

Simple Present Tense

The Simple Present tense (also called the Present Simple tense) is usually the first verb tense taught to English Language Learners.

The three essential elements of the Simple Present are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Simple Present Conjugation of Regular Verbs

Verbs must be conjugated for each of these subject pronouns: I, You, She/He/It, They, and We.

Here are some examples:

1. I talk. I walk. I dance. I think.
2. You talk. You walk. You dance. You think.
3. She/He/It talks. She/He/It walks. She/He/It dances. She/He/It thinks.
4. They talk. They walk. They dance. They think.
5. We talk. We walk. We dance. We think.

Teaching Simple Present verb conjugation is often started with common, everyday verbs the student can mostly likely use. There isn't any particular pattern (as in the Present Continuous, for example) to help the student. He or she must simply memorize the conjugation, paying special attention to the ending "s" used for the third person.

Simple Present Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I talk. You talk. She/He/It talks. They talk. We talk.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I don't talk. You don't talk. She/He/It doesn't talk. They don't talk. We don't talk.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Do I talk? Do you talk? Does she/he/it talk? Do they talk? Do we talk?)
4. **Short Answers** (Yes, I do. No, I don't. Yes, you do. No, you don't. Yes, she/he/it does. No, she/he/it doesn't. Yes, they do. No, they don't. Yes, we do. No, we don't.)
5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When does she talk? Why does he talk? Where do they talk? How does it talk? etc.)

Simple Present Functions (when to use the Present Simple)

The Present Simple verb tense has two primary functions:

1. To talk about **general truths**, *i.e.*, to talk about something that was true in the past, is true now, and will be true in the future (*e.g.*, The sun rises in the East. Nurses work hard. Water boils at 100 °C.)
2. To talk about **habits or rituals** (*e.g.*, I pay income taxes every year. She drinks coffee. We watch T.V. all the time. The San Francisco Giants always lose. It never rains in California.)

Note: Words such as "always," "never," "often," etc., are good “clue” words that the Present Tense should be used.

Student Challenges

1. Remembering that the Third Person (he/she/it) of a regular verb ends with an "s."
2. Remembering to use the helping verb "to do" to form questions, negative statements, and short answers.
3. Conjugation of irregular verbs. Very common verbs (*e.g.*, "to be") do not follow the rules and simply must be memorized.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/teaching-simple-present.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Simple Past Tense

Forming Simple Past tense verbs is actually quite easy for *regular* English verbs. There is essentially only one rule to form the affirmative regular past tense verb: add "-ed" or just a "d" if the base form of the verb ends with an "e."

Irregular verbs are a bit trickier. There is no one general rule for irregulars and English Language Learners must simply memorize irregular verbs (*e.g.*, bought, dealt, flew, ran, taught).

The three essential elements of the Simple Past are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Simple Past Conjugation

Regular Simple Past tense verbs are conjugated by adding "-ed" to the end of the base form of the verb (*e.g.*, walked, studied*, called*, enjoyed, etc.). For verbs that already end with an "e," just add a "d" (*e.g.*, cared, raced, decided, invited, etc.).

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I talked. I walked. I danced. I cared.
2. You talked. You walked. You danced. You cared.
3. She/He/It talked. She/He/It walked. She/He/It danced. She/He/It cared.
4. They talked. They walked. They danced. They cared.
5. We talked. We walked. We danced. We cared.

Negative, Yes/No Questions, and WH- Question use the helping verb "to do."

Simple Past Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I talked. You talked. She/He/It talked. They talked. We talked)
2. **Negative Usage** (I didn't talk. You didn't talk. She/He/It didn't talk. They didn't talk. We didn't talk.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Did I talk? Did you talk? Did she/he/it talk? Did they talk? Did we talk?)
4. **Short Answers** (Yes, I did. No, I didn't. Yes, you did. No, you didn't. Yes, she/he/it did. No, she/he/it didn't. Yes, they did. No, they didn't. Yes, we did. No, we didn't.)

5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When did she talk? Why did he talk? Where did they talk?)

