



SURAJBA POST GRADUATE CENTRE, DAKOR

ભવન સ કોલેજ, ડાકોર.

Bhavan's Shri I.L.Pandya Arts-Science and Smt. J.M. Shah Commerce College, Dakor.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

TENSES

Kinds of Tenses

The kind of a verb shows : i) the time of action and ii) its completeness or incompleteness

There are three divisions of time – Present, Past and Future. Generally speaking, these are called Present, Past and Future tenses.

❖ Simple Present Tense

Form : Subject + Verb + Object

Except in the case of third person singular (He/She/It), the simple present tense is formed by placing the bare verb (infinitive without 'to') after the subject. E.g.

1. I go
2. You eat
3. We laugh.

In case of third person singular, 's' or 'es' is added to the verb. E.g.

1. He goes
2. She laughs
3. The dog eats.

Uses :

The Simple Present Tense is mainly used :

- i) For habitual and repeated actions. E.g.

I take tea.

The shops in the city remain closed on every Monday.

ii) For actions which are always and necessarily true. E.g.

The sun rises in the east.

The earth moves round the sun.

iii) All the proverbs are in this tense. E.g.

A barking dog never bites.

A stitch in time saves nine.

iv) To express a future action when it is a part of a settled program. E.g.

I leave for Chicago tomorrow.

He retires next year.

Interrogative sentences :

Interrogative sentences in simple present tense begin with 'Do' / 'Does' as shown in the following examples :

'Do' is used with I/We/You/They

'Does' is used with He/She/It

Examples :

1. Do they read these books ?
2. Does he read these books ?

Negative Sentences :

In negative sentences of the simple present tense, 'do not' or 'does not' is used before the main verb as shown in the following examples :

He sings well.[A]

He does not sing well [N]

She attend the college regularly [A]

She does not attend the college regularly.[N]

I eat sweets.[A]

I do not eat sweets[N]

Words like “generally, usually, always, everyday, frequently, often” may indicate Simple Present Tense.

The Present Continuous Tense

Form : The Present Continuous Tense is formed by using {i} am/is/are as auxiliary and {ii} the '-ing' form of the verb. E.g.

1. I am going
2. He is going
3. They are going

Uses :

The Present Continuous Tense is used :

i} to describe an activity that is incomplete and is going on at the moment of speaking. E.g.

I am writing a letter now.

Look, he is running.

ii) Whenever a particular activity is not habitual, regular or permanent and is being repeated over a period of time. E.g.

He is reading quite a lot these days.

Note : There are certain verbs which by the nature of their meaning cannot be used in the continuous tense. These verbs are generally verbs of perception, emotions, possession and of opinion.

Following verbs fall into the above category :

Verbs of Perception : see, hear, feel, taste, smell

Verbs of Possession : have, possess, belong to

Verbs denoting mental state and processes : agree, disagree, believe, disbelieve, differ, doubt, find, forget, mean, recall, recollect, suppose, think, consider, understand, trust

Verbs of desire and feeling : desire, wish, want, love, hate, hope, forgive, prefer, please, displease, mind

Other Verbs : appear, consist of, contain, deserve, equal, matter, resemble, result, suffice

Interrogative sentences :

Interrogative sentences in present continuous tense begin with 'Am'/'Is'/'Are" as shown in the following examples :

'Am' is used with I

'Is' is used with He/She/It

'Are' is used with We/You/They

Am I writing a letter ?

Are they working in this factory ?

Is he reading a book now ?

Negative sentences :

Negative sentences in present continuous tense are formed by adding 'not' after am/is/are in the sentences as shown in the following sentences :

I am watching TV now.

I am not watching TV now.

He is reading a newspaper now.

He is not reading a newspaper now.

The Present Perfect Tense

Form : Subject + have/has + past participle of the verb + Object

e.g. I have worked in this college for seven years.

Uses :

The Present Perfect Tense is used :

i) To indicate an action that has just been completed. E.g.

The rain has stopped.

I have completed the project work.

ii) For an event begun in the past and continuing upto the present. E.g.

We have known each other for the last five years.

iii) To refer to the present result of an activity of the past. E.g.

