

VERB TENSES (OVERVIEW)

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Definition: Verb tenses are used to express time (past, present, future) in writing.

There are **six** main types of verb tenses:

Verb tense	example
1. Simple present	They take the bus to school.
2. Present perfect	They have taken the bus to school.
3. Simple past	They took the bus to school.
4. Past perfect	They had taken the bus to school.
5. Future	They will take the bus to school.
6. Future perfect	They will have taken the bus to school.

1. Simple present

- Use to show same-time action.



*I **am** excited to go to the beach because I **love** to swim.*

- Use with past-tense verb to show earlier action ([or future-tense verb to show later action?](#)).



*I **know** that I **aced** the exam.*

2. Present perfect

- Designates action that began in the past but will continue into the future. This tense implies that the action is ongoing.



*She **has been** a PhD student for three years.*

*My dog **has chewed** most of my shoes.*

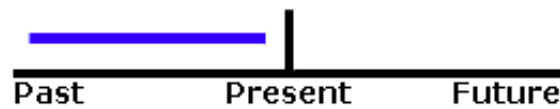
3. Simple past

- Used to show a completed past action.



She **ran** five miles.

- Can be used with present tense to show a general truth.



Ancient Greek philosophers **knew** that the earth **is** round.

4. Past perfect

- Use when an action is completed ([at some point](#)) before another action.



He gave a presentation to the class about the book he **had read**.

I had cleaned my apartment by the time my parents arrived.

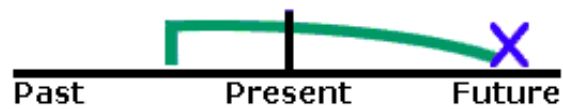
5. Future

- Use with present tense to show action happening at the same time.



*I **will be** happy if my Amazon package **comes** today.*

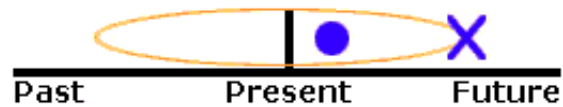
- Use with past tense to show earlier action.



*You **will pass** the exam if you **studied** hard.*

6. Future perfect

- Designates action that will have been completed at a specified time in the future.



*By May 10th, I **will have graduated** Law School.*



*I **will have saved** up enough money for a down payment by June.*

Exercises

Choose the correct verb tense for each sentence.

1. I [will be] [am] [be] turning 30 on my next birthday.
2. I [had completed] [completed] [complete] the homework before the due date.
3. My teacher explained to me why the sky [is] [was] [will be] blue.
4. You will go to jail because you [committed] [will commit] [commit] a crime.

5. By the end of my training program, I [will have run] [will have ran] [ran] a total of 100 miles.

6. Two years ago, she [moved] [will move] [move] across the country.

For additional information on verb tenses, please refer to the additional Yale Graduate Writing Center resources:

- Future Tenses
- Perfect Tense
- Simple vs. Continuous Tense
- Modal Verbs

Sources: Purdue OWL, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>, Yale GWC tutorials.
[English Page “Verb Tense Tutorial.”](http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbtenseintro.html) <http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbtenseintro.html>.