

ALL TENSES



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Present Simple

The **Present Simple tense** is the most basic tense in English and uses the base form of the verb (except for the verb *be*). The only change from the base is the addition of **s** for third person singular.

How do we make the Present Simple tense?

There are two basic structures for the Present Simple:

1. Positive sentences

subject	+	main verb
		Present Simple

2. Negative and question sentences

subject	+	auxiliary <i>do</i>	+	main verb
		conjugated in Present Simple		
		do, does		base

Look at these examples with the main verb *like*:



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	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I, you, we, they			Like	coffee.
	He, she, it			Likes	coffee.
-	I, you, we, they	do	not	Like	coffee.
	He, she, it	does	not	Like	coffee.
?	Do	I, you, we, they		Like	coffee?
	Does	he, she, it		Like	coffee?

From the above table, notice the following points...

For positive sentences:

- There is **no auxiliary verb**.
- We conjugate the main verb by adding **s** to the third person singular.

For negative and question sentences:

- The auxiliary verb (do) is conjugated in the Present Simple: *do, does*
- The main verb is invariable in base form: *base*
- For negative sentences, we insert **not** between the auxiliary verb and the main verb.



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- For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the auxiliary verb.

Emphatic *do*

Normally, for positive sentences we do not use the auxiliary verb *do*. But if we want to emphasize (stress) something, we may use it. For example, instead of saying "I like your dress", we could say "I do like your dress", just to show how much we like it. Here are some more examples:

- I do wish you'd stop.
- I do apologize.
- You do look smart today.

Present Simple with main verb *be*

The structure of the Present Simple with the main verb *be* is:

subject +	main verb <i>be</i>
	conjugated in Present Simple
	am, are, is

Look at these examples with the main verb *be*:

	subject	main verb <i>be</i>		
+ I		am		French.



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	subject	main verb <i>be</i>		
	You, we, they	are		French.
	He, she, it	is		French.
-	I	am	not	old.
	You, we, they	are	not	old.
	He, she, it	is	not	old.
?	Am	I		late?
	Are	you, we, they		late?
	Is	he, she, it		late?

From the above table, notice the following points...

- There is **no auxiliary verb**, even for questions and negatives.
- The main verb (be) is conjugated in the Present Simple: *am, are, is*
- For negative sentences, we insert **not** after the main verb.



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- For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the main verb.

How do we use the Present Simple tense?

We use the Present Simple to talk about:

- general time (action verbs)
- situations now (stative verbs)
- general time and situations now (verb *be*)

Present Simple for general time

We use the Present Simple tense when:

- the action is general
- the action happens all the time, or habitually, in the past, present and future
- the action is not only happening now
- the statement is always true

John drives a taxi.		
past	present	future
It is John's job to drive a taxi. He does it every day. Past, present and future.		



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Look at these examples:

- I live in New York.
- The Moon goes round the Earth.
- John drives a taxi.
- He does not drive a bus.
- We meet every Thursday.
- We do not work at night.
- Do you play football?

Present Simple for now

For stative verbs, we can use the Present Simple to talk about **now**. Stative verbs do not describe action. They describe state, and are verbs such as: *like, sound, belong to, need, seem*. We can use these verbs with the Present Simple tense to talk about about a situation at the present time, not general.

I want a coffee. That sounds interesting. Do you need some help?		
past	present	future
	The situation is now.	



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Present Simple for general time and now

The verb **be** is always special. It is a stative verb, and we use it in the Present Simple tense to talk about **now**situations *and* about **general** situations. Look at these examples of the verb *be* in the Present Simple tense - some are **general** and some are **now**:

I am not fat. Why are you so beautiful? Ram is tall.		
past	present	future
The situation is general. Past, present and future.		
Am I right? Tara is not at home. We are hungry.		
past	present	future
	The situation is now.	



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Present Continuous

(also called Present Progressive)

We often use the **Present Continuous tense** in English. It is very different from the Present Simple tense, both in structure and in use.

How do we make the Present Continuous tense?

The structure of the Present Continuous tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary <i>be</i>	+	main verb
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	conjugated in Present Simple	
	am, are, is	present participle (-ing)

The auxiliary verb (be) is conjugated in the Present Simple: *am, are, is*

The main verb is invariable in present participle form: *-ing*

For negative sentences we insert **not** between the auxiliary verb and the main verb.

For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the auxiliary verb.

Look at these example sentences with the Present Continuous tense:

	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I	am		speaking	to you.
+	You	are		reading	this.
-	She	is	not	staying	in London.
-	We	are	not	playing	football.
?	Is	he		watching	TV?



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	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
?	Are	they		waiting	for John?

