

LANGUAGE

Module 1

A Overview of past and present verb forms

1 Names of tenses

	Simple	Continuous	Perfect simple	Perfect continuous
Present	I work	I'm working	I've worked	I've been working
Past	I worked	I was working	I had worked	I had been working

2 Present simple versus Present continuous

While the Present simple is used for things that happen **regularly** or that we see as **permanent**, the Present continuous is used for things that we see as **temporary** or are happening over a **limited period of time**.

*Normally I **take** the train to work . . . (= this is what I usually do)
.. but this week I'm **coming** by bicycle. (= for a limited period)*

3 Verbs not normally found in continuous forms

A number of verbs (state verbs) describe states rather than actions. They are rarely found in continuous forms. These include:

- verbs that describe thought processes and opinions:
agree, believe, disagree, forget, know, remember, think
- verbs that describe emotions:
adore, detest, like, love, hate, want
- verbs that describe the five senses:
feel, hear, see, smell, taste
- others:
be, belong, have, seem

4 Verbs that can describe both states and actions

Some verbs can describe both states and actions, but there is a change of meaning.

STATE: He's very friendly (= this is his character)

ACTION: He's **being** very friendly. (= he is behaving this way, he is not usually like this)

STATE: They **have** an apartment near the town centre (= possess)

ACTION: They're **having** a coffee. (= taking)

STATE: I **think** you're absolutely right (= this is my opinion)

ACTION: I'm **thinking** about what you said. (= considering, it is in my mind)

5 Past simple and Past continuous

- The Past simple is used to describe actions or states in the past that we see as **complete**. The time when the action happened is often stated or understood.

*Jane **went** to visit her aunt in hospital **yesterday**. She **got** home about eight.*

- The Past continuous is used to describe actions or states that were **in progress** at a point of time in the past, or that we see as in some way **incomplete**.

*I **was driving** along when suddenly a dog ran into the road.*

6 Present perfect and Past simple

- The Present perfect is used when an action happened in the past, but is linked to the present. It is still relevant or important **now**.

*She's **broken** her leg (= her leg is broken now)*

*I **haven't read** 'War and Peace' (= I am unfamiliar with it now)*

- The Past simple is used for actions or states which we see as being **completely in the past**.

7 Present perfect and Past simple with periods of time

If an action continues over a period of time up to the present, we use the Present perfect. To describe a finished period of time in the past, we use the Past simple.

*I've **worked** in Singapore for two years. (= I still work there now)*

*I **worked** in Singapore for two years. (= completely in the past, I don't work there now)*

8 Present perfect and Past perfect

- The Present perfect is used for things which continued **up to the moment of speaking**, or ended a short time before.

*They've **been** together for years. (= and are still together)*

- The Past perfect is used for things which continued **up to a point of time in the past**, or ended a short time before.

*We'd **been** there for over an hour when the taxi finally arrived.*

9 used to

We use *used to* for describing habits and states in the past. We can always use the Past simple instead of *used to*, but we cannot use *used to* for actions that happen only once.

*I **used to** go to my grandmother's every Sunday.*

10 Past forms to express hypothetical meaning

We often use past forms to talk about situations which are hypothetical or imaginary. These verbs do not refer to past situations, but to the **present**.

*If only I **knew** the answer to your question.*

B Different uses of auxiliary verbs

Auxiliary verbs often emphasise things, show interest, or avoid repetition. If they are used alone, remember they must agree with the tense and person of the main sentence.

1 to emphasise

A: Are you hungry? B: Yes, I am!

A: I don't think you want to go. B: I do want to go, but ...

2 in questions

- You can show interest in what someone said by responding with a short question using an auxiliary verb.

A: Yes, I've got six grandchildren B: **Have you?** How lovely!

A: We didn't like the film at all B: Really, **didn't you**, why not?

Notice here that positive questions are used with positive sentences, and negative questions are used with negative sentences.

- Question tags at the end of a statement encourage the listener to respond. Here negative questions are used with positive sentences, and positive questions with negative sentences.

*You've remembered (+) your keys, **haven't** (-) you?*

*It isn't (-) a very nice day, **is** (+) it?*

If there is no doubt about the statement, the voice goes down.

*It isn't a very nice day, **is** it?*

If there is an element of doubt, the voice goes up.

*You've remembered your keys, **haven't** you?*

SUMMARY

3 to avoid repetition

We also use auxiliary verbs to avoid repeating whole phrases.

*I enjoyed the film very much, but most of my friends **didn't** (= enjoy the film very much)*

*The other students in the class don't understand Italian, but Alexandra **does**. (= understand Italian)*

This is common in answers to yes/no questions.

