**REVIEW OF TENSES**

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Tense is the relationship between the form of the verb and the time when the action happens or the state it describes. There are simple tenses, continuous tenses where the verb is formed with the auxiliary ‘be’ and the present participle, and perfect tenses where the verbs are formed with the auxiliary ‘have’ and the past participle.

**1. Present Tenses**

**1.1. The Simple Present Tense**

Regular and irregular verbs form the simple present with the addition of ‘s’or ‘es’ in the third person singular.

* + - * *He pays rent to the landlord every month. (affirmative form)*
* *Does he pay rent to the landlord every month? (interrogative form)*
* *He doesn't pay rent to the landlord every month. (negative form)*

**The simple present tense is used:**

1. to express habitual actions:

* *Mr Brown generally leaves the house at eight o'clock in the morning.*

(Adverbs of frequency and adverb phrases such as *never, rarely, often, seldom, sometimes, usually, frequently, always)*

1. to express natural and scientific laws, and simple facts:

* *The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.*
* *Gas expands on heating.*
* *Mr Brown owns three houses in this street.*

1. for planned future actions often associated with travel:

* *Mr Brown's plane leaves at 8.30 tomorrow morning.*

1. instead of the Present Continuous form of certain verbs which are not used in the Continuous (stative verbs, these are verbs of opinion such as *believe, like, doubt,* and verbs of perception: *see, hear, know, understand,* etc.):

* *I believe this house is haunted’.*
* *I often hear strange noises at night.*

1. for dramatic narration, particularly when the action of a play or a sport is being described:

* *The batsman hits the ball hard and it goes straight through the window of the house.*

**1.2. The Present Continuous Tense**

The present continuous tense is formed with ‘am / is / are’ (or their short forms ’m/’s/’ve) followed the present participle of the verb ‘v+ing’.

* *They're redecorating the sitting-room again. (affirmative form)*
* *Are they redecorating the sitting-room again? (interrogative form)*
* *They aren't redecorating the sitting-room again. (negative form)*

**The present continuous tense is used:**

1. generally to express a temporary action in progress at present (an action happening now)

* *The builders are mending the roof.*
* *Listen! The birds are singing outside.*

1. for an action not necessarily happening at the moment but occurring about this time:

* *I’m quite busy these days. I’m working with my uncle on a new project.*

1. for the arranged future:

* *The nursery is sending the plants for the garden next Monday.*
* *I’m seeing the manager tomorrow morning.*

1. with *always/continually/constantly* to express a frequently occurring action which annoys or surprises the speaker:

* *She is always leaving the front door open.*
* *That student is always talking during lecture.*

OR to emphasize that something is done so often that it is the characteristic of a person or thing:

* *A: I think I’ll stay here after all. –B: You’re constantly changing your mind.*

1. for a temporary situation:

* *He is paying extra premiums on his house insurance this month.*

**1.3. The Present Perfect Tense**

The present perfect tense is formed with ‘has/have’ (or their short forms ’s/’ve) followed by the past participle.

* *Mr Brown has tried to mend the gate before.*
* *Has Mr Brown tried to mend the gate before?*
* *Mr Brown hasn't tried to mend the gate before.*

**N.B.:** *Although this tense is described as a present tense, it really refers to a past that is in some way connected with the present.*

**The present perfect tense is used:**

1. for an action begun in the past and not yet finished:

* *The Smiths have lived in that house all their lives.*

1. with *for* and *since* to express an action which started in the past and extends to the present.

*Since is* used with a point of time in the past until now:

* *He has worked as a plumber since he left school.*

*For is* used with a period of time:

* *He has worked as a plumber for 10 years.*

1. with *ever* to express at any time in the past until now:

* *Have you ever been to South America?*

1. with *just* to express a recently completed action:

* *The children have just come home from school.*

1. for an action which occurred in the past but may be repeated in the future:

* *He has built many beautiful houses.*

1. After ‘It/That/This is /will be the first/second…time…’

* It’s the first time I’ve eaten such a delicious meal.
* This’s the second time I’ve been in big troubles. (talking about past events)
* It won’t be the first time he has disagreed with his parents. (talking about future events)

If the past simple is used instead of is/will, then the past perfect is used.

* It was the first time I had called him on his personal number.

