

Tenses

I) The present tenses

There are two present tenses in English: *The present continuous*: 'I am working.' and *The simple present*: 'I work.'

A) The present continuous

1-The present continuous tense is formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb be + the present participle:

<u>Affirmative</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Interrogative</u>
I am working	I am not working	am I working?

..... *Negative interrogative*: am I not working? are you not working? is he not working? etc.

-Note the irregular contraction, aren't I? for am I not?

Interrogative contractions: am, is, are may be contracted: Why's he working? Where're you working?

2-The spelling of the present participle

A) When a verb ends in a single **e**, this **e** is dropped before **ing**:

argue, arguing/ hate, hating / love, loving

...except after **age**, **dye** and **singe**: *ageing, dyeing, singeing*

...and verbs ending in **ee**: *agree, agreeing / see, seeing*

B) When a verb of one syllable has one vowel and ends in a single consonant, this consonant is doubled before **ing**: *hit, hitting/ run, running/ stop, stopping*

....Verbs of two or more syllables whose last syllable contains only one vowel and ends in a single consonant double this consonant if the stress falls on the last syllable:

admit, admitting / begin, beginning / prefer, preferring

but *budget, budgeting/ enter, entering* _____ (stress not on the last syllable).

-A final 'l' after a single vowel is, however, always doubled: *signal, signalling / travel, travelling* (except in American English.)

C) **ing** can be added to a verb ending in **y** without affecting the spelling of the verb:

carry, carrying /enjoy, enjoying /hurry, hurrying

3-Uses of the present continuous tense

A) For an action happening now: *It is raining. I am still wearing a coat as it isn't cold.*

Why are you sitting at my desk?

B) For an action happening about this time but not necessarily at the moment of speaking:

I am reading a play by Shaw. (This may mean 'at the moment of speaking' but may also mean 'now' in a more general sense.)

He is teaching French and learning Greek. (He may not be doing either at the moment of speaking.)

-When two continuous tenses having the same subject are joined by **and**, the auxiliary may be dropped before the second verb, as in the above example. This applies to all pairs of compound tenses:

She was knitting and listening to the radio.

-For a definite arrangement in the near future (the most usual way of expressing one's immediate plans):

I'm meeting Peter tonight. He is taking me to the theatre.

Are you doing anything tomorrow afternoon? ~ Yes, I'm playing tennis with Ann.

.....Note that the time of the action must always be mentioned, as otherwise there might be confusion between present and future meanings, come and go, however, can be used in this way without a time expression.

4- Other possible uses of the present continuous

A) With a point in time to indicate an action which begins before this point and probably continues after it:

At six I am bathing the baby. (I start bathing him before six.)

....Similarly, with a verb in the simple present:

They are flying over the desert when one of the engines fails.

-The present continuous is rarely used in this way except in descriptions of daily routine and in dramatic narrative, but the past continuous is often combined with a point in time or a verb in the simple past.

B) With **always**: *He is always losing his keys.*

...This form is used, chiefly in the affirmative:

For a frequently repeated action, usually when the frequency annoys the speaker or seems unreasonable to him: *Tom is always going away for weekends* (present continuous) would imply

that he goes away very often, probably too often in the speaker's opinion. But it does not necessarily mean that he goes away every weekend. It is not a literal statement. Compare with **always** + simple present:

Tom always goes away at weekends = Tom goes away every weekend. (a literal statement)

-**I/we** + **always** + continuous tense is also possible here. The repeated action is then often accidental:

I'm always making that mistake.

-For an action which appears to be continuous:

He's always working = He works the whole time.

-This sort of action quite often annoys the speaker but doesn't necessarily do so: *He's always reading* could imply that he spends too much time reading, but could also be said in a tone of approval.

-The first person could be used here too. The action then, like the other actions here in 2, is usually deliberate.

B) The simple present tense

1-In the affirmative, the simple present has the same form as the infinitive but adds an 's' for the third person singular.

-Irregular verbs form this tense in exactly the same way.

-Contractions: the verb **do** is normally contracted in the negative and negative: *I don't work, he doesn't work, don't I work? doesn't he work?*

2-Spelling notes

-Verbs ending in **ss, sh, ch, x** and **o** add **es**, instead of **s** alone, to form the third person singular:

I box, he boxes / I rush, he rushes/ I do, he does / I watch, he watches/ I go, he goes

-When 'y' follows a consonant we change the y into **i** and add **es**:

I carry, he carries/ I copy, he copies/ I try, he tries

.....but verbs ending in y following a vowel obey the usual rule: *obey, he obeys I say, he says*

3-The simple present used to express habitual action

-The main use of the simple present tense is to express habitual actions:

He smokes./ Dogs bark./ Cats drink milk.

-This tense does not tell us whether or not the action is being performed at the moment of speaking, and if we want to make this clear we must add a verb in the present continuous tense:

He's working. He always works at night.

My dog barks a lot, but he isn't barking at the moment.

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-The simple present tense is often used with adverbs or adverb phrases such as: *always, never, occasionally, often, sometimes, usually, every week, on Mondays, twice a year* etc.: *How often do you wash your hair?*

.....or with time clauses expressing routine or habitual actions; **whenever** and **when** (= whenever) are particularly useful:

Whenever it rains the roof leaks.

