
1 The Simple Present Tense

1.1 Permanent truths

Use this tense for stating general truths, things that are common knowledge, or laws of nature.

*Paris **is** the capital of France.*
*An old car **requires** a lot of maintenance.*
*The Earth **goes** around the Sun.*

1.2 Repeated or habitual actions

Use this tense for things happening repeatedly, habitually, or regularly. This tense is commonly used with frequency adverbs, such as *always*, *often*, *usually*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, *rarely*, or *never*.

*Nancy usually **works** this day of the week.*
*Every time I see her she **smiles** at me.*
*They **deliver** mail just before noon.*

- ! Use the Present Continuous Tense to describe a temporary or uncommon situation:

*Nancy **is not working** today.*

1.3 Permanent situations

Use this tense to describe situations that do not change or change slowly over time.

*John **wears** glasses.*
*I **don't play** the guitar.*
*Do you **speak** English?*

1.4 Actions by speaking

Sometimes saying something counts as an action. Use this tense for such actions.

*I **apologize** for my behavior.*
*She **claims** to be someone you know.*
*I **pronounce** you man and wife.*

- ! Use the Present Continuous Tense with these verbs when you are not performing the action but describing or explaining it.

*I **am apologizing** now because I think it is the right thing to do.*

1.5 State verbs

Use this tense with state verbs to describe a situation at the time of speaking. These verbs are not action verbs and are not ordinarily used in the continuous tenses.

*This coffee **tastes** delicious.*
*You **look** tired.*
*She **doesn't seem** concerned.*

- ! Use the Present Continuous Tense with action verbs to describe actions happening at the time of speaking.

*Hey, I **am talking** to you!*

- ! Use the Present Continuous Tense with state verbs to indicate a temporary or uncommon situation.

*I think I **am hearing** voices, because there is no one here.*

1.6 Narration

Use this tense to give a narrative. It is used to describe consecutive events or actions in the narrative. This tense is commonly used in theater plays.

*The doorbell **rings**, so I **open** the door.*
*He **sits down** at his desk and **pulls out** a drawer.*
*Othello **enters**.*

- ! Use the Present Continuous Tense to lay out the background for events and actions.

It is raining outside. I look out of the window and see wet leaves.

1.7 Rapid present actions

This tense is used to give live commentary on sports events. It is used to describe actions happening in rapid succession. It refers to actions that have just occurred.

*Johnson **makes** a pass left.*
*Smith **gets** the ball.*
*He **runs** past the defense and **scores**!*

- ! Even in such a commentary, actions or events in progress at the time of speaking are described in the Present Continuous Tense.

*The team's lead **is increasing** by the minute.*

1.8 Procedures and instructions

Use this tense when demonstrating or describing a procedure that has to be followed or when giving instructions.

*How **do** you **boil** an egg?*

*You **put** the egg into a pan with cold water and **turn** the fire on.*

*You **boil** the egg for ninety seconds and **take** it out of the water.*

- ! The Imperative is the preferred way of giving instructions, especially in writing.

*For best results, **use** one teaspoon of coffee per cup.*

1.9 Synopses and reviews

Use this tense when giving synopses or reviews of books, pictures, articles, etc.

*The events **take place** in medieval Japan.*

*An English sailor **finds** himself in a faraway world.*

*The hero **struggles** to adapt to an alien culture.*

1.10 Headlines and captions

This tense is commonly used in newspaper headlines and photograph captions.

*Madman **interrupts** show, takes hostage.*

*Schools **stay** closed due to severe weather conditions.*

*Left: The heroic cop **returns** the stolen relic to its grateful owner.*

1.11 Future meaning of regular schedule

Use this tense for future events or actions that will happen according to fixed schedules or timetables.

*Our plane **leaves** at six.*

*What time **does** your favorite TV show **start**?*

*I **play** golf on Sunday.*

- ! The Present Continuous Tense is used for actions or events that are arranged or planned, but not according to any regular schedule.

