

# Tense: Definition, Structures & Examples

**Tense** refers to the form of verbs that demonstrate the time and state of any action or event in a sentence usually performed by or centered around the subject of the sentence. The actions are called verbs. Verbs change according to tenses and other issues. As verbs are the most important elements of English sentences, tenses also carry paramount importance in English grammar.

**Tenses** are mainly categorized into three types.

1. Present Tense
2. Past Tense
3. Future Tense

Each of the types of tenses has four different forms:

- Present Indefinite Tense
- Present Progressive (Continuous) Tense
- Present Perfect Tense
- Present Perfect Progressive (Continuous)

## Present Tense

### Present Indefinite Tense

The **present indefinite** tense, also known as simple present tense, denotes a stative or habitual or eternally true action.

Examples of Present

Tense:

- Rock wants to sing.
- Bill writes the letters.
- Peter is coming to our place.
- Bob has given the book to Allen.
- I am going to the varsity.
- Aric loves to read books.
- Lisa has been living in this area for twenty years.
- The singer is singing nicely.
- The program is going on smoothly.

- Alice prefers coffee to tea.
- Alana attends the class every day.
- Tom is talented enough to do the task.
- Rick is upset.
- Richard is interested to perform in the program.
- The movie is fantastic.
- The detective book is thrilling.
- The actor is talented.
- We are excited to go to the picnic.
- We have been trying to solve the problem for two hours.
- Patrick is going to the library.

Generally simple present tense is used to indicate an action which happens regularly,  
 every day, daily, normally, generally, usually, occasionally, sometimes, often, rarely, frequently,  
 nowadays, naturally, seldom, constantly, never,  
 week,  
 at times, at present, now and then, or all the time.

**Structure:**

**Subject (third person singular number) + verb in simple present form + s/es + . . . . .**  
**Subject (all other kinds) + verb in simple present form + . . . . .**

Person/Number	Singular	Plural
First	I am a good cricket player.	We are good cricket players.
Second	You are an irresponsible person.	You all are always irresponsible.
Third	The earth is smaller than Jupiter.	Junk foods are not good for health.

There are some stative verbs which are usually used in simple tenses whether present or past or future.

The stative verbs are:

Have	Hate	Appear	Smell	Sound
Understand	Need	See	Want	
Know	Hear	Like	Taste	Own
Believe	Love	Seem	Wish	

### Examples:

- I know Billy Bob.
- He understands it.
- They love swinging in the park.
- Some people do not believe in God.
- I usually wake up at 6.00 AM.
- He plays cricket, but his brother plays football.
- Earth is bigger than Mercury.
- The heat of the sun is the least in the polar.

## Simple Present Tense in Future Meaning

The simple present tense is used to express future events that are scheduled and arranged. Examples:

- The plane **arrives** at 18.00 tomorrow.
- She **has** a yoga class tomorrow morning.
- The restaurant **opens** at 19.30 tonight.
- Next Thursday at 14.00 there **is** an English exam.
- The plane **leaves** in ten minutes.

## Present Progressive (Continuous) Tense

The **present progressive** is used to indicate the ongoing time (now). However, the stative verbs do not usually take the form of present progressive even though they refer to the present time.

Now, continually, perpetually, at this moment, at the moment, right now, this season, this year,

forever signs are not necessary all the time for a verb to present progressive tense.

## Structure:

**Subject + am/is/are + verb + ing + . . . . .**

### Example:

- I am going to the college field.
- He is coming here for some tips.
- They are making a basketball ground.
- Why are you working in that horrible place?
- Four teams are playing at this moment.
- This structure is also used to demonstrate future time.

### Example:

- Alex is leaving for Portugal tomorrow.
- I am going to complete my task tomorrow.
- Our bus is leaving at 6.00 PM.
- They are flying to Australia next month.

## Present continuous tense in future meaning

English speakers often use the present continuous tense (subject + 'be' = verb-ing) to talk about

**future plans or arrangements.** A **future arrangement** is a plan that you have decided and organized with another person.

Examples:

- **I'm meeting** Jim at the airport = Jim and I have discussed this.
- **I am leaving** tomorrow. = I've already bought my train ticket.
- **We're having** a staff meeting next Monday = all members of staff have been told about it.

It is not always necessary to state who the arrangement is with. For example, Tim says: So **what are we all doing** at Christmas?

**I'm popping over to** Poland for a few days.

**I'm looking forward to** a nice cozy Christmas.

Alice and Helen understand that Tim is talking about arrangements, even though he does

not say who the arrangements are with.

**Present continuous for things which you are about to start doing:** English speakers often use the present continuous tense to talk about things they have intended or are about to start doing. This is especially common with verbs of movement, such as go, come, leave etc.

**I'm going** to bed now - goodnight.

**I'm leaving** for work now.

## Present Perfect Tense

The **present perfect tense** is used when one intends to indicate:

- ✓ an action that occurred at a time which is indefinite and has its effect on the subject
- ✓ or action that occurred many times and has the possibility to occur in the
- ✓ an action that began in the past and still going on in the

### Structure:

**Subject + have/has + verb in the past participle form + . . . . .**

### Example:

- Alex has read the book through. (No time is indicated)
- I have read this poem many times. (Not habitual but occurred many times in the past)
- He has lived in this apartment for 15 years. (Still going on)

Just, already, yet, just now, ever, lately, recently, etc. are some of the signs for present perfect tense.

**Note:** Already comes between have/has and the past participle; yet appears with a negative form at the end of the sentence.

### Example:

- Alex has already reached there.
- Alex has not reached yet.

- I have already cleaned the house.
- I have not cleaned the house yet.

## Present Perfect Progressive (Continuous)

It is the least used form of present tense. **Present perfect progressive** is used to indicate an action that began in the past and is still occurring in the present.

### Structure:

**Subject + have/has + been + [verb + ing] + . . . . .**

### Example:

- Alex has been reading for 3 years.
- I have been sleeping since 10.00 AM
- Robert has been working in that shop for 6 years.
- We have been living together for four years.