When you open the door a light goes on.

4-Other uses of the simple present tense:

A) It is used, chiefly with the verb say, when we are asking about or quoting from books, notices or very recently received letters:

What does that notice say? ~ It says, 'No parking.'

What does the book say? ~ It says, 'Cook very slowly.'

Shakespeare says, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be.'

.....Other verbs of communication are also possible:

Shakespeare advises us not to borrow or lend.

A notice at the end of the road warns people not to go any further.

B) It can be used in newspaper headlines:

MASS MURDERER ESCAPES/ PEACE TALKS FAIL

C) It can be used for dramatic narrative. This is particularly useful when describing the action of a play, opera etc., and is often used by radio commentators at sports events, public functions etc.:

When the curtain rises, Juliet is writing at her desk. Suddenly the window opens and a masked man enters.

D) It can be used for a planned future action or series of actions, particularly when they refer to a journey. Travel agents use it a good deal.

We leave London at 10.00 next Tuesday and arrive in Paris at 13.00. We spend two hours in Paris and leave again at 15.00. We arrive in Rome at 19.30, spend four hours in Rome etc.

E) It must be used instead of the present continuous with verbs which cannot be used in the continuous form, e.g. love, see, believe etc

F) It is used in conditional sentences, type: *If I see Ann I'll ask her.*

Unless you take the brake off the car won't move.

G) It is used in time clauses

(a) when there is an idea of routine: *As soon as he earns any money he spends it.*

(b) when the main verb is in a future form: *It will stop raining, so when it stops raining we 'll go out.*

II) The past and perfect tenses

A_The simple past tense

1-The simple past tense in regular verbs is formed by adding **ed** to the infinitive:

Infinitive: *to work* Simple past: *worked*

Verbs ending in **e** add **d** only:

Infinitive: *to love* Simple past: *loved*

The same form is used for all persons: *I worked you worked he worked etc.*

The negative of regular and irregular verbs is formed with **did not (didn't)** and the infinitive: *I did not/didn't work*

The interrogative of regular and irregular verbs is formed with did + subject + infinitive:
did I work? did you work? etc.

Negative interrogative: *did you not/didn't you work? etc.*

2-Spelling notes

-The rules about doubling the final consonant when adding **ing** apply also when adding **ed**:

admit, admitted / stop, stopped/ travel, travelled

-Verbs ending in **y** following a consonant change the **y** into **i** before adding **ed**:

carry, carried try, tried

.....but **y** following a vowel does not change: *obey, obeyed.*

-Irregular verbs: These vary considerably in their simple past form:

Infinitive: *to eat, to leave, to see, to speak*

Simple past: *ate, left, saw, spoke*

-The simple past form of each irregular verb must therefore be learnt, but once this is done there is no other difficulty, as irregular verbs (like regular verbs) have no inflexions in the past tense.

-Use for the relation of past events:

A) It is used for actions completed in the past at a definite time. It is therefore used:

1- for a past action when the time is given: *I met him yesterday. / Pasteur died in 1895.*

2- or when the time is asked about: *When did you meet him?*

3- or when the action clearly took place at a definite time even though this time is not mentioned: *The train was ten minutes late. How did you get your present job? I bought this car in Montreal.*

4- Sometimes the time becomes definite as a result of a question and answer in the present perfect: *Where have you been? ~ I've been to the opera. ~ Did you enjoy it?*

B) The simple past tense is used for an action whose time is not given but which

(a) occupied a period of time now terminated:

He worked in that bank for four years. (but he does not work there now)

(b) occurred at a moment in a period of time now terminated.

My grandmother once saw Queen Victoria.

-These will be clearer when compared with the present perfect.

C) The simple past tense is also used for a past habit:

He always carried an umbrella.

D) The simple past is used in conditional sentences, type 2 (For use of the unreal past after *as if, as though, it is time, if only, wish, would sooner/rather*)

B) The past continuous tense

-Past continuous tense is formed by the past tense of the verb **to be + the present participle**:

Affirmative

Negative

Interrogative

I was working

I was not working

was I working?

he/she/it was working

he/she/it was not working

was he/she/it working?

Negative contractions: *I wasn't working, you weren't working* etc.

Negative interrogative: *was he not/wasn't he working?* etc.

-See present continuous for spelling of the present participle. Remember that some verbs cannot be used in the continuous tenses.

1-Main uses of the past continuous tense

-The past continuous is chiefly used for past actions which continued for some time but whose exact limits are not known and are not important. It might be expressed diagrammatically. '.....' indicates uncertainty about times of starting or finishing:

.....

-Used without a time expression it can indicate gradual development:

It was getting darker. The wind was rising.

-Used with a point in time, it expresses an action which began before that time and probably continued after it. *At eight he was having breakfast* implies that he was in the middle of

breakfast at eight, i.e. that he had started it before eight. *He had breakfast at eight* would imply that started it at eight.

-If we replace the time expression with a verb in the simple past tense: *When I arrived Tom was talking on the phone*

X

..... ●

-We convey the idea that the action in the past continuous started before the action in the simple past and probably continued after it. The diagram may help to show this relationship. The action in the simple past is indicated by X. Compare this combination with a combination of two simple past tenses, which normally indicates successive actions:

When he saw me he put the receiver down.

