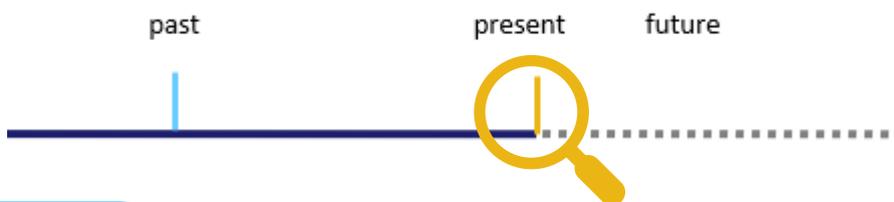




Present simple



ALWAYS TRUE

Scientific laws: water boils at 100 degrees
Facts: Mount Fuji is in Japan.
Cows and sheep eat grass.
Our hair goes grey as we age.

ROUTINES AND HABITS

I take the train to work. I swim twice a week.
My brother works in Liverpool. He rarely tips in restaurants.

Use with adverbs: once a week, every Monday, often, regularly, always, sometimes, rarely, ...

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

The imperative:

Walk past the post-office, then turn left.
Chop the carrots into cubes.

NB: Do not conjugate the verb.

SCHEDULED (FUTURE) EVENTS

The bus leaves on the hour every weekday. The class finishes in five minutes.
The alarm rings if you open the door.
When does the plane leave?

PERMANENT OR LONG-LASTING SITUATIONS

Personal facts: name, age, nationality, origin, job, family relations.

I'm Claire, I'm 25, I'm from France. I live in Mulhouse. I have a twin brother. He's a vegetarian.

ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS

She's very competitive.
Are they generous?
My boss isn't very punctual.

NARRATING CURRENT ACTIONS

Sports commentators: Mane takes the ball off Messi, he passes it to Salah, he shoots, he scores!

NARRATING PAST EVENTS

Bringing a story to life:

So last night, I go into the kitchen and there's a mouse on the table!

3rd person singular (he, she, it) verb forms conjugate with an 's' at the end.
The 's' is pronounced /s/ after a voiceless consonant and /z/ after a vowel or voiced consonant.



past

present

future

ACTIONS UNDERWAY AS YOU SPEAK

I'm just eating my lunch.
She **is having** a break at the moment.
He's **driving** me mad.
The children **aren't** listening to me.
It **isn't** working.
What **are** you doing?
Aren't you taking notes?

Use with: (right) now, just, at the moment.

ANNOYING HABITS

Emphasises a repeated action that happens regularly. Has negative connotations:

You're forever **losing** your keys!
She's always **going** on at him.
They're constantly **arguing**.

Use with: forever, constantly, always

DEFINITE FUTURE PLANS

These plans are decided before the moment of speaking:

My cousin **is visiting** next week.
We're **going** to the cinema on Friday.
Are you **seeing** your friends at the weekend?

TEMPORARY SITUATIONS

Gives the impression an end point will come:

My son **is learning** to drive.
He's **launching** his own business.
She's **studying** web design in her free time.

Gives the impression the situation is new:
I'm **living** in London at the moment.
He's **working** for McDonald's these days.

Use with: at the moment, for a few weeks, for a couple of months, for a while.

TEMPORARY HABITS

Indicates a change from the usual:

He usually plays drums, but tonight he's **playing** guitar.
He's **eating** a lot these days.
She's **smoking** more than usual.

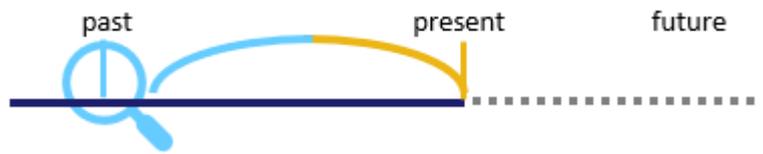
IDIOMATIC USES

I'm not having this! = I don't like or agree with this situation.

Stative verbs are not used in the continuous form, except for McDonald's slogan:
I'm loving it!



Present perfect simple



UNFINISHED TIMES

Gives the impression that the time period mentioned is not finished:

I've **bumped** into him three times today!
I **haven't seen** Emily this week. Is she OK?
He **hasn't texted** me yet today.
What **have** you **done** so far?

LIFE EXPERIENCE

The past experience is important, the time is unspecific.

Have you ever **been** to Japan?
I've never **eaten** sashimi.
She **has** never **been** paragliding.
Have you **read** War and Peace?
I've **read** it three times!
We **have visited** Paris several times.

Use with: ever, never, have you...?

PRESENT RESULT

An action in the past influences the current moment:

I've **left** my wallet at home (*so I can't buy a coffee*).
I've **lost** my keys (*so I can't drive my car*).
He **has lost** a lot of weight (*so he looks or feels different now*).

