

PAST TENSES

PAST SIMPLE

Used to describe actions or events completed in the past.

Structure:

- Affirmative: Subject + verb (past simple form) + rest of the sentence.
- Negative: Subject + did not (didn't) + base form of the verb.
- Question: Did + subject + base form of the verb...?

Examples:

- Affirmative: I visited Paris last summer.
- Negative: She didn't call me yesterday.
- Question: Did they finish their homework on time?

Signal Words:

- Yesterday, last week, in 1999, two days ago, when I was a child, once, then, etc.

Notes:

- Regular verbs: Add -ed (e.g., worked, played).
- Irregular verbs: Memorize their forms (e.g., go → went, see → saw).

PAST CONTINUOUS

Used to describe actions that were ongoing at a specific time in the past.

Structure:

- Affirmative: Subject + was/were + verb (-ing) + rest of the sentence.
- Negative: Subject + wasn't/weren't + verb (-ing).
- Question: Was/Were + subject + verb (-ing)...?

Examples:

- Affirmative: She was reading a book at 8 PM.
- Negative: We weren't watching TV when you called.
- Question: Were they running in the park yesterday?

Signal Words:

- While, as, at 5 PM yesterday, when (for interruptions).

Common Uses:

- Background actions: The sun was shining, and birds were singing.
- Interrupted actions:
 - I was cooking dinner when the phone rang.
 - I woke up just as the train was stopping.
- Actions in progress:
 - I was leaving for college in London to go home (you don't move out in a day)

PAST PERFECT

Used to describe actions completed before another action in the past.

Structure:

- Affirmative: Subject + had + past participle + rest of the sentence.
- Negative: Subject + hadn't + past participle.
- Question: Had + subject + past participle...?

Examples:

- Affirmative: She had already left when I arrived.
- Negative: He hadn't finished his homework by the deadline.
- Question: Had you ever seen that movie before last week?

Signal Words (for present perfect too!):

- Before, after, already, just, never, by the time, until then, etc.

Notes:

- Often used with the Past Simple to show the sequence of events.
 - I had eaten (Past Perfect) before they arrived (Past Simple).

PRESENT PERFECT

Used to describe actions with a connection to the present.

Structure:

- Affirmative: Subject + have/has + past participle + rest of the sentence.
- Negative: Subject + haven't/hasn't + past participle.
- Question: Have/Has + subject + past participle?

Examples:

- Affirmative: I have visited Rome three times.
- Negative: She hasn't finished her project yet.
- Question: Have you ever eaten sushi?

Signal Words:

- Already, yet, just, ever, never, for, since.
 - For → Period of time (e.g., for two weeks).
 - Since → Starting point (e.g., since 2010).

Notes:

- Use for experiences: I have never climbed a mountain.
- Use for recent actions: She has just left the room.
- Use for unfinished actions: We have lived here for 10 years.

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Used to describe actions that started in the past and continue now, or actions that have recently stopped with a visible result.

Structure:

- Affirmative: Subject + have/has been + verb (-ing) + rest of the sentence.
- Negative: Subject + haven't/hasn't been + verb (-ing).
- Question: Have/Has + subject + been + verb (-ing)...?

Examples:

- Affirmative: She has been studying all day.
- Negative: We haven't been working on the project recently.
- Question: Have you been feeling sick...?

Signal Words:

- For, since, lately, recently, all day, all week.

Notes:

- Focus on duration: I have been reading for two hours.
- Visible results: She's tired because she has been running.

COMMON PROBLEMS / CONTRAST BETWEEN THEM

Past Simple vs. Past Continuous

- Past Simple: Completed action → I ate dinner.
- Past Continuous: Ongoing action → I was eating dinner when the phone rang.

Past Perfect vs. Past Simple

- Past Perfect: Action before another past action → She had left before he arrived.
- Past Simple: Chronological sequence → First she left, and then he arrived.

Present Perfect vs. Past Simple

- Present Perfect: Connection to now → I have finished my homework (it's done now).
- Past Simple: Completed action → I finished my homework yesterday.

Present Perfect vs. Present Perfect Continuous

- Present Perfect: Focus on result → I have read that book (it's finished).
- Present Perfect Continuous: Focus on duration → I have been reading that book (I'm still reading it).