-We use the continuous tense in descriptions. Note the combination of description (past continuous) with narrative (simple past):

A wood fire was burning on the earth, and a cat was sleeping in front of it. A girl was playing the piano and (was) singing softly to herself. Suddenly there was a knock on the door. The girl stopped playing. The cat woke up.

2- Other uses of the past continuous

A-This tense can be used as a past equivalent of the present continuous:

A Direct speech: *He said, 'I am living in London.'*

Indirect speech: *He said he was living in London.*

B- Just as the present continuous can be used to express a definite future arrangement:

I'm leaving tonight. I've got my plane ticket.

... so the past continuous can express this sort of future in the past:

He was busy packing, for he was leaving that night. (The decision to leave had been made some time previously.)

C- The past continuous with always:

He was always ringing me up. He was always working.

(See present continuous with always.)

- Past continuous as an alternative to the simple past

-The past continuous can be used as an alternative to the simple past to indicate a more casual, less deliberate action: *I was talking to Tom the other day.*

...The past continuous here gives the impression that the action was in no way unusual or remarkable. It also tends to remove responsibility from the subject. In the above example it is

not clear who started the conversation, and it does not matter. Note the contrast with the simple past tense, *I talked to Tom*, which indicates that I took the initiative.

....Similarly: *From four to six Tom was washing the car.*

....This would indicate that this was a casual, possibly routine action. Compare with:

From four to six Tom washed the car. (implying a deliberate action by Tom)

-Note that continuous tenses are used only for apparently continuous uninterrupted actions. If we divide the action up, or say how many times it happened, we must use the simple past:

I talked to Tom several times. Tom washed both cars.

...But we may, of course, use the continuous for apparently parallel actions:

Between one and two I was doing the shopping and walking the dog.

-This tense is normally used in this way with a time expression such as *today, last night, in the afternoon*, which could either be regarded as points in time or as periods. Periods can also be indicated by exact times as shown above.

-In questions about how a period was spent, the continuous often appears more polite than the simple past: *What were you doing before you came here?* sounds more polite than *What did you do before you came here?*

C) The present perfect tense

1-The present perfect tense is formed with the present tense of have + the past participle:

I have worked etc.

-The past participle in regular verbs has exactly the same form as the simple past, i.e. *loved, walked* etc. (see spelling rules). In irregular verbs, the past participles vary.

<u>Affirmative</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Interrogative</u>
I have worked	I have not worked	have I worked?
he/she/it has worked	he/she/it has not marked	has he/she/it worked?

The negative is formed by adding not to the auxiliary.

The interrogative is formed by inverting the auxiliary and subject.

Negative interrogative: *has he not worked?* etc.

Contractions: *have/has* and *have not/has not* can be contracted thus: *I've worked, you haven't worked, hasn't he worked?* etc.

have and **has** may also be contracted: *Where 've you been? What's he done?*

2-Use

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-This tense may be said to be a sort of mixture of present and past. It always implies a strong connexion with the present and is chiefly used in conversations, letters, newspapers and television and radio reports.

-The present perfect used with just for a recently completed action

He has just gone out = He went out a few minutes ago.

-This is a special use of this tense, just must be placed between the auxiliary and the main verb. This combination is used chiefly in the affirmative, though the interrogative form is possible:

Has he just gone out?

It is not normally used in the negative.

-The present perfect used for past actions whose time is not definite

-The present perfect is used for recent actions when the time is not mentioned:

I have read the instructions but I don't understand them.

Have you had breakfast? ~ No, I haven't had it yet.

.....Compare with:

I read the instructions last night. (time given, so simple past)

Did you have breakfast at the hotel? (i.e. before you left the hotel: simple past)

.....Note possible answers to questions in the present perfect:

Have you seen my stamps? ~ Yes, I have/No, I haven't or Yes, I saw them on your desk a minute ago.

Have you had breakfast? ~ Yes, I have or No, I haven't had it yet or Yes. I had it at seven o'clock or Yes. I had it with Mary. (time implied)

-Recent actions in the present perfect often have results in the present;

Tom has had a bad car crash. (He's probably still in hospital.)

The lift has broken down. (We have to use the stairs.)

I've washed the car. (it looks lovely.)

.....But actions expressed by the simple past without a time expression do not normally have results in the present:

Tom had a bad crash. (but he's probably out of hospital now)

The lift broke down. (but it's probably working again now)

I washed the car. (but it may be dirty again now)

-Actions expressed by the present perfect + yet usually have results in the present:

He hasn't come yet. (so we are still waiting for him)

-It can also be used for actions which occur further back in the past, provided the connexion with the present is still maintained, that is that the action could be repeated in the present:

I have seen wolves in that forest

implies that it is still possible to see them, and *John Smith has written a number of short stories* implies that John Smith is still alive and can write more. If, however, the wolves have been killed off and John Smith is dead we would say:

I saw wolves in that forest once/several times or I used to see wolves here

and *John Smith wrote a number of short stories.*

-Note also that when we use the present perfect in this way we are not necessarily thinking of any one particular action (the action may have occurred several times) or of the exact time when the action was performed. If we are thinking of one particular action performed at a particular time we are more likely to use the simple past.

