

## Tenses in English: *When* are you Saying?

In English, time is identified by tenses and forms. The three tenses are **Present, Past, and Future**, and they appear in **Simple, Perfect, and Progressive/Continuous** forms.

### Tenses

A tense indicates when an action is taking place.

The **past tense** indicates that an action happened in the past.

*The dog walked.*

The **present tense** indicates that an action is happening now.

*The dog walks.*

The **future tense** indicates that an action will happen in the future.

*The dog will walk.*



The subject and the verb must always agree with each other. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular.

- You would not say *The dog have a ball* because “have” is a plural verb. You would either say “*The **dogs** have a ball*” or “*The dog **has** a ball.*”

Hint: Third-person singular verbs end in ‘s’ or ‘es’. *The dog sees the ball.*

### Forms

The **simple** form of each tense indicates an action occurring at a specific point in time:

*Past: I ate breakfast yesterday morning.*

*Present: I eat breakfast every morning.*

*Future: I will eat breakfast tomorrow morning.*

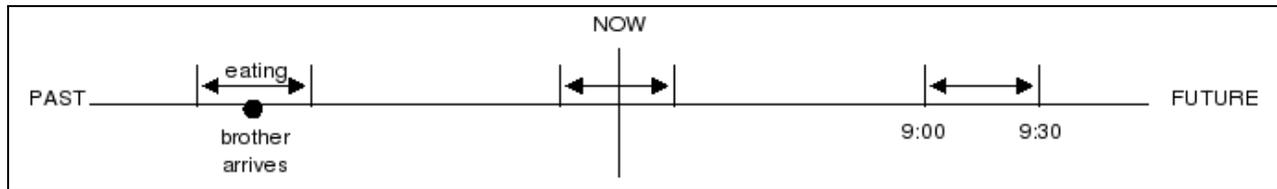


The **progressive or continuous** form indicates an action that refers to something occurring over a length of time. The verb will often take an “-ing” form.

*Past: I was eating breakfast when my brother arrived.*

*Present: I am eating breakfast.*

*Future: I will be eating breakfast from 9:00 to 9:30.*



The **perfect** form indicates an action that was or will be completed at the time of another action.

*Past: I had already eaten breakfast when my brother arrived.*

*Present: I have already eaten breakfast.*

*Future: I will have already eaten breakfast by the time my brother arrives.*

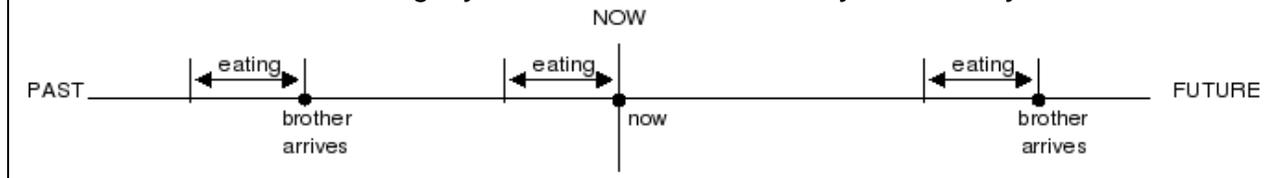


The progressive or continuous form also takes a perfect form, the **perfect continuous**, which is used when talking about a continuous action up to a point in time.

*Past: I had been eating breakfast for 30 minutes when my brother arrived.*

*Present: I have been eating my breakfast for 30 minutes.*

*Future: I will have been eating my breakfast for 30 minutes by the time my brother arrives.*



## Moods

Verbs can also appear as **infinitives**, **participles**, **imperatives**, and **subjunctives**:

Infinitives include a verb preceded by “to” and is used to show action **at the same time or later** than the action of the main verb.

*Jesus asked his disciples **to find** him a donkey.*

Participles indicate an action occurring **at the same time as or before** the main verb, ending in “-ing.”

***Speaking** to the crowd, Jesus taught his beatitudes.*

Imperatives indicate a **command**.

***Go** therefore and make disciples of all the nations.*

Subjunctives are used to indicate something that **may** happen. It does not carry certainty.

*Class **may be cancelled** if it snows too hard.*