

Every language in the world has **verb tenses**. These tenses, which refer to the present, past, and future, explain when something — such as an action, event, or state — happened. The problem is that although all languages have verb tenses, not all languages have the same verb tenses or use them in a similar way. That's why **English tenses** are often confusing to ESL students.

The charts below provide a quick reference to help you understand the tenses in English more easily:

- Chart 1 lists each English tense and explains when to use it.
- Chart 2 gives an example of each tense, in active and passive form.
- Chart 3 provides time words & expressions to help you recognize when to use each tense.

## Overview of English Verb Tenses

<b>Present Simple</b>	Usage:	general action, habitual action, general truth
	Example:	<i>I work in a hospital.</i>
<b>Present Continuous Present Progressive</b>	Usage:	ongoing or temporary action
	Example:	<i>Sorry, I can't talk right now. I am working.</i>
<b>Past Simple</b>	Usage:	completed action or condition
	Example:	<i>I worked for ten hours yesterday.</i>
<b>Past Continuous Past Progressive</b>	Usage:	past ongoing action, past interrupted action
	Example:	<i>I was working on my project when you called.</i>
<b>Future</b>	Usage:	planned or unplanned future action
	Example:	<i>I will work at the main branch next week.</i>
<b>Present Perfect</b>	Usage:	action that happened at an indefinite time in the past and continues to the present
	Example:	<i>I have worked at the bank for three years.</i>
<b>Past Perfect</b>	Usage:	past action that happened before another past action.
	Example:	<i>I had already worked for several years before I got married.</i>
<b>Future Perfect</b>	Usage:	future action that will happen before another future action
	Example:	<i>I will have worked here for five years next July.</i>
<b>Present Perfect Continuous Present Perfect Progressive</b>	Usage:	past action that started in the past and continues to the present
	Example:	<i>I have been working on that project for the last two weeks.</i>
<b>Past Perfect Continuous Past Perfect Progressive</b>	Usage:	past ongoing action that was completed before some other past action
	Example:	<i>I had been sleeping at my desk when my boss fired me.</i>
<b>Future Perfect Continuous Future Perfect Progressive</b>	Usage:	future ongoing action that will occur before another action
	Example:	<i>I will have been working here for ten years tomorrow, so we're having a party.</i>

<b>Examples of English Verb Tenses</b>		
<b>Verb Tense</b>	<b>Example – Active Form</b>	<b>Example –Passive Form</b>
<b>Present Simple</b>	I work.	The work is done.
<b>Present Continuous Present Progressive</b>	I am working.	The work is being done.
<b>Past Simple</b>	I worked.	The work was done.
<b>Past Continuous Past Progressive</b>	I was working.	The work was being done.
<b>Future</b>	I will work. I'm going to work.	The work will be done. The work is going to be done.
<b>Present Perfect</b>	I have worked.	The work has been done.
<b>Past Perfect</b>	I had worked.	The work had been done.
<b>Future Perfect</b>	I will have worked.	The work will have been done.
<b>Present Perfect Continuous Present Perfect Progressive</b>	I have been working.	–
<b>Past Perfect Continuous Past Perfect Progressive</b>	I had been working.	–
<b>Future Perfect Continuous Future Perfect Progressive</b>	I will have been working.	–

## Common Time Expressions for English Verb Tenses

Verb Tense	Example – Active Form	Time Clues
<b>Present Simple</b>	I work.	every day / morning / afternoon every evening / night always never sometimes usually frequently rarely seldom
<b>Present Continuous Present Progressive</b>	I am working.	now right now at the present time this weekend
<b>Past Simple</b>	I worked.	yesterday last night / week / month / year last summer / winter
<b>Past Continuous Past Progressive</b>	I was working.	while when
<b>Future</b>	I will work. I'm going to work.	tomorrow next week / month / year in the future soon
<b>Present Perfect</b>	I have worked.	since until now ever never for two hours / days / months many times
<b>Past Perfect</b>	I had worked.	already by the time till then till that time
<b>Future Perfect</b>	I will have worked.	by the time... already
<b>Present Perfect Continuous Present Perfect Progressive</b>	I have been working.	for the past four years for the last two days up to now
<b>Past Perfect Continuous Past Perfect Progressive</b>	I had been working.	before since for three hours / days / weeks
<b>Future Perfect Continuous Future Perfect Progressive</b>	I will have been working.	by the time for six months / years