Simple Past Function (when to use the Simple Past)

This verb tense has one primary function: to express an activity or situation that started in the past and ended in the past at a particular and specified time.

Here are some examples:

I finished the book last night.

You didn't do all your homework last week.

He traveled to Spain in 1985.

We got up at seven this morning.

Student Challenges

1. Remembering to use the correct helping verb ("to do") when forming Simple Past questions (*e.g.*, Did you eat all the cake? Why did you eat all the cake?) and also when forming the negative (*e.g.*, I did not eat all the cake!)
2. Irregular verb conjugation: these must simply be memorized
3. *Spelling rules for verbs that end with "y" (*e.g.*, "study" becomes "studied") and certain consonants (*e.g.*, "drop" becomes "dropped").
4. Confusing the function of the Simple Past with the "unspecified time" function of the Present Perfect (if the time is specified, use the Simple Past, if it is not, use the Present Perfect).

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/forming-simple-past.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Simple Future Tense

There are actually *two* "versions" of the Simple Future tense: **will** and **be going to**.

This page focuses on the use of "will" to express the future.

Resources for teaching "be going to," and also the use of the Present Progressive for the future, can be found at www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/will-and-be-going-to.html.

The three essential elements of the Simple Future are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Simple Future Conjugation

The Future Simple is pretty easy to construct. Here's how:

subject + will + base form of the verb

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I will talk. I will walk. I will dance. I will sing.
2. You will talk. You will walk. You will dance. You will sing.
3. She/He/It will talk. She/He/It will walk. She/He/It will dance. She/He/It will sing.
4. They will talk. They will walk. They will dance. They will sing.
5. We will talk. We will walk. We will dance. We will sing.

Simple Future Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I will study. You will study. She/he/it will study. They will study. We will study.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I will not read. You will not read. She/he/it will not read. They will not read. We will not read.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Will I teach English grammar? Will you teach English grammar? Will she/he/it teach English grammar? Will they teach English grammar? Will we teach English grammar?)
4. **Short Answers** (Yes, I will. No, I won't. Yes, you will. No, you won't. Yes, she/he/it will. No, she/he/it won't. Yes, they will. No, they won't. Yes, we will. No, we won't.)

5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When will she teach more verb tenses? Where will you eat dinner? Who will win the lottery? When will we study vocabulary? How will the movie end? Why will you be there?)

Simple Future Functions

The Simple Future tense has two functions:

1. To talk about something that will or will not happen in the future (*e.g.*, I will be there at 6 o'clock. I will never retire from teaching.), and
2. To express willingness (*e.g.*, Mary: "Someone is knocking at the door." John: "I'll get it.")

Student Challenges

1. Knowing when it is best to use "will" and when to use "be going to."
2. Remembering that the Present Progressive can also be used for the future. For example: He is cooking dinner for us tomorrow night.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/future-simple-tenses.html, www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/will-and-be-going-to.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Present Progressive Tense

The Present Progressive tense (also called Present Continuous) is usually one of the first verb tenses ESL students are taught. The verb "to be" is the helping verb (or auxiliary verb) used to form the Present Progressive.

The three essential elements of the Present Progressive are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Present Progressive Conjugation

This verb tense is constructed by combining the helping verb "to be" (*am, are* or *is*) with the "-ing" form (or Present Participle) of the main verb.

subject + am/are/is + -ing

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I am talking. I am reading. I am dancing. I am thinking.
2. You are talking. You are reading. You are dancing. You are thinking.
3. She/He/It is talking. She/He/It is reading. She/He/It is dancing. She/He/It is thinking.
4. They are talking. They are reading. They are dancing. They are thinking.
5. We are talking. We are reading. We are dancing. We are thinking.