How do we use the Present Continuous tense?

We use the Present Continuous to talk about:

- action happening now
- action in the future

Present Continuous for action happening now

a) for action happening **exactly now**

I am eating my lunch.		
past	present	future
	The action is happening now.	




Look at these images. Right now you are looking at this screen and at the same time...



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the pages are turning	the candle is burning	the numbers are spinning

b) for action happening **around now**

The action may not be happening exactly now, but it is happening just before and just after now, and it is not permanent or habitual.

John is looking for a new job.		
past	present	future
	The action is happening "around" now.	

Look at these examples:

- Muriel **is learning** to drive.
- I **am living** with my sister until I find an apartment.



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Present Continuous for the future

We can also use the Present Continuous tense to talk about the **future** - if we add a **future word**!! We must add (or understand from the context) a future word. "Future words" include, for example, **tomorrow**, **next year**, **in June**, **at Christmas** etc. We only use the Present Continuous tense to talk about the future when we have planned to do something before we speak. We have already **made a decision and a plan** before speaking.

I am taking my exam next month.		
past	present	future
!!!		
	A firm plan or programme exists now.	The action is in the future.

Look at these examples:

- We're **eating** at Joe's Cafe tonight. We've already booked the table..
- They can play tennis with you tomorrow. They're not **working**.
- When **are** you **starting** your new job?

In these examples, **a firm plan or programme exists before speaking**. The decision and plan were made **before** speaking.

How do we spell the Present Continuous tense?

We make the Present Continuous tense by adding -ing to the base verb. Normally it's simple: we just add -ing. But sometimes we have to change the word a little. Perhaps we double the last letter, or we drop a letter. Here are the rules to help you know how to spell the Present Continuous tense.



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Basic rule	Just add -ing to the base verb:										
	work	→	working								
	play	→	playing								
	assist	→	assisting								
	see	→	seeing								
	be	→	being								
Exception	If the base verb ends in consonant + stressed vowel + consonant , double the last letter:										
	<table><tr><td>s</td><td>t</td><td><u>o</u></td><td>p</td></tr><tr><td>consonant</td><td>stressed vowel</td><td>consonant</td><td></td></tr></table>			s	t	<u>o</u>	p	consonant	stressed vowel	consonant	
	s	t	<u>o</u>	p							
consonant	stressed vowel	consonant									
vowels = a, e, i, o, u											
	stop	→	stopping								



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	run	→	running
	begin	→	beginning
	<p><i>Note that this exception does not apply when the last syllable of the base verb is not stressed:</i></p>		
	open	→	opening
Exception	<p>If the base verb ends in ie, change the ie to y:</p>		
	lie	→	lying
	die	→	dying
Exception	<p>If the base verb ends in vowel + consonant + e, omit the e:</p>		
	come	→	coming
	mistake	→	mistaking



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Present Perfect Tense

The Present Perfect tense is a rather important tense in English, but it gives speakers of some languages a difficult time. That is because it uses concepts or ideas that do not exist in those languages. In fact, the **structure** of the Present Perfect is very simple. The problems come with the **use** of the tense. In addition, there are some differences in usage between British and American English.

In this lesson we look at the **structure** and **use** of the Present Perfect tense, as well as the use of **for** and **since**, followed by a **quiz** to check your understanding.

The Present Perfect tense is really a very interesting tense, and a very useful one. Try not to translate the Present Perfect into your language. Just try to accept the concepts of this tense and learn to "think" Present Perfect! You will soon learn to **like** the Present Perfect tense!

How do we make the Present Perfect tense?

The structure of the Present Perfect is:

subject	+	auxiliary <i>have</i>	+	main verb
		conjugated in Present Simple		



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		have, has		past participle
--	--	-----------	--	-----------------

The auxiliary verb (have) is conjugated in the Present Simple: *have, has*

The main verb is invariable in past participle form: *-ed (or irregular)*

For negative sentences we insert **not** between the auxiliary verb and the main verb.

For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the auxiliary verb.

Look at these example sentences with the Present Perfect tense:

	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I	have		seen	ET.
+	You	have		eaten	mine.
-	She	has	not	been	to Rome.
-	We	have	not	played	football.
?	Have	you		finished?	
?	Have	they		done	it?



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Contraction with Present Perfect

When we use the Present Perfect in speaking, we often contract the subject and auxiliary verb. We also sometimes do this in informal writing.

I have	I've
You have	You've
He has She has It has John has The car has	He's She's It's John's The car's
We have	We've
They have	They've

- You've told me that before.
- John's seen *Harry Potter*.

In negative sentences, we may contract the auxiliary verb and "not":

- You haven't won the contest.
- She hasn't heard from him.