*I **am picking up** a friend of mine at the airport tomorrow.*

2 The Present Continuous Tense

2.1 Actions happening now

Use this tense with action verbs to describe an action happening at the moment of speaking. The action is still not completed.

*What **are** you **doing** here?*

*I **am** still **looking for** my keys.*

*I am glad that it **isn't raining**, because I don't have an umbrella.*

- ! State verbs are not used in the continuous tenses. Even when talking about the present moment, use the Simple Present Tense with verbs describing states or static relationships.

*I **believe** his story.*

***Do** you **have** a headache?*

2.2 Actions happening around the moment of speaking

Use this tense with action verbs to describe activities that can be thought of as happening now but not all the time.

*I **am reading** an interesting book.*

*What subjects **are** you **studying** in school?*

*Ann **is learning** to play the piano.*

2.3 Present changes

Use this tense to describe changes happening around the present time. The changes may be slow and may not be happening all the time.

*The food prices **are rising**.*

*The world **is changing**.*

*The universe **is expanding**.*

2.4 Temporary or unusual situations

Use this tense to indicate the temporary nature of the present situation. The action doesn't have to be happening at the exact moment of speaking.

*I make good money, but I **am not doing** too well at the moment.*

*I **am living** with a friend of mine now. (It is temporary.)*

*I am still here, because I **am working** overtime tonight.*

(I don't usually work overtime.)

2.5 Future meaning for things already arranged or planned

Use this tense to talk about actions or activities that you have planned or arranged. You generally need to indicate when or where the activity or action will take place.

*Next winter they **are going** to the Bahamas.
Are you **playing** golf this weekend?
I **am picking up** a friend at the airport.*

- ! This tense is generally interchangeable with the Future Continuous Tense.

*Will you **be playing** golf this weekend?*

- ! It is similar to, but not the same as *be going to (do)*. Using *be going to (do)* implies that the action or activity is intended but not necessarily planned yet.

*I **am going to visit** the Bahamas one day.*

2.6 With high frequency adverbs, meaning *too much*

Use this tense to describe an action or activity that happens more often than is normal or desirable. To achieve that effect, use a high frequency adverb such as *always*, *constantly*, or *forever*.

*She **is always losing** things.
(She **loses them more often than a normal person does.**)
These two **are constantly arguing** about something.
They **are forever torturing** their mother.*

2.7 Temporary behavior, with *be*

Put the state verb *be* in this tense to describe temporary behavior, often deliberate. Note that state verbs cannot ordinarily be used in this tense.

*Why **are you being** so difficult?
Your brother **is being** a real brat tonight.
Never mind, I **am just being** silly.*

- ! You cannot use this tense with states that are not deliberate behavior, such as hungry or sleepy. In those situations you should use the Simple Present Tense.

*I **am** so hungry (that) I could eat a horse.*

3 The Present Perfect Tense

3.1 Completed atomic actions with present results

Atomic actions are actions that happen without duration. Use this tense to announce that some atomic action took place in the past and its results are present now. This tense says nothing about when the action took place, the focus is on its result in the present.

*I **have broken** my arm. (My arm is broken now.)
The police **have arrested** Joe Smith. (He is in custody now.)
I **have done** something I must tell you about.*

- ! This tense is used to introduce new information. When continuing to talk about it, use the Simple Past Tense.

*I **have broken** my arm. -- How **did** you **do** that? -- I **fell** off a ladder.*

3.2 Finished activities with results in the present

Using this tense with activities without indicating duration implies that they are finished and their results exist in the present.

*I **have studied** Spanish. (I know some Spanish now.)
Sam **has traveled** the world. (The fortress is finished now.)
Joe **has repaired** his garden shed. (It is in working order now.)*

- ! Indicating duration with activities with results in the present may mean that the activity still continues (or that the period in which it happens is not over).

*Sam **has traveled** the world for half a year.*

3.3 Present durations of state verbs

Use this tense with state verbs. Use the perfect tenses to talk about things that began at some moment in the past and still continue in the present. There must be an explicit or implied duration.

*James **has been** here since Monday.
We **have had** this car for several years.
I **have known** this all along.*

- ! Use the Present Perfect Continuous Tense with action verbs to give the duration of something that began in the past and still continues.

