

Overview of English Verbs Tenses & Aspects

	PRESENT	PAST	FUTURE
SIMPLE	- use for facts, habits/routines, scheduled future actions (with time reference) - use the base form of the verb for all subjects except 3rd person singular (<i>he / she / it</i>) which uses the base form + -s <i>I live in Argentina.</i> <i>We walk to school every day.</i> <i>The plane arrives at 6 p.m.</i>	- use for completed actions with clear beginning and end points - for regular verbs, use the base form + -ed for all subjects - irregular verb forms must be memorized <i>I called you last night.</i> <i>Lincoln was president during the Civil War.</i>	- use for actions (plans, predictions, promises) that will occur in the future - use will + base form of the verb for all subjects OR - use the correct form of be in present tense + going to + base form of verb <i>I will study geology at university.</i> <i>Brazil is going to win the World Cup.</i>
CONTINUOUS	- use for actions in progress or actions that will occur in the near future, or to show irritation caused by a repeated action - use the correct form of be in present tense + -ing form of verb <i>The children are watching TV right now.</i> <i>I'm going to the gym after work.</i> <i>He is always complaining.</i>	- use for past actions that were interrupted, to show prolonged past actions or a repeated past action without time reference - use the correct form of be in past tense + -ing form of verb <i>We were sleeping when the phone rang.</i> <i>My head was aching.</i> <i>They were always arguing.</i>	- use for future actions that will be in progress when another action occurs - for all subjects, use will be + -ing form of verb OR - use the correct form of be in present tense + going to be + -ing form of verb <i>I will be waiting when your bus arrives.</i> <i>He is going to be studying at 8 p.m.</i> * Note: for many tenses, the interruption may simply be a reference to time.
PERFECT	- use for completed action at an indefinite time in the past that has some connection to the present or action that began in the past and continues to the present - use have (or has for 3rd person singular) + participle <i>She has been to Italy three times.</i> <i>I have had a cold for two weeks.</i>	- use for completed action at an indefinite time in past that has some connection to another action in past or completed action that occurred before another action in past - use had + participle for all subjects <i>Bob had already eaten when we arrived.</i> <i>She had just finished the exam when the bell rang.</i>	- use for action in the future that will be completed before some other action/time in the future - use will have + participle for all subjects <i>By next December, she will have graduated.</i> <i>On the 15th, I will have finished the class.</i>
PERFECT CONTINUOUS	- use for action that began in the past and continues to the present or to emphasize that an action is recent - use have (or has for 3rd person singular) been + -ing form of verb <i>They have been talking on the phone for over two hours.</i> <i>He has been exercising lately.</i>	- use for action in the past that continued until another action in the past and to show cause - use had been + -ing form for all subjects <i>Janet had been working there almost a year when they fired her.</i> <i>He had been partying all night, so he fell asleep in class.</i>	- use for a future action that will be in progress when another action occurs (or time is referenced) - use will have been + -ing form of verb for all subjects <i>By 3035, aliens will have been ruling the planet for 50 years.</i> <i>I will have been studying for three hours by the time you arrive.</i>