He's or **he's**??? Be careful! The 's contraction is used for the auxiliary verbs *have* **and** *be*. For example, "It's eaten" can mean:



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- It **has** eaten. (Present Perfect tense, active voice)
- It **is** eaten. (Present Simple tense, passive voice)

It is usually clear from the context.

How do we use the Present Perfect tense?

This tense is called the **Present** Perfect tense. There is always a connection with the past *and* with the **present**.

We use the Present Perfect to talk about:

- experience
- change
- continuing situation

Present Perfect for experience

We often use the Present Perfect to talk about **experience** from the past. We are not interested in **when** you did something. We only want to know **if** you did it:

I have seen an alien. He has lived in Bangkok. Have you been there? We have never eaten caviar.		
past	present	future
!!!		



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The action or state was in the past.	In my head, I have a memory now.	
--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--

Connection with past: the event was in the past

Connection with present: in my head, **now**, I have a memory of the event; I **know** something about the event; I have **experience** of it

Present Perfect for change

We also use the Present Perfect to talk about a **change**, or **new** information:

I have bought a car.		
past	present	future
-	+	
Last week I didn't have a car.	Now I have a car.	
John has broken his leg.		
past	present	future
+	-	



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Yesterday John had a good leg.	Now he has a bad leg.	
Has the price gone up ?		
past	present	future
+	-	
Was the price \$1.50 yesterday?	Is the price \$1.70 today?	
The police have arrested the killer.		
past	present	future
-	+	
Yesterday the killer was free.	Now he is in prison.	

Connection with past: the past is the opposite of the present

Connection with present: the present is the opposite of the past



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Americans do use the Present Perfect but less than British speakers. Americans often use the Past Simple tense instead. An American might say "Did you have lunch?", where a British person would say "Have you had lunch?"

Present Perfect for continuing situation

We often use the Present Perfect to talk about a **continuing situation**. This is a state that started in the **past** and continues in the **present** (and will probably continue into the future). This is a **situation** (not an action). We usually use **for** or **since** with this structure.

I have worked here since June. He has been ill for 2 days. How long have you known Tara (for)?		
past	present	future
The situation started in the past.	It continues up to now.	(It will probably continue into the future.)

Connection with past: the situation started in the past.

Connection with present: the situation continues in the present.

For and Since with Present Perfect tense

We often use **for** and **since** with perfect tenses:



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- We use **for** to talk about a **period** of time: *five minutes, two weeks, six years*
- We use **since** to talk about a **point** in past time: *9 o'clock, 1st January, Monday*

for	since
a period of time	a point in past time
-----	•-----
20 minutes	6.15pm
three days	Monday
6 months	January
4 years	1994
2 centuries	1800
a long time	I left school



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ever	the beginning of time
etc	etc

Look at these example sentences using *for* and *since* with the Present Perfect tense:

- I have been here **for** twenty minutes.
- I have been here **since** 9 o'clock.
- John hasn't called **for** six months.
- John hasn't called **since** February.
- He has worked in New York **for** a long time.
- He has worked in New York **since** he left school.

For can be used with all tenses. **Since** is usually used with perfect tenses only.

Present Perfect Continuous

The Present Perfect Continuous uses **two** auxiliary verbs together with a main verb.



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In this lesson we look at the **structure** and **use** of the Present Perfect Continuous tense, as well as the use of **for** and **since**, followed by a **quiz** to check your understanding.

Note that **continuous** tenses are also called **progressive** tenses. So the Present Perfect Continuous tense is sometimes called the Present Perfect Progressive tense.

How do we make the Present Perfect Continuous tense?

The structure of the Present Perfect Continuous tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary <i>have</i>	+	auxiliary <i>be</i>	+	main verb
		conjugated in Present Simple		past participle		
		have, has		been		present participle

The first auxiliary (have) is conjugated in the Present Simple: *have, has*

The second auxiliary (be) is invariable in past participle form: *been*

The main verb is invariable in present participle form: *-ing*

For negative sentences we insert **not** after the first auxiliary verb.

For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and first auxiliary verb.

Look at these example sentences with the Present Perfect Continuous tense:



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	subject	auxiliary verb		auxiliary verb	main verb	
+	I	have		been	waiting	for one hour.
+	You	have		been	talking	too much.
-	It	has	not	been	raining.	
-	We	have	not	been	playing	football.
?	Have	you		been	seeing	her?
?	Have	they		been	doing	their homework?

Contraction with Present Perfect Continuous

When we use the Present Perfect Continuous tense in speaking, we often contract the subject and the first auxiliary verb. We also sometimes do this in informal writing.