*That girl **has been jumping** the rope for half an hour.*

3.4 Activities in progress for some time up to now

Some activities have aspects of state verbs. They are also used in the Present Perfect Tense with durations.

*I **have lived** in Chicago for several years now.
How long **has** he **worked** here?
The show **has delighted** its viewers for a decade.*

- ! You can use the Present Perfect Continuous Tense with any action verb. With activities you can use either tense, although the Present Perfect Continuous is still more common than the Present Perfect. Note that in the following example it is not necessary to use *now*, while not using it in the sentence above with the Present Perfect Tense leads to a possibility of a different meaning (See 3.5)

*I **have been living** in Chicago for several years (now).*

3.5 Past activities with durations and a possibility of change

Past activities with a duration are put in the Present Perfect Tense if the results are present now and the duration itself can still change.

*I **have lived** in Chicago for several months. (In all of my life.)
Ruth **has taken** a full year of painting lessons. (In all of her life.)
Sam **has studied** Spanish for two years.
(Sam spent two years of his life studying Spanish, but not necessarily the last two years. He might continue to study it and the number of years might therefore change.)*

- ! If you use the Present Perfect Continuous Tense with duration, the meaning will always be *up to this moment*.

*Sam **has been studying** Spanish for two years.*

3.6 Measuring progress

Use this tense to measure progress up to the present moment of any action or activity that can be measured. Use counts for things that can be counted. It is important to understand that this tense is used to talk about numbers that can still change.

*I **have read** fifty pages today. (The number can still change.)
This is the first time this **has happened**.
Jacob is a writer, he **has written** eleven books.
(Jacob is alive and is still writing books.)*

- ! This tense is a dynamic tense. It gives the changing situation in its present state. To give the final results of an activity, rather than measure its present progress, use the Simple Past Tense.

*I **read** fifty pages yesterday. (The number can change no more.)
Jacob was a writer, he **wrote** eleven books. (Jacob is dead.)*

3.7 Finished actions in unfinished periods of time

Use this tense to discuss actions that happen in unfinished periods of time. This usage is similar to 3.6.

***Have** you **seen** Jack today? (Today is not over.)
It **hasn't rained** this year. (The year still continues.)
Lisa **has never visited** China. (The unfinished period is Lisa's life.)*

- ! With finished periods of time use the Simple Past Tense.

***Did** you **see** Jack yesterday?*

3.8 Regular actions, with adverbs of frequency

Use this tense to talk about things or actions that happen with a certain frequency. This tense implies that the frequency described by the adverb might change.

*Ron **has** always **done** his homework very well. (At least until now.)
Sheila **has** often **wondered** what they do. (She might find out this time.)
I **have never seen** such a mess before. (But I see it now.)*

- ! To describe actions without the implication of a possible change in their frequency, use the Simple Present Tense with frequency adverbs.

*Ron always **does** his homework very well.*

3.9 Expected actions, with *still*, *already* and *yet*

Use this tense with *still*, *already* and *yet* for actions that are expected to happen. *Still* is only used in negative phrases, *yet* is used in questions and negative phrases, and *already* is not used in the negative. This is similar in usage to 3.1.

*Bobby **has** already **gone** to bed.
I still **haven't seen** your new car.
Have you **found** a job yet?*

3.10 Actions that happened a very short time ago, with *just*

Use this tense with *just* to indicate that the action ended a short time ago.

*I **have just written** a reply to that letter.*

*They **have just graduated** from college.*

*The bus **has just left**.*

- ! In the American English, the word *just* is usually enough to indicate that the action happened a very short time ago, so it is possible to use the Simple Past Tense with it.

*I just **wrote** a reply to that letter.*

3.11 With a superlative

Use this tense with the superlative degree of adjectives to indicate that the person, thing, or idea of which you are speaking wins the comparison. This tense is used because the winner might change in the future, and so this case of usage is similar to 3.6.

