

# English Tenses: A Practical Usage Map



## The present

TENSE	USE/SITUATION	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE	QUESTION	SHORT ANSWER
Present simple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use the present simple to talk about things that happen repeatedly (<i>every day, usually, often, sometimes</i>) – <b>habitual actions</b></li> <li>We use the present simple to talk about <b>facts</b> that are <b>generally true</b></li> <li>We use the present simple to say <b>how often</b> we do things</li> </ul>	<i>I often play tennis with my friends</i>  <i>She goes to school on foot</i>	<i>I don't play tennis every day</i>  <i>She doesn't go to school on foot</i>	<i>Do you sometimes play tennis?</i>  <i>Does she go to school on foot?</i>	<i>Yes, I do/No, I don't</i>  <i>Yes, she does/No, she doesn't</i>
➤ Verbs ending in ss-sh-ch-x-z-o > add es ➤ Verbs ending in y preceded by a consonant > add ies					
Present continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use the present continuous to talk about something that is <b>happening</b> at the moment we speak</li> <li>We use the present continuous to talk about <b>arranged future</b></li> </ul>	<i>She is walking to school now</i>  <i>We are walking to school tomorrow</i>	<i>She isn't walking to school now</i>  <i>We aren't walking to school tomorrow</i>	<i>Is she walking to school now?</i>  <i>Are we walking to school tomorrow?</i>	<i>Yes, she is/No, she isn't</i>  <i>Yes, we are/No, we aren't</i>
➤ Final "e" ( <i>give &gt; giving</i> ) ➤ Monosyllables ending in a consonant preceded by a vowel double the consonant ( <i>sit &gt; sitting</i> ) ➤ Verbs ending in y ( <i>play &gt; playing</i> )					

### ! Compare the questions:

- *What are you doing? – I'm studying English*
- *What do you do? – I'm a teacher*

## The past

TENSE	USE/SITUATION	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE	QUESTION	SHORT ANSWER
Past simple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use the past simple to talk about a <b>definite time in the past</b>; for something that started and finished in the past</li> <li>We use the past simple with these expressions: <b>last Sunday, last night, yesterday, a minute/hour/month ago</b></li> <li>We use the past simple to ask <b>when</b> something happened</li> </ul>	<i>They went to Paris last week</i>  <i>She played tennis yesterday</i>	<i>They didn't go to Paris last week</i>  <i>She didn't play tennis yesterday</i>	<i>Did they go to Paris last week?</i>  <i>Did she play tennis yesterday?</i>	<i>Yes, they did/No, they didn't</i>  <i>Yes, she did/No, she didn't</i>
<b>Verbs ending in</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ "e" add only "d" (<i>prepare &gt; prepared</i>)</li> <li>➤ "c" add "k" (<i>panic &gt; panicked</i>)</li> <li>➤ "l" double "l" (<i>label &gt; labelled</i>)</li> <li>➤ "y" preceded by a consonant turn y into ied (<i>try &gt; tried</i>)</li> <li>➤ Monosyllables ending in a consonant preceded by a vowel double the consonant (<i>stop &gt; stopped</i>)</li> </ul>					
Past continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use the past continuous to talk about something that was <b>in the middle of happening at a past time</b></li> <li>We often use the past continuous and the past simple together to say that something happened in the middle of something else</li> </ul>	<i>She was walking to school at 8.00 yesterday</i>  <i>We were walking to school yesterday when we met our teacher</i>	<i>She wasn't walking to school at 8.00 yesterday</i>  <i>We weren't walking to school yesterday when we met our teacher</i>	<i>Was she walking to school at 8.00 yesterday?</i>  <i>Were we walking to school yesterday when we met our teacher?</i>	<i>Yes, she was/No, she wasn't</i>  <i>Yes, we were/No, we weren't</i>
Present perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use the present perfect to talk about something that <b>started in the past and continues up to the present</b></li> <li>We use the present perfect with the expressions: <b>this morning, today, this week</b></li> <li>We use the present perfect with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Just, already, yet</b></li> <li>○ <b>How long, since and for</b></li> <li>○ <b>Ever and never</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<i>I've lost my wallet</i> <i>She has broken her leg</i> <i>My grandparents have just arrived.</i> <i>We have already passed the exam</i> <i>They haven't arrived yet</i> <i>How long have they lived in London?</i> <i>I have lived there for 2 years</i> <i>I have worked there since 1998</i> <i>Have you ever met famous people?</i> <i>I have never been to Paris</i>	<i>I haven't lost my wallet</i>  <i>She hasn't broken her leg</i>	<i>Have you lost your wallet?</i>  <i>Has she broken her leg?</i>	<i>Yes, I have/No, I haven't</i>  <i>Yes, she has/No, she hasn't</i>

