with This Tense

The simple present tense is commonly used with adverbs:
always, usually, seldom, never, sometimes, often, frequently, generally, habitually, occasionally, once, twice, thrice, etc.

Present Continuous

When someone uses the present continuous, they are thinking about something that is unfinished or incomplete, that is, the present continuous tense is used to talk about actions and situations that are in progress at the moment of speaking.

Form

The present continuous of any verb is composed of two parts - the present tense of the verb to be (am/is/are) + the present participle of the main verb (ing)

Affirmative		
Subject	+ to be	+ base+ing
she	is	talking
Negative		
Subject	+ to be + not	+ base+ing
she	is not (isn't)	talking
Interrogative		
to be	+ subject	+ base+ing
is	she	talking?

Common Uses of This Tense

To describe an action or event in the future, which has already been planned or prepared

We're going on holiday tomorrow.
I'm meeting my boyfriend tonight
.Are they visiting you next winter?

To describe a temporary event or situation

He usually plays the drums, but he's playing bass guitar tonight.
The weather forecast was good, but it's raining at the moment.

To describe and emphasize a continuing series of repeated actions with ‘always, forever, constantly’

Harry and Sally are always arguing!

You're constantly complaining about your mother-in-law!

Adverbs Commonly Used with This Tense

The following time expressions are commonly used with the present continuous tense: today, at present, at the moment, still, now, etc.

Present Perfect

The present perfect is used to indicate a link between the present and the past. The time of the action is before now but not specified, and we are often more interested in the result than in the action itself.

Form

The present perfect of any verb is composed of two elements: the appropriate form of the verb ‘have’ (present tense: have/has), plus the past participle of the main verb.

Affirmative		
Subject	to have	past participle
<i>She</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>visited</i>
Negative		
Subject	to have + not	past participle
<i>She</i>	<i>hasn't</i>	<i>visited</i>
Interrogative		
to have	subject	past participle
<i>Has</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>visited..?</i>
Interrogative negative		
to have + not	subject	past participle
<i>Hasn't</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>visited...?</i>

Common Uses of This Tense

To describe an action or situation that started in the past and continues in the present

Have you played the piano since you were a child?

I have lived in Bristol since 1984 (= and I still do.)

She has worked in the bank for five years.

They haven't lived here for years.

We have had the same car for ten years.

To describe an action performed during a period that has not yet finished

I have worked hard this week.

It has rained a lot this year.

She has been to the cinema twice this week (= and the week isn't over yet.)

We haven't seen her today.

To describe a repeated action in an unspecified period between the past and now

We have visited Portugal several times.
They have seen that film six times
It has happened several times already.
She has visited them frequently.
We have eaten at that restaurant many times.

To describe an action that was completed in the very recent past, expressed by 'just'

Has he just left?
Have you just finished work?
I have just eaten.
I have just finished my work.
We have just seen her.

To describe an action when the time is not important or not known

Have you seen 'Gone with the Wind'?
He has read 'War and Peace.' (= the result of his reading is important)
She's studied Japanese, Russian, and English.
Someone has eaten my soup!

Adverbs Commonly Used with This Tense

The present perfect tense is commonly used with the time expressions *just, yet, already, since, for, and so far.*

Simple Past

Form

Regular verbs: base + ed

e.g. walked, showed, watched, played, smiled, stopped.

Simple past of be, have, do:

Subject	Verb		
	Be	Have	Do
I	was	had	did
You	were	had	did
He, she, it	was	had	did
We	were	had	did
You	were	had	did
They	were	had	did

Affirmative

I **was** in Japan last year.

She **had** a headache yesterday.

We **did** our homework last night.

Negative and interrogative

Note: For the negative and interrogative simple past form of “do” as an ordinary verb, use the auxiliary “do”, e.g. We didn’t do our homework last night. The negative of “have” in the simple past is usually formed using the auxiliary “do”, but sometimes by simply adding not or the contraction “n’t”.

The interrogative form of “have” in the simple past normally uses the auxiliary “do”.

e.g. The **weren’t** in Rio last summer.

We **hadn’t** any money.

We **didn’t** do our exercises this morning.

Did you have a bicycle when you were a boy?

Function

The simple past is used to talk about a **completed action** in a time **before now**. Duration is not important. The time of the action can be in the recent past or the distant past.

e.g. John Cabot **sailed** to America in 1498.

My father **died** last year.

He **lived** in Scotland in 1999.

We **crossed** the Channel yesterday.

You always use the simple past when you say **when** something happened, so it is associated with certain past time expressions

Frequency:

often, sometimes, always;

A definite point in time:

Last week, when I was a child, yesterday, six weeks ago.

