**Present Tenses (Present Simple and Present Continuous)**

**We use the Present Simple:**

1 when the fact or event is always true:

*People* ***drive*** *on the right in most European countries. Water* ***freezes*** *at 0° Centigrade.*

1. to talk about regular or repeated actions or events:

*He usually* ***arrives*** *at school at 8.00 a.m.*

*3* with future meaning for timetables:

*The train for London* ***leaves*** *at 6.26 from Platform 8.*

4 to describe the plot of a book or film:

*Mr. Darcy eventually* ***proposes*** *to Elizabeth, and she* ***accepts.***

1. when the speaker is commentating on a sporting event:

... *and Hingis* ***serves.*** *Davenport* ***returns*** *the ball with ease ...*

1. for newspaper headlines (when the event is in the past):

*President* ***arrives*** *in China.* (When the event is in the future, we usually use the infinitive: *President* ***to visit*** *China next month.)*

**We use the Present Continuous:**

1 to describe an action happening at the moment of speaking:

*She can't come to the phone; she'****s******having*** *a shower.*

*2* to talk about temporary situations:

*She normally lives in London, but at the moment she'****s******living*** *in Athens.*

3 to talk about developing situations:

*Prices* ***are rising*** *every year.*

4 to talk about annoying/amusing habits + *always/constantly:  
 He****'s******always complaining*** *about something.*

**Note:**

The following verbs are not usually used in the continuous form:

a) denoting mental activity – *to know, to believe, to doubt, to imagine, to suppose, to forget, to remember* etc;

b) denoting abstract relations – *to seem, to appear, to have, to belong, to consist of, to own, to possess, to lack* etc;

c) denoting sense perception – *to see, to hear* etc;

d) denoting wish and feeling – *to want, to wish, to love, to like, to hate, to prefer* etc;

e denoting physical properties of objects – *to taste* (have a flavour), *to smell* (give out a smell), *to weigh* (have weight) etc.

Some verbs have different meanings in the Present Simple and Present Continuous:

*I****'m thinking about*** *it.* – I'm considering it (denoting a process of thought).

*I* ***think*** *it's wrong.*  – It is my opinion.

*I'****m******seeing*** *him on Thursday.* – I am meeting him.

*Every morning, I* ***see*** *the children on their way to school.* – I notice, look at them.

*You* ***don't look*** *very well.* – You don't seem well.

*What* ***are you looking*** *at?* – What can you see?

**Present Perfect Tenses**

**We use the Present Perfect Simple:**

1. when the timeof the action in the past is not important. No time expression is used. It has a connection with the present:

*I****'ve lost*** *my pen! (I haven't got it now.)*

1. when the past time reference is indefinite**,** with time expressions such as *ever, never, before, already, just recently, lately, yet, in the last few days, so far,* etc:

*I****'ve met*** *a lot of people recently.*

*I****'ve been*** *to Australia before.*

1. to talk about actions and events that have been continuing up to the present with *since* and *for:*

*I****'ve known*** *him for 20 years/since1996.*

*I* ***haven't played*** *basketball for weeks/since last year.*

4 with the expression *It's the first time:*

*It's the first time I* ***have seen*** *this film.*

**We use the Present Perfect Continuous:**

1 to talk about events/actions which started in the past and have been continuing up to the present, and are still happening now. The actions may continue into the future:

*I* ***have been writing*** *letters all morning, and I still have a lot more to do.*

*2* with the time expressions *for* and *since* to express the same meaning as above:

*I****'ve been writing*** *letters for 6 hours.*

3 to talk about an event that has only just finished, so that there is present evidence of that event:

*A: Why are you so red in the face?(the evidence)*

*B: I****'ve been running*** *up the stairs!*

**Notes:**

1 The Present Perfect is never used to talk about a definite time in the past. Use the Past Simple for this:

*I* ***had*** *an accident on my way home last night.*

*I****'ve had*** *an accident! I'm going to be late for the meeting.*

2 There is always some kind of reference to the presentin the use of this tense: e.g. *I'****ve******lost*** *my keys!* (The speaker wants to emphasise that she does not have them now), or a reference to an indefinitetime in the past *(already, before,* etc.).

1. Note the difference between *been to* and *gone to:*

*John'****s gone******to*** *America on business/to the shops. (=* He's there now.)

*I'****ve******been******to*** *India lots of times.* (= visited).

**Past Tenses**

**We use the Past Simple**:

1 to talk about an action that happened at a specific time in the past:

*I* ***met*** *John last night.*

The time of the action may be implied in the situation through the mention of the place of the action:

*I* ***ate*** *turnips in Germany.*

***Did*** *you* ***belong*** *to any society at the University?*

2 to talk about something that happened over a period of time in the past and was completed in the past:

*I* ***lived*** *in Spain from 1992 to 1995.*

3 to talk about repeated actions or habits in the past:

*He always* ***caught*** *the 8.30 train to go to work.*

*They* ***went*** *to Spain every year for their holidays.*

4 in narration to express a succession of actions:

*I* ***found*** *some matches,* ***climbed*** *on the table,* ***lit*** *the gas lamp,  
then* ***settled******down*** *to read.*

5 to make polite enquiries or requests, usually in formal situations:

***Did*** *you* ***want*** *to see me?* ***Could*** *you* ***turn*** *the TV off?*

**We use the Past Continuous:**

1 to describe actions which are interrupted by another action (the interrupting action is in the Past Simple):

*I* ***was writing*** *an essay when the phone rang*.