Present Progressive Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I am studying. You are studying. She/He/It is studying. They are studying. We are studying.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I am not playing. You are not playing. She/He/It is not playing. They are not playing. We are not playing.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Am I reading? Are you reading? Is she/he/it reading? Are they reading? Are we reading?)
4. **Short Answers** (Yes, I am. No, I am not. Yes, you are. No, you are not. Yes, she/he/it is. No, she/he/it is not. Yes, they are. No, they are not. Yes, we are. No, we are not.)
5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When is she leaving? Why are you talking? Where are they studying? Who are they meeting? How are they sleeping? What am I eating?)

Present Progressive Functions (when to use the Present Progressive)

The Present Progressive has two primary functions, and one secondary function:

1. To express an activity that is ***in progress at the moment of speaking***. The activity is temporary. It began in the past, is happening right now, and will probably end at some time in the future (*e.g.*, I am drinking a cup of coffee. She is sleeping on the couch. They are watching television.), and
2. To talk about something that is happening ***generally at this time*** (during this week, this year, at this time in one's life, etc.), (*e.g.*, I am teaching ESL to adults. She is traveling with friends. He is writing a grammar book. James is working at Google.).
3. ***Future Meaning***: Depending on the context, the Present Progressive can also be used with a future meaning. For example, "Tomorrow, I'm cooking dinner for friends."

Student Challenges

1. Using the correct helping (auxiliary) verb; beginning students often confuse "to do" with "to be," and
2. Knowing when to use the Present Progressive instead of the Simple Present and vice versa.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/present-progressive-conjugation.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Past Progressive Tense

The Past Progressive tense (also called the Past Continuous) is appropriate for beginning English learners. Intermediate and Advanced students may also benefit from a review of this tense.

The three essential elements of the Past Progressive are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Past Progressive Conjugation

The Past Progressive is formed by combining the Past tense of the helping verb "to be" (*was* or *were*) with the "-ing" (*i.e.*, Present Participle) form of the main verb.

Construction looks like this:

subject + was/were + -ing

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I was talking. I was walking. I was dancing. I was thinking.
2. You were talking. You were walking. You were dancing. You were thinking.
3. She/He/It was talking. She/He/It was walking. She/He/It was dancing. She/He/It was thinking.
4. They were talking. They were walking. They were dancing. They were thinking.
5. We were talking. We were walking. We were dancing. We were thinking.

Past Progressive Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I was reading. You were reading. She/He/It was reading. They were reading. We are reading.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I wasn't reading. You weren't reading. She/He/It wasn't reading. They weren't reading. We weren't reading.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Was I reading? Were you reading? Was she/he/it reading? Were they reading? Were we reading?)
4. **Short Answers** (Yes, I was. No, I wasn't. Yes, you were. No, you weren't. Yes, she/he/it was. No, she/he/it wasn't. Yes, they were. No, they weren't. Yes, we were. No, we weren't.)

5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When was I reading? Where were you reading? Why was he reading? How were they reading? What were we reading?)

Past Progressive Functions (when to use the Past Progressive)

The Past Progressive verb tense has two functions.

Function #1: To express an activity that was in progress at a *particular time* in the past or when *another action happened* that interrupted the first activity (*i.e.*, the activity that was already in progress).

Example 1: "Last night at eleven o'clock, the teacher was still preparing his Past Progressive lesson plan." In this example, the teacher started preparing his or her lesson before eleven o'clock and was still preparing it at eleven o'clock.

Example 2: "Mary was reading her favorite book when the phone rang." In this example, Mary was reading her favorite book and *then* the phone rang and *interrupted* her reading activity. She may or may not have continued reading after the phone rang. We don't know from this sentence.

Function #2: To talk about two activities which were in progress simultaneously in the past.

Example 1: "Jane was cooking dinner while her roommate was setting the table." Both activities were occurring simultaneously.

Example 2: "The baby was crying when we were trying to sleep." Both activities were occurring simultaneously.

You may notice that "when" is useful for both functions of the Past Progressive. "While" is commonly used for the second function of this verb tense.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/teaching-ideas-for-past-continuous.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Future Continuous Tense

The Future Continuous (also called the Future Progressive) is a bit complicated for students because it involves two concepts:

- (1) a progressive action, and
- (2) a point in time in the future.