-The present perfect used for actions occurring in an incomplete period. An incomplete period may be indicated by *today* or *this morning/afternoon/evening/week/month/year/century* etc.

-Note that the present perfect can be used with *this morning* only up to about one o'clock, because after that this morning becomes a completed period and actions occurring in it must be put into the simple past:

(at 11 a.m.) *Tom has rung up three times this morning already.*

(at 2 p.m.) *Tom rang up three times this morning.*

....Similarly, this afternoon will end at about five o'clock:

(at 4 p.m.) *I haven't seen Tom this afternoon.*

(at 6 p.m.) *I didn't see Tom this afternoon.*

-The present perfect used with an incomplete period of time implies that the action happened or didn't happen at some undefined time during this period:

Have you seen him today? (at any time today) — *Yes, I have/*

Yes. I've seen him today. (at some time during the day)

.....But if we know that an action usually happens at a certain time or in a certain part of our incomplete period we use the simple past tense. If my alarm clock normally goes off at six, I might say at breakfast:

My alarm clock didn't go off this morning.

Imagine that the postman normally comes between nine and ten. From nine till ten we will say:

Has the postman come yet/this morning?

....But after this nine to ten period we will say:

Did the postman come this morning?

-We use the past tense here because we are thinking about a complete period of time even though we do not mention it.

Has the postman come this morning? Did the postman come this morning?

-lately, recently used with the present perfect also indicate an incomplete period of time.

....In the sentences *Has he been here lately/recently?* and *He hasn't been here lately/recently*, **lately/recently** means 'at any time during the last week/month etc. and in *He has been here recently*, **recently** means 'at some undefined time during the last week/month etc.' **lately** is less usual with the affirmative, except for actions covering periods of time:

There have been some changes lately/recently.

He's had a lot of bad luck lately/recently.

.....**recently**, used with a simple past tense, means 'a short time ago';

He left recently = He left a short time ago.

-The present perfect can be used similarly with ever, never, always, occasionally, often, several times etc. and since + a point in time, since + clause, or since, adverb:

ANN: Have you ever fallen off a horse?

TOM: Yes, I've fallen off quite often/occasionally.

But if Tom's riding days are over, we would have;

ANN: Did you ever/all off a horse? (past tense)

TOM: Yes. I did occasionally/frequently.

- The present perfect can be used here for habitual actions:

They've always answered my letters.

I've never been late for work.

-Sometimes these appear to be continual rather than repeated action:

Since my accident I have written with my left hand.

I've worn glasses since my childhood.

-We can then use **for** + a period of time as an alternative to since + a point in time:

I've used my left hand/or a month now.

I've worn glasses for ten years.

-Note also sentences of this type:

This is the worst book I have ever read.

This is the easiest job I have ever had.

We can use this construction, without ever. with the first, the second etc. and the only:

It/This is the first time I have seen a mounted band.

It is only the second time he has been in a canoe.

This is the only book he has written.

-The present perfect used for an action which lasts throughout an incomplete period

-Time expressions include *for, since, all day/night/week, all my etc. life, all the time, always, lately, never, recently*. The action usually begins in the past and continues past the time of speaking in the present:

He has been in the army for two years. (He is still in the army.)

I have smoked since I left school. (I still smoke.)

We have waited all day. (We are still waiting.)

He has lived here all his life. (He still lives here.)

He has always worked for us. (He still works for us.)

-This type of action might be expressed by a diagram thus: Compare the above sentences with:

He was in the army for two years. (He is not in the army now.)

I smoked for six months. (and then stopped smoking)

He lived here all his life. (Presumably he is now dead.)

In each of the last three examples we are dealing with a completed period of time: so the simple past tense is used.

-Sometimes, however, the action finishes at the time of speaking:

ANN (on meeting someone): I haven't seen you for ages? (but I see you now)

This room hasn't been cleaned for months, (but we are cleaning it now)

It has been very cold lately but it's just beginning to get warmer.

-Verbs of knowing, believing and understanding cannot be used in the present perfect except as shown in A above:

I have known him for a long time.

I have never believed their theories.

-So recent actions, even when the time is not mentioned, must be expressed by the simple past:

Did you know that he was going to be married? (Have you known would not be possible) and *Hello! I didn't know you were in London. How long have you been here?*

think and **wonder** however can be used:

I have sometimes thought that I should have emigrated.

I have often wondered why he didn't marry her.

D-The present perfect continuous tense

1) This tense is formed by the present perfect of the verb **to be + the present participle**:

Affirmative: *I have been working, he has been working* etc.

Negative: *I have not/haven't been working* etc.

Interrogative: *have I been working?* etc.

Negative interrogative: *have I not/haven't I been working?* etc.

2) Use

-This tense is used for an action which began in the past and is still continuing or has only just finished:

I've been waiting for an hour and he still hasn't turned up.

I'm so sorry I'm late. Have you been waiting long?

-Remember that a number of verbs are not normally used in the continuous form, but that some of these can be used in this form in certain cases. We can therefore say:

Tom has been seeing about a work permit for you.