**! Compare gone and been**

- *Tony isn't at home. He has gone out (he has not returned)*
- *Tony is back home now. He has been out (he has returned)*

## The future

TENSE	USE/SITUATION	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE	QUESTION	SHORT ANSWER
Arranged future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use the present continuous for something that we have already arranged to do in the future</li> </ul>	<i>I'm meeting a friend this evening</i>	<i>I'm not meeting a friend this evening</i>	<i>Are you meeting a friend this evening?</i>	<i>Yes, I am /No, I'm not</i>
Intentional future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use <i>going to</i> to talk about something we have already decided to do in the future</li> </ul>	<i>She is going to fly to Rome next week</i>	<i>She isn't going to fly to Rome next week</i>	<i>Is she going to fly to Rome next week?</i>	<i>Yes, she is/No, she isn't</i>
Future with will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use <i>will</i> when we decide to do something at the moment we speak (<b>decisions</b>)</li> <li>We use <i>will</i> when we provide information about the future (<b>giving info about the future</b>)</li> <li>We use <i>will</i> when we make <b>predictions</b></li> <li>We use <i>will</i> when we offer to do something (<b>offers</b>)</li> <li>We use <i>will</i> when we ask somebody to do something (<b>requests</b>)</li> <li>We use <i>will</i> when we promise to do something (<b>promises</b>)</li> </ul>	<i>I will call you tomorrow</i> <i>It's late to start cooking.</i> <i>I'll order some pizzas.</i> <i>We'll arrive at ...</i> <i>They will open the new stadium the next year</i> <i>I'll give you money</i> <i>Will you help David?</i> <i>Will you give me ...?</i> <i>We won't tell your parents</i>	<i>I won't call you tomorrow</i>	<i>Will you call me tomorrow?</i>	<i>Yes, I will/No, I won't</i>
Future with shall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use <i>shall</i> only with I and we when we offer to do something or when we suggest something</li> <li>We use <i>shall</i> only with I and we to ask for advice</li> </ul>			<i>Shall I buy the tickets? – shall we go to the disco?</i> <i>Where shall I sit? – shall we tell James about the party?</i>	

## The passive

We use the active form to say what the subject does; we use the passive form to say what happens to the subject  
Sometimes when we use the passive we do not know **who** did the action.

TENSE	USE/SITUATION	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE	QUESTION	SHORT ANSWER
Present simple passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>we use the present simple passive to say what happens to the subject</li> </ul>	<i>These cars are made in Italy</i>	<i>These cars aren't made in Italy</i>	<i>Are these cars made in Italy?</i>	<i>Yes, they are/No, they aren't</i>
Past simple passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>we use the present simple passive to say what happened to the subject in the past</li> </ul>	<i>These cars were made in Italy</i>	<i>These cars weren't made in Italy</i>	<i>Were these cars made in Italy?</i>	<i>Yes, they were/No, they weren't</i>

### ! Note:

*They give homework to children*

- *Homework is given to children*
- *Children are given homework*

## The conditional

0 CONDITIONAL	1 <sup>ST</sup> CONDITIONAL	2 <sup>ND</sup> CONDITIONAL
<i>If you press play, the CD starts</i> <i>If/when I wear my glasses, I see perfectly</i>	<i>If you study hard, you'll pass the exam</i> <i>If it rains, I'll stay at home</i>	<i>If I were rich, I would buy a new car</i> <i>If I were you, I would go away</i>
Action + consequence – <b>Cose che sono sempre vere</b>	<b>Ipotesi probabile o possibile nel presente o futuro</b>	<b>Ipotesi poco probabile, irreali / consiglio</b>
IF + PS (subordinata)   PS (principale)	IF + PS subordinata   will future (principale)	IF + past (subordinata)   would conditional (principale)
NOTE Le due proposizioni (principale e subordinata) sono intercambiabili Ex. <i>If I see him, I'll tell him - I'll tell him if I see him</i>		