It's usually saved for intermediate learners. However, most advanced English Language Learners also benefit from a review of this tense.

The three essential elements of the Future Continuous are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Future Continuous Conjugation

There are two versions of the Future Continuous. They are constructed as follows:

- **subject + will be + -ing** or
- **be going to + be + -ing.**

Conjugation of the first version is very easy; only the subject changes. "Will be + -ing" stays the same no matter *who* or *what* the subject is.

Here are some examples using **subject + will be + -ing** in the Affirmative:

1. I will be talking. I will be walking. I will be dancing. I will be eating.
2. You will be talking. You will be walking. You will be dancing. You will be eating.
3. She/He/It will be talking. She/He/It will be walking. She/He/It will be dancing. She/He/It will be eating.
4. They will be talking. They will be walking. They will be dancing. They will be eating.
5. We will be talking. We will be walking. We will be dancing. We will be eating.

For **be going to + be + -ing**, the verb "be" in the first part of the formula must be conjugated to match the subject. The rest ("going to be + -ing") stays the same.

Here are some examples using **be going to + be + -ing**:

1. I am going to be talking. I am going to be walking. I am going to be dancing. I am going to be eating.

2. You are going to be talking. You are going to be walking. You are going to be dancing.
You are going to be eating.
3. She/He/It is going to be talking. She/He/It is going to be walking. She/He/It is going to be dancing.
She/He/It is going to be eating.
4. They are going to be talking. They are going to be walking. They are going to be dancing.
They are going to be eating.
5. We are going to be talking. We are going to be walking. We are going to be dancing. We are going to be eating.

Future Continuous Verb Forms

1. Affirmative Usage

I'll be teaching ESOL next semester. / I'm going to be teaching ESOL next semester.

You'll be studying English in the United States. / You're going to be studying English in the United States.

She/He/It will be leaving soon. / She/He/It is going to be leaving soon.

They'll be arriving at noon. / They're going to be arriving at noon.

We'll be dancing all night long. / We're going to be dancing all night long.

2. Negative Usage

I won't be teaching ESOL next semester. / I'm not going to be teaching ESOL next semester.

You won't be studying English in the United States. / You're not going to be studying English in the United States.

She/He/It won't be leaving soon. / She/He/It isn't going to be leaving soon.

They won't be arriving at noon. / They're not going to be arriving at noon.

We won't be dancing all night long. / We're not going to be dancing all night long.

3. Yes/No Questions

Will I be teaching ESOL next semester? / Am I going to be teaching ESOL next semester?

Will you be studying English in the United States? / Are you going to be studying English in the United States?

Will she/he/it be leaving soon? / Is she/he/it going to be leaving soon?

Will they be arriving at noon? / Are they going to be arriving at noon?

Will we be dancing all night long? / Are we going to be dancing all night long?

4. **Short Answers**

Yes, I will. No, I won't. / Yes, I am. No, I'm not.

Yes, you will. No, you won't. / Yes, you are. No, you aren't.

Yes, she/he/it will. No, she/he/it won't. / Yes, she/he/it is. No, she/he/it isn't.

Yes, they will. No, they won't. / Yes, they are. No, they aren't.

Yes, we will. No, we won't. / Yes, we are. No, we aren't.

5. **WH- Questions** (examples)

Why will I be traveling to Mexico? / Why am I going to be traveling to Mexico?

When will you be driving to Las Vegas? / When are you going to be driving to Las Vegas?

What will she/he/it be reading tonight? / What is she/he/it going to be reading tonight?

Where will they be studying next year? / Where are they going to be studying next year?

Who will we be meeting? / Who are we going to be meeting?

Future Continuous Function

We use this tense to talk about an activity that will be in progress at some point in the future.

Here are some examples:

I will be vacationing in France next summer. / I'm going to be vacationing in France next summer.

You will be driving to Las Vegas tomorrow at 11 a.m. / You are going to be driving to Las Vegas tomorrow at 11 a.m.

