ADVERBS & TIME EXPRESSIONS BY TENSE

How Time Expressions Guide Verb Tenses

Time expressions and adverbs are essential vocabulary clues in English because they tell us WHEN an action happens, how often it repeats, or whether it is finished, in progress, or planned for the future. For example, frequency adverbs like 'sometimes' or 'always' signal habits in the Present Simple, while 'now' or 'at the moment' show temporary actions in the Present Continuous. Similarly, words like 'twice', 'ever', or 'since' connect past experiences to the present in the Present Perfect, whereas 'by next year' points to completion in the Future Perfect.

VOCABULARY CATEGORIES: ADVERBS & TIME EXPRESSIONS FOR 8 TENSES

Verb Tense	Adverbs & Time Expressions	Example Sentence
1. Present Simple (Habits & routines)	always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, never, every day/week, once/twice a month, on Mondays	She sometimes studies in the library on Mondays.
2. Present Continuous (Now & temporary)	now, right now, at the moment, currently, today, this week/month, these days, Look! / Listen!	They are working on a new project at the moment.
3. Past Simple (Finished past time)	yesterday, last night/week/year, two days ago, in 2020, when I was a child, earlier today	We visited our grandparents two weeks ago.
4. Past Continuous (Past action in progress)	while, when, as, at 8:00 p.m. last night, all day yesterday, at that moment, during the storm	I was cooking dinner while my brother was studying.
5. Present Perfect (Life experience & unfinished time)	twice, many times, ever, never, already, yet, just, recently, so far, since (2019), for (five years)	He has traveled to Spain twice so far.
6. Future with 'Will' (Predictions & instant decisions)	tomorrow, next week/year, soon, in the future, in 2030, I think, I believe, probably, maybe	I think people will drive electric cars in the future.
7. Future with 'Going to' (Plans & intentions)	tonight, this weekend, next month, next summer, in two weeks, after graduation, later today	We are going to take a French course next summer.
8. Future Perfect (Completed before a future time)	by tomorrow, by next week/year, by 2030, by the time (+ present simple), before Friday, within two years	By next June, she will have finished her degree.

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VOCABULARY & GRAMMAR PRACTICE EXERCISES: TIME EXPRESSIONS

Exercise 1: Classify each time expression or adverb into the correct tense category from the box.
(Present Simple • Present Continuous • Past Simple • Present Perfect • Future Perfect)

1. already / yet / twice / since 2021 →

_____

2. by next year / by the time you arrive / by 2035 →

_____

3. always / every weekend / rarely / once a week →

_____

4. yesterday / three months ago / last summer / in 2018 →

_____

5. right now / at the moment / these days / currently →

_____

Exercise 2: Circle the correct time expression or adverb to match the verb tense in each sentence.

1. My parents have lived in this neighborhood (since 2010 / in 2010 / next year).
2. (By next Friday / At the moment / Yesterday), I will have completed all my final exams.
3. Look! The children are playing soccer in the rain (right now / usually / two hours ago).
4. When the phone rang, I was taking a shower (at that moment / tomorrow / twice).
5. Daniel (never / currently / by 2030) drinks coffee before going to bed.

Exercise 3: Complete each sentence with the correct verb tense using the time expression clue in bold.

1. She _____ (practice) the piano every afternoon. (Present Simple)
2. We _____ (visit) Paris twice so far in our lives. (Present Perfect)
3. At 9:00 p.m. last night, Carlos _____ (watch) a documentary. (Past Continuous)
4. By the end of this month, they _____ (save) enough money for the trip. (Future Perfect)
5. I've already bought the tickets! I _____ (travel) to Bogotá next weekend. (Going to)

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