

జనరల్ ఇంగ్లీష్

TENSES

There are three broad categories of tenses in the English language, the *Present*, *Past* and *Future*. These are only grammatical categories but do not always correspond to the present, past, and future time as such. For example when we say '*He is leaving for New Delhi tomorrow*', the tense is the Present Continuous and the time is future.

The tenses, Present, Past and Future each can further be divided into Simple, Continuous, Perfect and Perfect Continuous.

SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

The Simple Present Tense is used to express

Hobbies and Habitual actions:

- i) *I often go to the cinema.*
- ii) *She always wakes up early in the morning.*

Universal truths: *Oil floats on water.*

A fixed official schedule or time table:

- i) *Our college reopens in the second week of next month.*
- ii) *The Prime Minister arrives here next Friday.*

Dramatic narratives: *Macbeth murders King Duncan and takes the throne for himself.*

Reports / Announcements / Notices:

- i) *The Telangana government announces two bedroom housing scheme.*
- ii) *The magic show begins at 5 p.m.*

Quotations, Proverbs etc.:

- i) *Fortune favours the brave.*
- ii) *God helps those who help themselves.*

Radio and television commentaries: *The batsman hits the ball and goes for a run.*

PRESENT CONTINUOUS TENSE

The Present continuous tense is used to express

An activity in progress at the time of speaking: *I am driving a car now.*

Planned future actions: *They are visiting Agra next week.*

To emphasize the present moment which is a temporary situation: *We are staying at Hotel Taj.*

Things happening around now, but not necessarily at this moment:

- i) *I am writing a paper on 'The Relevance of Shakespeare Today'.*
- ii) *He is looking for a good job.*

Note: *The following verbs are not generally used in continuous form*

Area	Verb
1. Perception (senses)	see, smell, hear, feel, taste, recognize, notice
2. Feelings and emotions	love, like, hate, dislike, detest, desire, wish, want, fear, prefer, refuse, hope
3. Mental activity	know, understand, remember, recollect, believe, expect, forget, think, suppose, consider, trust, imagine, mean, mind
4. Possession	owe, have, possess, own, belong (to), contain, consist (of)
5. Appearing	appear, look, seem

But if the verbs given above describe an event or action, they can be used in present continuous tense.

i) *I am seeing the doctor this evening (visiting).*

ii) *We are having breakfast right now (eating).*

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

The present perfect tense is used to refer to

Past situations those continue up to the present: *He has worked in this office for five years.*

An action just completed: *Don't touch the door. They have painted it just now. (It is still wet).*

A past action, the result of which still continues: *She has burnt her fingers. (She is unable to write now).*

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

The Present Perfect Continuous Tense is used to express an action which began in the past and is continuing right up to the present.

I have been teaching English since 2001 / for fifteen years.

★ 'Since' is used with a point of time and 'for' with a period of time.

SIMPLE PAST TENSE

The Simple Past Tense is used...

★ To describe events, actions and situations that occurred in the past and are now finished:

We went to Chennai last week.

★ To describe past habits:

He played hockey every day in his college days.

★ To express a desirable or an unreal state of things:

I wish I became a millionaire.

★ After certain phrases like 'as if', 'as though', 'it's time' etc.:

i) *She behaves as if she knew everything*

ii) *It's time the bus started.*

PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE

The Past Continuous Tense is used to express...

★ An action which was going on at sometime in the past:

Last night at 10 p.m. I was eating dinner.

- ★ The longer of the two past actions happened at the same time:

e.g.: *He was taking a bath when the phone rang.*

- ★ Two or more parallel activities happening at the same time:

e.g.: *While I was watching TV, my sister was listening to the radio.*

PAST PERFECT TENSE

When two actions happened one after another in the past, the past perfect tense is used to describe the earlier action.

e.g.: *When they went to the railway station the train had already left.*

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

The past perfect continuous tense is used to refer to some action which began before a certain point in the past and continued till that time in the past.

e.g.: *NTR had been acting in films for more than three decades before he floated Telugu Desam Party.*

SIMPLE FUTURE TENSE

The Simple Future Tense is used to indicate actions which take place in the future.

e.g.: *He will come tomorrow.*

- ★ The Simple Future Tense is used to express pure or colourless future. When the future is coloured by intention or likelihood, 'be + going to + 'V1' form is used.

i) *It is going to rain (likelihood).*

ii) *I am going to buy a flat (intention).*

FUTURE CONTINUOUS TENSE

The Future Continuous Tense is used to express an action going on at some point in the future.

e.g.: *We will be writing the entrance test at this time tomorrow.*

FUTURE PERFECT TENSE

The Future Perfect Tense is used to express an action which will be finished or complete by a certain time in the future.

e.g.: *She will have finished her research by the end of next year*

FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

The Future Perfect Continuous Tense is used to express an action that will be in progress over a period of time in the future.

e.g.: *Amitab Bachchan will have been acting in films for fifty years by next year.*

- ★ Formerly 'shall' was used as an alternative to 'will' with 'I' and 'we'. Today, 'will' is normally used. We don't use 'shall' very frequently in modern English. It is used with 'I' and 'we' to make offers and suggestions and to ask for advice.

i) *What time shall we meet?*

ii) *Shall I open the window?*

- ★ In legal documents, 'shall' is often used with third-person subjects to refer to obligations and duties.

e.g.: *The borrower shall repay the loan in a year.*

- ★ 'Shall' is unusual in American English.