She will be sleeping when I get there. / She is going to be sleeping when I get there.

They will be waiting for me at the train station when I arrive. They are going to be waiting for me at the train station when I arrive.

We will be playing tennis at 5:30 a.m. / We are going to be playing tennis at 5:30 a.m.

Student Challenges

- (1) The first possible challenge is the fact that there are two ways to express the Future Continuous. I present only one way at a time so that students have an opportunity to focus on and master each way individually.
- (2) The other challenge, or confusion, is that sometimes either the Future Continuous or the Future Simple can be used with very little or no difference in meaning.

For example:

"Don't eat too much. We'll eat dinner soon."

"Don't eat too much. We'll be eating dinner soon."

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-future-continuous.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Present Perfect Tense

The Present Perfect tense is appropriate for high beginning ESOL students, as well as a review for intermediate and advanced students.

The three essential elements of the Present Perfect are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Present Perfect Conjugation

The Present Perfect is constructed this way:

subject + have/has + past participle

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I have talked. I have walked. I have danced. I have eaten.
2. You have talked. You have walked. You have danced. You have eaten.
3. She/He/It has talked. She/He/It has walked. She/He/It has danced. She/He/It has eaten.
4. They have talked. They have walked. They have danced. They have eaten.
5. We have talked. We have walked. We have danced. We have eaten.

Present Perfect Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I have studied English. You have studied English. She/He/It has studied English. They have studied English. We have studied English.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I have not learned Spanish. You have not learned Spanish. She/He/It has not learned Spanish. They have not learned Spanish. We have not learned Spanish.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Have I studied? Have you studied? Has she/he/it studied? Have they studied? Have we studied?)
4. **Short Answers** (Yes, I have. No, I have not. Yes, you have. No, you have not. Yes, she/he/it has. No, she/he/it has not. Yes, they have. No, they have not. Yes, we have. No, we have not.)
5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When have you traveled to Spain? Why has he given up? What has she done? How have they learned English so quickly? Where have I seen that man before?)

Present Perfect Functions

This verb tense has three functions:

1. Unspecified time
2. Repetition
3. Started in the past and continues until the present, may or may not continue into the future (there just isn't a short way to describe this function)

Function 1: Unspecified time

The Present Perfect verb tense can be used to express something in the past, when:

1. We don't know when it happened (*e.g.*, I have lost my keys), or
2. *When* it happened is not important (*e.g.*, She has traveled to Ethiopia).

This function is often confused with the Simple Past. The key is whether a time was specified or not; if a time was specified then the Simple Past should be used.

Compare Present Perfect usage to Simple Past usage:

Present Perfect: "I have traveled to Europe." In this sentence, no time is specified.

Simple Past: "I traveled to Europe in 2009." The Simple Past is used when a time is specified. The specified time could be "this morning," "yesterday," "at 6pm," "when I was a child," etc.

Function 2: Repetition

The Present Perfect is used to describe something that has happened many (or a couple of) times in the past.

For example: "I've traveled to Brazil many times." "I've eaten at that restaurant twice." "John Grisham has written several books."

Function 3: Started in the past, continues until now, and may or may not continue into the future

For example, "I've lived in this city since 2005."

This tense can be replaced with the Present Perfect Progressive when *emphasizing duration*. For example, "I've been watching soap operas since 1997" or "I've been waiting for you for ten minutes." (Note that the duration does not have to be long to use the Progressive form of the tense. The point is that the speaker wishes to emphasize the duration.)

Note that “for” and “since” are often clues to use the Present Perfect instead of the Simple Past.

Student Challenges

1. Subject-verb agreement with the correct helping verb (have/has).
2. Deciding between using the *Present Perfect* or the *Simple Past* to express something that happened in the past.
3. Using the correct Past Participle of some irregular verbs.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/present-perfect-lesson-plans.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Past Perfect Tense

The Past Perfect tense is often studied, but rarely used by English Language Learners. Instead, two Simple Past tense verbs along with some time marker words (*e.g.*, before, after, when) are used. But it's still important to encourage students to practice this tense so that they can more fully express themselves.