An indefinite point in time:

The other day, ages ago, a long time ago etc.

Note: the word **ago** is a useful way of expressing the distance into the past. It is placed after the period of time e.g. a week ago, three years ago, a minute ago.

e.g. yesterday, I **arrived** in Antalya.

Yasemin **finished** her work at seven o’clock.

We **saw** a good film last week.

She **played** the piano when she was a child.

George **left** five minutes ago.

Past Continuous

Form

The past continuous of any verb is composed of two parts: the past tense of the verb to be (was/were), and the base of the main verb + ing.

Subject	was/were	base-ing
They	were	watching

Affirmative		
She	was	reading
Negative		
She	wasn't	reading
Interrogative		
Was	she	reading?
Interrogative negative		
Wasn't	she	reading?

The past continuous describes action or events in a time **before now**, which began in the past and was **still going on** at the time of speaking. In other words, it expresses an **unfinished or incomplete action** in the past.

It is used:

Often, to describe the background in a story written in the past tense:

e.g. "The sun **was shining** and the birds **were singing** as the elephant came out of the jungle. The other animals **were relaxing** in the shade of the trees, but the elephant moved very quickly. She **was looking** for her baby, and she didn't notice the hunter who **was watching** her through his binoculars. When the shot rang out, she **was running** towards the river..."

to describe an unfinished action that was interrupted by another event or action:

e.g. I **was having** a beautiful dream when the alarm clock rang.

To express a change of mind:

e.g. I **was going** to spend the day at the beach but I've decided to go on an excursion instead.

With 'wonder', to make a very polite request:

e.g. I **was wondering** if you could baby-sit for me tonight.

Past Perfect

Form

The past perfect in English is composed of two parts: the past tense of the verb to have (had), and the past participle of the main verb.

Subject	had	past participle
We	had	decided...
Affirmative		
She	had	given.
Negative		
We	hadn't	asked.
Interrogative		
Had	they	arrived?
Interrogative negative		
Hadn't	you	finished?

Function

The past perfect refers to a time **earlier than** before now. It is used to make it clear that one event happened before another in the past. It does not matter which event is mentioned first – the tense makes it clear which one happened first.

In these examples, **Event A** is the first or earliest event, **Event B** is the second or latest event:

a.	John had gone out	when I arrived in the office.
	Event A	Event B
b.	I had saved my document	before the computer crashed.
c.	Event A	Event B
	When they arrived	we had already started cooking
d.	Event B	Event A
	He was very tired	because he hadn't slept well.
	Event B	Event A

'**Just**' is used with the past perfect to refer to an event that was only a short time earlier than before now, e.g.,

The train **had just left** when I arrived at the station.

She **had just left** the room when the police arrived.

I **had just put** the washing out when it started to rain.

PRACTICE

Exercise 1: Put the verb into the correct form, positive (I'm doing, etc.) or negative (I'm not doing, etc.).

- 1 Please don't make so much noise (I / try) to work.
- 2 Let's go out now. (it / rain) any more.
- 3 You can turn off the radio (I / listen) to it.
- 4 Kate phoned me last night. She's on holiday in France (she / have) a great time and doesn't want to come back.
- 5 I want to lose weight, so this week (I / eat) lunch.
- 6 Andrew has just started evening classes. (he / learn) Japanese.
- 7 Paul and Sally have had an argument. (they / speak) to each other.
- 8 (I / get) tired. I need a rest.
- 9 Tim (work) today. He's taken the day off.
- 10 (I / look) for Sophie. Do you know where she is?

Exercise 2: Complete the sentences using the following verbs:

Start get increase change rise

- 1 The population of the world very fast.
- 2 The world Things never stay the same.
- 3 The situation is already bad and it worse.
- 4 The cost of living Every year things are more expensive.
- 5 The weather to improve. The rain has stopped, and the wind isn't as strong.

Exercise 3: Read the situations and write sentences. Use the following verbs in the present perfect:

Arrive break fall go up grow Improve lose

- 1 Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it. *Tom has lost his key*
- 2 Lisa can't walk and her leg is in plaster. Lisa
- 3 Last week the bus fare was £1 .80. Now it is £2. The bus fare
- 4 Maria's English wasn't very good. Now it is better. Her English
- 5 Dan didn't have a beard before. Now he has a beard. Dan

6 This morning I was expecting a letter. Now I have it. The letter

7 The temperature was 20 degrees. Now it is only 12. The

Exercise 4: Read the situations and write sentences with **just**, **already** or **yet**.

