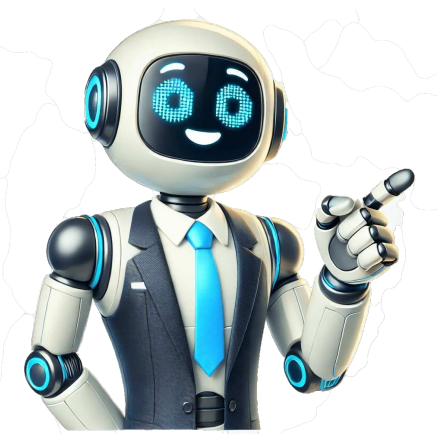


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Mastering the 12 tenses in English grammar is essential for a proper English and writing. In this guide, we break down each tense with easy-to-understand example sentences, ensuring you grasp the nuances of English grammar quickly. Plus, don't miss out on our free downloadable PDFs that provide quick-reference guides for each tense, making your learning journey even easier!

12 English tenses with example sentences

English has 12 basic tenses which are divided into three main categories: past, present and future. All tenses have different forms for affirmative, negative and interrogative statements.

Comprehensive English Tenses Chart: Learn the Past, Present, and Future Tenses with Examples

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The 12 English Tenses: Formulas, Rules, and Examples

Learn about the 12 English tenses with usage explanations, formulas, auxiliary verbs and examples to improve your grammar skills.

1. Simple Present Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Base Verb (V1) + Object

Negative: Subject + Do/Does + Not + Base Verb (V1) + Object

Interrogative: Do/Does + Subject + Base Verb (V1) + Object?

Usage: Describes habits, general truths, and everyday activities.

Examples: Affirmative: I play soccer every Saturday.

Negative: I do not play soccer on any day other than Saturday.

Interrogative: Do I play soccer every day of the week?

2. Present Continuous Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Am/Is/Are + Verb (-ing) + Object

Negative: Subject + Am/Is/Are + Not + Verb (-ing) + Object

Interrogative: Am/Is/Are + Subject + Verb (-ing) + Object?

Usage: Describes ongoing actions happening at the present moment.

Examples: Affirmative: I am playing soccer right now.

Negative: I am not playing soccer right now.

Interrogative: Am I playing soccer right now?

3. Simple Past Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Verb (Past Form – V2) + Object

Negative: Subject + Did + Not + Base Verb (V1) + Object

Interrogative: Did + Subject + Base Verb (V1) + Object?

Usage: Describes actions completed in the past.

Examples: Affirmative: I played soccer yesterday.

Negative: I did not play soccer yesterday.

Interrogative: Did I play soccer yesterday?

4. Past Continuous Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Was/Were + Verb (-ing) + Object

Negative: Subject + Was/Were + Not + Verb (-ing) + Object

Interrogative: Was/Were + Subject + Verb (-ing) + Object?

Usage: Describes ongoing actions in the past.

Examples: Affirmative: I was playing soccer when she called.

Negative: I was not playing soccer when she called.

Interrogative: Was I playing soccer when she called?

5. Simple Future Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Will/ Shall + Base Verb (V1) + Object

Negative: Subject + Will/ Shall + Not + Base Verb (V1) + Object

Interrogative: Will/ Shall + Subject + Base Verb (V1) + Object?

Usage: Describes actions or events in the future.

Examples: Affirmative: I will play soccer tomorrow.

Negative: I will not play soccer tomorrow.

Interrogative: Will I play soccer tomorrow?

6. Future Continuous Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Will Be + Verb (-ing) + Object

Negative: Subject + Will Not Be + Verb (-ing) + Object

Interrogative: Will + Subject + Be + Verb (-ing) + Object?

Usage: Describes ongoing actions in the future.

Examples: Affirmative: I will be playing soccer at this time tomorrow.

Negative: I will not be playing soccer at this time tomorrow.

Interrogative: Will I be playing soccer at this time tomorrow?

7. Present Perfect Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Has/Have + Past Participle (V3) + Object

Negative: Subject + Has/Have + Not + Past Participle (V3) + Object

Interrogative: Has/Have + Subject + Past Participle (V3) + Object?

Usage: Describes actions that happened at an unspecified time before now.

Examples: Affirmative: I have played soccer.

Negative: I have not played soccer.

Interrogative: Have I played soccer?

8. Present Perfect Continuous Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Has/Have Been + Verb (-ing) + Object

Negative: Subject + Has/Have + Not Been + Verb (-ing) + Object

Interrogative: Has/Have + Subject + Been + Verb (-ing) + Object?

Usage: Describes ongoing actions that started in the past and continue in the present.

Examples: Affirmative: I have been playing soccer for an hour.

Negative: I have not been playing soccer for an hour.

Interrogative: Have I been playing soccer for an hour?

9. Past Perfect Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Had + Past Participle (V3) + Object

Negative: Subject + Had + Not + Past Participle (V3) + Object

Interrogative: Had + Subject + Past Participle (V3) + Object?

Usage: Describes actions completed before another action in the past.

Examples: Affirmative: I had played soccer before I went to the party.

Negative: I had not played soccer before I went to the party.

Interrogative: Had I played soccer before I went to the party?

10. Past Perfect Continuous Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Had Been + Verb (-ing) + Object

Negative: Subject + Had + Not Been + Verb (-ing) + Object

Interrogative: Had + Subject + Been + Verb (-ing) + Object?

Usage: Describes ongoing actions that continued up to a point in the past.

Examples: Affirmative: I had been playing soccer for two hours before the game ended.

Negative: I had not been playing soccer for two hours before the game ended.

Interrogative: Had I been playing soccer for two hours before the game ended?

11. Future Perfect Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Will Have + Past Participle (V3) + Object

Negative: Subject + Will + Not Have + Past Participle (V3) + Object

Interrogative: Will + Subject + Have + Past Participle (V3) + Object?

Usage: Describes future actions completed by a specific time.

Examples: Affirmative: By next year, I will have played soccer for ten years.

Negative: By next year, I will not have played soccer for ten years.

Interrogative: Will I have played soccer for ten years by next year?

12. Future Perfect Continuous Tense

Formula: Affirmative: Subject + Will Have Been + Verb (-ing) + Object

Negative: Subject + Will + Not Have Been + Verb (-ing) + Object

Interrogative: Will + Subject + Have Been + Verb (-ing) + Object?

Usage: Describes ongoing actions continuing up to a point in the future.

Examples: Affirmative: By the end of the day, I will have been playing soccer for six hours.

Negative: By the end of the day, I will not have been playing soccer for six hours.

Interrogative: Will I have been playing soccer for six hours by the end of the day?

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