

UTS:

HELPS

HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

Grammar 2B: Verb Tenses

Workshop objectives

This workshop will assist you in becoming familiar with:

- **The function and correct use of common verb tenses**
- **Distinctions between past, present and future tenses**
- **Conditionals**

Brainstorm with a partner

Using example sentences, how many different tenses can you make with the verb “*live*”?

Possible examples (not an exhaustive list)

- I live in Dulwich Hill.
- She's living with her uncle in Sydney.
- He lived there a long time ago.
- We were living overseas at the time.
- I've lived in many different countries.
- I've lived here all my life.
- They've been living there for 2 years.
- He'd been living there for 6 months when he got the notice.
- She's going to live with his family.
- He'll live with her family while he's over there.
- I'll be living near the uni next year.
- If you live here, you have to obey the rules.
- If he lived with you, he'd drive you mad.
- If I had lived in in Melbourne, I would have seen the show.
- I wish I lived in Europe.
- You should live near the sea.
- You must live your life with integrity.

Activity: discussion

The following pairs of slides provide students with the opportunity to discuss the use of many of the English tenses.

On the first slide, students will discuss example sentences in pairs or small groups.

On the following slide(s), explanations will be given.

Present tenses

Why have the following present tenses been used?

(On the phone) “Can I call you back? I’**m** just **submitting** my assignment.”

I’**m** **submitting** my assignment tomorrow morning.

I always **submit** my assignments on time.

Students **submit** assignments in week 10.

Present tenses

Present continuous can refer to an action happening now.

“Can I call you back? I’**m submitting** my assignment.”

Present continuous can refer to a definite future plan.

I’**m submitting** my assignment tomorrow morning.

Present simple can refer to events that are true in the past, present and future

I always **submit** my assignments on time.

Present simple can refer to future events in a timetable.

Students **submit** assignments in week 10.

Present tenses

What is the difference in meaning between these tenses?

Our lecturer lives on a farm near the city and commutes to work.

She's living with her mother's friend this semester.

Present tenses

Present simple is used when a state or action feels permanent (past, present and future)

Our lecturer lives on a farm near the city and commutes to work.

Present continuous is used when a state or action feels temporary (around the present)

She's living with her mother's friend this semester.

Future

What is the difference between these two ways of talking about the future?

I am **going to** enrol in an MBA.

A: There are no trains today.

B: OK. I **will** take a bus to uni.

Future

Be going to + infinitive can express a future plan/ intention. The decision to do the action was made before the time of speaking.

Will + infinitive can express a spontaneous decision about a future plan/ intention. The decision to do the action is made at the time of speaking.

I am **going to** enrol in an MBA.

A: There are no trains today.

B: OK. I **will** take a bus to uni.

Future

What is the difference between these two ways of talking about the future?

A: Everyone is so quiet in class.

B: Mmm. The tutor is **going to** have a hard time.

The library **will** be closed next weekend for renovations.

Future

Be going to + infinitive can be used to make a prediction about the future, based in evidence on the present.

A: Everyone is so quiet in class.

B: Mmm. The tutor is **going to** have a hard time.

Will + infinitive can be used to talk about inevitable future facts.

The library **will** be closed next weekend for renovations.

Future

What is the difference between these two ways of talking about the future?

You can call me at home tonight. I **will be finishing** off my assignment. I just need to write the conclusion and do the reference list.

She **will have finished** her assignment by the weekend.

Future

The “future continuous” is used to talk about an activity in progress around a future point in time.

You can call me at home tonight. I **will be finishing** off my assignment. I just need to write the conclusion and do the reference list.

The “future perfect simple” is used to talk about a future action that will be completed before a specified future time (often used with “by”).

She **will have finished** her assignment by the weekend.

Future

What is the difference between these two ways of talking about the future?

I **will have studied** for three out of eight of my subjects by the end of this year.

She **will have been studying** here for 2 years by the end of next month.

Future

The “future perfect simple” is used to talk about a future action that will be ***completed*** before a specified future time (often used with “by”).

I **will have studied** for three out of eight of my subjects by the end of this year.

The “future perfect continuous” is used to talk about the ***duration*** of an activity that extends to a future point in time (often used with “by”).

She **will have been studying** here for 2 years by the end of next month.

Past tenses

What is the difference between these past tenses?

I **did** that assignment last week.

He **was doing** his assignment, when I called him (at 8 o'clock).

She **had done** her assignment before she went on holiday.

They **had been doing** their assignment for three hours when they decided they needed a break.

Past tenses: Simple past

Past simple is used to talk about things which happened in the past, are finished and have no connection with the present. We usually know when these things happened.