**1.4. The Present Perfect Continuous Tense**

The present perfect continuous Tense is formed with ‘has/have been’ followed by the present participle ‘v+ing’.

* *The builders have been working hard for the last hour.*
* *Have the builders been working hard for the last hour?*
* *The builders haven't been working hard for the last hour.*

**The present perfect continuous tense is used:**

1. for an action which began in the past and is still continuing:

* *The repairs in your street have been causing lots of traffic problems.*
* *He has been repairing the machine the whole day.*

1. in the same way as the Present Perfect to express periods of time with *for* and *since:*

* *They've been waiting to be rehoused for six years.*
* *I*'*ve been living in this house since 1970.*

N.B.: This tense is commonly used to describe how long an action has been going on.

1. for an action which has just finished:

* *The painter has just been putting the final touches to the paintwork.*

**2. Past Tenses**

**2.1. The Simple Past Tense**

Regular verbs form the simple past with the addition of ‘—ed’.

* *He worked hard on the car yesterday. (affirmative form)*
* *Did he work hard on the car yesterday? (interrogative form)*
* *He didn't work hard on the car yesterday. (negative form)*

Irregular verbs take many forms in the affirmative (refer to the list).

* *He drove a long way yesterday.*
* *Did he drive a long way yesterday?*
* *He didn't drive a long way yesterday.*

**The simple past tense is used:**

1. for an action completed in the past at a known time:

* *He had six accidents last year.*
* *He bought an i-pad in his last trip to Spain.*

1. for an action which took place in the past for which the time is understood but not stated:

* *I bought my new car in London.*
* *Shakespeare wrote Hamlet.*

1. for habitual actions and states in the past:

* *He was furious every time he got a parking ticket.*
* *He never drove faster than the speed limit.*

1. For two or more past actions in a sequence, especially in narrative:

* *He knocked her down, grabbed her purse and ran off.*

**The simple past or the present perfect**

Very often there is confusion in the use of the present perfect and the past simple.

1. We use the past simple when we think that the situation is finished and the present perfect when we think that the situation has not yet finished.

* My father worked in this bank for 25 years. (He is no more working now)
* My father has worked in this bank for 25 years. (He’s still working there)

1. With time expressions referring to the present, such as this morning/year and today, we use the past simple when we think that this time period is completed; and we use the present perfect when we think that this time period has not yet finished.

* I didn’t take my coffee this morning. (The morning is over and I didn’t take my coffee)
* I haven’t taken my coffee this morning. (It’s still the morning and I may take my coffee later)

3-We use the present perfect to give a piece of news and the past simple to give and ask for details about things such as what, where and why.

* A: I have sold my car. (A piece of news)

B: Oh, have you? When did you sell it? (Asking for details)

A: I sold it the day before yesterday. (Giving details)

**2.2. The Past Continuous Tense**

The past continuous tense is formed with ‘was/were’ followed by the present participle of the verb.

* *They were crossing the road while the traffic lights were changing. (affirmative form)*
* *Were they crossing the road while the traffic lights were changing? (interrogative form)*
* *They weren't crossing the road**while the traffic lights were changing. (negative form)*

**The past continuous tense is used**

1. for continuous past action:

* *It was snowing heavily all day yesterday.*

1. for frequently repeated actions in the past:

* *My old car was always breaking down.*

1. for two actions in the past occurring simultaneously:

* *The lorry driver was braking hard while the traffic lights were changing.*

1. for interrupted past action (first action interrupted by second):

* *He was racing down the motorway when a tyre burst.*

1. to express intention in the past but in fact not done:

* *I was going to buy a car but I didn't have enough money.*

**2.3. The Past Perfect Tense (the pluperfect)**

The past perfect tense is formed with ‘had’ followed by the past participle of the verb.

* *He had typed half of the research paper before midnight.*
* *He hadn’t typed half of the research paper before midnight.*
* *Had he typed half of the research paper before midnight.*

**The past perfect tense is used:**

1. to express the first of two past actions:

* *He had already parked the car when I arrived.*

1. to show an action that happened before a stated past time:

* *I had finished cleaning the car before one o'clock.*
* *The secretary had arranged all the documents before the start of the meeting.*

1. to explain a past situation before a time understood but not stated:

* *He had never driven before.*

**2.4. The Past Perfect Continuous Tense**

The past perfect continuous tense is formed with ‘had been’ followed by the present participle of the verb.

