

Simple Present

I walk/She walks to school.	Habits and truths
Lemons are yellow.	General facts
Water boils at 100 degrees C.	Mathematic and scientific truths

Clues in sentences: adverbs of frequency (always, never, sometimes, seldom)

Present Continuous

I am eating my lunch./She is walking to school.	Temporary action/habit
I am looking forward to hearing from you.	With verbs of hoping
We are picking her up tonight.	Future action with time marker
I am always losing my keys.	Regrettable habit

Clues in sentences: now, at the moment, at present

Present Perfect

Peter has lived in England since he was born.	Uncompleted action (results remain)
I've seen her this morning (she must be here).	Action not yet over
I have spilt my drink. (It needs to be cleaned up)	Action which happened but is not over yet.
I have studied French. (So I can speak it now)	Past action that relates to the present
I have just finished breakfast.	With time markers <i>just yet already still</i>
I will come when I have finished breakfast.	With <i>when</i> for the future

Clues in sentences: yet, already, never, just

Present Perfect Continuous

I have been gardening. (so my hands are dirty)	Explain the present situation
I have been waiting for you for two hours.	Account for a period of time ending
I have been learning French for ten years.	Draw attention to a habitual action
He has been seeing a lot of her lately.	New temporary habits
I have been having a lot of headaches lately.	Describing symptoms
I have been looking forward to meeting you.	With verbs of <i>wishing/hoping</i> .

Clues in sentences: time words such as 'recently, 'lately'

Past Simple

I met him yesterday.	Past action with time marker
When I arrived, I sat down immediately.	As a time marker with <i>when</i> or <i>while</i>
You would be glad if I sold it.	With <i>if</i> in hypothetical clauses
They went on an trip last month.	For narratives/telling stories

Clues in sentences: fixed time markers (yesterday, last week)

Past Continuous

I was having a bath when the phone rang.	Point in past mentioned in rel to action
I was doing my homework from 8 pm to 10 pm.	A period in the past is specified
I found a coin while I was digging in the garden.	With <i>while</i> or <i>when</i>

Clues in sentences: while, when, time from...to...

Past Perfect Continuous

I was tired because I had been doing my exams. I had been working for hours without a break. When he came I had been baking. I had been meaning to visit her but didn't have time.	Provide background information. When a period of time is specified. To link one event with another (showing the order)
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Clues in sentences: linked events with a need to show time order

Diary Future (Present Continuous)

I am picking her up at 6 pm. I can't come as I am going on holiday.	Pre-arranged plans Explain why unable to do something
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Clues in sentences: specific times, giving reasons, declining invitations

Going To Future

I am going to buy a new cat tomorrow. It is going to rain tomorrow If he comes in I am going to leave	Indicate a plan or intention Predict future events Express an condition
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Clues in sentences: similar to will/shall future but used more often in conversation

Will/Shall Future

I will help clean my room now. It will rain tomorrow. I will lose weight. I will tell your teacher. That will be the postman. He will be late. (He always is)	Deciding to do something Prediction Expressing determination Expressing commitment Logical deduction Persistence (especially habit)
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Clues in sentences: used to show determination

Future Continuous

This time tomorrow he will be taking his exam. We will be arriving at 6 am. I shall be making a complaint. I expect you will be feeling hungry.	Action expected to cross a certain time Reassuring/asserting arrangements Threatening or promising future action Logical deduction
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Clues in sentences: Expressing future situations with a specific time

Future Perfect

I will have left England by next week. He will have arrived home by now.	With <i>by</i> at a point in the future Logical deduction
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Clues in sentences: by

Future Perfect Continuous

This time tomorrow I will have been sitting on the plane for 10 hours.	Predicted duration of an event
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Clues in sentences: a time in the future with a continuous action

Passive Tenses

English is spoken in many countries.	Present simple passive
The cake was baked by Mary.	Past simple passive
The car is being fixed.	Present continuous passive
The floor was being washed so it was slippery.	Past continuous passive
We have been invited to the party.	Present perfect passive
The project had been finished.	Past perfect passive
The thief will have been arrested by now.	Future perfect passive

Conditional Tenses

<p>If you boil water, it releases steam. Water releases steam if you boil it.</p>	General condition – scientific rules
<p>If the weather is sunny, I will wear a sun hat. I will wear a sun hat if the weather is sunny.</p>	First condition – Prediction for highly possible event
<p>If I won a million dollars, I would buy new car. I would buy a new car if I won a million dollars.</p>	Second condition – Prediction for unlikely event.
<p>If I had taken my umbrella I would not be all wet now. I would not be all wet now, if I had taken my umbrella.</p>	Third condition – Impossible as the event has already been completed.