The three essential elements of the Past Perfect are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Past Perfect Conjugation

The Past Perfect is constructed this way:

subject + had + past participle

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I had talked. I had smoked. I had danced. I had eaten.
2. You had talked. You had smoked. You had danced. You had eaten.
3. She/He/It had talked. She/He/It had smoked. She/He/It had danced. She/He/It had eaten.
4. They had talked. They had smoked. They had danced. They had eaten.
5. We had talked. We had smoked. We had danced. We had eaten.

Past Perfect Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I had studied. You had studied. She/He/It had studied. They had studied. We had studied.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I had not studied. You had not studied. She/He/It had not studied. They had not studied. We had not studied.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Had I studied? Had you studied? Had she/he/it studied? Had they studied? Had we studied?)
4. **Short Answers** (Yes, I had. No, I hadn't. Yes, you had. No, you hadn't. Yes, she/he/it had. No, she/he/it hadn't. Yes, they had. No, they hadn't. Yes, we had. No, we hadn't.)
5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When had she studied English? Where had he traveled? Who had you visited? What had I done? Where had they been?)

Past Perfect Function

The function of the Past Perfect is to talk about an event/activity that was completed before another event/activity or time in the past.

When using this tense, there will always be two past events or activities, or an event/activity and a particular time in the past.

Here are some sentences showing the use of the Past Perfect:

I had already gone to bed by the time you got home.

She had already studied English for six months when she left for the United States.

He had finished his dessert before I even started my entrée.

Her older brother had graduated from college before she started high school.

We had fallen asleep by 9 o'clock.

You'll notice that the Simple Past is used in the second part of the sentences that have two events/activities.

The above sentences could also be written without using the Past Perfect tense, like this:

I went to bed before you got home.

She studied English for six months before she left for the United States.

He finished dessert before I even started my entrée.

Her older brother graduated from college before she started high school.

We fell asleep before 9 o'clock.

Whenever "before" or "after" are used, the Past Perfect tense is optional because the sequence of events is clear. Some typical Past Perfect lesson plans ask students to take two past tense events/sentences and to correctly write one sentence using the Past Perfect.

Note: The two events or the event and the particular time do not both need to be included in the same sentence when the other event/activity or time is understood from context.

Student Challenges

1. Using the correct Past Participle for irregular verbs.
2. Getting enough practice using this tense since learners can easily get by without ever using it; and it is one of the last tenses taught in class.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/past-perfect-lesson-plans.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com

Future Perfect Tense

The Future Perfect tense is appropriate for advanced English Language Learners and, possibly, for high intermediate students.

The three essential elements of the Future Perfect are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Future Perfect Conjugation

The Future Perfect is constructed this way:

subject + will have + past participle

The conjugation is fairly simple. Only the subject changes in this tense.

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I will have talked. I will have walked. I will have danced. I will have eaten.
2. You will have talked. You will have walked. You will have danced. You will have eaten.
3. She/He/It will have talked. She/He/It will have walked. She/He/It will have danced. She/He/It will have eaten.
4. They will have talked. They will have walked. They will have danced. They will have eaten.
5. We will have talked. We will have walked. We will have danced. We will have eaten.

Future Perfect Verb Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I will have studied. You will have studied. She/He/It will have studied. They will have studied. We will have studied.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I won't have traveled. You won't have traveled. She/He/It won't have traveled. They won't have traveled. We won't have traveled.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Will I have spoken? Will you have spoken? Will she/he/it have spoken? Will they have spoken? Will we have spoken?)
4. **Short Answers*** (Yes, I will. No, I won't. Yes, you will. No, you won't. Yes, she/he/it will. No, she/he/it won't. Yes, they will. No, they won't. Yes, we will. No, we won't.)
5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When will she have studied? Where will you have traveled? How will they have lost weight?)