2 to talk about an action that continued over some time in the past (the action may or may not have been completed):

*I* ***was doing*** *my homework all evening.*

3 with *while* to talk about two actions continuing at the same time in the past:

*While I* ***was writing****, my brother* ***was watching*** *TV****.***

4 to talk about annoying habits in the past + *always / constantly*:

*He* ***was always losing*** *his keys.*

**We use USED TO and WOULD:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FORM** | **MEANING** |
| **used to**  She **used to go** to school, but now she's at college.  Did you **use to talk** a lot in class?  She **didn't use** to exercise, but she's started now. | We use ***used to***to talk about habits/routine actions/events in the past. This always implies that the action no longer happens:  *When I was younger* ***I used to play*** *in the park.*  Note: Remember that there is no  present tense of this verb. For habits and routines in the present use the Present Simple + *usually.* (See Unit 1) |
| **would do**  We **would talk** for hours about philosophy.  We **wouldn't** ever **talk** about it. **Would** you ever **talk** ... ? | We use ***would***with the same meaning as ***used to****,* but only for concrete actions. It is not used for general situations: *We* ***used to live*** *in Paris when I was a child, and I* ***would cycle/used to cycle*** *to school every day.* (NOT *We would live in Paris* ...) |

**We use the Past Perfect:**

1 to describe actions and events which happened at an earlier time than the events described in the Past Simple or Continuous. There must always be a past tense to refer to:

*I* ***had never played*** *tennis until I went to Spain.*

2 with *when, before* and *after* to express the same time relations as above. (Note that the Past Simple can be used instead of the Past Perfect but the Past Perfect emphasizes the completion of the action in the subordinate clause):

*When I* ***had finished,*** *I* ***went*** *home.*

*After I* ***had finished,*** *I* ***went*** *home.*

*I* ***went*** *home before I* ***had finished*** *my work.*

3 in the continuous form when describing an action which continued for some time before another past action:

*The train* ***arrived*** *late and he* ***had been waiting*** *for an hour.*

1. in the sentence pattern with a subordinate clause of time introduced by the correlatives *scarcely… when, hardly … when, nearly… when, no sooner …* ***than*** to show the time relation between the two actions of a specific character: the action of the subordinate clause takes place when the action of the principal clause is hardly accomplished yet.

*He had scarcely entered the room when in a chair by the door he perceived Ann Chester.*

Such sentences are emphatic in meaning and so the correlatives *scarcely, hardly, nearly, no sooner* may be placed at the head of the sentence with an inverted word order following.

*No sooner had they established themselves in the house than he perceived* to his dismay a return of her gloomy mood.

1. in the sentence pattern which is a complex sentences with a before-clause or when-clause to express an action that is not fully accomplished before the action in the subordinate clause.

*He had not been there for two days before he admitted that* he should not *have taken the invitation*.

*I hadn’t been in the pub five minutes when somebody brought in Tom for a drink.*

**We use the Future in the Past**

to describe events that will take place in the future of the story, when we are already using past tenses to tell the story:

I ***was*** *afraid that I* ***would*** *never* ***win*** *the game* or

I***was*** *afraid that I* ***was*** *never* ***going to win*** *the game.*

**Future Tenses**

**We use *going to:***

1 to express a decision already made, an intention:

*I'****m going to spend*** *the summer on a Greek island.*

2to make a prediction that is almost certain to happen. This prediction is based on something you can see in the present:

*The twins are growing fast - they'****re going to be*** *as tall as their father.*

**We use the Present Continuous**

to express definite arrangements already made. Appointments, meetings, reservations, etc, can all be expressed with the Present Continuous. This is a very certain future:

*They'****re getting*** *married in July. I'****m spending*** *the summer on Kos.* (compare with ***'****I'****m going to*** *spend the summer on a Greek island.')*

**We use the Present Simple:**

1 to express the future based on timetables and fixed programmes:

*The film* ***starts*** *at 7.30.The plane* ***arrives*** *at 8 this evening.*

2 in subordinate clauses of time, condition and concession when the action refers to the future. Clauses of time may be introduced by  
the conjunctions *when, while, till, until, before, after, as soon as:*

*I shall have a look at his paper when I* ***get*** *it. She won't go to bed till you* ***come****.*

Clauses of condition are introduced by the conjunctions *if, un-  
less, on condition (that), provided (providing)* and *in case:*