- Used to describe concrete events in the past (which you may then reflect on)

I **did** that assignment last week. I **found** the research easy but I **had** a bit of trouble with the structure. I **started** it on Sunday and **finished** it on Friday afternoon. My friend **read** it Friday night and I **submitted** it at 10pm.

Other past tenses

Past continuous is used to talk about an action that was in progress at a past point in time, or when another action interrupted it.

He **was doing** his assignment, when I called him (at 8 o'clock).

Past perfect is used to show that one past action happened before another past action.

She **had done** her assignment before she went on holiday.

Past perfect continuous is used to talk about the duration of an activity that happened until a specified time in the past.

They **had been doing** their assignment for three hours when they decided they needed a break.

1. Present perfect simple for past actions

What tenses are used in the sentences below?

Why are the different tenses used?

I've read two chapters of the book today.

COMPARE: I read five chapters yesterday.

Have you ever failed an exam?

COMPARE: Did you fail any exams last semester?

COMPARE: Did you fail any exams in high school?

The lecturer has taught at a few universities.

COMPARE: She taught at Macquarie university for ten years.

1. Present perfect simple for past actions

Present perfect simple can be used to talk about **past complete** actions that have happened in an unfinished time frame that includes the present.
(e.g today, this week, this year).

I've **read** two chapters of the book today.
I **read** five chapters yesterday.

Present perfect simple can be used to talk about **past experiences** that people have had at some point in their lives (ie an unfinished time frame). When the event happened is not specified.

Have you ever failed an exam?

Did you fail any exams last semester?

Did you fail any exams in high school?

The lecturer **has taught** at a few universities.

She **taught** at Macquarie university for ten years.

2. Present perfect for past actions

Why is present perfect used in the sentences below?

You haven't done your reference list properly. (This is why you don't have a high mark)

I have finished all my exams. (Now I can relax.)

She's had a haircut. (She looks different.)

2. Present perfect for past actions

Present perfect simple can be used to talk about a past complete action that has a result that is evident in the present.

You **haven't done** your reference list properly.

(PRESENT RESULT: This is why you don't have a high mark)

I **have finished** all my exams.

(PRESENT RESULT: Now I can relax.)

She's **had** a haircut.

(PRESENT RESULT: She looks different.)

2. Present perfect: simple or continuous?

Present perfect continuous can also be used to talk about a recently stopped activity that has a result that is evident in the present.

He **has been working** on a really big assignment.

PRESENT RESULT: He's exhausted

2. Present perfect: simple or continuous?

Present perfect continuous is used rather than simple if the action happened over a period of time, or is not complete.

PRESENT RESULT: I'm tired.

I've read. X

I've been reading. ✓

I've walked. X

I've been walking. ✓

I've studied. X

I've been studying. ✓

I've read three magazines. ✓

I've been reading 3 magazines. X

3. Present perfect for present actions

Why is present perfect used in the sentences below
Do the verbs refer to present or past events?

She has studied here for three years.

I've known her since 2014.

3. Present perfect for present actions

Present perfect can be used to talk about the duration of an event that started in the past and continues in the present. It is often used with **since** and **for**.

She **has studied** here for three years.

I've **known** her since 2014.

3. Present perfect: simple or continuous?

Present perfect continuous can also be used to talk about the duration of an event that started in the past and continues in the present.

These events are not seen as permanent.

- ✓ She **has studied** here for two years.
- ✓ She **has been studying** here for two years.

- ✓ I've **been working** on this assignment since last week.
- ✗ I've **worked** on this assignment since last week.

- ✓ I've **lived** here all my life.
- ✗ I've **been living** here all my life.

If: conditionals

What tenses are used in these sentences ?
Are the verbs referring to real or imaginary events?
Are they referring to present, past or future events?

If students hand in assignments late without an extension, they lose marks.

If I pass this exam, I will celebrate.

If I won a lot of money, I would quit uni and travel the world.

If she had studied harder, she would have passed her exams.

If: conditionals

Zero conditional is used to express a general rule or scientific fact that is always true.

If students **hand** in assignments late without an extension, they **lose** marks.

First conditional is used to talk about the consequences of a possible future situation.

If I **pass** this exam, I **will celebrate**.

Second conditional is used to talk about an improbable or unreal event (hypothetical present or future).

If I **won** a lot of money, I **would quit** uni and travel the world.

Third conditional is used to speculate about the consequences of something that did not happen in the past.

If she **had studied** harder, she **would have passed** her exams.

...wish

What tenses are used in these sentences ?
Are the verbs referring to real or imaginary events?
Are they referring to present or past events?

I wish we didn't have to do the presentation today.

I wish I had studied harder.

...wish

Wish + past simple is used to express our dissatisfaction with something in the present.

I wish we **didn't have** to do the presentation today.

Wish + past perfect is used to express our regret about something we did or didn't do in the past.

I wish I **had studied** harder.

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