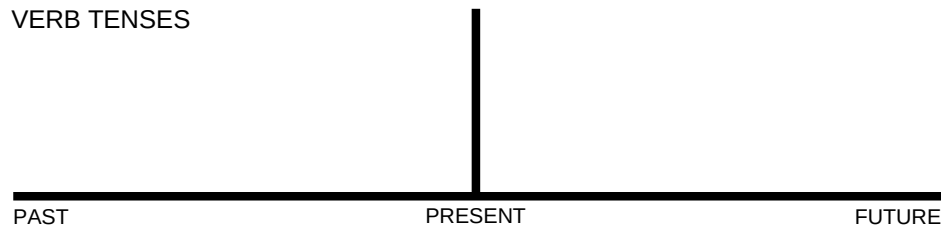


VERBS AND THEIR TENSES



WHAT DOES THE SIMPLE TENSE MEAN?

The **simple tense** is a category of verb **tense**. The three **simple tenses** (past, present and future) are used to describe actions without specifically stating whether the actions are completed or ongoing.

Simple Past:

The **simple past tense** is used to describe a completed activity that happened in the past. In other words, it started in the past and ended in the past. For example:

- John baked a cake.
- They painted the fence.

Simple Present:

The **simple present tense** is used to describe a completed activity in the present.

- To describe facts and habits.
*He **plays** chess.*
- To describe scheduled events in the future.
*The plane **lands** in 5 minutes.*
- To tell stories (particularly jokes).
*He **asks** the policeman for directions.*

Simple Future:

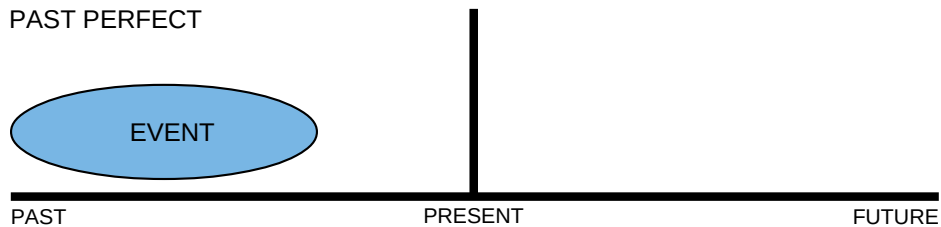
The **simple future tense** is used for an action that will occur in the future. For example:

- John will bake a cake.
- They will paint the fence.

WHAT DOES THE WORD **PERFECT** MEAN?

Perfect tense verbs show completed or perfected action. They are formed with some form of the auxiliary verb 'to have.' Use perfect tense to show completed action.

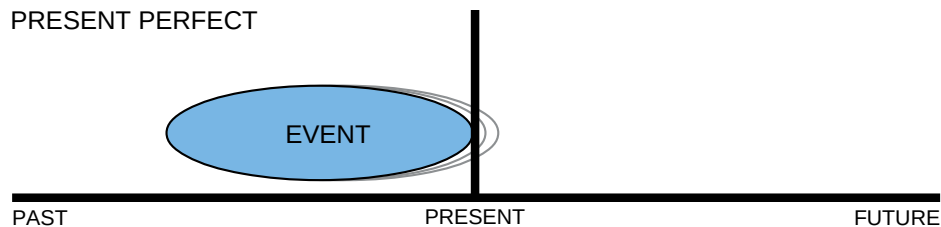
Past **perfect** tense:



This is formed by combining 'had' with the past participle of the verb.

The past perfect is used for an event that started in the past. **Not only did it start in the past but it also ended in the past.** This can be used with a specified time. For example, "I had studied in China last year". This also implies the event happened a long time ago.

Present **perfect** tense:



The present perfect is formed by using 'has' or 'have' and the past participle of the verb. For example, "I have watched the movie" or "She has watched the movies."

We use the present perfect when we are talking about an event that **started in the past and the event still has some influence in the present** though the event itself has been completed. This influence could be something that you have experienced in your life that still has an impact on your life. It could also be used for things that have changed over a time, or a task that was unfinished in the past and will be completed in the future.

Let's take a look at each example:

An experience: "I have been to India."

