

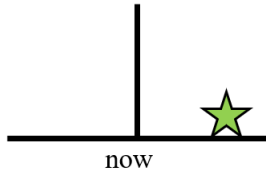



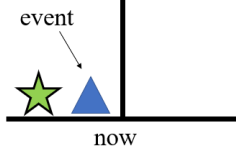

Verb Tenses

A **verb** describes an action that occurs in a sentence. **Tense** is the time frame when a specific event occurs and can appear in the past, present, or future time. There are also different verb **forms** such as simple, perfect, progressive, and perfect progressive. This handout explains the purpose of verb tenses and forms, and it provides examples of how to conjugate verbs within the appropriate verb form.


Simple Forms

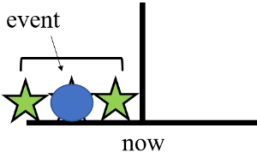

Time	Verb Formation & Examples
<p>Simple Present: Indicates that an action is a <i>fact</i> or a <i>routine</i>.</p> 	<p>Formed by adding -s or -es to the end of the base form of the verb when the subject is a singular/non-count noun or he, she, or it.</p> <p><i>Fact:</i> (Non-count noun): Water <u>boils</u> at 100 degrees Celsius and at 212 degrees Fahrenheit.</p> <p><i>Routine:</i> I/You/We/They <u>sleep</u> every night. He/She/It <u>sleeps</u> every night.</p>
<p>Simple Past: Indicates that an action <i>finished</i> at an <i>identified time</i> in the past.</p> 	<p>Formed by adding -ed to the end of the base form of a regular verb.</p> <p>(Regular verb): He <u>lived</u> in Germany in 2010.</p> <p>Irregular verbs have various simple past forms.</p> <p>(Irregular verb): I <u>slept</u> well last night.</p>
<p>Simple Future: Indicates a <i>planned</i> event or a <i>prediction</i> about the future.</p> 	<p>Formed by the auxiliary verb will + the base form of the verb. An auxiliary verb helps determine the tense of the main verb.</p> <p><i>Planned:</i> I <u>will visit</u> my grandmother next weekend.</p> <p><i>Prediction:</i> She <u>will love</u> the gift I have made for her.</p>

Perfect Forms




Time	Verb Formation & Examples
<p>Present perfect: Indicates that an action finished at an <i>unspecified time</i> in the past or that it started in the past and <i>continues into the present</i>.</p> 	<p>Formed by have or has + the past participle of the verb. The past participle is the same as the simple past form of regular and irregular verbs.</p> <p><i>Unspecified time:</i> I <u>have visited</u> Ellis Island in New York.</p> <p><i>Continues into the present:</i> She <u>has known</u> her best friend for ten years.</p>
<p>Past perfect: Indicates that an action finished at some point in the past <i>before</i> another event occurred.</p> 	<p>Formed by had + the past participle.</p> <p>I <u>had known</u> my partner for a few years before we got married.</p>
<p>Future perfect: Indicates that an action will finish at some time in the future <i>before</i> another event occurs.</p> 	<p>Formed by will have + the past participle.</p> <p>I <u>will have slept</u> for eight hours when my alarm wakes me tomorrow morning.</p>

Progressive Forms

Time	Verb Formation & Examples
<p>Present progressive: Indicates that an action is <i>in progress</i> or occurring now.</p> 	<p>Formed by am/is/are + the present participle of the verb. The present participle is formed by adding -ing to the end of the base form of the verb.</p> <p>I <u>am sleeping</u> right now. He/She/It <u>is sleeping</u> right now. You/We/They <u>are sleeping</u> right now.</p>

<p>Past progressive: Indicates that an action was in progress in the past when another simple past event <i>interrupted</i> the action in progress.</p> 	<p>Formed by was/were + the present participle.</p> <p>I/He/She <u>was sleeping</u> when the storm began. You/We/They <u>were sleeping</u> when the storm began.</p>
<p>Future progressive: Indicates that an action will be in progress at some time in the future.</p> 	<p>Formed by will be + the present participle.</p> <p>I <u>will be sleeping</u> later tonight, so please do not call me.</p>

Perfect Progressive Forms

Time	Verb Formation & Examples
<p>Present perfect progressive: Indicates that an action started in the past and continues into the present.</p> 	<p>Formed by have/has been + the present participle.</p> <p>I/You/We/They <u>have been driving</u> for eight hours. He/She <u>has been driving</u> for eight hours.</p>
<p>Past perfect progressive: Indicates that an action started and was still in progress when another event occurred.</p> 	<p>Formed by had been + the present participle.</p> <p>I <u>had been living</u> in that house for ten years when my parents decided to sell it.</p>
<p>Future perfect progressive: Indicates that an action will be in progress when another event occurs.</p> 	<p>Formed by will have been + the present participle.</p> <p>I <u>will have been working</u> at that company for thirty years when I retire at age 65.</p>

*Note: there are many verbs, such as *live*, *work*, *study*, which can be used in both simple and progressive forms without much difference in meaning.

Practice

Read through the following sentences and identify the form of the verb in **boldface**.

1. I **eat** at my best friend's house every Sunday.
 - a. Simple past
 - b. Simple future
 - c. Simple present
 - d. Present perfect

2. I **ate** at my best friend's house last Sunday.
 - a. Simple future
 - b. Present perfect
 - c. Simple past
 - d. Future progressive

3. I **will eat** at my best friend's house next Sunday.
 - a. Simple future
 - b. Past progressive
 - c. Present perfect progressive
 - d. Future progressive

4. I **have been listening** to music all afternoon.
 - a. Simple present
 - b. Past perfect progressive
 - c. Present perfect progressive
 - d. Present perfect

5. I **had been studying** when my phone rang.
 - a. Future perfect
 - b. Past perfect progressive
 - c. Future progressive
 - d. Present perfect progressive

6. I **will have been studying** for eight hours by the time I go to bed.
- Future progressive
 - Present perfect progressive
 - Present perfect
 - Future perfect progressive

Conjugate the verb in **boldface** to match the perfect tense indicated in the parentheses.

7. I **eat** at my best friend's house. (Present perfect)
- have ate
 - have eaten
 - will eaten
 - will eat
8. I laughed at my best friend because she **said** something funny. (Past perfect)
- have said
 - had said
 - will have said
 - had say
9. I **drove** to my best friend's house. (Future perfect)
- will have driven
 - had drove
 - will have drove
 - will drive

Answer Key

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. C | 6. D |
| 2. C | 7. B |
| 3. A | 8. B |
| 4. C | 9. A |
| 5. B | |

Additional Resources

For further help understanding and practicing verb tenses, visit the Academic Center for Excellence on-campus or online Writing Center, schedule an appointment, or visit our website at <https://www.germannna.edu/academic-center-for-excellence/>. You can also look at the [Subject Verb Agreement handout](#) or the [Subject Verb Agreement module](#).