- A. Have you done your homework yet?
B. Yes, actually, I **have**. (= done my homework)

Module 2

A Common suffixes for nouns

-ance, -ence

Often used to form abstract nouns from adjectives ending in *-ant* or *-ent*.

patient → *patience*
tolerant → *tolerance*

-ee

Used to describe a person on whom an action is performed

employee (= person who is employed)
trainee (= person who is being trained)

-er, -ian, -or

Often used for people or things that do a particular job.

act → *actor*
football → *footballer*
music → *musician*
can opener

-hood

Used to form abstract nouns, especially those concerned with periods of life or relationships between people.

child → *childhood*
mother → *motherhood*

-ism

Often used to describe particular religions or ideologies, and with some abstract nouns.

Buddhism, Liberalism, criticism, cynicism

-ist

Used to describe people's beliefs and sometimes their occupation.

communist, journalist, pianist

-ity, -iety, -y

Used to form nouns from adjectives.

anxious → *anxiety*
immune → *immunity*

-tion, -(s)ion

Often used to form nouns from verbs.

imagine → *imagination*
admit → *admission*

-ment

Often used to form abstract nouns from verbs.

enjoy → *enjoyment*
move → *movement*

-ness

Often used to form abstract nouns from adjectives.

happy → *happiness*
nervous → *nervousness*

-ship

Used to form abstract nouns, usually about relationships.

friend → *friendship*
member → *membership*

REMEMBER!

Many other nouns are exactly the same as the verb form.

to comment → *a comment*
to decrease → *a decrease*
to drive → *a drive*
to study → *a study*

B Gerunds

The gerund (*-ing* form) is used in the same way as a noun, either as the subject or object of the sentence, or alone. It is commonly used:

- to describe general activities or abstract ideas.
Trusting your children is very important.
Walking and swimming are my favourite forms of exercise.
We cannot use the infinitive here.
- when there is no single noun to describe that idea.
Going to the dentist's makes me really nervous.
- when ideas or activities are not put into complete sentences.
This can be in written lists:
Our priorities for next year are:
– *cutting costs*
– *expanding into new markets.*

or in conversation:

- A: *So, what's your idea of relaxation?*
B: **Having a nice long bath and reading my book**

C Common suffixes for adjectives

suffix	examples
-able, -ible <i>This suffix sometimes means 'can be', e.g. washable (= can be washable)</i>	miserable, responsible
-al	physical, psychological
-ant, -ent, -lent,	pleasant, violent, efficient
-ed*	depressed, talented
-ful	powerful, successful
-ic	enthusiastic, scientific
-ing*	exciting, interesting
-ive	aggressive, intensive
-less	hopeless, penniless (= without)
-ious, -ous,	anxious, nervous
-y	healthy, wealthy

*** REMEMBER!**

Many adjectives to describe feelings have both an *-ing* and an *-ed* form.
annoyed / annoying depressed / depressing excited / exciting

The *-ed* form describes how you feel.
I'm very tired this morning.

The *-ing* form describes what makes you feel that way.
Looking after babies can be very tiring.

However, not all *-ed / -ing* adjectives have both forms.
Ben is a very talented musician
Fortunately, her illness isn't catching.

D Prefixes used to form opposites

prefix	example
dis-	disloyal, displeased*
il-	illegal, illiterate
im-	immature, impossible
in-	inexperienced, insecure
un-	unhappy*, unpopular

* Note that these prefixes can also be used with some verbs, e.g. disagree, unlock.

E Other prefixes which change meaning

prefix	examples	meaning
anti-	anti-social, anti-war	against
mis-	misunderstood, mismanaged	badly, in the wrong way
non-	non-stop, non-smoking	without, not
over-	over-cooked	too much
post-	post-war	after
pre-	pre-war	before
pro-	pro-European	in favour of
re-	re-united, re-charged	again
self-	self-confident	relating to itself
under-	under-cooked	not enough

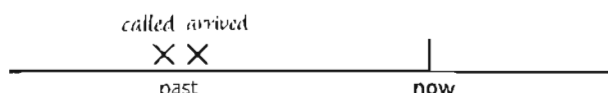
Module 3

A Narrative tenses

Past simple	I worked	verb + -ed (regular verbs)
Past continuous	You were working	was / were + -ing
Past perfect simple	She had worked	had + past participle
Past perfect continuous	She had been working	had + been + -ing

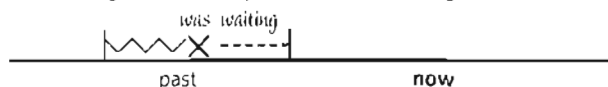
1 Past simple and Past continuous

The Past simple describes the **main events** in a past narrative.
I called the police and they arrived more or less straightaway.