She has been having a tooth out.

I've been thinking it over.

I've been hearing all about his operation.

-In addition, the verb *want* is often used in this tense, and *wish* is also possible:

Thank you so much for the binoculars. I've been wanting a pair for ages.

-The present perfect continuous tense does not exist in the passive. The nearest passive equivalent of a sentence such as *They have been repairing the road* would normally be *The road has been repaired lately* (present perfect passive), which is not exactly the same thing.

3) Comparison of the present perfect simple and continuous

-An action which began in the past and is still continuing or has only just finished can, with certain verbs, be expressed by either the present perfect simple or the present perfect continuous. Verbs which can be used in this way include *expect, hope, learn, lie, live, look, rain, sleep, sit, snow, stand, stay, study, teach, wait, want, work*:

How long have you learnt English?

How long have you been learning English?

He has slept for ten hours.

He has been sleeping/or ten hours.

It has snowed/or a long time.

It has been snowing for a long time.

A) This is not of course possible with verbs which are not used in the continuous forms, i.e, the present perfect continuous could not replace the simple present perfect in the following examples:

They've always had a big garden.

How long have you known that?

He's been in hospital since his accident.

-Notice also that the present perfect continuous can be used with or without a time phrase. In this way it differs from the simple present perfect, which can only express this type of action if a time phrase is added such as *for six days, since June, never*. When used without a time expression of this kind, the simple present perfect refers to a single completed action.

B) A repeated action in the simple present perfect can sometimes be expressed as a continuous action by the present perfect continuous:

I've written six letters since breakfast.

I've been writing letters since breakfast.

I have knocked five times. I don't think anyone's in.

I've been knocking. I don't think anybody's in.

-Note that the present perfect continuous expresses an action which is apparently uninterrupted: we do not use it when we mention the number of times a thing has been done or the number of things that have been done.

C) There is, however, a difference between a single action in the simple present perfect and an action in the present perfect continuous:

(a) *I've polished the car* means that this job has been completed.

(b) *I've been polishing the car* means 'this is how I've spent the last hour'. It does not necessarily mean that the job is completed.

-Note also that a single action in the present perfect continuous continues up to the time of speaking, or nearly up to this time:

He's been taking photos (he's probably still carrying his camera) but

He has taken photos. (This action may or may not be very recent.)

E) The past perfect tense

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1-This tense is formed with had and the past participle:

Affirmative: *I had/I'd worked* etc.

Negative: *I had not/hadn't worked* etc.

Interrogative: *had I worked?* etc.

Negative interrogative: *had I not/hadn't I worked?* etc.

2- Use

-The past perfect is the past equivalent of the present perfect.

Present: *Ann has just left. If you hurry you'll catch her.*

Past: *When I arrived Ann had just left.*

Present: *I've lost my case.*

Past: *He had lost his case and had to borrow Tom's pyjamas.*

-Unlike the present perfect the past perfect is not restricted to actions whose time is not mentioned. We could therefore say:

He had left his case on the 4.40 train.

-The present perfect can be used with *since/for/always* etc, for an action which began in the past and is still continuing or has only just finished. The past perfect can be used similarly for an action which began before the time of speaking in the past, and

(a) was still continuing at that time or

(b) stopped at that time or just before it.

.....But note that the past perfect can also be used:

(c) for an action which stopped some time before the time of speaking.

-Examples of types (a), (b) and (c) are given below:

(a) *Bill was in uniform when I met him. He had been a soldier for ten years/since he was seventeen, and planned to stay in the army till he was thirty.*

(b) *The old tree, which had stood in the yard for 300 years/since before the castle was built, suddenly crashed to the ground.* (The past perfect continuous tense had been standing would also be possible here.)

(c) *He had served in the army for ten years; then he retired and married. His children were now at school.*

-Here we cannot use either **since** or the past perfect continuous. Note also that the past perfect here has no present perfect equivalent. If we put the last verb in this sentence into the present tense the other tenses will change to the simple past.

He served in the army for ten years: then retired and married. His children are now at school.

-The past perfect is also the past equivalent of the simple past tense, and is used when the narrator or subject looks back on earlier action from a certain point in the past:

Tom was 23 when our story begins. His father had died five years before and since then Tom had lived alone. His father had advised him not to get married till he was 35, and Tom intended to follow this advice. / I had just poured myself a glass of water when the phone rang. When I came back from answering it the glass was empty. Somebody had drunk the water or thrown it away.

-But if we merely give the events in the order in which they occurred no past perfect tense is necessary:

Tom's father died when Tom was eighteen. Before he died he advised Tom not to marry till he was 35, and Tom at 23 still intended to follow this advice.

-Note the difference of meaning in the following examples:

She heard voices and realised that there were three people in the next room.

He arrived at 2.30 and was told to wait in the VIP lounge.

He arrived at 2.30. He had been told to wait in the VIP lounge.

-In the second example he received his instructions after his arrival. In the third he received them before arrival, possibly before the journey started.

-The past perfect can be used similarly with **as soon as**, **the moment**, **immediately**.