*If you* ***send*** *me a line to my club, it'll be forwarded at once.*

Clauses of concession are introduced by the conjunctions *even  
if, even though, no matter how, whenever, whatever, however,* etc:

*I'll have dinner whenever it* ***is*** *ready.*

**We use the Present Perfect**

in subordinate clauses of time introduced by the conjunctions *when, before, after, as soon as, till* and *until* where it is used to express a future action. It shows that the action of the subordinate clause will be accomplished before the action of the principal clause:

*As soon as we* ***have had*** *some tea, Ann, we shall go to inspect your house. I'll take you back in my car but not till I'****ve made*** *you some coffee.*

**We use the Future Simple:**

1 to express simple, factual predictions:

*The newspaper says inflation* ***will go*** *up in the next few months.*

2 to express a succession of actions in the future:

*I'****ll take*** *a walk to the sea and on my way back I'****ll buy*** *you a newspaper.*

3 a) to express hopes, fears, thoughts about the future, with verbs like *think, hope, am sure, am afraid, believe, expect,* etc:

*I'm afraid I****'ll get*** *lost without a map.*

*Do you think the weather* ***will change?***

b) to denote actions whose realization is uncertain, doubtful, with adverbs *perhaps, probably, of course* and the like:

*They'****ll probably******get*** *a lot of satisfaction out of our quarrel.*

***Of course*** *he* ***will send*** *you a letter in a few days.*

4 to express a decision made at the moment of speaking:

*O, wait a minute, I****'ll come*** *tomorrow instead of Friday.*

**We use the Future Continuous**:

1 to express an action that will be taking place over a period of time in the future:

*Don't come on Monday because I'****ll be working*** *all day.*

*This time next year, I'****ll be taking*** *my exams.*

2 to speak about an action that will happen around or at a certain time:

*He****'ll be arriving*** *at 7.*

3 to be more polite and formal when asking questions about the future:

*When* ***will*** *you* ***be arriving?***

4 to express an action which the speaker expects to take place  
in the future *in the natural course of events*. The difference between the Present Continuous used to denote a future action and the Future Continuous becomes quite evident if we compare the following sentences:

*We* ***are meeting*** *tomorrow* (= we have arranged to meet tomorrow, we have fixed the date of our meeting).

*We* ***shall be meeting*** *tomorrow* (= not because of some arrangement but in the normal course of events; either because we work together, or because we attend classes together, or regularly play some game at the same place and at the same time, etc)*.*

**We use the Future Perfect Simple**

totalk about an action that will be completed before a given time in the future:

*I'****ll have taken*** *all my exams by**the end of next week.*

**We use the Future Perfect Continuous**

to talk about an action that will be completed before a given time in the future similar to the Future Perfect Simple, but to describe actions/events that continue over a period of time:

*By the end of the year, I'****ll have been working*** *in my present job* ***for*** *three years.*

**Passive Forms**

**The passive forms are used when:**

1 we don't know the agent (the person or thing who performs the action):

*My money* ***has been stolen!*** (I don't know WHO stole my money.)

2 the agent is obvious:

*Smoking* ***is forbidden.*** (It is obvious that this is a rule made by the government, or the management of a building.)

3 the event or action is more important than the agent:

*The proposal* ***is being considered*** *by the committee.* (We are more interested in whether the proposal will be accepted or not, than who is considering it.)

4 Most verbs with an object (transitive verbs) can be made passive, however, the verbs to *own, become, fit (be the right size), get, have, lack, let, like, resemble, suit* may not be used in the Passive.

5 It is quite rare to mention an agent in passive sentences.

6 Passives are often used in formal report writing.

*He* ***will be informed*** *about the situation.*

*The building* ***will have been completed*** *by the end of the year.*

*The road* ***is going to be repaired*** *soon*.

7 Modals can be combined with passive infinitives:

*It* ***can't be done!***

*He* ***should have been told*** *about the problem.*

8 Not all tenses of active verbs can be transferred to a passive. For example, notice that there are only two continuous passive forms, present and past.

9 It is possible to end a sentence with a preposition in the sentence where a prepositional verb is passive

*Our hose was broken into.*

*10* ***Make***is followed by***to***when used in the Passive form.

*I was made to work hard by my boss.*

**The word-combination *have/get something* done is called The Causative.**

All tenses of the Causative are formed with the verb *have/get* + object + past participle:

*I* ***have my car washed*** *every week. It's expensive, but I'm too lazy to do it myself!*

I ***had my hair cut*** last week.

*I'****ve had this watch repaired*** three times, and it still doesn't work.

You ***should have something done*** about that.

**The causative is used:**

1 when we want to say that someone else has to do something, usually when we can't do it ourselves:

*I* ***had my hair cut*** *last week.* (I can't cut my own hair, so I go to the hairdresser).

2 when we want to talk about asking, ordering or arranging for someone to do something:

*You should* ***get your eyes tested*** *(have* is more formal than *get).*

3 when we want to talk about something unpleasant that happened:

*I* ***had my handbag stolen*** *on the bus.*