***Note:** "Have" is sometimes added to the Short Answer form; *e.g.*, Yes, I will have. No, I won't have.

Future Perfect Function

The Future Perfect is used to express an activity that will be completed by another time or event in the future. It's usually used with a time clause, for example, "by the time" or "by next week." If the time clause uses a verb, this verb will be in the Simple Present tense.

Here are some examples:

By the time I finish dinner, you will have eaten two desserts!

By the time she sees her son again, he will have been in Afghanistan for three years.

She will have studied English for six months by the time she leaves for the United States.

We will have traveled to six countries by the end of our vacation.

Student Challenge

1. Getting enough practice using this tense since it is usually one of the last tenses taught.
2. Using the correct Past Participle for irregular verbs.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/future-perfect-lesson-plans.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Present Perfect Continuous Tense

The Present Perfect Continuous is also called the Present Perfect Progressive.

The three essential elements of the Present Perfect Continuous are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Present Perfect Continuous Conjugation

The Present Perfect Continuous is constructed this way:

subject + have/has been + -ing

The conjugation is fairly simple. Remember to use "has" only for the third person.

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I have been talking. I have been learning. I have been dancing. I have been eating.
2. You have been talking. You have been learning. You have been dancing. You have been eating.
3. She/He/It has been talking. She/He/It has been learning. She/He/It has been dancing. She/He/It has been eating.
4. They have been talking. They have been learning. They have been dancing. They have been eating.
5. We have been talking. We have been learning. We have been dancing. We have been eating.

Present Perfect Continuous Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (*e.g.*, She has been studying English for four years.)
2. **Negative Usage** (*e.g.*, She has not been living here since 2005.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (*e.g.*, Have you been playing tennis for very long?)
4. **Short Answers*** (Yes, I have. No, I have not. Yes, you have. No, you have not. Yes, she/he/it has. No, she/he/it has not. Yes, they have. No, they have not. Yes, we have. No, we have not.)
5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, What have they been doing? Where has she been traveling? What have you been dreaming about?)

***Note:** "Been" is sometimes added to the Short Answer form; *e.g.*, Yes, I have been.

Present Perfect Continuous Functions

The Present Perfect Continuous has two functions.

1. To show and/or emphasize the *duration* of an activity that began in the past and continues until the present time.

Examples using this first function:

She has been working on this project for three years.

They have been acting strangely since they arrived.

2. To talk about something that has been in progress recently or lately.

Examples using this second function:

You look great! Have you been working out lately?

I've been thinking about taking a trip to South America.

Student Challenges

The biggest challenge is deciding between using the Present Perfect Continuous or the Present Perfect. This is because *one of the functions* of the Present Perfect is to talk about an activity that began in the past and continues until the present.

Use the Present Perfect Continuous when you want to emphasize the *duration* of an activity that started in the past and continues until now; otherwise the Present Perfect Continuous or the Present Perfect can be used with very little or no difference in meaning.

There is especially very little difference in meaning with verbs such as "teach," "live" and "work" when "for" or "since" are used. For example, "I have been living in California for ten years," and "I have lived in California for ten years." Both of these sentences have the same meaning. However, if I want to emphasize the duration, I should use the Present Perfect Continuous.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/present-perfect-continuous-forms.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Past Perfect Continuous Tense

The Past Perfect Continuous tense is also called the Past Perfect Progressive tense.

The three essential elements of the Past Perfect Continuous are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Past Perfect Continuous Conjugation

The Past Perfect Continuous tense is constructed this way:

subject + had been + -ing

Only the subject changes in this tense.

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I had been talking. I had been walking. I had been dancing. I had been eating.
2. You had been talking. You had been walking. You had been dancing. You had been eating.
3. She/He/It had been talking. She/He/It had been walking. She/He/It had been dancing. She/He/It had been eating.
4. They had been talking. They had been walking. They had been dancing. They had been eating.
5. We had been talking. We had been walking. We had been dancing. We had been eating.

