

## Using Verbs to Express Time: An Explanation

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### **Simple Present Tense** (one-word verb)

1. Make a statement of fact
  - a. Bananas grow on trees.
2. Express customs and habitual actions
  - a. James **watches** TV every night.
3. Express opinions
  - a. Jane **is** a good cook.

### **Present Continuous Tense** (two-word phrase: am, are, is + -ing verb)

1. Express an action that is happening at the moment of speaking or writing
  - a. I am sitting in the library.
  - b. He is reading the newspaper.
2. Express an activity or situation that is happening over a given period including at the moment of speaking or writing
  - a. She is studying French this semester.

### **Present Perfect Tense** (two-word verb phrase: have or has + past participle verb form)

1. Express an action that started in the past and is still continuing in the present
  - a. She has lived in Long Beach for three years.
2. Indicate an action that happened at an unspecified time in the past.
  - a. I have seen that movie.
  - b. Tina has baked an apple pie.

**Present Perfect Continuous** (three-word verb phrase: have or has + been + -ing verb form)

1. Express the duration or time of an action that began in the past, has continued into the present, and may continue into the future.
  - a. David has been working for two hours.
  - b. Jessie and Julie have been traveling for a month.

**Simple Past Tense** (one word verb)

1. Express an action or an event in the past that is completed
  - a. I went to school yesterday.
  - b. Gina cried at the end of the movie.

**Past Continuous Tense** (two-word verb phrase: was or were + -ing verb)

1. Express an action that was happening at a specific moment in the past.
  - a. He was doing his homework at 8:00 P.M. last night.
  - b. The children were eating pancakes yesterday morning.
2. Express two actions that were happening at the same time in the past.
  - a. The students were talking while the teacher was writing on the board.

**Past Perfect Tense** (two-word verb phrase: had + past participle verb form)

1. Express an action or event in the past that happened before another action in the past.
  - a. Dr. Smith had taught at three other schools before he taught here.
  - b. The band had played two shows in Los Angeles before coming to Long Beach.

**Past Perfect Continuous** (three-word verb phrase: had + been + -ing verb form)

1. Express an activity in progress before another activity or time in the past.
  - a. We had been driving for two hours when the tire blew out.
  - b. He had a headache because he had been reading without his glasses.

**Other ways to express past time**

1. Used to and a verb
  - a. When Mary was a teacher, she used to assign lots of homework.
  - b. The children used to watch Sesame Street every morning.
2. Would and a verb
  - a. As a boy, I would climb trees to look for birds' nests.
  - b. When Maria lived in Mexico, she would eat papayas everyday.

**Simple Future Tense** (two-word verb phrase: will or shall + base verb form)

1. Express an action or event that will happen, or express a promise of action.
  - a. She will play tennis tomorrow.
  - b. I shall meet you after class.

**Future Continuous** (three-word verb phrase: will + be + -ing verb form)

1. Express an activity or situation that will happen in the future over a given period, or while another activity will be occurring at the same time.
  - a. She will be working at the store while she goes to school.
  - b. Isabelle will be practicing her routine in preparation of the meet.

**Future Perfect** (three-word verb phrase: will + have + past participle verb form)

1. Express an action that will be completed before another activity or time.
  - a. Lisa will have worked ten hours by the end of the week.

**Future Perfect Continuous** (four-word verb phrase: will + have + been + -ing verb form)

1. Express the duration of an activity that will be in progress before another time or event in the future.
  - a. Next month, we will have been attending LBCC for exactly two years.

**Other ways to express future time:**

1. Going to + simple verb
  - a. I am going to visit my grandmother next week.
2. Simple present
  - a. The plane leaves at two o'clock this afternoon.
3. Present continuous
  - a. My brother is returning from Europe next week.