*This is the best sandwich I **have had** in years.*

*Sam is the most amazing person I **have seen** in my life.*

*That's the dumbest idea I've ever **heard**.*

4 The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

4.1 Activities continuing for some time

Use this tense to talk about continuous actions or activities lasting for some time up to the present moment. The activity may not be happening all the time without interruption.

*I **have been waiting** for you for an hour.*

*Joe **has been painting** his house since Monday.*

*It **has been raining** all day again.*

- ! This tense can be used only with action verbs. For state verbs use the Present Perfect Tense.

*I **have been** here for an hour.*

- ! To indicate that the activity has ended, use the Present Perfect Tense.

*John **has painted** his house.*

4.2 Repeated atomic actions continuing for some time

Use this tense to talk about actions happening repeatedly for some time up to the present moment. The actions taken together can be thought of as a continuous activity.

*She **has been winking** at you for some time now.*

*John **has been trying** to talk to you since Monday.*

*They **have been throwing** dice for hours.*

4.3 Past activities with present giveaway results

Use this tense for activities that took place some time ago. There is usually some present evidence of the past activity, which makes it possible to guess that the activity took place.

***Have you been fighting?** (You have a black eye.)*

***It has been raining.** (The streets are still wet.)*

***Have you been working out?** (You look great!)*

- ! This tense is commonly used for complaints.

*Someone **has been smoking** in here again.*

(The room smells of cigarettes.)

5 The Simple Past Tense

5.1 Complete actions with a past time phrase

Use this tense with a past time phrase to tell of a completed past action or event. The past time adverb has to answer the question *when?* The past time phrase doesn't have to occur in the same sentence and can be derived from context. This tense is most often used with the adverb *ago*.

*I **saw** a good movie yesterday.*

*He **called** me last night at six and we **talked** for an hour.*

*The ship **sank** many years ago.*

- ! Use the Past Continuous Tense for actions that were still in progress at the time specified by the past time phrase.

*At a quarter past six last night I **was talking** to him on the phone.*

- ! Use the Present Perfect Tense for actions completed in an unspecified period of time or in a period of time that still continues in the present, such as *lately*, *today*, or *this year*.

***Have** you **talked** to him today?*

5.2 Complete actions with an implied past time phrase

Use this tense when describing past actions if it is clear that the time period in which the action or event took place is now over.

*I **saw** Jake at the club. (I am no longer at the club.)*

*Shakespeare **wrote** many immortal plays. (Shakespeare is dead.)*

*Ted **smoked** forty cigarettes a day. (Ted doesn't smoke anymore.)*

5.3 The immediate past

Use this tense to refer to something that took place a short time ago. The phrase *a short time ago* is implied and doesn't have to be specified.

***Did** you **say** something?*

*I **thought** the telephone **rang**.*

*I **let** the dog **out** for a walk.*

5.4 Consecutive actions or events in the past

Use this tense to describe a past sequence of events or actions. This tense is commonly used for books, stories, reports, and witness accounts.

*Last night John **took** his hat and **went** for a walk.*

*He **noticed** a beggar by the gate.*

*John **gave** him a dollar.*

5.5 As past equivalent of the Simple Present

Use this tense to replace the Simple Present Tense in reported past speech and in other cases requiring agreement of tenses.

*He said that he **loved** her. (He still loves her now.)*

*She asked where the theater **was**. (The theater is still there.)*

*I explained that I **wanted** to stop by a drug store.*

(I said: "I want to stop by a drug store.")

6 The Past Continuous Tense

6.1 Actions in progress in the past

Use this tense with a past time phrase to describe actions that were in progress at a given moment in the past. The past time adverb has to answer the question *when*? The past time phrase doesn't have to be given in the same sentence and can be derived from context.

*Two years ago Bob **was studying** biology.
Last night at seven we **were not having** dinner yet.
What **were** you **doing** at six last night?*

- ! Use this tense only for actions or events in progress at the moment. Use the Simple Past Tense for completed actions in the past.