The past continuous describes **actions in progress** at the time that the main events happen.

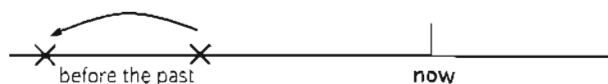
When they got home, everyone was waiting to greet them.



2 Past perfect simple and Past perfect continuous

Both these tenses describe events **before** the events in the main narrative. They are 'the past of the past.'

The suspects had disappeared when the police arrived.



The Past perfect continuous emphasises the duration of an event, and often describes actions which continue up until the main past events.

He had been waiting for hours when we got there.

B Continuous aspect

Continuous verb forms can

- emphasise that an action **lasts for some time**.
*We **were waiting** for ages!*
- emphasise that an action is **repeated**.
*I **rang** you this morning.*
*I **was ringing** you all morning!*
- describe an action that is in **progress** at a particular time.
*He **was just having** breakfast when the postman came*
- describe a situation which is **temporary**.
*They'**d been staying** at their sister's house for a few days.*

C Continuous aspect in other tenses

Present continuous	He is working	be + -ing
Present perfect continuous	She has been working	have / has + been + -ing
Future continuous	We will be working	will + be + -ing

The points in section B above are also true of continuous tenses with the Present perfect and the future.

Compare the following pairs of sentences:

I've cut my finger! (= action lasts for only a moment)
I've been cutting firewood. (= action lasts for some time)

She's visited her relatives in Canada (= one visit)
She's been visiting her relatives in Canada (= she's visited several different people)

We'll have dinner at eight (= the meal will begin then)
We'll be having dinner at eight. (= the meal will be in progress)

Module 4

A The active and the passive

- In active sentences the subject is the agent (or 'doer') of the verb.
*The two fire fighters **rescued** the child.*
(subject) (verb) (object)
- In passive sentences the subject is **not** the agent of the verb.
*The child **was rescued** by the two fire fighters.*
(subject) (verb) (agent)
- The passive is formed with *be* + past participle.

	Active	Passive
Present simple	It makes	It is made
Present continuous	It is making	It is being made
Present perfect	It has made	It has been made
Past simple	It made	It was made
Past continuous	It was making	It was being made
Past perfect	It had made	It had been made
Future simple	It will make	It will be made
Infinitive forms	make to make	be made to be made
-ing form	making	being made

B Reasons for using the passive

- The agent is unknown, unimportant or obvious.

*My bicycle **has been stolen!*** (= we don't know who did this)
*The mice **are kept** in cages.* (= it's not important who does this)
*A man **was arrested.*** (= it's obvious the police did this)

- The main topic of the sentence is not the agent.

In English, the main topic of the sentence normally comes at the beginning, and the new information about the topic comes at the end.

Roman Polanski directed 'The Pianist'.

(In a profile of Polanski, who is the main topic of the sentence.)

If the agent is not the main topic of the sentence, we use the passive

'The Pianist' was directed by Roman Polanski.

(In an article about *The Pianist*, which is the main topic of the sentence)

REMEMBER!

If we include the agent in the sentence, we use *by*.

C Formal and informal texts

- In more formal texts, the passive is preferred because it is less personal. This is especially true in scientific, technical or academic writing.
- The following passive constructions are particularly common in this kind of formal writing:
It is said that ... It is thought that ... It is believed that ...
It has been proved that ...
- In informal speech, we can avoid using the passive by using a subject like *we, you, they, people, someone*, etc. This sounds more personal and friendly.

Compare the following pairs of sentences.

*Gregor **is said to be** interested in living abroad.*

*They **say** Gregor is interested in living abroad*

*The Gold Label credit card **can be used** all over the world.*

*You **can use** the Gold Label credit card all over the world.*

*More computers **are being** bought than ever before*

*People **are buying** more computers than ever before.*

D Passive forms with have and get

- The passive form *have* + subject + past participle is used to talk about something we pay other people to do for us.
*She **had her nose pierced** when she was a teenager.*

We use *get* + subject + past participle when it was difficult to have something done.
*After many years of trying, he finally **got his book published.***
- We use *get* + past participle for things that happen by accident, or things which happen to us that are unpleasant.
*It's common for things **to get broken** when you move house.*
*My luggage **got stolen** somewhere at the airport.*