

2 Grammar

Use of the tenses

Simple and progressive forms

Use of the simple present	Examples
things that are generally true	Many people drink coffee.
natural facts and scientific laws	Cats have four legs.
regular, repeated actions; routines	Tom usually cycles to work.
permanent situations	Berlin is the capital of Germany.
state verbs (generally only used in the simple form)	This soup tastes delicious!
after time clauses (<i>when, if, until, as soon as, etc.</i>)	Emma will be surprised when she hears our news!

TIPP

Good to know

Signal words for the simple present:

- ➡ always, usually, often, sometimes, occasionally, never, every
- ➡ if, when, until, as soon as
- ➡ to be, to believe, to belong, to consist, to contain, to depend, to hate, to know, to like, to love, to mean, to need, to prefer, to realise, to remember, to seem, to smell, to taste, to want

Use of the present progressive	Examples
actions happening at the moment of speaking	It's raining heavily – you'd better take an umbrella.
incomplete actions	We're learning about the Cold War in history.
temporary situations	My cousin is staying with us for a few days.
changing or developing situations	The effects of global warming are getting worse.

2 Grammar

The past tenses work in a similar way:

Use of the simple past	Examples
permanent or long-lasting situations in the past	His family owned the land for many generations.
repeated actions and routines	The film club met every Monday afternoon in the cinema.
completed actions	The factory closed down in 2015.
actions in a sequence	She pressed the button, the door opened and she stepped into the lift.
state verbs	This painting belonged to my grandmother.

Use of the past progressive	Examples
temporary situations in the past	I stayed at home last night because I wasn't feeling well.
activities happening at a definite time in the past	Three weeks ago we were skiing in Austria.
actions not complete at a certain time in the past	They were talking about Lucy when she came into the room.

TIPP

Good to know

We often use the simple past and past progressive to show that one action interrupted another:

- ➔ We **were having** a barbecue when it **started** to rain.
- ➔ I **saw** Tina while I **was waiting** for the bus.



Lernzettel

The perfect tenses

Perfect tenses are used in a number of different situations in English:

Use of the present perfect simple	Examples
recent events, without saying exactly when they took place	Tom has just left . He'll be back this afternoon.
results of past actions that have an effect on the present	If you haven't revised for this test, you're likely to fail it.
for things someone has experienced at some time in their life; exactly when is not mentioned	She's visited New York several times.

Use of the present perfect simple	Examples
situations that began in the past and have continued to the present	They've lived in that house for over 20 years.
for routines or repeated actions that began in the past and have continued until the present	I've never missed an episode of "Lost Kingdoms" – I watch it every week!
for time expressions that indicate unfinished time	There hasn't been much snow so far this winter.
for state verbs	We've known each other since we were children.

Contrast of the present perfect simple and the present perfect progressive

In some cases, there is no real difference in meaning between the simple and progressive forms of the present perfect:

- ➔ I've **worked** here for several years or I've **been working** here for several years.

However, the focus of the sentence is different, depending on whether the simple or progressive form is used:

The present perfect progressive focuses on the activity, whereas the simple form focuses on the result:

- ➔ I've **been revising** for the maths test all week.
- ➔ I've just **found out** that I've **passed** the test – what a relief!

The progressive form shows that an action is not complete, whereas the simple form is used for completed activities:

- ➔ They've **been renovating** our school this year. The work should be finished by June.

- ➔ The building looks much better now they've **renovated** it.

The progressive form shows how long something has been going on, while the simple form expresses how often something has happened:

- ➔ You've **been sitting** at your computer all afternoon. Go out and get some fresh air!
- ➔ I've already **walked** the dog twice today – now it's your turn!

As with other tenses, the progressive form can be used to show that a situation is temporary, while the simple form indicates a permanent or long-lasting situation:

- ➔ I've **been looking** everywhere for my phone – I really need to check my messages.
- ➔ It seems that I've **lost** my phone. I can't find it anywhere.

The present perfect and the simple past

It can be tricky to decide whether you need the present perfect or the simple past. Here are some pointers:

- ➔ When you use a specific past time expression (e. g. **yesterday, last week, ago**), you need the simple past:
 - ➔ *She's **worked** with many Hollywood legends, most recently with Tom Cruise, whose new film she **directed last year**.*
 - ➔ *"I've never **been** to the USA. **Have** you?" "No, but I **visited** Canada a couple of years **ago**."*
- ➔ Expressions indicating "unfinished" time (e. g. **today, this week**) cannot be used with the present perfect for short, completed actions:
 - ➔ *When **did** Tom **leave** this morning?*
 - ➔ *(at 10 a. m.): I've **sent** a lot of emails this morning.*
 - ➔ *(at 5 p. m.): I **sent** a lot of emails this morning.*
- ➔ The simple past is used when there is no connection to the present:
 - ➔ *Marilyn Monroe **starred** in several films. (As she is now dead, she will not star in any more films.)*
 - ➔ *Although she is still young, Jennifer Lawrence **has** already **starred** in several films.*
- ➔ The present perfect is often used to introduce new information, followed by the simple past to continue the story:
 - ➔ *President Jones **has won** the election. Experts **expected** a close result, but when the votes **were counted**, she **was** the clear winner.*



Lernzettel

The past perfect tenses

Use of the past perfect simple	Examples
for past events that happened before other events in the past	When Lucy had finished her essay, she switched off the computer.
Use of the past perfect progressive	Examples
for events that happened before another past event, the result of which could still be seen later	It had been raining for days and the water in the river was dangerously high.
for situations that continued for a while up to a certain time in the past	We were relieved when Ben finally phoned – we had been waiting for his call all day.
for talking about how long an activity or event went on	Jane had been drinking coffee all day and couldn't get to sleep.