*We **had** dinner late last night.*

6.2 Background actions in the past

Use this tense to describe longer actions that were in progress when a shorter action occurred. The longer action can be seen as a background action for the shorter one. Note that the shorter action pinpoints a specific moment in the past and can be viewed as a time phrase.

*We **were having** dinner when someone called.
The company **wasn't doing well** when the new boss took over.
While I **was looking** for my wallet, he paid the waiter.*

6.3 Parallel actions in the past

Use this tense to describe two or more actions that were in progress at the same time in the past.

*The cats **were fighting** and we **were watching**.
It **was raining**, and the leaves **were rustling**.
She **was talking** to me, but I **wasn't paying attention**.*

- ! If one or more of the parallel actions end in the past, you can use the Simple Past Tense for them. It usually happens in the middle of a past narrative.

*The cats **fought** and we **watched**.
It **was raining** as we **walked** home.*

6.4 Polite requests

Use this tense to start a polite request.

*I **was hoping** you would give me a lift.
I **was wondering** if you could lend me some cash.
I **was thinking** maybe I could use your car tonight?*

6.5 As past equivalent of the Present Continuous

Use this tense to replace the Present Continuous Tense in reported past speech and in other cases requiring agreement of tenses.

*They asked him if **he was leaving**.
(They asked him: "Are you leaving?")
She asked what I **was looking at**.
(She asked: "What are you looking at?")
I admitted that I **wasn't trying** hard enough.
(I said: "I am not trying hard enough.")*

7 The Past Perfect Tense

7.1 Actions preceding other actions in the past

When it is necessary to clarify that one action happened before another in the past, use this tense for the earlier action. Both actions don't have to occur in the same sentence.

*When we arrived at the station, the train **had left**.*

(The train left before we arrived.)

*He remembered the man he **had seen** in the car.*

(He saw the man earlier.)

*They saw that someone **had taken** their seats.*

(The seats were already occupied when they looked.)

- ! Use the Simple Past Tense for consecutive events in the past. Also, when it is clear from the sentence that one action happened before another, using the Past Perfect for the earlier action is optional.

*The train **left** before we arrived at the station.*

7.2 As past equivalent of the Present Perfect

Use this tense to replace the Present Perfect Tense in reported past speech and in other cases requiring agreement of tenses.

*He said he **had seen** that movie.*

(He said: "I have seen that movie.")

*By the end of last week he **had finished** the first part.*

(The past time phrase requires a past tense.)

*They were selling the house they **had built**.*

(The house was built earlier in the past.)

7.3 To start a past conditional phrase

Use this tense to state the past condition in a conditional phrase.

*If you **had studied** better, you would have passed the exam.*

(You did not study when you should have and failed the exam.)

*If you **had listened** to me earlier, everything would have gone differently.*

(You did not listen to me when you had the chance.)

***Had I realized** that it was you, I would have said hello.*

(I didn't realize it was you and said nothing.)

8 The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

8.1 Actions in progress for some time at a past moment

Use this tense for actions that started earlier in the past and were still continuing at some past moment. There is always an explicit or implied duration.

*When we met, she **had been studying** medicine for a year.*

*Don **hadn't been sleeping** for an hour when his dad called.*

*The boss let me go home. I **had been working** since morning.*

- ! With state verbs, which cannot be used in the continuous, use the Past Perfect Tense for past durations.

*We **had owned** our car for three years before we sold it.*

- ! Use the Past Continuous Tense when describing an action in progress in the past without specifying its duration.

*He **was still sitting** in his chair when I left.*

8.2 As past equivalent of the Present Perfect Continuous

Use this tense to replace the Present Perfect Continuous Tense in reported past speech and in other cases requiring agreement of tenses.

*I asked if he **had been playing** all morning.*

("Have you been playing all morning?")

*She was out of breath. She **had obviously been running**.*

(The past requires a past tense.)

*They said someone **had been stealing** their mail.*

("Someone has been stealing our mail.")

9 The Simple Future Tense

9.1 Future predictions

Use this tense for future events without indicating any feelings or intentions, for stating a certain future fact.