-The past perfect can be used with **till/until** and **before** to emphasize the completion or expected completion of an action. But note that in **till/until + past perfect + simple past** combinations the simple past action may precede the past perfect action; and in **before + past perfect + simple past** combinations the simple past action will always precede the past perfect action:

He refused to go till he had seen all the pictures.

He did not wait till we had finished our meal.

Before we had finished our meal he ordered us back to work.

Before we had walked ten miles he complained of sore feet.

-Past perfect tenses in both time clause and main clause are also possible:

It was a very expensive town. Before we had been here a week we had spent all our money.

-**after** is normally followed by a perfect tense:

After the will had been read there were angry exclamations.

-We have already stated that actions viewed in retrospect from a point in the past are expressed by the past perfect tense. If we have two such actions:

He had been to school but he had learnt nothing there, so was now illiterate.

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-Verbs of knowing, understanding etc. are not normally used in the past perfect tense in time clauses except when accompanied by an expression denoting a period of time:

When she had known me for a year she invited me to tea but

When I knew the work of one department thoroughly I was moved to the next department or As soon as I knew etc.

....Compare with:

When I had learnt the work of one department I was moved.

F) The past perfect continuous tense

1-This tense is formed with **had been** + the present participle. It is therefore the same for all persons:

I had/I'd been working

they had not/hadn't been working

had you been working?

had you not/hadn't you been working?

-It is not used with verbs, which are not used in the continuous forms, except with **want** and sometimes **wish**:

The boy was delighted with his new book. He had been wanting one for a long time.

-Note that this tense has no passive form. The nearest passive equivalent of a sentence such as *They had been picking apples* would be *Apples had been picked*, which is not the same thing

2-Use

-The past perfect continuous bears the same relation to the past perfect as the present perfect continuous bears to the present perfect

-When the action began before the time of speaking in the past, and continued up to that time, or stopped just before it, we can often use either form:

It was now six and he was tired because he had worked since dawn = It was now six and he was tired because he had been working since dawn.

-A repeated action in the past perfect can sometimes be expressed as a continuous action by the past perfect continuous (see 192 B):

He had tried five times to get him on the phone.

He had been trying to get him on the phone.

.....But there is a difference between a single action in the simple past perfect and an action in the past perfect continuous:

By six o'clock he had repaired the engine. (This job had been completed.)

He had been repairing the engine tells us how he had spent the previous hour/half hour etc. It does not tell us whether or not the job was completed.

-Another difference is that an action in the present perfect continuous continues up to, or beyond, the time of speaking in the past. An action in the past perfect may occur shortly before the time of speaking, but there could be quite a long interval between them:

He had been painting the door. (The paint was probably still wet.) But

He had painted the door. (Perhaps recently, perhaps some time ago.)

III) The future

-There are several ways of expressing the future in English. The forms are listed below. Students should study them in this order, as otherwise the relationship between them will not be clear.

- (a) The simple present
- (b) **will** + infinitive, used for intention
- (c) The present continuous
- (d) The **be going to** form
- (e) The 'future simple' **will/shall** + infinitive
- (f) The future continuous
- (g) The future perfect
- (h) The future perfect continuous

2-The simple present used for the future

-This tense can be used with a time expression for a definite future arrangement:

The boys start school on Monday. I leave tonight.

-instead of the more normal present continuous tense:

The boys are starting school on Monday. I'm leaving tonight.

-The difference between them is:

- (a) The simple present is more impersonal than the continuous. *I'm leaving tonight* would probably imply that I have decided to leave, but *I leave tonight* could mean that this is part of a plan not necessarily made by me.
- (b) The simple present can also sound more formal than the continuous. A big store planning to open a new branch is more likely to say *Our new branch opens next week* than *Our new branch is opening next week*.
- (c) The simple present is sometimes used where the continuous would sound a bit clumsy, e.g. when speaking of a series of proposed future actions, like plans for a journey; i.e. we say:

We leave at six, arrive in Dublin at ten and take the plane on . . .

instead of:

We are leaving at six, arriving in Dublin at ten and taking the plane on . . .

-Note, however, that in a sentence such as *My train leaves at six* we are using the simple present for a habitual action. Here, therefore, the simple present is not replaceable by the continuous.

-**will** + infinitive and the **be going to** form can be used in this way.

-The present continuous tense in the second or third person conveys no idea of intention, though there may be a hint of intention when the first person is used. The future simple (apart from **will**) normally conveys no idea of intention; **will + infinitive** used to express intention at the moment of decision

The phone is ringing. ~ I'll answer it.

Don't bother. I'll drive you.

-For unpremeditated actions, as above, we must use **will** (normally contracted to 'll). But note that if after his decision the speaker mentions the action again, he will not use **will**, but **be going to** or the present continuous. (**be going to** is always possible; the present continuous has a more restricted)

...For example, imagine that to (b) above a friend, Tom, joins Bill before his food has arrived:

TOM: *What are you having/going to have?*

BILL: *I'm having/going to have a steak.*

Similarly, at a later time, in: (c) Ann might say:

Tom is driving me /going to drive me to the airport tonight.

3-The present continuous as a future form

-Note that the time must be mentioned, or have been mentioned, as otherwise there may be confusion between present and future.