DURATION

Something began in the past and is still true in the present:

We've **known** each other since we were children (*we still know each other*).
I've always really **liked** her. (*I still like her*)
How long **have** you **worked** here?
Hasn't she **lived** here longer than him?

Use with: How long...? since 2015, since last summer, since February, for six weeks

RECENTLY COMPLETED ACTIONS

The plumber **has just finished** the repairs.
She's just **texted** me.
He's already **eaten** four.
Have you **done** your homework yet?
They **have** recently **bought** a house.

Use with: just, recently, already, yet.

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements are recent actions with present results:

The government **has announced** new support for small businesses.

She's just **had** a baby.



Present perfect continuous

past

present

future



DURATION

Something began in the past and continues into the present. Emphasises the process or length of the activity.

I've **been waiting** for you all day.

I've **been meaning** to tell you.

It's **been raining** all day.

She's **been studying** hard all week.

How long **has** he **been working** here?

He's **been working** here since 2015.

Hasn't she **been living** here longer than him?

Also reinforces the idea that something usually takes a long time to master:

She **hasn't been learning** Spanish very long.

Use with: How long...? all year, since 2013, since last summer, since (last) February, for six weeks, for 10 days, not (very) long

TEMPORARY SITUATIONS

Something began in the past and continues into the present. We are still doing something that we began doing in the past. Emphasises the repeated nature of the activity and gives the impression that the situation is new or might end.

I **have been working** out a lot recently.

She **has been taking** things very seriously of late. I think she's stressed.

He **has been studying** web design at night school recently.

The business **has been making** a profit these past few months.

Use with: recently, these past few weeks, in recent months, of late

STATIVE VERBS

are **not** used in the continuous forms.

**I've been knowing him all my life.*



For a lesson and practice quizzes on stative verbs, access the [Grammar Course](#) in Moodle

PRESENT RESULT

An action in the past has just finished and this influences the current moment. Emphasises the length or repeated nature of the activity is responsible for the result.

I'm shattered, I've **been working** all day.

They've **been drinking** all night (*so they are drunk now*).

She's **been practicing** for ages (*so she is very good now*).



Past simple



ONCE IN THE PAST

For actions that were done once and finished during a time period that is now ended.

We **went** to Austria last summer.
I **went** to the supermarket yesterday.
We **stayed** up late last night.
She **finished** it this morning.
He **bought** me flowers for my birthday.
My son **graduated** six months ago.
They **stayed** with us for 10 days.

Use with: yesterday, last winter, 5 weeks ago, for 5 months, in 2005.

REPEATEDLY IN THE PAST

For actions that happened repeatedly during a time period that is now ended.

When I was young, I **took** the bus to school every day.
We **hiked** and **swam** a lot last summer because the weather was so good.
My aunt and uncle always **enjoyed** visiting their friends.
As a child, he **made** friends easily.

Use with: when, as, last week, in the past

IMAGINARY EVENTS & WISHES

Begin with 'if', use the past simple and finish with the second conditional:

If I **won** the lottery, I would buy a yacht.
If she **paid** more attention, she would get injured less often.
If he **took** more time, he wouldn't make as many mistakes.

PAST DURATION

Something was true for a stretch of time in the past, but that time period is over now.

I **lived** abroad for twelve years.
He **enjoyed** being a doctoral student.
My sister **played** a lot of badminton when she was younger.

REPORTED SPEECH

Direct speech in the present tense 'shifts back' one tense into the past simple as reported speech:

"I work here". →
He said that he **worked** here.



Past continuous

past

present

future



INTERRUPTED & OVERLAPPING ACTIONS

One action or process was ongoing (in the past) when another happened.

My flat mate **was eating** dinner when I got home at 8pm.

The burglars **were carrying** our TV across the room when we walked in.

She **was walking** to the shops when she bumped into Jim yesterday.

Use with: when, past simple sentence, 5pm, yesterday, last weekend

ONGOING ACTIONS IN THE PAST

Shows that the action was in progress and continued for some time around a specific point in the past. Similar to interrupted and overlapping actions, but no other event.

Where **were** you **living** when Covid broke out?
They **were** both **working** in Tokyo in 1999.

CHANGE OR GROWTH

Some verbs convey a change or growth process.

The children **were growing up** quickly.

His hair **was going** grey.

The town **was changing** quickly.

Our plans **were coming along** nicely.

Her writing **was improving**, but her listening **wasn't**.

DURATION

To emphasise that something **continued (on and on) for some time in a time period that is now ended:**

My eyes and nose **were streaming** all day because the pollen count was so high.

It was a terrible meeting! Everyone **was shouting** but no one **was listening**.

I **was working** in Malaysia at the time.