*It **will rain** tomorrow.
Will the present real estate prices **hold** steady for a month?
The current measures **will prove** inadequate in the long run.*

9.2 Spontaneous decisions

Use this tense to voice decisions made at the time of speaking. This is often preceded in the sentence by an introductory phrase, such as *I think*, *maybe*, or *perhaps*. Here *will* is a modal verb.

*I **will give** him a call right now.
I think I'll **pass** on that offer.
Perhaps I'll **do** it after all.*

9.3 Promises

Use this tense when taking oaths or making promises or resolutions. Here *will* is a modal verb.

*I **will behave** at the fair.
I **will learn** a new language in the coming year.
I **will not rest** until I have avenged my brother.*

9.4 Threats

Use this tense when making threats. Here *will* is a modal verb.

*You **will suffer** for this.
I'll **teach** you a lesson in manners.
You **will regret** your words for the rest of your days.*

9.5 Requests

Use this tense in questions when asking for things. The intonation can give the request an air of impatience or irritation. Here *will* is a modal verb.

*Will you **help** me with my homework?
For the last time, **will** you please **be** quiet?
Will you **let** me sleep or not?*

! Using *could* or *would* in your requests is more polite and is preferred in social situations.

*Could you **help** me with my homework?
Would you please **pass** me some of that cake?*

9.6 Refusals

This tense is used to indicate a refusal to perform some action or accept a proposal or situation. The tense is used in the negative form and is often abbreviated to *won't*. Here *will* is a modal verb.

*My car **won't** start.
I keep telling her but she **won't** listen.
I am sorry, but I **will not** do it.*

9.7 Offers

Use this tense to offer help. The verb is used in the form of a question with *shall* rather than *will*. Here *shall* is a modal verb.

*Shall I **open** the window for you?
Shall I **make** you some coffee?
What **shall** I **get** you?*

! Using *can* or *could* is another way to make offers. It sounds more formal and is the preferred way of offering some service to a customer.

*Can I **help** you?
Could I **interest** you in our steak?*

9.8 Asking for opinion or advice

Use this tense to ask what someone thinks whether or not you should go ahead with what you are about to do. The verb is often introduced by a question such as *what do you think* or *what's your opinion*.

*Shall I **call** him tonight?
What do you think, **shall** I **try** it on?
Shall I **buy** this dress? (Do you want me to buy it or not?)*

! Using *should* is another way of asking for advice. *Should* is used more often and differs from *shall* in that it asks for the listener's feelings on the subject.

*What do you think, **should** I **buy** this dress?
(Do you think it is a good idea for me to buy it?)*

9.9 Suggestions

Use *shall we* when making a suggestion to do something together. It is the more polite and formal question form of *let's*. *Shall we* is commonly used in situations where the proposed activity is expected.

Shall we dance?

Shall we open our presents?

Shall we join our guests?

- ! When proposing to do something spontaneous, do not use *shall we*. In a formal situation use *I suggest we*. In an informal situation use a more colloquial phrase like *let's*, *why don't we*, or *how about*.

I suggest we rethink our strategy.

Let's do something different this time.

Why don't we play a game?

How about a dance?

10 The Future Continuous Tense

10.1 Actions in progress at some future time

Use this tense to describe an action or activity in progress at some future time. This tense is concerned only with the fact that the action will be in progress at the specific time in the future, not with its duration up to that time.

*This time tomorrow I **will be playing** golf.*

*We **will be soliciting** donations next week.*

*In less than an hour she **will be flying** over the mountains.*

- ! Use the Future Perfect Tense for state verbs and the Future Perfect Continuous Tense for action verbs when describing durations up to some time in the future.

*They **will have had** this house for a year by then.*

*By five o'clock she **will have been flying** for half an hour.*

- ! Note that the Simple Future Tense has modal meanings. (Modal meaning shows your attitude towards the action.) You can use the Future Continuous Tense to indicate pure future without modality.

*We **will solicit** donations next week. (We promise.)*

*We **will be soliciting** donations next week. (It is a fact.)*

10.2 Future planned or arranged actions

This tense can be used to describe an action planned or arranged.

