

Active Verb Tenses

This handout gives some examples of the different tenses verbs can have.

Simple Present	
Present or Action Condition	General Truths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I hear you. Here comes the bus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are thirty days in September.
Non-action; Habitual Action	Future Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I like music. I run on Tuesdays and Sundays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The train leaves at 4:00 p.m.

Present Progressive	
Activity in Progress	Verbs of Perception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am playing soccer now. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He is feeling sad.

Simple Past	
Completed Action	Completed Condition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We visited the museum yesterday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The weather was rainy last week.

Past Progressive	
Past Action that took place over a period of time	Past Action interrupted by another
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They were climbing for twenty-seven days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We were eating dinner when she told me.

Future	
With will/won't — Activity or event that will or won't exist or happen in the future	With going to — future in relation to circumstances in the present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'll get up late tomorrow. • I won't get up early 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm hungry. • I'm going to get something to eat.

Present Perfect	
With verbs of state that begin in the past and lead up to and include the present	To express habitual or continued action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has lived here for many years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has worn glasses all his life.
With events occurring at an indefinite or unspecified time in the past — with ever, never, before	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been to Tokyo before? 	

Present Perfect Progressive	
To express duration of an action that began in the past, has continued into the present, and may continue into the future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David has been working for two hours, and he hasn't finished yet. 	

Past Perfect	
To describe a past event or condition completed before another event in the past	In reported speech
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I arrived home, he had already called. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane said that she had gone to the movies.

Future Perfect

To express action that will be completed by or before a specified time in the future
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By next month we will have finished the job.• He won't have finished his work until 2:00. |
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