

III. Lesson : The English Tenses

1. Introduction : What are tenses ?

In English, *tenses* are the way we show **time** in a sentence.

When we speak, we always speak **about time** — about what happens **now**, what happened **before**, or what will happen **later**.

So, every tense answers one question :

When does the action happen?

- **Past** = something already finished.
- **Present** = something happening now.
- **Future** = something that will happen later.

But in English, each time (past, present, future) has several forms. So we go slowly, one by one.

2. The Present – what happens now

There are two main present forms we must know :

- **Simple Present** → for habits, facts, and routines.
 - Example : *I eat breakfast at 7 a.m.* (It is something I do every day.)
 - Example : *The sun rises in the east.* (It is always true.)
- **Present Continuous** → for actions happening now.
 - Example : *I am eating breakfast now.* (It is happening at this moment.)

Simple = routine. Continuous = now.

And again:

“I play football” is not the same as “I am playing football.”

The first means you do it often. The second means you are doing it *right now*.

3. The Past – what happened before

We use the **past tense** to talk about things that are finished.

There are two basic forms :

- **Simple Past** → for actions that happened once or regularly in the past.
 - Example : *I watched a movie yesterday.*
 - Example : *He lived in London for five years.*

- **Past Continuous** → for actions that were happening in the past.
 - Example : *I was watching TV when you called.*

Simple = finished. Continuous = action in progress.

I studied English last night. (finished)

I was studying English when my friend arrived. (it was happening at that time)

4. The Future – what will happen later

We use future to express things that are *not yet real*, but that we *plan, expect, or imagine*.

There are several ways to speak about the future :

- **Will + verb** → for decisions made now or future facts.
 - Example: *I will call you tomorrow.*
- **Be going to + verb** → for plans or intentions.
 - Example: *I am going to visit my grandmother next week.*
- **Present Continuous (future meaning)** → for fixed arrangements.
 - Example: *I am meeting my teacher at 3 p.m.*

“Will” = decision now.

“Going to” = plan.

“Am/is/are + -ing” = arranged meeting.

5. Recap – connecting all tenses

Time	Simple	Continuous	Example
Present	I play	I am playing	now
Past	I played	I was playing	before
Future	I will play / I'm going to play	I will be playing	later

Activity 1 – Complete the Sentence

1. I ___ (watch) TV now. →
2. She ___ (go) to school every day. →
3. They ___ (play) football yesterday. →
4. He ___ (call) you tomorrow. →

Activity 2 – Find the Mistake

1. She go to school every day. →

2. I am play football now. →

3. I will went tomorrow. →

Activity 3 – Mini Dialogue Practice

A: What do you do every morning?

B: I ___ (drink) coffee. →

A: What are you doing now?

B: I ___ (drink) coffee. →

A: What did you do yesterday?

B: I ___ (drink) coffee. →

A: What will you do tomorrow?

B: I ___ (drink) coffee. →

Variation : change the verb (*eat, study, play, etc.*) and repeat the activity.