Past Perfect Continuous Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I had been studying. You had been studying. She/He/It had been studying. They had been studying. We had been studying.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I hadn't been learning. You hadn't been learning. She/He/It hadn't been learning. They hadn't been learning. We hadn't been learning.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Had I been reading? Had you been reading? Had she/he/it been reading? Had they been reading? Had we been reading?)
4. **Short Answers*** (Yes, I had. No, I hadn't. Yes, you had. No, you hadn't. Yes, she/he/it had. No, she/he/it hadn't. Yes, they had. No, they hadn't. Yes, we had. No, we hadn't.)

5. **WH- Questions** (*e.g.*, When had she been traveling abroad? Why had you been running? Where had they been going?)

***Note:** "Been" is sometimes added to the Short Answer form; *e.g.*, Yes, I had been.

Past Perfect Continuous Functions

1. To *emphasize the duration* of an activity that was in progress before another activity or time in the past.

Example: I had been waiting for them for thirty minutes before they finally arrived.

2. To express an activity that was in progress close in time to another activity or time in the past.

Example: She was all wet because she had been jogging in the rain.

Note that the second part of these sentences uses the Simple Past.

Student Challenges

1. Getting enough practice because this tense is usually one of the last tenses taught in a class.
2. Remembering all the parts of the long construction of this tense.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/past-perfect-continuous-tense.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.

Future Perfect Continuous

The Future Perfect Continuous, also called the Future Perfect Progressive, is one of the last tenses taught to English Language Learners.

The three essential elements of the Future Perfect Continuous are: Conjugation, Form, and Function.

Future Perfect Continuous Conjugation

The Future Perfect Continuous is constructed this way:

subject + will have been + -ing

Here are some examples in the Affirmative:

1. I will have been talking. I will have been walking. I will have been dancing. I will have been eating.
2. You will have been talking. You will have been walking. You will have been dancing. You will have been eating.
3. She/He/It will have been talking. She/He/It will have been walking. She/He/It will have been dancing. She/He/It will have been eating.
4. They will have been talking. They will have been walking. They will have been dancing. They will have been eating.
5. We will have been talking. We will have been walking. We will have been dancing. We will have been eating.

Future Perfect Continuous Forms

1. **Affirmative Usage** (I will have been teaching. You will have been teaching. She/He/It will have been teaching. They will have been teaching. We will have been teaching.)
2. **Negative Usage** (I won't have been studying. You won't have been studying. She/He/It won't have been studying. They won't have been studying. We won't have been studying.)
3. **Yes/No Questions** (Will I have been learning? Will you have been learning? Will she/he/it have been learning? Will they have been learning? Will we have been learning?)
4. **Short Answers*** (Yes, I will have. No, I won't have. Yes, you will have. No, you won't have. Yes, she/he/it will have. No, she/he/it won't have. Yes, they will have. No, they won't have. Yes, we will have. No, we won't have.)

5. **WH- Questions** (e.g., How long will the children have been sleeping?)

***Note:** Short Answers can also include "been" at the end of the sentence; for example, "Yes, I will have been."

Future Perfect Continuous Function

The Future Perfect Continuous is used to emphasize the *duration* of an activity that will be in progress *before* another time or event in the future.

Here are some examples:

She will have been sleeping for only four hours when the alarm goes off.

We will have been driving for fifteen hours by the time we arrive in Los Angeles.

At midnight, I will have been studying English grammar tenses for three hours.

Also, the activity that *will be* or *is* in progress before the other time or event in the future may be something that started in the past.

For example:

He is going to move next year. He will have been living in the same house for twenty years when he moves.

Student Challenges

The Future Perfect Progressive tense can sometimes be used interchangeably with the Future Perfect.

For example:

He is going to move next year. He will have lived in the same house for twenty years when he moves. or He will have been living in the same house for twenty years when he moves.

It's 11 p.m. At midnight, I will have studied English grammar tenses for three hours. or I will have been studying English grammar tenses for three hours.

Remember: the Future Continuous tense is used when you want to emphasize the *duration* of an activity.

Additional Resources

For more details, see www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-future-perfect-continuous.html and www.teaching-esl-to-adults.com/esl-verb-tenses.html.