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Tenses play an integral role in developing the basics of English Grammar. Having a proper understanding of tenses helps students to form grammatically correct sentences. If the students have a clear idea of tenses, it will help them to express the time of the action effortlessly. But to be fluent with tenses, one needs to practise a lot of exercises.

There are *three main verb* tenses in English: the past, the present and the future, which each have various forms and uses.

The present tenses

In English, there are four present tenses: *simple present, present perfect, present continuous, and present perfect continuous*. Tenses denote the time of action. They show when the work / action is done.

These are the four present tenses in English and how they are used in a sentence:

<i>Present simple</i>	Ex: I design a dress
<i>Present continuous</i>	Ex: I am designing a dress
<i>Present perfect</i>	Ex: I have design a dress
<i>Present perfect continuous</i>	Ex: I have been designing a dress.

A. Present simple

The tense that is used to refer to events, actions, and conditions that are happening all the time, or exist now.

“I swim every day.”

“I play football.”

The form:

Affirmative form: subject+ verb (stem) with I, you, we, they + the rest of the sentence.

Subject + verb + s or es with he, she, it+ the rest of the sentence.

We add “es” to the verbs that end with: z, o, x, ss, sh, ch.

Examples:

- I **prefer** swimming rather than gaming.
- She **prefers** shopping.
- Leila **goes** to Tunisia.

Negative form: subject + do not (I, you, we, they) +verb (stem) + the rest of the sentence.

Subject + does not (he, she, it) + verb (stem) + the rest of the sentence.

Examples:

- I don't like eating traditional food.
- She doesn't know how to cook pasta.

Interrogative form:

Do/ does + subject+ verb (stem) + rest of the sentence?

Examples:

- Does the teacher come late?
- Do the students attend the course?

B. Present continuous

The present continuous (also called present progressive) is a verb tense which is used to show that an on-going action is happening now, either at the moment of speech or now in a larger sense. It can also be used to show that an action is going to take place in the near future.

The form:

Affirmative form Use the subject then the verb **to be** + the base verb+ ing.

Ex: I **am reading** a book.

Leila **is preparing** the dinner.

They **are studying**.

Negative form use the subject then the to be + not + the base verb+ ing.

Ex: I am **not** reading a book.

Interrogative form use the verb to be first then the subject + the base verb+ing+ the rest of the sentence?

Ex: Are you going to the park?

Stative verbs: there are some verbs we cannot use in the continuous tense. These are called stative verbs. They refer to states, feelings, or sense rather than action. In these cases, we use the present simple instead. Here are some examples of stative verbs:

<p>✗ I <u>am understanding</u> you</p> <p>⇓</p> <p>(stative verb)</p>	<p>✓ I understand you</p>
<p>✗ I <u>am believing</u> you</p> <p>⇓</p> <p>(stative verb)</p>	<p>✓ I believe you</p>
<p>✗ I <u>am loving</u> her</p> <p>⇓</p> <p>(stative verb)</p>	<p>✓ I love her</p>
<p>✗ I <u>am preferring</u> it</p> <p>⇓</p> <p>(stative verb)</p>	<p>✓ I prefer it</p>
<p>✗ I <u>am knowing</u> you</p> <p>⇓</p> <p>(stative verb)</p>	<p>✓ I know you</p>

C. The present perfect

The present perfect is used to describe:

- An action or situation that started in the past and continues in the present. *I **have lived** in Bristol since 1984* (= and I still do.)
- An action performed during a period that has not yet finished. *She **has been** to the cinema twice this week* (= and the week isn't over yet.)
- A repeated action in an unspecified period between the past and now. *We **have visited** Portugal several times.*

- An action that was completed in the very recent past, expressed by 'just'. *I **have just finished** my work.*
- An action when the time is not important. *He **has read** 'War and Peace'.* (= the result of his reading is important)

Forming the present perfect

The present perfect of any verb is composed of two elements: the appropriate form of the auxiliary verb **to have** (present tense), plus the past participle of the main verb. The past participle of a regular verb is **base+ed**, e.g. *played, arrived, looked*. For irregular verbs, see the **Table of irregular verbs** in the section called '**Verbs**'.

<i>Affirmative</i>		
Subject	+to have	+past participle
She	has	visited.
<i>Negative</i>		
Subject	+to have + not	+past participle
She	has not (hasn't)	visited.
<i>Interrogative</i>		
to have	+subject	+past participle
Has	she	visited?

D. The present perfect continuous

The present perfect continuous tense (also known as the present perfect progressive tense) shows that something

started in the past and is continuing at the present time. The present perfect continuous is formed using the construction **has/have been + the present participle (root + -ing)**.

Ex: I **have been reading** War and Peace for a month.

Example: present perfect continuous, TO LIVE

<i>Affirmative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Interrogative</i>
<i>I have been living</i>	<i>I haven't been living</i>	<i>Have I been living?</i>
<i>You have been living</i>	<i>You haven't been living</i>	<i>Have you been living?</i>
<i>He, she, it has been living</i>	<i>He hasn't been living</i>	<i>Has she been living?</i>
<i>We have been living</i>	<i>We haven't been living</i>	<i>Have we been living?</i>
<i>You have been living</i>	<i>You haven't been living</i>	<i>Have you been living?</i>
<i>They have been living</i>	<i>They haven't been living</i>	<i>Have they been living?</i>

Tasks

Task: Fill in the Blanks with Correct Simple Present Tenses.

- The Earth _____ round the Sun. (revolve)
- The nurse _____ of my grandfather. (take care)
- The fluffy clouds _____ around. (fly)
- The dogs _____ at night. (bark)
- The teacher _____ the parents today. (meet)

Task: Write the correct form of the present perfect for each verb given in parentheses.

- Elizabeth (catch) _____ three colds this winter.
- Rita (write, not) _____ a letter to Paul since the beginning of the semester.
- 10. Paul wonders why Rita (answer, not) _____ his letters.
- 11. He thinks that she (forget) _____ him.

- 12. However, this is not true. She (be) _____ very busy studying and working, and she will write to him when she gets a chance.

Task:

In few lines write a paragraph in which you speak about your daily habits or routines.

Remember: use the present tenses.