*This summer we'll **be going** to Europe.*

*I'll **be visiting** my brother tomorrow.*

*He **will be playing** at the opening ceremony on Tuesday.*

- ! You can also use the Present Continuous Tense for actions already arranged or planned.

*This summer we **are going** to Europe.*

10.3 Inquiries about the future

Use this tense to inquire about the future without implying any modal meaning. It is a good way to start a request.

***Will you be passing** the post office? (Could you get some stamps?)*

***Will you be visiting** her tomorrow? (Could you give this to her?)*

***Will you be calling** Richard tonight? (Please tell him I said hello.)*

11 The Future Perfect Tense

11.1 States or actions in progress for some time in the future

Use this tense to describe a future duration up to some time in the future. The duration can start at any time, but it has to be measured at some future moment.

*Tomorrow they **will have had** our car for a full week.*

*We **will have been** married for a year next Tuesday.*

*In a week I **will have worked** for this company for over a decade.*

- ! Use the Future Perfect Continuous Tense with action verbs to stress that the action will still be in progress at the future time.

*Tomorrow they **will have been using** our car for a week.*

11.2 Actions completed by some time in the future

Use this tense for an action or activity that will finish by some future time.

*They **will have invented** time travel before the end of the century.*

*Ben **will have built** his new house by next summer.*

*I **will have finished** my homework by dinnertime.*

- ! The Simple Future Tense can be used for future actions that cannot have duration (atomic actions).

*They **will** probably **invent** time travel before the end of the century.*

11.3 Measuring progress up to some future time

Use this tense for measuring progress of an action or activity up to some moment in the future.

*At this rate you **will** probably **have read** half the book by tomorrow.*

*By next Monday our workers **will have dug out** one-third of the trench.*

*We **will have eaten** most of our food supplies by the end of the winter.*

12 The Future Perfect Continuous Tense

12.1 Actions in progress for some time in the future

For action verbs, use this tense with durations up to a moment in the future. This tense is preferred to the Future Perfect Tense for action verbs. Use this tense if you need to stress that the actions or activities will still be in progress at the time.

*Tomorrow I **will have been looking** for work for half a year.*

*At 6:30 she **will have been watching** television for thirty minutes.*

*In a week I **will have been working** for this company for a decade.*

- ! For state verbs, use the Future Perfect Tense with durations up to a moment in the future.

*Tomorrow I **will have been** unemployed for half a year.*

- ! Using the Future Perfect Tense with durations up to a moment in the future conveys the idea of a possible completion or change at that time.

*In a week I **will have worked** for this company for a full year, and I will become eligible for a raise.*

13 State Verbs

Some verbs are called state verbs since they describe states rather than actions. Action verbs describe some actions performed by the subject. State verbs either describe the subject itself, or they describe static relationships between the subject and the object. As a rule, state verbs are not used in the continuous tenses. There are several classes into which state verbs can be organized for easier comprehension and memorization. Some of them are given below with short lists of verbs. The lists of verbs are not exhaustive, but they should help you get a general idea of the meaning of each class. The examples below use the Simple Present Tense. Note that it would be a mistake to use the Present Continuous Tense in these examples.

13.1 Describing the subject

These verbs are used to describe the subject. They need a complement and can be replaced by *be* without turning the sentence into nonsense.

<i>appear</i>	<i>The stars appear so close to us.</i>
<i>be</i>	<i>You are the best.</i>
<i>feel</i>	<i>I feel so tired.</i>
<i>remain</i>	<i>The situation remains the same.</i>
<i>seem</i>	<i>They seem unhappy.</i>

13.2 Possession

These verbs describe ownership and possession.

<i>belong</i>	<i>This bag belongs to my wife.</i>
<i>boast</i>	<i>The car boasts a powerful engine.</i>
<i>have (got)</i>	<i>Helen has got a great library.</i>
<i>own</i>	<i>We don't own this house.</i>
<i>possess</i>	<i>Aloe possesses healing properties.</i>

13.3 The whole and its parts

These verbs describe a relationship between the whole and its parts, which can be seen as an unchanging relationship.