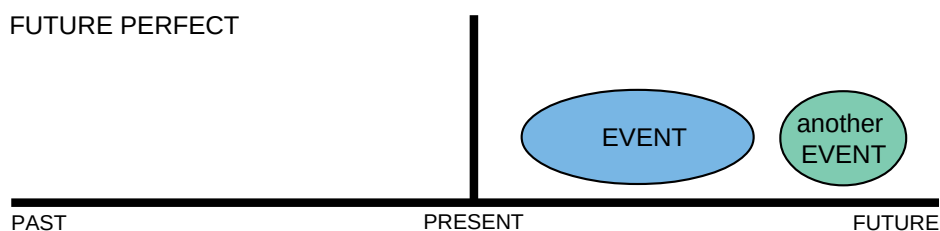
Change over time: "Her English has improved since she joined EF English Live."

An unfinished task: "He has not finished cleaning the house. "

All of these tasks started in the past, but something about them still applies in the present time. Something about them could change in the present or future.

Also, a confusion that students tend to have is when they see **'have had'** placed together in a sentence. For example, "*I have had a cold*". So is this the present perfect because of 'have', or is the past perfect because of 'had'? In order to identify the correct tense, **always look at the first 'have' or 'had.'** In this sentence, we first used 'have', therefore **this sentence is the present perfect.**

Future Perfect tense:



Future perfect has two different forms: "will have done" and "be going to have done." Unlike Future Simple forms, future perfect forms are usually interchangeable.

The future perfect tense indicates **actions that are complete, or finished**. These actions have not yet occurred but will occur and be finished in the future. To form the future perfect: Subject + will have + past participle of verb. Example: "*I will have finished...*" The future perfect tense is used to express an event that will be finished before something else that comes later in the future.

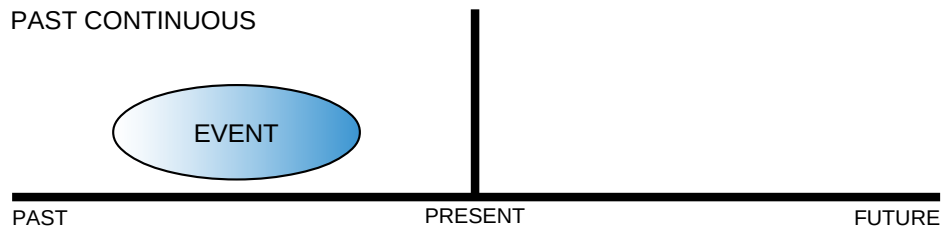
WHAT DOES THE WORD **Continuous** MEAN?

(also known as *progressive tense*)

The **continuous verb** is called that because the action "continues" over time (either in the past, present, or future). It **does** not just happen at a single instant within time.

NOTE: WE DO NOT normally use the **continuous** with **STATIVE verbs**.
See more about stative verbs at the end of this document.

Past **Continuous** aka *Past Progressive tense*:



*It uses the auxiliary verb i.e. was or were + present participle. The past continuous is made from **the past tense of the verb be** and the **-ing form of a verb***

- *I was working*
- *He was playing*
- *They were talking*

Past Continuous Tense is a tense which is used to indicate a **continuing action or event that was happening at some point in time in the past**. Use it for:

- for something which **happened before or after another action**:
*The children **were doing** their homework when I got home.*
*(The children **did** their homework when (= after) I **got** home.)*

This use of the past continuous is very common at the beginning of a story:

*The other day **I was waiting** for a bus when ...*
*Last week, as **I was driving** to work, ...*

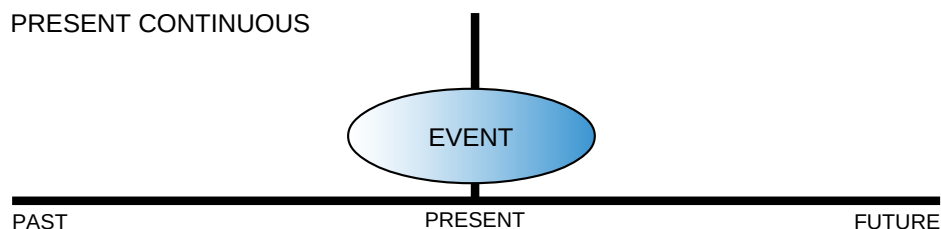
- for something that **happened before or after a specific time**:
*It was **eight o'clock**. **I was writing** a letter.*
(At eight o'clock I wrote (= started writing) some letters.)
- to show that something **continued for some time**:
*My head **was aching**.*
*Everyone **was shouting**.*

- for something that **happened again and again**:
*I **was practising** every day, three times a day.*
*They **were meeting** secretly after school.*
*They **were always quarrelling**.*
- with verbs which show **change or growth**:
*The children **were growing up** quickly.*
*Her English **was improving**.*
*My hair **was going** grey.*
*The town **was changing** quickly.*

We do **not** normally use the past continuous with **stative verbs**. We use the **past simple** instead:

*When I got home, I really **needed** (NOT was needing) a shower.*

Present **Continuous** aka *Present Progressive tense*:



*The Present **Continuous** Formula: to be [am, is, are] + verb [present participle] Aunt Christine is warming up the car while Scott looks for his new leather coat.*

*The present continuous is made from the **present tense of the verb be** and the **-ing form of a verb**:*

The Present Continuous Tense is a verb tense which we use to show that an **ongoing action is occurring now, frequently, and may continue into the future**. It can be either at the moment of speech or now in a larger sense.

