

Tenses

A tense refers to the form of a verb that indicates the time and state of an action or event. Verbs can denote:

Time of an Action (Tense)

- Present: "He goes to school."
- Past: "He went to school."
- Future: "He will go to school."

From these examples, it is evident that there are three primary tenses: Present, Past, and Future.

State of an Action (Function of Tenses)

- Habitual: "I write letters regularly."
- Progressive: "I am writing a letter."
- Preceding: "I have just written a letter."
- Time Expression: "I have been writing a letter for some time."

Time Frame of a Tense

There are three main time frames to understand tenses fully:

- Point of Time: Denotes specific times, e.g., "in 1947," "on Monday."
- Period of Time: Denotes durations, e.g., "from 1930 to 1950," "from Monday to Saturday."
- Expression of Time: Combines both, e.g., "winter 1947," "summer 1950."

Present Indefinite Tense - Habitual Action

This tense indicates habits, customs, repeated actions, permanent activities, or general truths, often with adverbs of frequency like "often," "seldom," "usually," "never," etc.

Examples:

- "The old lady goes for a walk in the morning."
- "Pearl usually believes everybody."
- "I know him well."
- "The cow gives milk."

Additional Uses:

- Historical Present: "Now Netaji enters and addresses the Indian soldiers."
- Future Arrangement: "The Prime Minister arrives from New York tomorrow."

Present Continuous Tense - Progressive Action

This tense describes temporary actions in progress at the time of speaking or definite future arrangements.

Examples:

- "She is not working. She is swimming in the river."
- "It is raining outside."
- "I am going to the cinema tomorrow."

Additional Uses:

- With "always" to express annoyance: "She is always teaching her children."
- Non-progressive (Stative) verbs that don't typically admit progressive action: "He owns a car" (not "He is owning a car").

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Present Perfect Tense - Preceding Action

A mix of present and past, this tense indicates actions completed in the past but connected to the present, often using adverbs like "ever," "just," "already," "yet," etc.

Examples:

- "I have just seen that film."
- "I have already had my breakfast."

Note:

- Present Perfect with a point of time should be in Simple Past: "She returned two days ago" (not "She has returned two days ago").

Past Indefinite Tense - Habitual Action

Used for past habits or single completed actions in the past, marked by words like "often," "seldom," "yesterday," etc.

Examples:

- "They never drank wine."
- "I met your brother yesterday."

Past Continuous Tense - Progressive Action

Describes past actions in progress or definite future arrangements in the past.

Examples:

- "It was still raining when I reached there."
- "He was leaving that night."

Past Perfect Tense - Past Preceding

Used when one past action was completed before another started.

Examples:

- "I had gone to Delhi last week before my father came."
- "I had already taken breakfast."

Future Indefinite Tense - Future Action

Expresses actions that will occur in the future.

Examples:

- "They will come here shortly."
- "Ritu will take the examination next month."

Additional Uses:

- Future action in present continuous: "They are coming tomorrow."
- Future action in future continuous: "Sushant will be arriving soon."

Future Continuous Tense - Future Progressive

Describes actions in progress at a future time.

Examples:

- "She will be waiting for me when I reach her home."
- "Rahul will be watching a movie on television now."

Future Perfect Tense - Future Preceding

Indicates actions that will be completed before another future action starts.

Examples:

- "She will have already prepared food when I reach home."
- "He will have rung up his wife before he arrives."

Perfect Continuous Tense - Time Expression

Denotes actions continuing from the past into the present or future, emphasising the duration of the action.

Examples:

- "She has been suffering from fever for two days."
- "He will have known her for two years next month."