-The present continuous can express a definite arrangement in the near future:

I'm taking an exam in October implies that I have entered for it;

and *Bob and Bill are meeting tonight* implies that Bob and Bill have arranged this.

...If there has merely been an expression of intention, we use the **be going to** form.

...But with verbs of movement from one place to another, e.g. *arrive, come, drive, fly, go, leave, start, travel*, verbs indicating position, e.g. *stay, remain*, and the verbs *do* and *have* (food or drink), the present continuous can be used more widely. It can express a decision or plan without any definite arrangement.

Alan can say *I'm going home tonight/I'm leaving tonight* even before he has arranged his journey.

Note also:

What are you doing next Saturday? (This is the usual way of asking people about their plans.)

Possible answers: *I'm going to the seaside. /The neighbours are coming in to watch television.*

-This method of expressing the future cannot be used with verbs which are not normally used in the continuous tenses. These verbs should be put into the future simple (**will/shall**):

I am meeting him tonight but I will/shall know tonight.

They are coming tomorrow but They will be here tomorrow.

We 'll think it over.

-Note, however, that **see**, when it is used for a deliberate action (**see to/about, see someone out/off/home** etc., **see** meaning 'meet by appointment'), can be used in the continuous tenses (see 170):

I'm seeing her tomorrow. (I have an appointment with her.)

to be can be used in the continuous tenses when it forms part of a passive verb:

He is being met at the station tonight.

Our new piano is being delivered this afternoon.

4-The future simple

-There is no future tense in modern English, but for convenience we often use the term 'future simple' to describe the form will/shall + bare infinitive.

<u>Affirmative</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Interrogative</u>
<i>I will/I'll work</i>	<i>I will not/won't work</i>	
<i>I shall work</i>	<i>I shall not/shan't work</i>	<i>shall I work?</i>

Negative interrogative: *will he not/won't he work?* etc.

-First person **will** and **shall**. Formerly, **will** was kept for intention:

I will wait for you = I intend to wait for you

and **shall** was used when there was no intention, i.e. for actions where the subject's wishes were not involved:

I shall be 25 next week.

We shall know the result next week. (It will be in the papers.)

-**shall**, used as above, is still found in formal English, but is no longer common in conversation. Instead we normally use **will**:

I will be 25 next week. I'll know the result tomorrow. I'm sure I won't lose my way.

-Sometimes, however, **will** might change the meaning of the sentence. If in *I shall see Tom tomorrow* we replace **shall** by **will**, we have *I will see Tom tomorrow*, which could be an expression of intention. To avoid ambiguities of this kind we use the future continuous tense:

I'll be seeing Tom tomorrow.

-**shall**, however, is still used in the interrogative:

In question tags after **let's**: *Let's go, shall we?*

In suggestions: *Shall we take a taxi?*

In requests for orders or instructions: *What shall I do with your mail?*

In speculations: Where shall we be this time next year? (Here, though, will is also possible.)

A-Uses of the future simple

-To express the speaker's opinions, assumptions, speculations about the future. These may be introduced by verbs such as *assume, be afraid, be/feel sure, believe, daresay, doubt, expect, hope, know, suppose, think, wonder* or accompanied by adverbs such as *perhaps, possibly, probably, surely*, but can be used without them:

(I'm sure) he 'll come back.

(I suppose) they 'll sell the house.

(Perhaps) we 'll find him at the hotel.

They'll (probably) wait for us.

-The future simple can be used with or without a time expression **be going to** is sometimes possible here also, but it makes the action appear more probable and (where there is no time expression) more, immediate. *He'll build a house* merely means 'this is my opinion', and gives no idea when the building will start. But *He's going to build a house* implies that he has already made this decision and that he will probably start quite soon.

-The future simple is used similarly for future habitual actions which we assume will take place:

Spring will come again.

Birds will build nests.

People will make plans.

(will be coming/building/making/climbing/sitting would also be possible.)

-The future simple is used in sentences containing clauses of condition, time and sometimes purpose:

If I drop this glass it will break.

When it gets warmer the snow will start to melt.

I'm pulling this letter on top of the pile so that he'll read it first.

-Note that in an **if-clause** or a time clause we don't use the future simple even when the meaning is future:

He will probably be late but If he is late . . . and

It will get warmer soon but When it gets warmer . . .

-Verbs not normally used in the continuous tenses, e.g. auxiliary verbs, verbs of the senses, of emotion, thinking, possessing etc. usually express the future by the future simple, though **be going to** is sometimes possible: *He 'll be here at six. You 'll have time for tea.*

She'll wonder where you are. They'll know tonight.

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-The future simple is used, chiefly in newspapers and news broadcasts, for formal announcements of future plans and for weather forecasts. In conversations such statements would normally be expressed by the present continuous or **be going to** form or, for plans only, by the present continuous:

NEWSPAPER: The President will open the new heliport tomorrow.

The fog will persist in all areas.

But the average reader/listener will say:

The President is going to open/is opening . . .

The fog is going to persist/continue . . .

-will expresses an intention + a decision to fulfil it: I will buy it = I intend to buy it/I'm going to buy it.

- Note, however, that **I'd like** is often a possible alternative to *I'll have/take*:

CUSTOMER (in a shop): I'd like/I'll have a pound of peas, please.