We use the present continuous to talk about:

- **activities at the moment of speaking:**

*I'm just **leaving** work. I'll be home in an hour.*

*Please be quiet. The children **are sleeping**.*

- **future plans or arrangements:**

*Mary **is going** to a new school **next term**.*

*What **are you doing next week**?*

We make questions by putting **am, is** or **are** in front of the **subject**:

***Are you** listening?*

***Are they** coming to your party?*

*When **is she** going home?*

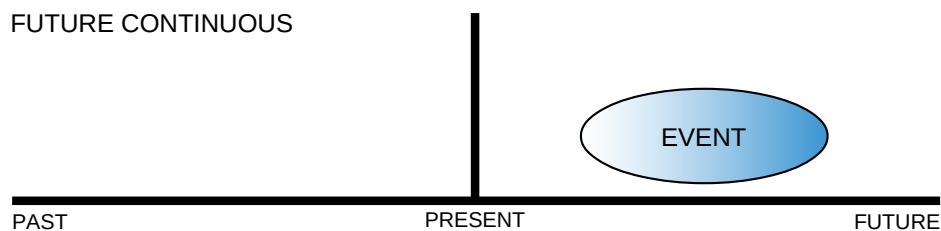
*What **am I** doing here?*

WE DO NOT normally use the continuous **with stative verbs**.

We normally use the simple instead:

- *I understand you.*
(NOT *I am understanding you.*)
- *This cake tastes wonderful.*
(NOT *This cake is tasting wonderful.*)

Future **Continuous** aka Future *Progressive tense*:



*The structure of the **Future Continuous tense** is: For negative sentences in the **Future Continuous tense**, we insert *not* between *will* and *be*. For question sentences, we exchange the *subject* and *will*.*

The **Future Continuous tense** is often used in English as a way to talk about something happening at a given point in the **future** and is used to discuss an event that will happen in the future for a specific amount of time. It is also used to tell about a planned future event.

When to use **future continuous**:

- When describing an action that will happen in the future, continue, and then be interrupted by another action.

*Can you answer the door in 5 min.? **I'll be cooking** when she arrives.*

***I'll be waiting** here when you arrive.*

***We will be staying** at an Airbnb, so contact the owner of the property if anything happens.*

- When using a continuous action in the future that will happen at a specific time. Similar to above, this puts the use of the future continuous as the interrupting action.

*At Noon, **I will be eating** lunch with my daughter.*

*Around 6, **we'll be watching** a movie with our kids.*

*Tomorrow morning, **she'll be writing** some more chapters of her book.*

- When describing actions happening at the same time in the future.

*While they're talking, **I'll be watching** their dog.*

Tomorrow I will be helping my mother at her house, and he'll be watching the kids at home.

(A prime example of a possible colloquial use of '**gonna be**' in this context.)

What are you two doing tomorrow?

***I'm going to be helping** my mother at her house, and **he's going to be watching** the kids.*

- When describing an atmosphere that may or may not exist in the future.

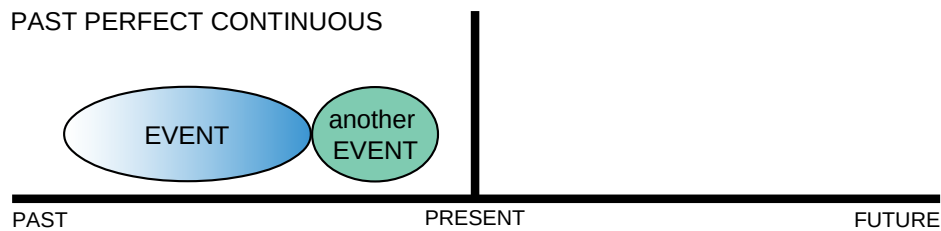
*When we get to the game, everyone **will be shouting and yelling**.*

*I can see it now. Everyone **will be laughing** at me.*

*I don't want to go to the funeral. Everyone **will be crying and telling old stories**.*

However, future continuous tense is less common in use. Most times simple future and future continuous forms are used interchangeably.