1 After lunch you go to see a friend at her house. She says, 'Would you like something to eat?'
You say: No thank you. *I've just had lunch* . (have lunch)

2 Joe goes out. Five minutes later, the phone rings and the caller says, 'Can I speak to Joe?'
You say: I'm afraid
..... (go out)

3 You are eating in a restaurant. The waiter thinks you have finished and starts to take your plate away. You say: Wait a minute! (not I finish)

4 You plan to eat at a restaurant tonight. You phoned to reserve a table. Later your friend says, 'Shall I phone to reserve a table?' You say: No,
..... (do it)

5 You know that a friend of yours is looking for a place to live. Perhaps she has been successful. Ask her. You say:
..... ? (find)

6 You are still thinking about where to go for your holiday. A friend asks, 'Where are you going for your holiday?' You say:
..... (not I decide)

7 Linda went shopping, but a few minutes ago she returned. Somebody asks, 'Is Linda still out shopping?' You say: No, (come back)

Exercise 5: Complete the sentences using the following verbs in the correct form:

Buy catch cost fall hurt sell spend teach throw write

1 Mozart *wrote* more than 600 pieces of music.

2 'How did you learn to drive?' 'My father me.'

3 We couldn't afford to keep our car, so we it.

4 Dave down the stairs this morning and his leg.

5 Joe the ball to Sue, who it.

6 Ann a lot of money yesterday. She a dress which

..... £100.

Exercise 6: Complete the sentences. Put the verb into the correct form, positive or negative.

- 1 It was warm, so I off my coat. (take)
- 2 The film wasn't very good. I it much. (enjoy)
- 3 I knew Sarah was busy, so I her. (disturb)
- 4 We were very tired, so we the party early. (leave)
- 5 The bed was very uncomfortable. I well.
(sleep)
- 6 The window was open and a bird into the room. (fly)
- 7 The hotel wasn't very expensive. It much to stay there. (cost)
- 8 I was in a hurry, so I time to phone you. (have)
- 9 It was hard carrying the bags. They very
heavy. (be)

Exercise 7: What were you doing at these times? Write sentences as in the examples. The past continuous is not always necessary (see the second example).

- 1 (at 8 o'clock yesterday evening) *I was having dinner.*
- 2 (at 5 o'clock last Monday) *I was on a bus on my way home.*
- 3 (at 10.15 yesterday morning)
- 4 (at 4.30 this morning)
- 5 (at 7.45 yesterday evening)
- 6 (half an hour ago)

Exercise 8: Use your own ideas to complete the sentences. Use the past continuous.

- 1 Matt phoned while we *were having dinner*.....
- 2 The doorbell rang while I
- 3 The car began to make a strange noise when we
- 4 jessica fell asleep while she
- 5 The television was on, but nobody

Exercise 9: Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

- 1 jenny *was waiting*. (wait) for me when I *arrived* (arrive).
- 2 'What (you *I* do) at this time yesterdayt 'I was asleep.'

- 3 '..... (you *I* go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired !'
 4 How fast (you *I* drive) when the accident
 (happen)?
 5 Sam (take) a picture of me while I
 (not *I* look).
 6 We were in a very difficult position. We (not *I* know) what to do.
 7 I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last
 (see) him, he (try) to find a job.
 8 I (walk) along the street when suddenly I
 (hear) footsteps behind me. Somebody
 (follow) me. I was scared and I (start) to run.
 9 When I was young, I (want) to be a pilot.
 10 Last night I (drop) a plate when I
 (do) the washing-up. Fortunately it
 (not *I* break).

Exercise 10: Read the situations and write sentences from the words in brackets.

- 1 You went to Sue's house, but she wasn't there.
 (she / go / out)
 2 You went back to your hometown after many years. It wasn't the same as before.
 (it / change / a lot)
 3 I invited Rachel to the party, but she couldn't come.
 (she / arrange / to do something else)
 4 You went to the cinema last night. You got to the cinema late.
 (the film / already / start)
 5 It was nice to see Daniel again after such a long time.
 (I / not / see / him for five years)
 6 I offered Sue something to eat, but she wasn't hungry.
 (she / just / have / breakfast)

Lesson Two: Passive Voice

In the **active** voice, the subject of the verb is the person or thing that does the action:

John burnt the dinner last night.

In the **passive** voice, the action is done to the subject: **The dinner was burnt last night.**

Form

We form the passive with a suitable form of be + past participle.

present: he writes.	it is written
past: he wrote.	it was written
present/past perfect: he has/had written	it has/had been written

Steps to change from the active to the passive voice.