I have been	I've been
You have been	You've been



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He has been She has been It has been John has been The car has been	He's been She's been It's been John's been The car's been
We have been	We've been
They have been	They've been

- I've been reading.
- Jenny's been helping us recently.

In negative sentences, we may contract the first auxiliary verb and "not":

- I haven't been playing tennis.
- It hasn't been snowing.

How do we use the Present Perfect Continuous tense?

This tense is called the **Present** Perfect Continuous tense. There is usually a connection with the **present** or now.

We use the Present Perfect Continuous to talk about:

- past action recently-stopped
- past action still-continuing

Present Perfect Continuous for past action just stopped

We use the Present Perfect Continuous tense to talk about **action** that started in the past and stopped recently. There is usually a result **now**.



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I'm tired because I've been running.		
past	present	future
!!!		
Recent action	Result now	

- I'm tired ^[now] because I've been running.
- Why is the grass wet ^[now]? Has it been raining?
- You don't understand ^[now] because you haven't been listening.

Present Perfect Continuous for past action continuing now

We use the Present Perfect Continuous tense to talk about **action** that started in the past and is continuing **now**. This is often used with **for** or **since**.

I have been reading for 2 hours.		
past	present	future



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Action started in past.	Action is continuing now.	
-------------------------	---------------------------	--

- I **have been reading for** 2 hours. (I am still reading now.)
- We've **been studying since** 9 o'clock. (We're still studying now.)
- How long **have you been learning** English? (You are still learning now.)
- We **have not been smoking**. (And we are not smoking now.)

For and Since with Present Perfect Continuous tense

We often use **for** and **since** with perfect tenses:

- We use **for** to talk about a **period** of time: *three hours, two months, one decade*
- We use **since** to talk about a **point** in past time: *9 o'clock, 1st January, Monday*

for	since
a period of time	a point in past time
-----	•-----
30 minutes	10.00am



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four days	Friday
3 months	March
2 years	2010
3 centuries	1700
ages	I left school
ever	the beginning of time
etc	etc

Look at these example sentences using *for* and *since* with the Present Perfect Continuous tense:

- I have been studying **for** three hours.
- I have been watching TV **since** 7pm.
- Tara hasn't been feeling well **for** two weeks.
- Tara hasn't been visiting us **since** March.
- He has been playing football **for** a long time.
- He has been living in Bangkok **since** he left school.



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For can be used with all tenses. **Since** is usually used with perfect tenses only.

Past Simple

The Past Simple tense is sometimes called the "preterite tense". We can use several tenses and forms to talk about the past, but the Past Simple tense is the one we use most often.

In this lesson we look at the **structure** and **use** of the Past Simple tense, followed by a **quiz** to check your understanding.

How do we make the Past Simple tense?

There are two basic structures for the Past Simple tense:

1. Positive sentences

subject	+	main verb
---------	---	-----------



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	Past Simple
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2. Negative and question sentences

subject	+	auxiliary <i>do</i>	+	main verb
		conjugated in Past Simple		
		did		base

Look at these examples with the main verbs *go* (irregular) and *work* (regular):

	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I			went	to school.
	You			worked	very hard.
-	She	did	not	go	with me.
	We	did	not	work	yesterday.



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	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
?	Did	you		go	to London?
	Did	they		work	at home?

From the above table, notice the following points...

For positive sentences:

- There is **no auxiliary verb**.
- The main verb is conjugated in the Past Simple, invariable: *-ed (or irregular)*

For negative and question sentences:

- The auxiliary is conjugated in the Past Simple, invariable: *did*
- The main verb is invariable in base form: *base*
- For negative sentences, we insert **not** between the auxiliary verb and main verb.
- For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the auxiliary verb.

Emphatic did

Normally, for positive sentences we do not use the auxiliary *did*. But if we want to emphasize (stress) something, or contradict something, we may use it. For example: "I didn't use a spellchecker but I did use a dictionary." Here are some more examples:

- "Why didn't you go to the party?" / "I did go."



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- It did seem a bit strange.
- After drinking it I did in fact feel better.

Past Simple with main verb *be*

The structure of the Past Simple with the main verb *be* is:

subject	+	main verb <i>be</i>
		conjugated in Past Simple
		was, were

Look at these examples with the main verb *be*:

	subject	main verb <i>be</i>		
+	I, he/she/it	was		here.
	You, we, they	were		in London.
-	I, he/she/it	was	not	there.
	You, we, they	were	not	happy.



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	subject	main verb <i>be</i>		
?	Was	I, he/she/it		right?
	Were	you, we, they		late?

From the above table, notice the following points...