Past Perfect Continuous aka *Past Perfect Progressive tense*:



The past perfect continuous is formed using had + been + present participle. Questions are indicated by inverting the subject and had. Negatives are made with not

- You **had been waiting** there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.
- **Had** you **been waiting** there for more than two hours when she finally arrived?
- You **had not been waiting** there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.

The **past perfect continuous tense** is used to describe an action that began and was still **in progress in the past** up to another point or time when another **past** action started. ... We can also use the **past perfect continuous** to indicate that the **continuous** action that finished **in the past** was the cause of a condition, situation, or event **in the past**.

For five minutes and *for two weeks* are both durations which can be used with the past perfect continuous. Notice that this is related to the *present perfect continuous*; however, the duration does not continue to the present, it stops before something else in the past.

- They **had been talking** for over an hour before Tony arrived.
- She **had been working** at that company for three years when it went out of business.
- How long **had** you **been waiting** to get on the bus?
- Mike wanted to sit down because he **had been standing** all day at work.

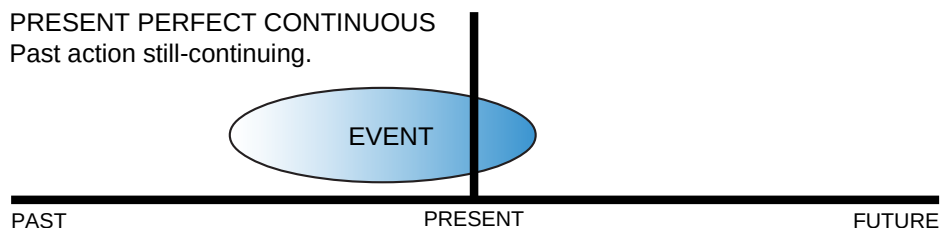
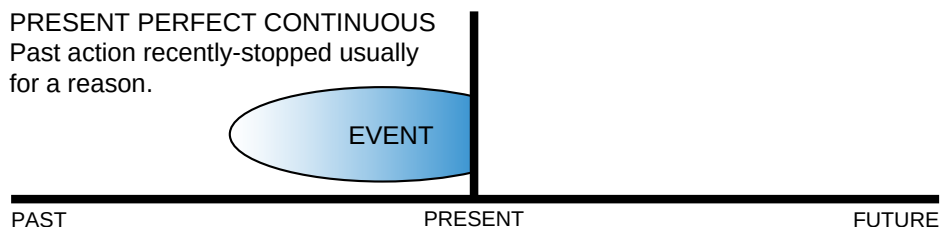
Using the past perfect continuous before another action in the past is a good way to show cause and effect.

- Jason was tired because he **had been jogging**.
- Sam gained weight because he **had been overeating**.
- Betty failed the final test because she **had not been attending** class.

Present Perfect Continuous aka Present Perfect Progressive:

We use the Present Perfect Continuous to talk about:

- past action recently-stopped, usually for a reason
- past action still-continuing



The Present Perfect Continuous uses **two** auxiliary verbs together with a main verb. Present Perfect Continuous is formed by adding “has been” or “have been” to the present participle. The present **perfect continuous** is formed using the construction *has/have been* + the present participle (root + -ing).

We **have** + **been** + **singing**.

I have + **been** + **reading** War and Peace for a month now.

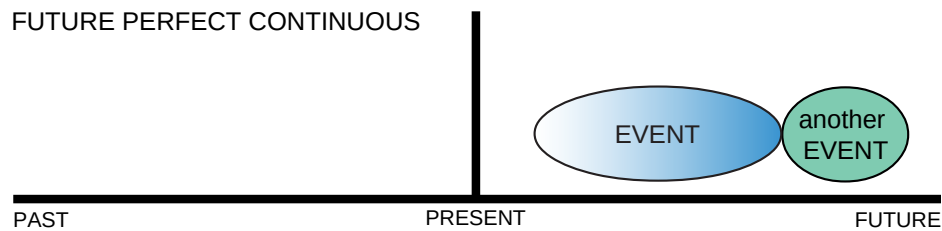
(Using a contraction) **I've** + **been** + **reading** War and Peace.

(Using a contraction) **Jenny's** + **been** + **helping** us recently.

We use the **Present Perfect Continuous** tense to talk about action that started in the past and **is still continuing now**. This is often used with *for* or *since*. **I have been reading for 2 hours**. The present perfect continuous usually emphasizes duration, or the amount of time that an action has been taking place.

