

Understanding → TENSE

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Every time we talk about an action, we specify *when* that action happens by using the appropriate *tense* of the verb. By doing so, we indicate whether the action has already taken place (**past**), is currently taking place (**present**), or will take place (**future**).

But that's not all! These three different tenses can be further divided into four aspects – **simple**, **continuous**, **perfect** or **perfect-continuous** – depending on whether the actions are completed or still being acted out.

SIMPLE The simple past, present and future tenses are the most basic.

Simple Past - I sang.

Simple Present - I sing.

Simple Future - I will sing.

We use the simple aspect when we are talking about actions that are habitual or regular.



CONTINUOUS The continuous aspect means that the action is ongoing (*not completed*).

Past Continuous - He was running.

Present Continuous - He is running.

Future Continuous - He will be running.

As the actions are ongoing, we always use the present participle form (ending in *-ing*).



PERFECT The perfect aspect means that the action has been completed.

Past Perfect - They had eaten.

Present Perfect - They have eaten.

Future Perfect - They will have eaten.

We use the relevant form of the verb *to have* + the past participle, to form the perfect aspect.



PERFECT-CONTINUOUS The action had been ongoing, but is completed.

Past Perfect-Continuous - They had been waiting.

Present Perfect-Continuous - They have been waiting.

Future Perfect-Continuous - They will have been waiting.



Can you see how this is just a combination of the perfect and continuous aspects?

Worksheet 1

IDENTIFY THE TENSE



Correctly identify the tenses of the following sentences:

	Past	Present	Future	Simple	Continuous	Perfect	Perfect-Continuous
E.g I had been cooking for three hours.	✓						✓
1 Bethany will run the marathon tomorrow.							
2 It was not raining last Tuesday evening.							
3 Knowing the girl, Tom walked up to her and asked if she would like coffee.							
4 We will have written the exam by this time tomorrow.							
5 The class is quietly working on their projects.							
6 John and Matthew have eaten their lunch already.							
7 By the end of the class, the teacher will have been speaking for forty minutes.							
8 Mr. Williams was running down the street with his coat billowing like a cape.							
9 My father boiled the kettle to make tea.							
10 My sister will wrap the gift before my grandmother's birthday.							
11 When I graduate, I will have been at this school for four years.							
12 As the children happily play and laugh, the mother smiles.							
13 Joseph was silently laughing as Lara was attempting to sing.							
14 My parents have been married for twenty years.							
15 Neil is learning to play the piano: an arduous process.							
16 He has been patiently waiting for her for three hours.							
17 She was standing on the tracks when the train approached.							
18 By January 3 rd , Mr. Kim had already broken all his New Year's resolutions.							
19 At the end of the year, our teacher will be leaving to have a baby.							
20 The children have already eaten.							
21 Tim and Suzie had been studying for hours when their parents arrived home.							
22 Will you be having fries with that burger?							
23 This time tomorrow the protestors will have finished their sit-in.							
24 I love singing in the shower.							
25 My uncle has never voted in an election.							