

Tenses (Part I)

At the end of this lecture, students should be able to :

- ✓ Understand the five forms of verbs in English.
- ✓ Distinguish between present, past, and future tenses.
- ✓ Use tenses properly in different contexts.

Verbs are words that express action. They can express **tense** (the time at which the action occurred) and **voice**. The **voice** can be active (where the subject performs the action) or passive (where the subject is placed in a passive position in the sentence).

The most common verb tenses are the **present**, **past**, and **future**. Each of these tenses has a progressive, habitual, and perfect form.

 Most verbs have five forms:

Base form. This is the verb in its original form, the form you find in the dictionary. Run, study, eat, think, write, fall, open, and ask are verbs in their base form.

Third-person singular form: base form + -s (or -es). This form is used with he, she, or it in the present tense. Runs, studies, eats, thinks, writes, falls, opens, and asks are verbs in *the third-person singular form*.

Past tense form. This form can be regular or irregular. The regular past tense is the base form + -ed. Studied, opened, and asked are verbs in the regular past tense form. There are fewer irregular verbs in the English language than regular verbs. These verbs are called irregular, because they do not end with -ed in the past tense. Ran, ate, thought, wrote, and fell are past tense forms of irregular verbs.

Present participle, or progressive, form: base form + -ing. Running, studying, eating, thinking, writing, falling, opening, and asking are verbs in the present participle, or progressive, form.

Past participle form. This form can be regular or irregular. The regular past participle form is the base form + -ed. Studied, opened, and asked are verbs in

this form.) Irregular past participles are formed differently, for example, run, eaten, thought, written, and fallen.

✚ Most verbs can be conjugated in the **present**, **past**, and **future** tenses. The present participle, or progressive form, of a verb is used together with the auxiliary be to show a continuing or incomplete action in the various tenses.

Activity

Rewrite each present-tense sentence using the other five tenses.

1. I study mathematics.
Past.....
Present Perfect.....
Past Perfect.....
Future.....
Future Perfect.....
2. Tom is going to Iraq.
Past.....
Present Perfect.....
Past Perfect.....
Future.....
Future Perfect.....
3. Anna comes along.
Past.....
Present Perfect.....
Past Perfect.....
Future.....
Future Perfect.....

The Present Tenses

English has two 'present' tenses. The simple present (I play,I work etc) is used especially to talk about regular or permanent activities and situations. The

present progressive (also called 'present continuous') is used especially to talk about things that are going on around the moment of speaking'

Examples : The sun rises in the east. My parents live near Dover. Joe plays golf on Saturdays.

Most verbs can form a present participle and be used in the progressive tenses. These tenses express the idea that an action is in progress during a particular time, that an action begins before, is in progress during, and continues after a period of time or after another action begins.

The Present Progressive

The present progressive tense expresses an action that is taking place at the moment of speaking and can imply that the action is incomplete.

Lauren is shopping right now. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: She is still shopping.)

He is traveling to Germany. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: He hasn't arrived yet.)

The sun is shining brightly. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: The sun continues to shine.)

The girls are walking to the park. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: They haven't arrived yet.)

Often, the progressive present tense can be used to imply a future tense meaning.

I am driving home this weekend.
Are you going to college next fall?

Activity 1/Make present progressive sentences

1. Ann/ read/the newspaper.
2. The baby/cry/again.

3. It /snow/again.
4. You/look/very beautifultoday.
5. Your coffee /get/ cold.
6. I/play/a lot of football this year.
7. We/wait/for a phone call.

Activity 2/ Put the words in the correct order

1. getting are you up.
2. you what drinking are ?
3. not you are listening.
4. going where you are ?
5. talking fast too I am.
6. I film enjoying not this am.
7. Looking all those people at are what ?
8. Am for you I cooking this not.

Activity 3/ Complete the sentences with verbs from the box

Want like need not understand prefer seem
--

1. What.....Paul.....for his birthday ?
2. Przepraszam ! ‘Sorry, I.....’
3. ‘Would you like some coffe ?’ ‘I.....tea, if that’s OK.’
4. ‘What do you think of this music ?’ ‘I.....it.’
5. This room.....very cold. Is the heating on ?
6. I’m going to the shops.we.....anything ?

Activity 4/ Circle the correct answers

1. ‘Your English gets/is getting better’. ‘Oh, thank you.’
2. ‘Where’s Susan ?’ ‘She comes/She’s coming now.’
3. ‘Do you smoke ?’/ ‘Are you smoking ?’ ‘No, never.’
4. John cooks dinner now/every Sunday.

5. I'm reading a lot of magazines these days/when I go on holiday.
6. I work late all this week/ most Tuesdays.

Activity 5/ Correct (√) or not (x)

1. You're driving too fast.
2. What is this word meaning ?
3. I'm not wanting a drink just now.
4. Where are you living now ?
5. I'm thinking you're wrong.
6. Sorry, I'm not understanding.

References

Hewings, M. (2013). *Advanced grammar in use*. Cambridge University Press.

Swan, M. (2016). *Practical English usage*. Oxford University Press.

Swan, M. & Walter, C. (2011). *Oxford English grammar course*. Oxford University Press.