- There is **no auxiliary verb**, even for questions and negatives.
- The main verb (be) is conjugated in the Past Simple: *was, were*
- For negative sentences, we insert **not** after the main verb.
- For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the main verb.

How do we use the Past Simple tense?

We use the Past Simple tense to talk about an action or a situation - an event - in the past. The event can be **short** or **long**.

Here are some **short** events with the Past Simple:

The car exploded at 9.30am yesterday. She went to the door. We did not hear the telephone. Did you see that car?		
past	present	future



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The action is in the past.		
----------------------------	--	--

Here are some **long** events with the Past Simple tense:

I lived in Bangkok for 10 years. The Jurassic period lasted about 62 million years. We did not sing at the concert. Did you watch TV last night?		
past	present	future
The action is in the past.		

Notice that it does not matter how long ago the event is: it can be a few minutes or seconds in the past, or millions of years in the past. Also it does not matter how long the event is. It can be a few milliseconds (car explosion) or millions of years (Jurassic period). We use the Past Simple tense when:

- the event is **in the past**
- the event is **completely finished**
- we say (or understand) the **time** and/or **place** of the event

In general, if we say the past **time** or **place** of the event, we must use the Past Simple tense; we cannot use the present perfect.



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Here are some more examples:

- I **lived** in that house when I was young.
- He **didn't like** the movie.
- What **did** you **eat** for dinner?
- John **drove** to London on Monday.
- Mary **did** not **go** to work yesterday.
- **Did** you **play** tennis last week?
- I **was** at work yesterday.
- We **were** not late (for the train).
- **Were** you angry?

Note that when we tell a story, we usually use the Past Simple. We may start with the Past Continuous tense to "set the scene", but we almost always use the Past Simple tense for the action. Look at this example of the beginning of a story:

"The wind *was howling* around the hotel and the rain *was pouring down*. It **was** cold. The door **opened** and James Bond **entered**. He **took off** his coat, which **was** very wet, and **ordered** a drink at the bar. He **sat down** in the corner of the lounge and quietly **drank** his..."

This page shows the use of the Past Simple tense to talk about past events. But note that there are some other uses for the Past Simple, for example in [conditional or if sentences](#).



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Past Continuous

The Past Continuous tense is an important tense in English. We use it to say what we were in the middle of doing at a particular moment in the past.

In this lesson we look at the **structure** and the **use** of the Past Continuous tense, followed by a **quiz** to check your understanding.

Note that **continuous** tenses are also called **progressive** tenses. So the Past Continuous tense is sometimes called the Past Progressive tense.

How do we make the Past Continuous tense?

The structure of the past continuous tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary <i>be</i>	+	main verb
		conjugated in Past Simple		
		was, were		present participle

The auxiliary verb (be) is conjugated in the Past Simple: *was, were*

The main verb is invariable in present participle form: *-ing*

For negative sentences we insert **not** between the auxiliary verb and the main verb.

For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the auxiliary verb.



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Look at these example sentences with the Past Continuous tense:

	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I	was		watching	TV.
+	You	were		working	hard.
-	He, she, it	was	not	helping	Mary.
-	We	were	not	joking.	
?	Were	you		being	silly?
?	Were	they		playing	football?

The spelling rules for adding -ing to make the Past Continuous tense are the same as for the Present Continuous tense.

How do we use the Past Continuous tense?

The Past Continuous tense expresses action at a **particular moment** in the past. The action started before that moment but has not finished at that moment. For example, yesterday I watched a film on TV. The film started at 7pm and finished at 9pm.



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At 8pm yesterday, I was watching TV.		
past	present	future
8pm		
At 8pm, I was in the middle of watching TV.		

When we use the Past Continuous tense, our listener usually knows or understands what time we are talking about. Look at these examples:

- I **was working** at 10pm last night.
- They **were** not **playing** football at 9am this morning.
- What **were** you **doing** at 10pm last night?
- What **were** you **doing** when he arrived?
- She **was cooking** when I telephoned her.
- We **were having** dinner when it started to rain.
- Ram went home early because it **was snowing**.

Note that some verbs cannot be used in continuous/progressive tenses.

We often use the Past Continuous tense to "set the scene" in stories. We use it to describe the background situation at the moment when the action begins. Often, the story starts with the Past Continuous tense and then moves into the Past Simple tense. Here is an example:



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"James Bond **was driving** through town. It **was raining**. The wind **was blowing** hard. Nobody **was walking** in the streets. Suddenly, Bond saw the killer in a telephone box..."

Past Continuous + Past Simple

We often use the Past Continuous tense with the Past Simple tense. We use the Past Continuous to express a **long** action. And we use the Past Simple to express a **short** action that happens **in the middle** of the long action. We can join the two ideas with **when** or **while**.

