

TENSES

PRESENT

PRESENT SIMPLE

for a habit He goes for a walk every evening. We usually have lunch at two.

for a state You eat too much. She speaks English well.

for a general truth Magnet attracts iron.

as a timetable future The train leaves at 11.00.

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).

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

at the moment of speaking I am reading a book. It is raining outside.

around the time of speaking His son is studying medicine. Harold Pinter is writing a play.

future arrangement We are getting married in the spring.

PAST

PAST SIMPLE

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?

to tell a story

PAST CONTINUOUS

at a particular time in the past They were playing cards all evening yesterday. Peter and I were skiing last Sunday.

an activity that is interrupted I was watching television when he came home. While he was watering the garden, it began to rain.

for descriptions

PERFECT

PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

something has been finished and we don't know when She has read the book. We have seen the movie. She has painted the ceiling.

how much we have done, how many things we have done, 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 hung up her coat.

Unfinished past, present result, present experience

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

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.

ask or say how long something has been happening - the action or situation began in the past and is still happening or has just stopped It has been raining for two hours.

for actions repeated over a period of time She has been playing tennis since she was eight. How long have you been smoking?

We often used it with how long, for and since

PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

an action which happened before a definite time in the past She had left before I arrived.
tell a story in chronological order

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

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.

a longer activity that had been going on continuously up to a definite time in the past

FUTURE

WILL FUTURE

future intention, plan or prediction thought at the time of speaking It will rain tomorrow.

GOING TO

a future intention, plan or decision thought before the moment of speaking

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

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

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.