You can also use the **present perfect continuous** WITHOUT a duration (such as *for two weeks*). Without the duration, the tense has a more general meaning of *lately*. We often use the words *lately* or *recently* to emphasize this meaning.

Future Perfect Continuous aka Present Perfect Progressive tense:



The future perfect continuous is a verb tense that describes actions that will continue up until a point in the future. The future perfect continuous consists of will + have + been + the verb's present participle (verb root + -ing).

The **Future Perfect Continuous** tense is like the **Future Perfect** tense, but it expresses longer actions or states extending up to some specific event or time in the **future**.

Future perfect continuous has two different forms: "*will have been doing*" and "*be going to have been doing*." Unlike simple future forms, future perfect continuous forms are usually interchangeable.

You **will have been waiting** for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives.

You **are going to have been waiting** for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives.

NOTE: It is possible to use either "*will*" or "*be going to*" to create the future perfect continuous with little or no difference in meaning.

When to use **future perfect continuous**:

- **Duration Before Something in the Future**

To show that something will continue up until a particular **event** or **time** in the future.

"For five minutes," "for two weeks," and "since Friday" are all durations which can be used with the future perfect continuous. Notice that this is related to the present perfect continuous and the past perfect continuous; however, with **future perfect continuous**, the duration stops at or before a reference point **in the future**.

Examples:

- They **will have been talking** for over an hour by the time Thomas *arrives*.
- She **is going to have been working** at that company for three years when it finally *closes*.
- James **will have been teaching** at the university for more than a year by the time he *leaves* for Asia.
- How long **will you have been studying** when you *graduate*?

- We **are going to have been driving** for over three days straight when we *get* to Anchorage.
- A: When you *finish* your English course, **will you have been living** in New Zealand for over a year?
B: No, I **will not have been living** here that long.

Notice in the examples above that the reference points (*marked in italics*) are in simple present rather than simple future. This is because these future events are in time clauses, and you cannot use future tenses in time clauses.

- **Cause of Something in the Future**

Examples:

- Jason will be tired when he gets home because he **will have been jogging** for over an hour.
- Claudia's English will be perfect when she returns to Germany because she **is going to have been studying** English in the United States for over two years.

STATIVE Verbs

Stative verbs are verbs that express a state or condition rather than an action. **Stative verbs** describe how something is or seems or a mental process. Revise them out of your writing to increase imagery and details in a passage.

Stative verbs definition: Stative verbs are verbs that are used to refer to states and conditions that are unlikely to change anytime soon. One way to identify them is that they do not have a progressive form (*to be + verb + ing*). Also, they indicate qualities incapable of changing.

Common examples include be , have , like , seem , prefer , understand , belong, doubt , hate , and know , such as in the saying, "We **are what** we believe we **are** ."

For example, in *Sue is short*, *short* is a quality that is incapable of changing, i.e., Sue cannot choose not to be short. Therefore, a stative verb, in this example, is the proper verb to use.

There are five types of Stative Verbs. They include:

1. Emotion stative verbs
2. Mental or cognitive stative verbs
3. Possession stative verbs
4. Senses (perception)
5. Others (conditions and stances)

Examples and a wealth of information provided on this web site: [English with Ashish](#)

Stative Verbs vs. Dynamic Verbs

Stative verbs are used for expressing states and conditions

Dynamic verbs, also called action words, are used for expressing actions.

Examples:

- Jaimeson **believes** that Russia is the coldest country in the world.
In this example, *believes* is a **stative verb**; it is referring to an *unchanging state*.
- Jaimeson **plays** the violin.
Plays is a dynamic verb, and *it is expressing the action of play*.

Play is an example of a **dynamic verb** in: Jaimeson plays the violin.

Dynamic verbs

Since actions have a start and an end, it is logical for the actions to progress gradually. Hence, dynamic verbs can be expressed in the progressive or continuous tenses. However, states cannot have progression. Therefore, stative verbs cannot be expressed in progressive tenses.

Examples:

- Jaimeson has been **playing** the violin for the past few months.
*In this example, the action of playing has been progressing for the past few months and continues to the present. It is a **dynamic** or **action** verb*
- However, it would not make sense to write:
Jaimeson is **believing** that Russia is the coldest country in the world.
*Therefore it is a **stative verb***

Read and save a copy of [this article to further discuss](#) Stative Verbs. The tenses in Stative Verbs are often treated differently and have different rules than 'dynamic or action' verbs.

Another good source of **Stative verb** information: [British Council, LearnEnglish](#)