In the following example, we have two actions:

1. long action (watching TV), expressed with Past Continuous
2. short action (telephoned), expressed with Past Simple

past	present	future
<i>long action:</i> I was watching TV from 7pm to 9pm.		
8pm		
<i>short action:</i> You phoned at 8pm.		

We can join these two actions with **when**:



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- I was watching TV **when** you telephoned.

Notice that "when you telephoned" is also a way of defining the time (8pm).

We use:

- **when + short action** (Past Simple)
- **while + long action** (Past Continuous)

There are four basic combinations:

	I was walking past the car	when	it exploded.
When	the car exploded		I was walking past it.
	The car exploded	while	I was walking past it.
While	I was walking past the car		it exploded.

Notice that the **long action** and **short action** are relative.

- "Watching TV" took two hours. "Telephoned" took a few seconds.
- "Walking past the car" took a few seconds. "Exploded" took milliseconds.



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Past Perfect

The Past Perfect tense is quite an easy tense to understand and to use. This tense talks about the "past in the past".

In this lesson we look at the **structure** and **use** of the Past Perfect tense, followed by a **quiz** to check your understanding.

How do we make the Past Perfect tense?

The structure of the Past Perfect tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary <i>have</i>	+	main verb
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	conjugated in Past Simple	
	had	past participle

The auxiliary verb (have) is conjugated in the Past Simple: *had*

The main verb is invariable in past participle form: *-ed (or irregular)*

For negative sentences we insert **not** between the auxiliary verb and the main verb.

For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the auxiliary verb.

Look at these example sentences with the Past Perfect tense:

	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I	had		finished	my work.
+	You	had		stopped	before me.
-	She	had	not	gone	to school.
-	We	had	not	left.	
?	Had	you		arrived?	



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?	Had	they		eaten	dinner?
---	-----	------	--	-------	---------

Contraction with Past Perfect

When we use the Past Perfect in speaking, we often contract the subject and the auxiliary verb. We also sometimes do this in informal writing:

I had	I'd
you had	you'd
he had she had it had	he'd she'd it'd
we had	we'd
they had	they'd

- I'd eaten already.
- They'd gone home.

In negative sentences, we may contract the auxiliary verb and "not":

- I hadn't finished my meal.
- Anthony hadn't had a day off for months.



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The **'d** contraction is also used for the auxiliary verb **would**. For example, **we'd** can mean:

- We **had**, *OR*
- We **would**

But usually the main verb is in a different form, for example:

- We had **arrived** (past participle)
- We would **arrive** (base)

It is always clear from the context.

How do we use the Past Perfect tense?

The Past Perfect tense expresses action in the **past** *before* another action in the **past**. This is the **past in the past**. For example:

- The train left at 9am. We arrived at 9:15am. When we arrived, the train **had left**.

The train had left when we arrived.		
past	present	future
Train leaves in past at 9:00		



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9:00 9:15		
We arrive in past at 9:15		

Look at some more examples:

- I wasn't hungry. I **had** just **eaten**.
- They were hungry. They **had** not **eaten** for five hours.
- I didn't know who he was. I **had**never **seen** him before.
- "Mary wasn't at home when I arrived." / "Really?
Where **had** she **gone**?"

You can sometimes think of the Past Perfect tense like the Present Perfect tense, but instead of the time being **now** the time is **before**.

	have done →		
had done →			
	past	present	future

For example, imagine that you arrive at the station at 9:15am. The stationmaster says to you:



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- "You *are* too late. The train **has left**."

Later, you tell your friends:

- "We *were* too late. The train **had left**."

We often use the Past Perfect in reported speech after verbs like: *said, told, asked, thought, wondered*

Look at these examples:

- He told us that the train **had left**.
- I thought I **had met** her before, but I was wrong.
- He explained that he **had closed** the window because of the rain.
- I wondered if I **had been** there before.
- I asked them why they **had not finished**.

Past Perfect Continuous



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The Past Perfect Continuous is another tense that expresses the "past in the past".

In this lesson we look at the **structure** and **use** of the Past Perfect Continuous tense, followed by a **quiz** to check your understanding.

Note that **continuous** tenses are also called **progressive** tenses. So the Past Perfect Continuous tense is sometimes called the Past Perfect Progressive tense.

How do we make the Past Perfect Continuous tense?

