

TENSES

Tenses and their functions

The table below gives an overview of some of the basic functions of tenses and aspects. Tenses locate an event in time, while aspects communicate durations and relationships between events that happen at different times.

Tense	Function	Example
Present simple	used for facts, generalizations, and truths that are not affected by the passage of time	"She writes a lot of papers for her classes."
Past simple	used for events completed in the past	"She wrote the papers for all of her classes last month."
Future simple	used for events to be completed in the future	"She will write papers for her classes next semester."
Present perfect	used to describe events that began in the past and are expected to continue, or to emphasize the relevance of past events to the present moment	"She has written papers for most of her classes, but she still has some papers left to write."
Past perfect	used to describe events that happened prior to other events in the past	"She had written several papers for her classes before she switched universities."
Future perfect	used to describe events that will be completed between now and a specific point in the future	"She will have written many papers for her classes by the end of the semester."
Present continuous	used to describe currently ongoing (usually temporary) actions	"She is writing a paper for her class."
Past continuous	used to describe ongoing past events, often in relation to the occurrence of another event	"She was writing a paper for her class when her pencil broke."
Future continuous	used to describe future events that are expected to continue over a period of time	"She will be writing a lot of papers for her classes next year."