1. Move the object of the active sentence to the subject position in the passive sentence.
2. Add a form of the verb to be to the verb (Note (1) that the verb to be should be conjugated in the same tense as the verb in the active sentence, and (2) that it should confirm in number with the subject.)
3. Add the past participle form of the main verb of the active sentence.
4. Place the subject of the active sentence beginning by the preposition *by*.

Example: Marlyin mailed the letter

1. The letter
2. The letter was (the verb to be is conjugated in the past because the main verb of the active sentence 'mailed' is conjugated in the past. It is used in singular because the subject is singular.)
3. The letter was mailed.
4. The letter was mailed by Marlyin.

Common Uses

The passive is used to describe actions:

a) when we don't know who does or did the action:

My briefcase was stolen last night.

(I don't know who stole it).

b) when it is not important to know who does, or did the action:

The cars are taken to Europe every week.

(It doesn't matter who takes them).

These televisions are made in Japan.

(It doesn't matter who makes them).

PRACTICE

Exercise 11: Complete the sentences using one of these verbs in the correct form, present or past:

Cause overtake damage show hold surround invite translate

- 1 Many accidents *are caused* by dangerous driving.
- 2 Cheese from milk.
- 3 The roof of the building in a storm a few days ago.
- 4 You to the wedding. Why didn't you go?
- 5 A cinema is a place where films
- 6 In the United States, elections for president every four years.
- 7 Originally the book in Spanish, and a few years ago it into English.
- 8 Although we were driving fast, we by a lot of other cars.
- 9 You can't see the house from the road. It by trees.

Exercise 12: Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using somebody, they, people, etc., write a passive sentence.

- 1 Somebody cleans the room every day. The room is cleaned every day.
- 2 They cancelled all flights because of fog. All
- 3 People don't use this road much.
- 4 Somebody accused me of stealing money. I
- 5 How do people learn languages? How
- 6 People warned us not to go out alone.

KEY

Exercise 1:

- 1 I am trying / I'm trying
- 2 It is not raining / It isn't raining
- 3 I'm not listening / I am not listening
- 4 She's having / She is having
- 5 I'm not eating / I am not eating
- 6 He's learning / He is learning
- 7 They aren't speaking / They're not speaking / They are not speaking
- 8 I'm getting / I am getting
- 9 isn't working / 's not working / is not working
- 10 I'm looking / I am looking

Exercise 2:

- 2 is changing
- 3 's getting I is getting
- 4 is rising
- 5 is starting

Exercise 3:

- 1 Tom has lost his key.
- 2 Lisa has broken her leg.
- 3 The bus fare has gone up.
- 4 Her English has improved.
- 5 Dan has grown a beard.
- 6 The letter has arrived.
- 7 The temperature has fallen.

Exercise 4:

- 1 I've just had lunch / I have just had lunch.
- 2 he's just gone out / He has just gone out or he just went out
- 3 I haven't finished yet.
- 4 I've already done it / I have already done it.
- 5 Have you found a place to live yet?
- 6 I haven't decided yet.
- 7 she's just come back / she has just come back.

Exercise 5:

- 2 taught
- 3 sold
- 4 fell ... hurt
- 5 threw ... caught
- 6 spent ... bought ... cost

Exercise 6:

- 1 took
- 2 didn't enjoy

- 3 didn't disturb
- 4 left
- 5 didn't sleep
- 6 flew
- 7 didn't cost
- 8 didn't have
- 9 were

Exercise 7:

Example answers:

- 3 I was working.
- 4 I was in bed asleep.
- 5 I was getting ready to go out.
- 6 I was watching TV at home.

Exercise 9:

- 1 was waiting
- 2 were you doing
- 3 Did you go
- 4 were you driving ... happened
- 5 took ... wasn't looking
- 6 didn't know
- 7 saw ... was trying
- 8 was walking ... heard ... was following ... started
- 9 wanted
- 10 dropped ... was doing ... didn't break

Exercise 10:

- 1 She had gone out.
- 2 It had changed a lot.
- 3 She'd arranged to do something else. / She had arranged ...
- 4 The film had already started.
- 5 I hadn't seen him for five years.
- 6 She'd just had breakfast. / She had just had ...

Exercise 11:

- 2 is made
- 3 was damaged
- 4 were invited
- 5 are shown
- 6 are held
- 7 was written ... was translated
- 8 were overtaken
- 9 is surrounded

Exercise 12:

- 2 All flights were cancelled because of fog .
- 3 This road isn 't used much .

- 4 I was accused of stealing money.
- 5 How are languages Learned/ learnt?
- 6 We were warned not to go out alone.

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