* *He had been drinking when the police stopped**him. (affirmative form)*
* *Had he been drinking when the police stopped him? (interrogative form)*
* *He hadn't been drinking when the police stopped him. (negative form)*

**The past perfect continuous tense is used:**

1. for a continuous past action completed before another past action:

* *He had been driving all day, so he was very tired when he arrived.*

1. for a repeated action in the past implying continuity:

* *He had been trying to telephone the breakdown service for two hours.*

**3. Future Tenses**

**3.1. The Simple Future Tense**

Regular and irregular verbs form the simple future with ‘shall/will’ followed by the bare infinitive for the first person singular and plural, and ‘will’ for the other persons. ‘Shall’ and ‘will’ are contracted to ‘*'ll’* in spoken English. The negative is formed by putting ‘not’ after ‘shall’ or ‘will’. ‘Shall not’ is contracted to ‘*shan't’* and ‘will not’ is contracted to ‘*won't’* in spoken English.

* *He'll be at the fair tomorrow. They'll see him there. (affirmative form)*
* *He won't be at the fair tomorrow. They won't see him there. (negative form)*
* *Will he be at the fair tomorrow? Will they see him there? (interrogative form)*

**The simple future tense is used:**

1. for a simple statement of future fact:

* *Tickets for the stadium will cost £5.00.*

1. for habitual actions in the future:

* *Football will start again in autumn as usual.*

1. to express prediction for the future based on our experience or knowledge/ past experience:

* *I expect they'll go to the theatre tomorrow.*
* *Try that dress. It’ll suit you.*

1. to express an instant decision (decision made at the moment of speaking):

* A: The bag is too heavy. B: I’ll help you.
* A: Did you call Ali? B: Oh no, I forgot. I’ll call him now.

1. with ‘I (don’t) think….’

* I feel hungry, I think I’ll have something to eat.
* I don’t think I’ll go out today, I feel tired.

1. *Will* can be used to express:
2. promises: *I will remember to buy you a present at the fair.*

*I won’t tell anyone. I promise.*

1. offers: I’ll help you to carry the bag.

I’ll peel the potatoes. - Oh, thank you.

1. invitation: Will you come to the party?

Will you have a cup of tea?

1. threats: Stop or I’ll call the police.

Give me the money or I’ll tell my mother.

1. *Will* can also be used to order things and to ask someone to do something:

* (In the restaurant) I’ll have a soup and a salad, please.
* Will you shut the door, please?

1. *Shall is* used with the first person singular and plural for suggestions and offers:

* *Shall we go to the circus tonight?*
* *Shall we go for a walk?*
* *Shall I get the tickets for the theatre?*

*\*Shall* is not used in American English.

**3.2. The Future Continuous Tense**

The future continuous tense is formed with the Simple Future of the verb ‘to be’, ‘shall/will be’, and the present participle of the verb.

* *They'll be seeing that film on Wednesday. (affirmative form)*
* *They won't be seeing that film on Wednesday. (negative form)*
* *Will they be seeing that film on Wednesday? (interrogative form)*

**The future continuous tense is used:**

1. for an action in progress at a particular time in the future:

* *Ahmed can’t go to the party. He’ll be working all day tomorrow.*
* *She’ll be cleaning the house at 11 in the morning.*

1. for an arranged action in the future (its use is very similar to that of the present continuous):

* *They'll be starting to play in ten minutes’ time.*

But the future continuous can be used for the more distant or less definite future:

* *I'll be seeing him again sometime.*

whereas the present continuous expresses a nearer or more definite future:

* *I*'*m**meeting him again tomorrow.*

1. to ask about someone’s plans, especially if you want something or want them to do something for you.

* A: Will you be passing a chemist when you are out?

B: Yes, why?

A: Could you get some aspirin, please?

* A: How long will you be using the computer?

B: You can have it in a minute.

**3.3. The Future Perfect Tense**

The future perfect tense is formed with ‘shall/will’ followed by the perfect infinitive (without `to').

* *They will have finished the game by five o'clock. (affirmative form)*
* *They won't have finished the game by five o'clock. (negative form)*
* *Will they have finished the game by five o'clock? (interrogative form)*

**The future perfect tense is used:**

-to express an action in the future which will finish before or last up to a particular time in the future.