STORY BACKGROUND

Use of the past continuous is very common at the beginning of a story:

The other day I **was driving** to work when ...

It was a beautiful day. The sun **was shining**, and the birds **were singing**...

PAST HABITS

Past habits or events that happened again and again in a time period that is now ended.

They **were meeting** secretly after school.

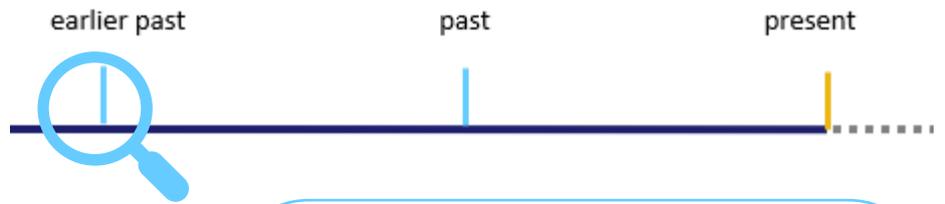
When the twins were younger,

they **were constantly quarrelling**.

Tim **was always talking** about winning the lottery!



Past perfect simple



ONLY JUST

The adverbs 'just' and 'only just' indicate that the two events occurred very close together (but not at the same time). There was a very short span of time between them.

I **had** only just **put** the laundry out when it started raining.

Luckily, I **had** just **saved** my file when the computer crashed.

TWO STEPS BACK

Shows the order of events; that one action finished prior to another action or event in the past:

We rushed to the station, but the train **had** already **left**.

Thankfully, I **had** already **saved** my file before the computer crashed.

TIME TAKEN TO REACH A POINT IN THE PAST

She **had been** in Paris two years when she met him.

When he graduated, he **had been** in Liverpool for five years.

WISHING THE PAST WERE DIFFERENT

Use a negative sentence to negate what really happened in the past.

I wish I **hadn't stayed** up all night (*but in reality, I did*).

They wished they **hadn't gone** to the party.

She wished she **had** never **met** him.

You'll wish you **had** never **asked**!

Use with: wish, not (n't), never

REPORTED SPEECH

Direct speech in the past tense 'shifts back' one tense into the past perfect simple as reported speech:

"I bought it in town." →

He said that he **had bought** it in town.

"I didn't want to go." →

He said that he **hadn't wanted** to go.



Past perfect continuous

earlier past

past

present



ONGOING ACTIVITY UP TO A POINT IN THE PAST

The continuous form emphasises the ongoing or repeated nature of the action that began before another event in the past.

Louise **had been working** in Tokyo for two years when she met Ken.

By the time he was six, Mozart **had been performing** publicly for three years.

She **had** only **been working** for the company for 18 months when they offered her a promotion.

Use with: By the time, when, simple past sentences, only

INTERRUPTED ACTIONS

One action or process was ongoing (in the past) when another happened and ended or delayed it (also in the past):

The refugees **had been escaping** from Syria when their boat capsized (Their escape was interrupted, possibly ended).

After she **had been walking** for three hours, she decided to have a rest. (She stopped walking).

Use with: simple past for subsequent event.

RESULT IN THE PAST, DUE TO EARLIER ONGOING ACTIVITY

Emphasises the continuous nature of the activity or event more so than the simple aspect:

The roads were flooded because it **had been raining** all night.

The ski slopes were closed because it just **hadn't been snowing** enough.

When we met for coffee, she had streaks of paint in her hair because she **had been decorating** the kitchen that morning.

He **had been working** hard all week, so he spent the weekend relaxing.

REPORTED SPEECH

"Sorry I'm late; I've been decorating the spare room and I lost track of time." →

She said that she **had been decorating** the spare room.

"I've been concentrating so hard this morning, I'm shattered!" →

He said that he **had been concentrating** hard all morning.



Future simple

past

present

future 

INVITATIONS, OFFERS, PROMISES, REFUSALS, REQUESTS

Whether spontaneous decisions or planned in advance, these speech acts use 'will'.

Will you marry me?

I promise I **won't** do it again.

I'll help you decorate the kitchen.

Will you join us for lunch?

Will you please be quiet?!

NB: Requests with 'will' can sound harsh.

PLANS & INTENTIONS

When our future actions are decided, scheduled and fairly sure, use 'be going to':

They **are going to** move house.

I'm **going to** visit my sister in Australia next month.

When **are you going to** pay this bill?

Are you going to study this evening?

NB: We also use the [present progressive](#) for the planned, future simple.

I'm **visiting** my sister next month.

INSTANT DECISIONS

Some offers are instant decisions about what to do next. Use 'will':

[Knock at the door] "I'll get it!"

Are you thirsty? I'll make some tea.

I'll have the veggie burger, please.