We have bought a car [so we need not travel by bus/train]

Mohan will not come with us because he has seen this film.

Interrogative sentences :

Interrogative sentences in present perfect tense begin with 'has'/'have' as shown in the following examples :

He has seen this movie.

Has he seen this movie ?

We have worked together for six years.

Have we worked together for six years ?

Negative sentences :

Negative sentences in present perfect tense are formed by adding 'not' after has/have in the sentences as shown in the following sentences :

I have seen Dr. Abdul Kalam.

I have not seen Dr. Abdul Kalam.

She has gone to New York.

Has she gone to New York ?

The Simple Past Tense

Form : Subject + past form of the verb + object

e.g. I passed my H. S. C. examination in 1990.

He went to Europe last year.

Uses :

The Simple Past Tense is used

i) When an activity is completed in the past. E.g.

He went to his college at 11:00 am

ii) To indicate a past habit. E.g.

He never smoked.

Till last year, he always got up at 4 o'clock

iii) To show an improbable condition. E.g.

If I became the Prime Minister of India, I would close down all the theatres.

The above sentence implies that there are very few chances of my becoming the Prime Minister of India.

Interrogative sentences :

“Did” (the past form of the auxiliary ‘DO’) is used to form interrogative sentences in the simple past tense as shown in the following examples :

He bought my book.
Did he buy my book ?

They saw you yesterday.
Did they see you yesterday ?

Negative sentences :

“Did not” (the past form of the auxiliary Do + not) is used to frame negative sentences in the simple past tense as shown in the following examples :

He did not return my book.
I did not go to the meeting yesterday.

The Past Continuous Tense

Form : Subject + was/were + the '-ing' form of the verb + O. E.g.

Was/were watching.

Uses :

The Past Continuous Tense is used

- i) To indicate an action which was continuing in the past at a particular point of time. E.g.

When I went to his house, he was watching TV.

He saw an accident when he was going to the office.

The Past Perfect Tense

Form : Subject + 'had' as an auxiliary + past participle of the verb + O. e.g.

Had gone, had visited

Uses :

The Past Perfect Tense is used

- i) To show that some activity was completed at a particular point of time in the past.
E.g.

I had reached the station, before the train arrived.

In this sentence, there are two events -

- a) My reaching the station
- b) the arrival of the train. The first event had taken place before the arrival of the train.

You should note that the past perfect is past within the past. The use of the past perfect is restricted. It can only be used when

1. There are two activities or events 2. both occurred in the past 3. one occurred before the other. In that cases, the event that occurred before the other is put in the past perfect tense and the subsequent event (the event that happened afterwards) is placed in the simple past tense. E.g. a) He had finished his homework, before he went to watch a movie. b) When I reached there, the thief had already run away.

ii) In the indirect speech when the event is expressed in simple past or present perfect tense and the reporting verb is in the past tense. E.g.

I said to him, "Rohit has left for Chennai" [Direct speech]

I told him that Rohit had left for Chennai. [Indirect speech]

iii) In conditional sentences, to show a past and unfulfilled condition. E.g.

If you had worked hard, you would have secured a first class.

The Simple Future Tense

Form : Subject + will/shall + verb + object. E.g.

I shall/will go

Uses :

The Simple Future Tense is used

i) To show an activity which is going to take place in future. E.g.

I shall go to New York next month.

'Will' is used :

1. With second and third person to express mere futurity
2. with first person to show certainty of an action

'Shall' is used with :

1. With first person to express mere futurity
2. with second and third person to express compulsion or command or determination. E.g.

You shall obey my orders.

The Future Continuous Tense

Form : Subject + shall/will + be + verb with '-ing' + object. E.g.

He will be having a nap in the afternoon

Uses :

i) The Future Continuous Tense represents an action as going on at some time in future.

E.g. They will be assembling at the club this evening.

We shall be visiting Darjeeling in the summer

The Future Perfect Tense

Form : Subject + shall/will + have + past participle + object. E.g.

I shall have taken my bath by the time he arrives.

Uses :

- i) The Future Perfect Tense denotes that some action will be completed before a certain point of time in future. E.g.

We shall have completed half the course by Diwali.

Saraswati will have gone to Delhi before Rajan arrives.