DINER (in a restaurant): I'd like/I'll have the soup, please.

Both can be used for invitations:

Would you like a drink? or Will you have a drink?

When accepting an invitation we can use either form:

I'd like/I'll have a sherry, please.

But the two forms are not interchangeable in the negative, so if we wish to refuse an invitation we must say:

I won't have anything, thanks or I don't want anything, thanks.

-wouldn't like means 'would dislike', so could not be used here.

B) The future continuous tense

-This tense is made up of the future simple of to be + the present participle. In the first person, will is more usual than shall, except in the interrogative.

Affirmative *I/we will/shall be working*

he/she/it/you/they will be working

Negative *I/we will/shall not be working*

he/she/it/you/they will not be working

Interrogative *shall/will I/we be working?*

will he/she/it/you/they be working?

Negative interrogative: *will he not/won't he be working?* etc.

2-Use

-This tense has two uses: It can be used as an ordinary continuous tense.

It can express a future without intention.

-The future continuous used as an ordinary continuous tense, like other continuous tenses it is normally used with a point in time, and expresses an action which starts before that time and probably continues after it. This use is best seen by examples. Imagine a class of students at this moment We might say:

Now they are sitting in their classroom. They are listening to a tape. This time tomorrow they will be sitting in the cinema. They will be watching a film. On Saturday there is no class. So on Saturday they will not be sitting in the classroom. They will be doing other things. Bill will be playing tennis. Ann will be shopping. George will still be having breakfast.

A continuous tense can also be used with a verb in a simple tense:

Peter has been invited to dinner with Ann and Tom. He was asked to come at eight but tells another friend that he intends to arrive at seven. The friend tries to dissuade him: 'When you arrive they'll still be cooking the meal!'

-The future continuous used to express future without intention ; example: *I will be helping Mary tomorrow.*

....This does not imply that the speaker has arranged to help Mary or that he wishes to help her. It merely states that this action will happen. The future continuous tense used in this way is somewhat similar to the present continuous, but differs from it in the following points.

-The present continuous tense implies a deliberate future action. The future continuous tense usually implies an action which will occur in the normal course of events. It is therefore less definite and more casual than the present continuous:

I am seeing Tom tomorrow.

I'll be seeing Tom tomorrow.

-The first implies that Tom or the speaker has deliberately arranged the meeting, but the second implies that Tom and the speaker will meet in the ordinary course of events (perhaps they work together). This difference is not always very important, however, and very often either tense can be used. We can say:

He'll be taking his exam next week or He is taking his exam next week.

He won't be coming to the party or He isn't coming to the party.

-The present continuous can only be used with a definite time and for the near future, while the future continuous can be used with or without a definite time and for the near or distant future.

We can say:

I am meeting him tomorrow but

I'll be meeting him tomorrow/next year/some time. (or without a time expression at all)

-Examples of various future forms

A) Imagine that we ask five people about their plans for the following Saturday. We say:

What are you doing/going to do on Saturday?

(a) Peter has arranged to play golf with George; so he will say:

I'm playing/going to play golf with George.

(b) Mary has decided to stay at home and make jam; so she will say:

I'm staying/going to stay at home. I'm going to make jam.

(c) Andrew's plans depend on the weather; so he may say:

If it's fine I'll work/I'm going to work in the garden.

(d) Ann hasn't made any plans, but she may say:

Perhaps I'll take/I expect I'll take/I'll probably take/I suppose I'll take my children for a walk.

(e) Bill always has to work on Saturdays; so he will say:

Oh, I'll be working as usual. (No other form would give this exact meaning.)

4-The future perfect and the future perfect continuous

A) The future perfect:

will/shall + perfect infinitive for first persons, **will** + perfect infinitive for the other persons.

2 -Use

-It is normally used with a time expression beginning with **by**: *by then, by that time, by the 24th*:

By the end of next month he will have been here for ten years.

-It is used for an action which at a given future time will be in the past, or will just have finished.

Imagine that it is 3 December and David is very worried about an exam that he is taking on 13 December. Someone planning a party might say:

We'd better wait till 14 December. David will have had his exam by then, so he'll be able to enjoy himself.

-Note also:

I save £50 a month and I started in January. So by the end of the year I will/shall have saved £600.

BILL (looking at Tom's cellar): You've got over 400 bottles. How long will that last you? Two years?

TOM: Not a hope. I drink eight bottles a week. I'll have drunk all these by the end of this year.

B) The future perfect continuous:

-will/shall have been + present participle for the first persons, **/will have been** + present participle for the other persons.

2-Use

-Like the future perfect, it is normally used with a time expression beginning with **by**:

By the end of this year he'll have been acting for thirty years.

-The future perfect continuous bears the same relationship to the future perfect as the present perfect continuous bears to the present perfect, i.e. the future perfect continuous can be used instead of the future perfect:

1- When the action is continuous:

By the end of the month he will have been living/working/studying here for ten years.

2- When the action is expressed as a continuous action:

By the end of the month he will have been training horses/climbing mountains for twenty years.

-But if we mention the number of horses or mountains, or divide this action in any way, we must use the future perfect;

By the end of the month he will have trained 600 horses/climbed 50 mountains.