The structure of the Past Perfect Continuous tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary <i>have</i>	+	auxiliary <i>be</i>	+	main verb
		conjugated in Past Simple		past participle		
		had		been		present participle

The first auxiliary verb (have) is conjugated in the Past Simple, invariable: *had*

The second auxiliary verb (be) is invariable in past participle form: *been*

The main verb is invariable in present participle form: *-ing*

For negative sentences we insert **not** after the first auxiliary verb.

For question sentences, we **exchange** the subject and the first auxiliary verb.

Look at these example sentences with the Past Perfect Continuous tense:



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	subject	auxiliary verb		auxiliary verb	main verb	
+	I	had		been	working.	
+	You	had		been	playing	tennis.
-	It	had	not	been	working	well.
-	We	had	not	been	expecting	her.
?	Had	you		been	drinking?	
?	Had	they		been	waiting	long?

Contraction with Past Perfect Continuous

When we use the Past Perfect Continuous in speaking, we often contract the subject and the first auxiliary verb. We also sometimes do this in informal writing.

I had been	I'd been
you had been	you'd been



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he had been she had been it had been	he'd been she'd been it'd been
we had been	we'd been
they had been	they'd been

- He'd been drinking all day.
- It'd been pouring with rain.

In negative sentences, we may contract the first auxiliary verb and "not":

- We hadn't been living there long.
- They hadn't been studying very hard.

How do we use the Past Perfect Continuous tense?

The Past Perfect Continuous tense is like the Past Perfect tense, but it expresses longer actions in the **past** before another action in the **past**. For example:

- Ram started waiting at 9am. I arrived at 11am. When I arrived, Ram **had been waiting** for two hours.

past	present	future
Ram starts waiting in past at 9am.		



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9 11		
I arrive in past at 11am.		
Ram had been waiting for two hours when I arrived.		

Here are some more examples:

- John was very tired. He **had been running**.
- I could smell cigarettes. Somebody **had been smoking**.
- Suddenly, my car broke down. I was not surprised. It **had not been running** well for a long time.
- **Had** the pilot **been drinking** before the crash?

You can sometimes think of the Past Perfect Continuous tense like the Present Perfect Continuous tense, but instead of the time being **now** the time is **before**.

	have been doing →		
had been doing →			



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	past	present	future
--	------	---------	--------

For example, imagine that you meet Ram at 11am. Ram says to you:

- "I **am** angry. I **have been waiting** for two hours."

Later, you tell your friends:

- "Ram **was** angry. He **had been waiting** for two hours."
- Future Simple

The **Future Simple tense** is often called the "**will tense**" because we make the Future Simple with the modal auxiliary **will**.

How do we make the Future Simple tense?

The structure of the Future Simple tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary <i>will</i>	+	main verb
		invariable		base
		will		V1



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For negative sentences in the Future Simple tense, we insert **not** between the auxiliary verb and main verb. For question sentences, we exchange the **subject** and **auxiliary verb**. Look at these example sentences with the Future Simple tense:

	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I	will		open	the door.
+	You	will		finish	before me.
-	She	will	not	be	at school tomorrow.
-	We	will	not	leave	yet.
?	Will	you		arrive	on time?
?	Will	they		want	dinner?

We sometimes use **shall** instead of **will**, especially for I and we.

Contraction with Future Simple

When we use the Future Simple tense in speaking, we often contract the subject and auxiliary verb:



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I will	I'll
you will	you'll
he will she will it will	he'll she'll it'll
we will	we'll
they will	they'll

In negative sentences, we contract with **won't**, like this:

I will not	I won't
you will not	you won't
he will not she will not it will not	he won't she won't it won't
we will not	we won't



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they will not	they won't
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How do we use the Future Simple tense?

No Plan

We use the Future Simple tense when there is no plan or decision to do something before we speak. We make the decision spontaneously at the time of speaking. Look at these examples:

- Hold on. I'll **get** a pen.
- We **will see** what we can do to help you.
- Maybe we'll **stay in** and **watch** television tonight.

In these examples, we had no firm plan before speaking. The decision is made **at the time of speaking**.

We often use the Future Simple tense with the verb **to think** before it:

- I **think** I'll go to the gym tomorrow.
- I **think** I will have a holiday next year.
- I don't **think** I'll buy that car.

Prediction

We often use the Future Simple tense to make a prediction about the future. Again, there is no firm plan. We are saying **what we think will happen**. Here are some examples:

- It **will rain** tomorrow.
- People **won't go** to Jupiter before the 22nd century.
- Who do you think **will get** the job?



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Be

When the main verb is **be**, we can use the Future Simple tense even if we have a firm plan or decision before speaking. Examples:

- I'll **be** in London tomorrow.
- I'm going shopping. I **won't be** very long.
- **Will** you **be** at work tomorrow?

