

The Present

The Present Simple

-It's used to express an action which happens again and again, that is, a **habit**:
He **goes** for a walk every evening.
We usually **have** lunch at two.

-It's used to express a fact, that stays the same for a long time, that is, a **state**:
You **eat** too much.
She **speaks** English well.

-It's used to express **something which is always true** (general truth) about person or about a world:
Magnet **attracts** iron.

-It's also used with: verbs of mind (**know, think...**), verbs of emotion or feeling (**love, like...**), verbs of the five senses (**see, smell, taste, hear, touch**), verbs of possession (**owns, belongs...**), certain other verbs (**needed, cost, depend, contains, consist, seem**).

-Timetable future (future time)
The train **leaves** at 11.00.

The Present Continuous

-It's used to express an activity **which is happening at the moment of speaking**:
I **am** reading a book.
It **is raining** outside.

-It's used to express an activity **which is happening around the time of speaking**, but not necessarily exactly at the time of speaking:
His son **is studying** medicine.
Harold Pinter **is writing** a play.

-Future arrangement
We **are getting married** in the spring.

The past

The Past Simple

-It's used to express an action which happened **at a specific time in the past** and is now finished:

I **met** him an hour ago.

He **didn't pay** the bill yesterday.

Did you **speak** to him last night?

-It's used to **tell a story**.

The Past Continuous

-It's used to express an activity happening at a **particular time in the past**:

They **were playing** cards all evening yesterday.

Peter and I **were skiing** last Sunday.

-It's used to express an **activity that is interrupted** (using past simple and past continuous together to say that something happened in the middle of something else):

I **was watching** television **when he came** home.

While he **was watering** the garden, **it began** to rain.

-It's used for **descriptions**.

Perfect tenses

The Present Perfect Simple

-It express **an action which happened in the past and is finished**, but we are not interested in **when**. The important thing is, **that something has been finished**. We are interested in the result of the action not in the action itself:

She **has read** the book.

We **have seen** Gone with the Wind.

She **has pained** the ceiling.

-It's used to express **how much we have done, how many things we have done, or how many times we have done something**:

Ann **has written ten letters** today.

-It's used to express an action or state which results can stretch into a present:

Who **has closed** the window?

She **has hang up** her coat.

-Unfinished past

-Present result

-Present experience

The Present Perfect Continuous

-It's used to express **an action** (quite a long action) **which began in the past and has recently stopped or just stopped**:

I **have been watching** TV for an hour.

How long **have you been learning** English? I **have been learning English** since September and the term isn't over yet.

-It's also used to **ask or say how long something has been happening**. This time the action or situation began in the past and is still happening or has just stopped:

It **has been raining for two hours**.

-We often used it with **how long, for** and **since**.

-We can also use it for **actions repeated over a period of time**:

She **has been playing** tennis **since she was eight**.

How long have you been smoking?

The Past Perfect Simple

-It's used to **express an action which happened before a definite time in the past**:

She **had left** before I arrived.

-The past perfect simple **tell a story in chronological order.**

The Past Perfect Continuous

-We use it to say **how long something had been happening before something else happened:**

Ken **had been smoking for** 30 years when he finally gave it up.

She **had been crying** for a long time, before he came.

-It's used to express a **longer activity that had been going on continuously up to a definite time in the past.**

Future tenses

Will future

-It's used to express **future intention, plan** or **prediction** thought at the time of speaking.

It **will** rain tomorrow.

Going to

-It expresses a **future intention, plan or decision** thought before the moment of speaking.

-It also expresses a **future event for** which there is some evidence now.

He is **going to be** a pilot in the Air Force.

Future Simple

I **will have** a break at 8.00. (exactly at 8.00)

Future Continuous

-It is used to express **an activity that will be in progress at a specific time in the future.**

I **will be having** a break at 8.00. (around 8.00)

Future Perfect

-It's used to express an action that will be finished **before a definite time in the future.**

We don't know exactly when the action will happen; we only know it will happen before a certain time.

I **will have had** a break at 8.00. (before 8.00)

By the year 2000, the population of the world **will have reached** six billion.

Some verbs are used only in simple tenses. Here is a list of verbs which are not normally used in continuous tenses:

want like belong know suppose remember need love see realize

mean forget prefer hate hear believe understand seem

have (*when the meaning is "posses"*)

think (*when the meaning is "believe"*)