* *The show will have finished by six o'clock.*
* *We won’t have saved up enough money by the end of the year.*

The future perfect is often used with time expressions such as: by lunch time, until midnight, before then, by the time you have finished …

**3.4. The Future Perfect Continuous Tense**

The future perfect continuous tense is formed with ‘shall/will’ followed by the perfect continuous.

* *They will have been playing for 45 minutes by half time. (affirmative form)*
* *They won't have been playing for 45 minutes by half time. (negative form)*
* *Will they have been playing for 45 minutes by half time? (interrogative form)*

**The future perfect continuous tense is used:**

1- for an action which begin before a certain future time and will have finished by that time (i.e. we look ahead to a future time and imagine an action lasting from a point before that time up to that future time).

* *By the time you reach the fairground, you'll have been driving for two hours.*
* *By next December, we’ll have been living here for 25 years.*

This form stresses the continuity of the action rather than the action itself.

**1.5. Other Future Forms**

* + 1. **The ‘Going to’ Future**

The ‘going to’ future is formed with the present continuous of the verb ‘to go’ followed by the infinitive with ‘to’.

* *He's going to watch TV tonight. (affirmative form)*
* *He isn't going to watch TV tonight. (negative form)*
* *Is he going to watch TV tonight? (interrogative form)*

**The ‘going to’ future is used:**

1. to express an intention but perhaps not arranged, i.e., we have decided but perhaps not arranged to do it:

* *‘The house is dirty.’ –‘Yes, I know. I’m going to clean later.’*
* *Is Ali going to apply for the job?*

1. To make a prediction based on a present situation/present evidence:

* *The sky is cloudy. Do you think it is going to rain?*
* *He can’t see the nails on the piece of wood. He’s going to hurt his foot.*

**N.B.** ‘be going to’ can be used in the past to express an intention in the past but which was not accomplished.

* *I was going to change my son from his school but I decided not to.*
* *The boy was going to cross the road when the policeman shouted and asked him to stop.*
* *The situation was going to be very bad but the director resolved the problem at the last moment.*
  + 1. **The Present Continuous**

The present continuous tense is used:

* 1. To express an arrangement for the future, i.e., we have decided and arranged to do something (the time and /or the place of arrangement is often mentioned)
* *I’m meeting my uncle on Saturday evening.*
* *I’m going to the stadium. I’ve bought the tickets.*

\* The difference between the ‘be going to’ and the present continuous to express the future is very thin. Often we can use either forms.

* *I’m meeting Ali at eight. / I’m going to meet Ali at eight.*

\*The use of verbs of motion such as *to go* and *to come* with the ‘going to’ is generally avoided, the present continuous is used instead.

* *We are going to the zoo this weekend. (We ~~are going to go~~  …)*
  + 1. **The Present Simple**

The present Simple tense is used:

1. to express scheduled future events, usually public ones such as train timetables or travel agency programs.

* *The train leaves at 7:30 tomorrow morning.*
* *We land at midnight.*
* *What time does the film begin?*
* *Next Tuesday is the seventeenth.*

Let’s compare the uses of the ‘be going to’ with ‘will’ and the present simple tense.

**a.** Will and ‘be going to’

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| --- | --- |
| **Will** | **be going to** |
| 1-Used to talk about facts in the future.   * *My son will be six next month*.   2-Used for an instant decision.   * *‘Pineapples are not on special offer*   *this week.’ - ‘In that case, I’ll buy two’*  3-Used to make a prediction based on previous knowledge or experience.   * *I think she’ll succeed the exam.* | 1-Used to express an intention   * *I’m going to organize a party for my son’s birthday.*   2-Used for a decision already made.   * *When I’ve saved up enough money, I’m going to buy a camera.*   3-Used to make a prediction based on a present situation.   * *The clouds are dark. It’s going to rain.* |

**b.** The present continuous and ‘be going to’

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **the present continuous** | **be going to** |
| -Used to express an arrangement. (an intention already arranged)   * *I’m leaving tomorrow. I’ve bought my plane tickets.* | -Used to express an intention. (an intention but perhaps not arranged to do it)   * *Next week, I’m going to look for an new flat to live alone.* |