

## **Present Simple**

Use the present simple tense in English...

For general facts:

This shirt costs ten dollars. We speak English.

For actions that happen regularly:

I take guitar lessons on Wednesday nights. Sarah sometimes eats lunch in her office.

## **Present Continuous**

Use the present continuous tense in English...

For a continuous action in progress at the moment:

I'm currently studying biology at university. Bill can't talk on the phone right now – he's doing his homework. We're watching TV at the moment.

For future plans/arrangements:

I'm having lunch with Jack tomorrow. My sister is driving me to the airport on Saturday. Tim and Joanna are joining us for dinner next week.

## **Present Perfect**

Use the present perfect tense in English...

With actions that happened in the past at an unspecified time:

I've met several celebrities. He's been to Australia several times. We've already taken the test.

With actions that began in the past and continue to the present:

I've lived in this house for five years. Harry has worked at the same company since 1992.

Note: Usually the verbs "lived" and "worked."

## **Present Perfect Continuous**

Use the present perfect continuous tense in English...

With actions that began in the past and continue to the present:

I've been thinking a lot about the situation recently. Laura's been studying since 7 AM. We've been waiting for you to arrive for over an hour.

### **Past Simple**

Use the past simple tense in English...

For events that started and finished in the past:

I worked as a research assistant from 2001 – 2003.

He called me ten minutes ago. We went to the Bahamas last summer.

Note: Many common verbs are irregular in the simple past. Check out these tips for learning irregular verbs in English!

### **Past Continuous**

Use the past continuous tense in English...

For events that were in progress in the past (often when another one-time event happened):

Sorry I didn't pick up the phone – I was taking a shower when you called. He was sleeping on the couch when I got home. When I saw Tina and Sam at the park earlier today, they were arguing.

### **Past Perfect**

Use the past perfect tense in English...

For past events that happened BEFORE other past events:

By the time we arrived at the train station, the train had already left. When I woke up, I saw that my husband had made breakfast. Five minutes after leaving my house, I realized I'd forgotten to lock the front door.

### **Past Perfect Continuous**

Use the past perfect continuous tense in English...

For past actions that continued up to another point in the past:

Before I lost my job, I had been working on some important projects. ("working" was a continuous action until the point I lost my job) They had been hoping Pat would make a full recovery after the accident, but he died. ("hoping" was a continuous action until Pat died) She'd already been

studying English by herself for several years by the time she started taking classes. (“studying” English by herself was a continuous action until the time when she started classes)

### **Future Simple**

There are two ways to form the future simple tense in English.

Use the “going to” form of the future simple tense...

For plans, arrangements, and predictions:

After I graduate from college, I’m going to study for a Masters degree. We’re going to move to a different city next year. I think the current president is going to be reelected.

Use the “will” form of the future simple tense...

For promises, offers, predictions, and decisions made in the moment of speaking:

Promise: I’ll call you later. Offer: We’ll give you a ride home. Prediction: I have a feeling that this new singer will become very popular. Decision made in the moment: I’ll have the spaghetti and a side order of salad.

### **Future Continuous**

Use the future continuous tense in English...

For actions that will be in progress at a time in the future:

Don’t call me at 6, because I’ll be driving home from work. At 10:30 tomorrow morning, we’ll be giving a presentation in English class. He’ll be watching the football game tonight at 8.

### **Future Perfect**

Use the future perfect tense in English...

For actions that will be completed before a future time:

I will have written a book before I’m 40. We’re late. By the time we get to the theater, the movie will have started already. We will have traveled to 12 different countries by 2015.

### **Future Perfect Continuous**

Use the future perfect continuous tense in English...

For actions that will continue up to a future time:

By the time she graduates, she will have been studying for 7 years. By 7 PM, I will have been working on this project for eight hours straight.

By this time next year, they will have been living in Japan for two decades.

Note: BY and BY THE TIME are commonly used with the future perfect continuous.