<i>consist</i>	<i>Water consists of oxygen and hydrogen.</i>
<i>contain</i>	<i>Milk contains protein.</i>
<i>exclude</i>	<i>The new rule excludes employees over 60.</i>
<i>have</i>	<i>The Solar system has nine planets.</i>
<i>include</i>	<i>Our itinerary includes the Grand Canyon.</i>

13.4 Capacity

These verbs tell us how many or how much of something is in something else.

<i>accommodate</i>	<i>This table accommodates 4 people.</i>
<i>seat</i>	<i>The hall seats 3000 spectators.</i>
<i>comprise</i>	<i>This dictionary comprises over 10,000 entries.</i>
<i>contain</i>	<i>A glass of milk contains 10 grams of protein.</i>
<i>hold</i>	<i>This bucket holds 3 gallons.</i>

13.5 Wishes

These verbs describe desires.

<i>crave</i>	<i>She always craves oranges in the winter.</i>
<i>desire</i>	<i>What we can never have, we desire most.</i>
<i>need</i>	<i>I don't need another car.</i>
<i>want</i>	<i>What do you want?</i>
<i>wish</i>	<i>I wish to clarify my previous statement.</i>

13.6 Personal feelings

These verbs describe emotions, attitudes, and preferences.

<i>fear</i>	<i>I fear for your safety.</i>
<i>hate</i>	<i>Don't you just hate when that happens?</i>
<i>like</i>	<i>My dog likes to chase sparrows.</i>
<i>love</i>	<i>I love classical music.</i>
<i>prefer</i>	<i>Some people prefer tea to coffee.</i>

13.7 People and information

These verbs describe a relationship between people and some information, idea or fact. Many of them can be used after *can*.

<i>appreciate</i>	<i>I appreciate your help.</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>They believe everything they hear.</i>
<i>know</i>	<i>I know what I have to do.</i>
<i>remember</i>	<i>Do you remember her phone number?</i>
<i>understand</i>	<i>I don't understand your explanation.</i>

13.8 Introducing ideas

These verbs are used to introduce an opinion or belief. They are often followed by *that* and by a complete sentence.

<i>believe</i>	<i>He still believes (that) Santa Claus exists.</i>
<i>feel</i>	<i>I feel (that) you should call her.</i>
<i>know</i>	<i>The adults know (that) pigs cannot fly.</i>
<i>think</i>	<i>I think (that) we are lost.</i>
<i>understand</i>	<i>I understand (that) you are an artist.</i>

13.9 Senses of perception

These verbs are used to describe senses of perception. They are often used with *can*, with no change in meaning.

<i>see</i>	<i>Do you see that tree over there? (Can you see...)</i>
<i>hear</i>	<i>I don't hear anything. (I can't hear...)</i>
<i>smell</i>	<i>Do you smell something burning? (Can you smell...)</i>
<i>feel</i>	<i>I feel a pebble in my shoe. (I can feel...)</i>
<i>taste</i>	<i>I barely taste apples in this pie. (I can barely taste...)</i>

13.10 Acting upon senses of perception

These verbs are also used to describe senses of perception. The difference with 13.9 is that here the subject of the sentence is the object of perception.

<i>look</i>	<i>You look fantastic!</i>
<i>sound</i>	<i>This song sounds too mellow.</i>
<i>smell</i>	<i>That rotten fish in the fridge smells just awful.</i>
<i>feel</i>	<i>A hot shower feels nice after a day in the field.</i>
<i>taste</i>	<i>This cake tastes delicious.</i>

13.11 Static spatial relationships

These verbs describe static layouts. Their main uses are for description of geography, landscapes, or architecture.

<i>border</i>	<i>The state of Texas borders Mexico.</i>
<i>extend</i>	<i>The cape extends far out into the ocean.</i>
<i>oversee</i>	<i>The balcony oversees a beautiful garden.</i>
<i>sandwich</i>	<i>Our house is sandwiched by two huge buildings.</i>
<i>surround</i>	<i>The woods completely surround the village.</i>