QUICK TIPS FOR TIME EXPRESSIONS

- **Past Simple**: Specific time → Yesterday, last year, in 2000.
- **Present Perfect**: Unfinished time → This week, today, so far.
- **Present Perfect Continuous**: Duration → For hours, since morning, all day.

Exercise 3: mixed past tenses

- I _____ (never/see) such a beautiful view before.
- While we _____ (walk) to school, it _____ (start) raining.
- He _____ (study) English for five years now.
- When I _____ (arrive), they _____ (already/start) dinner.
- She _____ (watch) TV when the lights _____ (go) out.
- We _____ (visit) this museum last year.
- Have you _____ (ever/try) skateboarding?
- By the time they _____ (arrive), we _____ (already/finish) our homework.
- I _____ (read) this book for two hours, and I'm not finished yet.
- They _____ (not/see) the movie yet.
- While he _____ (run) in the park, he _____ (fall) and hurt his knee.
- She _____ (just/finish) her breakfast.
- We _____ (live) in this house since 2010.
- He _____ (study) when the phone _____ (ring).
- She _____ (not/be) to the new shopping center yet.
- They _____ (build) the house before they _____ (move) in.
- He _____ (cook) dinner for an hour when the guests arrived.
- I _____ (already/clean) the room before my mom asked me to do it.
- She _____ (try) to call him all day.
- _____ you _____ (ever/be) to London before?
- We _____ (go) to the beach last summer.
- While I _____ (swim) in the pool, someone _____ (steal) my bag.
- She _____ (not/want) to go because she _____ (already/see) the movie.
- I _____ (just/realize) that I _____ (lose) my keys.
- He _____ (not/know) what to say because he _____ (not/prepare).
- She _____ (work) on the report for three hours.
- I _____ (always/like) reading books.
- They _____ (leave) the party before we _____ (arrive).
- Have you _____ (hear) the news about the new mall?
- He _____ (be) tired because he _____ - (run) for an hour.
- We _____ (go) to the mountains every winter.
- The children _____ (play) outside when it started to rain.
- She _____ (not/finish) her project yet.
- While I _____ (drive), I _____ (see) a beautiful sunset.
- They _____ (just/move) to a new house.
- He _____ (write) a letter when the dog _____ (bark).
- She _____ (work) here for 10 years.
- I _____ (already/watch) the latest episode of the show.
- By the time we _____ (arrive), the event _____ (end).
- They _____ (wait) for the bus for 30 minutes when it finally arrived.

Exercise L: text, fill the gaps. (past simple, continuous and perfect)

I _____ (never/visit) Madrid before, so when my parents _____ (decide) to take me there last summer, I was incredibly excited. On the day of the trip, we _____ (wake) up early because our flight _____ (leave) at 7:00 AM. By the time we _____ (arrive) at the airport, the sun _____ (not/rise) yet, and the whole place was buzzing with activity.

While we _____ (wait) to board the plane, I _____ (feel) a mix of excitement and nervousness. I _____ (never/fly) before, so I _____ (not/know) what to expect. When the plane finally _____ (take off), I _____ (look) out of the window and _____ (see) the most amazing view of the clouds.

We _____ (land) in Madrid around 10:00 AM, and by then, I _____ (already/make) a list of all the places I wanted to visit. Our hotel _____ (be) in the city center, so while we _____ (drive) there, I _____ (notice) how busy and lively the streets were. It _____ (seem) like everyone _____ (have) somewhere to go.

After we _____ (check) into the hotel, we _____ (go) straight to the Royal Palace. I _____ (read) about it in a travel guide, but seeing it in person was completely different. While we _____ (walk) around the palace gardens, I _____ (take) pictures of everything—I didn't want to forget a single moment.

Later that afternoon, we _____ (visit) the Prado Museum, where I _____ (see) some of the most famous paintings in the world. By the time we _____ (leave) the museum, I _____ (already/learn) so much about Spanish art and culture.

In the evening, while we _____ (eat) dinner at a small restaurant, a street performer _____ (start) playing the guitar nearby. I _____ (never/hear) such beautiful music before. My parents and I _____ (talk) about our favorite moments of the day when I suddenly _____ (realize) how lucky I was to be there.

The next morning, while we _____ (pack) our bags to head back home, I _____ (think) about how much I _____ (enjoy) the trip. Even though I _____ (be) there for only two days, it felt like I _____ (experience) a whole new world.