



Verb Tense

Simple Past

The simple past indicates that an activity or situation **began and ended at a particular time in the past**.

Regular Verbs add **ed** in the past tense, e.g. walk → walked & live → lived.

Irregular verbs are formed differently, e.g. buy → bought; go → went; hide → hid

- a) John **lived** in Paris for ten years, but now he lives in Rome. (live)
- b) I **bought** a new bicycle three days ago. (buy)

If a sentence contains **when** and has the simple past in both clauses, the action in the when clause happens first.

In **(c)** below: 1st: The rain began. 2nd: She stood under a tree.

- c) Rita **stood** under a tree when it began to rain.
- d) When Mrs. Chi heard a strange noise, she **got** up to investigate.
- e) When I dropped my bag, the contents **spilled** on the street.

Past Progressive (be + verb + ing)

In **(g)** below: 1st: I was walking down the street. 2nd: It began to rain.

Both actions occurred at the same time, but one action began earlier and was in progress when the other action occurred.

In **(i)** below: My studying began before 8:00, was in progress at that time, and probably continued.

- f) I was walking down the street when it began to rain.
- g) While I was walking down the street, it began to rain.
- h) Rita was standing under a tree when it began to rain.
- i) At eight o'clock last night, I was studying.
- j) Last year at this time, I was attending school.

Sometimes the past progressive is used in both parts of a sentence when two actions are in progress at the same time.

- k) While **I was studying**, my roommate **was cooking** dinner.

Past Tense (have + past principle)

Perfect tenses all give the idea that one thing happens before another time or event. Whatever happens first is in the **perfect tense**.

Regular Verbs add **ed** for the past participle, e.g. play → **played**.

Irregular verbs form differently, e.g. eat → ate → **eaten**; go → went → **gone**

Present Perfect: Tom has already eaten.

Tom finished eating sometime before now (the present). The exact time is not important.

Past Perfect: Tom had already eaten when his friend arrived

First, Tom finished eating. Later, his friend arrived. Tom's eating was completely finished before another time in the past.

Future Perfect: Tom will have eaten when his friend arrives

First, Tom will finish eating. Later, his friend will arrive. Tom's eating will be completely finished before another time in the future.

Perfect Progressive Tenses

The perfect progressive tenses give the idea that one event is in progress immediately before / up to another time or event.

The tenses are used to express the duration of the **first event**. The verb "have" indicates the tense i.e. **past / present / future**.

Present Perfect Progressive: Tom has been studying for two hours.

Event in progress: studying when? Before now, up to now (the present)
How long? For two hours.

Past Perfect Progressive: Tom had been studying for two hours before his friend came.

Event in progress: studying when? Before another event in the past. How long? For two hours.

Future Perfect Progressive: Tom will have been studying for two hours by the time his friend arrives.

Event in progress: studying when? Before another event in the future.
How long? For two hours.

Practice Exercise

Exercise 1

Use the **simple past** or the **past progressive** of verbs in parentheses.

- 1) I am sitting in class right now. I (sit) _____ in class at this exact same time yesterday.
- 2) I don't want to go to the zoo today because it is raining. The same thing happened yesterday. I (want, not) _____ to go to the zoo because it (rain) _____.
- 3) I (call) _____ Roger at nine last night, but he (be, not) _____ at home. He (study) _____ at the library.
- 4) I (hear, not) _____ the thunder during the storm last night because I (sleep) _____ deeply.

Exercise 2

Use the **simple past** or **present perfect** of the verbs in parentheses.

- 5) The company and the union finally _____ on salary raises two days ago. Since then, they _____ on everything, and the rest of the negotiations have gone smoothly. (agree)
- 6) This university _____ 120 students to study in other countries last year. In total, we _____ 875 students abroad over the past 10 years. (send)
- 7) Monica is a pilot for a major airline company. She _____ nearly 10 million kilometers during her career. Last year, she _____ 150,000 kilometers. (fly)
- 8) Frank _____ the violin with an amateur orchestra since 2005. Last year, he _____ Beethoven's violin concerto at one of the concerts. (play)

Answers

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| 1) Sat | 4) did not hear;
was sleeping | 8) has played;
played |
| 2) did not want;
was raining | 5) agreed; have
agreed | |
| 3) called; was not;
was studying | 6) sent; have sent | |
| | 7) has flown; flew | |