FUTURE CONDITIONALS

If it doesn't rain tomorrow, we'll go for a walk.
You'll be late if you don't hurry.

Use with: If + first conditional

FUTURE NEUTRAL

He will be here in 5 minutes.

FUTURE PREDICTION

When we have information that makes us fairly sure about what might happen next, use 'be going to':

It's **going to** rain – look at those dark clouds!

I think the Tories **are going to** win the next election.

[Watching someone play video games]

Aren't you going to study today?

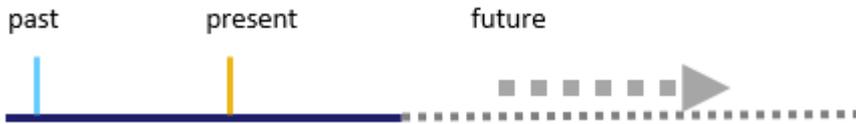
[Knowing someone has done something wrong]:

She's **going to** be so angry with you!



There is no future tense in English. We have many options. Study more examples during your course with us.





ASKING POLITELY FOR INFORMATION

Will you be bringing your friend to the pub tonight?

Will you be joining us for dinner?

How long **will you be staying** with us?

Will anyone be joining you or **will you be dining** alone?

Will your colleagues be attending the seminar this afternoon?

PLANNED FUTURE PROCESSES & ONGOING ACTIVITIES

To emphasise the ongoing, continuous or repeated nature of a future action:

Next week, **I'll be sunbathing** and sipping cocktails by the pool in Bali.

We'll be studying this for the next few lessons

This time next month, **you'll be working** in the city centre, so I won't see you at lunch time anymore.

OVERLAPPING ACTIONS

An action in the future will overlap an ongoing activity or process in the future:

I'll be here waiting for you when you arrive.

Jim **will be working** when we get home this evening, so we need to be quiet.

SINGLE, PLANNED FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Conveys the sense that a single future action will happen during the course of events because it is part of a schedule.

I'll be seeing Jim at the conference next week.

The government **will be making** an announcement later.

The party **will be starting** at 8pm.

PREDICTING ACTIVITIES OF DURATION OR REPETITION

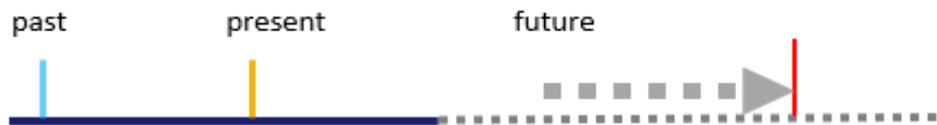
He'll still **be working** on that project days from now!

We'll be eating apples for weeks; we've picked so many!

An hour from now, **I'll probably still be ironing** my clothes.

You'll be missing the sunshine once you're back in the UK.





began living herenext month
 began working.....your next appraisal

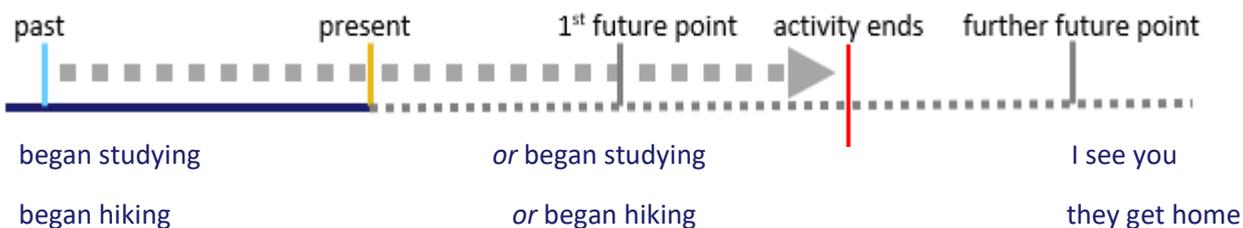
LENGTH OF TIME TO A FUTURE POINT

Expresses how much time will have elapsed between an event beginning in the past and a specific point in the future. It is very similar to the future perfect simple, but we use the ~ing form to emphasise the ongoing or repeated nature of the verb.

As of next month, I **will have been living** here six years.
 By October, he **will have been volunteering** for us for five years.
 By the time of your next appraisal, how long **will you have been working** here?
 When she leaves next month, will she really **have been studying** here for 10 years?!

Use with: As of, by, by the time of, when + present simple, five months, three years, for hours, for days, for ages.

NB: *for ages* is casual register



FUTURE ACTION FINISHED BEFORE A FURTHER FUTURE POINT

An action which began either in the past or in the future will have ended by a further, specific point in the future. We emphasise the ongoing nature of the activity with the ~ing form.

When I see you later, I **will have been studying** most of the day, so I'll probably be tired.
 By the time they get home, they'll **have been hiking** for hours, so they'll need a good rest.