Note that when we have a plan or intention to do something in the future, we usually use other tenses or expressions, such as the present continuous or going to.

Future Continuous

The Future Continuous tense is often used in English as a way to talk about something happening at a given point in the future.

How do we make the Future Continuous tense?

The structure of the Future Continuous tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary verb <i>WILL</i>	+	auxiliary verb <i>BE</i>	+	main verb
		invariable		invariable		present participle



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	will	be	base + ing
--	------	----	------------

For negative sentences in the Future Continuous tense, we insert **not** between **will** and **be**. For question sentences, we exchange the **subject** and **will**. Look at these example sentences with the Future Continuous tense:

	subject	auxiliary verb		auxiliary verb	main verb	
+	I	will		be	working	at 10am.
+	You	will		be	lying	on a beach tomorrow.
-	She	will	not	be	using	the car.
-	We	will	not	be	having	dinner at home.
?	Will	you		be	playing	football?
?	Will	they		be	watching	TV?

We sometimes use **shall** instead of **will**, especially for I and we.



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Contraction with Future Continuous

When we use the Future Continuous tense in speaking, we often contract the subject and WILL:

I will	I'll
you will	you'll
he will she will it will	he'll she'll it'll
we will	we'll
they will	they'll

In negative sentences, we may contract with **won't**, like this:

I will not	I won't
you will not	you won't



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he will not she will not it will not	he won't she won't it won't
we will not	we won't
they will not	they won't

How do we use the Future Continuous tense?

The Future Continuous tense expresses action at a **particular moment** in the future. The action will have started before that moment but it will not have finished at that moment. For example, tomorrow I will start work at 2pm and stop work at 6pm:

At 4pm tomorrow, I will be working .		
past	present	future
4pm		
		At 4pm, I will be in the middle of working.

When we use the Future Continuous tense, our listener usually knows or understands what time we are talking about. Look at these examples:

- I **will be playing** tennis at 10am tomorrow.



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- They **won't be watching** TV at 9pm tonight.
- What **will** you **be doing** at 10pm tonight?
- What **will** you **be doing** when I arrive?
- She **will** not **be sleeping** when you telephone her.
- We'll **be having** dinner when the film starts.
- Take your umbrella. It **will be raining** when you return.

Note that **continuous** tenses are also called **progressive** tenses. So the Future Continuous tense is sometimes called the Future Progressive tense.

Future Perfect

The **Future Perfect tense** is quite an easy tense to understand and use. The Future Perfect talks about the **past in the future**.

How do we make the Future Perfect tense?

The structure of the Future Perfect tense is:

subject	+	auxiliary verb <i>WILL</i>	+	auxiliary verb <i>HAVE</i>	+	main verb
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		invariable		Invariable		past participle
		will		Have		V3

Look at these example sentences in the Future Perfect tense:

	subject	auxiliary verb		auxiliary verb	main verb	
+	I	will		have	finished	by 10am.
+	You	will		have	forgotten	me by then.
-	She	will	not	have	Gone	to school.
-	We	will	not	have	left.	
?	Will	you		have	arrived?	
?	Will	they		have	received	it?

Contraction with Future Perfect

In speaking with the Future Perfect tense, we often contract the **subject** and **will**. Sometimes, we may contract the **subject**, **will** and **have** all together:



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I will have	I'll have	I'll've
you will have	you'll have	you'll've
he will have she will have it will have	he'll have she'll have it'll have	he'll've she'll've it'll've
we will have	we'll have	we'll've
they will have	they'll have	they'll've

- I'll have finished when you arrive.
- She'll have forgotten everything.
- They'll've had their dinner by then.

In negative sentences, we may contract with **won't** or **won't've**, like this:

- Anthony won't have arrived by then.
- They won't've finished the car tomorrow.

We sometimes use **shall** instead of **will**, especially for I and we.

How do we use the Future Perfect tense?

The Future Perfect tense expresses action in the future **before** another action in the future. This is the **past in the future**. For example:



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- The train will leave the station at 9am. You will arrive at the station at 9.15am. When you arrive, the train **will have left**.

The train will have left when you arrive.		
past	present	future
		Train leaves in future at 9am.
9 9:15		
		You arrive in future at 9.15am.

Look at some more examples:

- You can call me at work at 8am. I **will have arrived** at the office by 8.
- They will be tired when they arrive. They **will not have slept** for a long time.
- "Mary won't be at home when you arrive." / "Really? Where **will she have gone**?"

You can sometimes think of the Future Perfect tense like the Present Perfect tense, but instead of your viewpoint being in the present, it is in the future:



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have done →		
	will have done →	
past	present	future

Future Perfect Quiz



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