

Present tense

Simple present

The simple present is a verb tense with two main uses.

1- We use the simple present tense when an action is happening right now.

2- When we talk about something true or fact.

Or

3- When it happens regularly (or unceasingly, which is why it's sometimes called present indefinite).

Depending on the person, the simple present tense is formed by using the root form or by adding -s or -es to the end.

Example

I feel great!

Ali loves pie.

I'm sorry to hear that you're sick.

The other is to talk about habitual actions or occurrences.

Example

Ahmed practices the piano every day.

John travels during the summer.

How to Form the Simple Present

In the simple present, most regular verbs use the root form, except in the third-person singular (which ends in -s).

First-person singular: I write

First-person plural: We write

Second-person singular: You write

Second-person plural: You write

Third-person singular: He/she/it writes

Third-person plural: They write

Note:

For a few verbs, the third-person singular ends with -es instead of -s. Typically, these are verbs whose root form ends in o, ch, sh, th, ss, gh, or z.

For most regular verbs, you put the negation of the verb before the verb.

e.g. “She won’t go” or “I don’t smell anything.”

The verb to be is irregular

First-person singular: I am

First-person plural: We are

Second-person singular: You are

Second-person plural: You are

Third-person singular: He/She/It is

Third-person plural: They are

How to Make the Simple Present Negative

The formula for making a simple present verb negative is do/does + not + [root form of verb].

You can also use the contraction don’t or doesn’t instead of do not or does not.

Example

Ali does not want to share the pie.

He doesn’t think there is enough to go around.

His friends do not agree.

I don't want pie anyway.

To make the verb to be negative, the formula is [to be] + not.

Example

I am not a pie lover, but Ali sure is.

You aren't ready for such delicious pie.

How to Ask a Question

The formula for asking a question in the simple present is do/does + [subject] + [root form of verb].

Do you know how to bake a cake?

How much does Ahmed love cake?

Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense refers to an action or state that either occurred at an indefinite time in the past (e.g., we have talked before) or began in the past and continued to the present time (e.g., he has grown impatient over the last hour). This tense is formed by have/has + the past participle.

The construction of this verb tense is straightforward. The first element is have or has, depending on the subject the verb is conjugated with. The second element is the past participle of the verb, which is usually formed by adding -ed or -d to the verb's root (e.g., walked, cleaned, typed, perambulated, jumped, laughed, sautéed) although English does have quite a few verbs that have irregular past participles (e.g., done, said, gone, known, won, thought, felt, eaten).

These examples show how the present perfect can describe something that occurred or was the state of things at an unspecified time in the past.

I have walked on this path before. Correct

We have eaten the food here. Correct

The important thing to remember about the present perfect is that you can't use it when you are being specific about when it happened.

I have put away all the laundry. Correct

I have put away all the laundry this morning. Incorrect

You can use the present perfect to talk about the duration of something that started in the past is still happening.

She has had the chickenpox since Tuesday. Correct

Present Continuous

The present continuous verb tense indicates that an action or condition is happening now, frequently, and may continue into the future.

The Present Continuous Formula: to be [am, is, are] + verb [present participle]

Sara is warming up the car while Zeki looks for his new leather coat.

They are eating at Ali's favourite restaurant today.

Key words: Verb, present participle, tense, dynamic verbs, stative verbs

When to Use the Present Continuous Tense

Use the present continuous tense with the appropriate "to be" verb and a dynamic verb. A dynamic verb shows action and/or process.

Example

Scott's little sister is arriving at the diner two hours late because her roller-derby team, Chicks Ahoy, won the national championships early today. As she is walking into Polly's Pancake Diner, she is yelling goodbye to her friends outside, and Scott hopes she doesn't cause a scene since she is always embarrassing him in public.

When Not to Use the Present Continuous Tense

Do not use the present continuous tense with stative verbs. Stative verbs show a state of being that does not show qualities of change. These verbs can stay in the simple present.

Example

Ali is preferring the cakes over the pies that Ahmed loves.

Incorrect

Ali prefers the cakes over the pies that Ahmed loves.

Correct

Here, the stative verb to prefer shows opinion, and therefore should not be conjugated into the present continuous. Stative verb categories include emotion (to love), possession (to belong), and thoughts (to recognize), and none of these should use the present continuous form.

Simple Past Tense–Grammar Rules

The simple past is a verb tense that is used to talk about things that happened or existed before now.

Example

Ali entered a tennis contest.

He won the silver medal.

The simple past tense shows that you are talking about something that has already happened. Unlike the past continuous tense, which is used to talk about past events that happened over a period of time, the simple past tense emphasizes that the action is finished.

You can also use the simple past to talk about a past state of being, such as the way someone felt about something. This is often expressed with the simple past tense of the verb to be and an adjective, noun, or prepositional phrase.

Example

Ali was proud of his victory.

The contest was the highlight of his week.

How to Formulate the Simple Past

For regular verbs, add -ed to the root form of the verb (or just -d if the root form already ends in an e):

Play→Played Type→Typed Listen→Listened Push→Pushed
Love→Loved

For irregular verbs, things get more complicated. The simple past tense of some irregular verbs looks exactly like the root form:

Put→Put Cut→Cut Set→Set Cost→Cost Hit→Hit

For other irregular verbs, including the verb to be, the simple past forms are more erratic:

See→Saw Build→Built Go→Went Do→Did Rise→Rose
Am/Is/Are→Was/Were

The good news is that verbs in the simple past tense (except for the verb to be) don't need to agree in number with their subjects.

Ali polished his medal. The other winners polished their medals too.

How to Make the Simple Past Negative

Fortunately, there is a formula for making simple past verbs negative, and it's the same for both regular and irregular verbs (except for the verb to be). The formula is did not + [root form of verb]. You can also use the contraction didn't instead of did not.

Ali did not brag too much about his skills. Ali's friend didn't see the contest.

For the verb to be, you don't need the auxiliary did. When the subject of the sentence is singular, use **was not** or **wasn't**. When the subject is plural, use **were not** or **weren't**.

The third-place winner was not as happy as Ali. The fourth-place winner wasn't happy at all. The onlookers were not ready to leave after the contest ended. The contestants weren't ready to leave either.

How to Ask a Question

The formula for asking a question in the simple past tense is did + [subject] + [root form of verb].

Did Ali win the gold medal or the silver medal? Where did Ali go to celebrate? Did the judges decide fairly, in your opinion?

When asking a question with the verb to be, you don't need the auxiliary did. The formula is was/were + [subject].

Was Ali in a good mood after the contest? Were people taking lots of pictures?

Past Perfect Tense

The past perfect, also called the pluperfect, is a verb tense used to talk about actions that were completed before some point in the past.

We were shocked to discover that someone had written "John was here" on our front door. We were pleased that John had used washable paint.

The past perfect tense is for talking about something that happened before something else.

Imagine waking up one morning and stepping outside to buy something. On your way back, you notice that your bike was stolen. When you're telling this story to your friends later, how would you describe this moment? You might say something like:

I turned back to the house and saw that someone had stolen my bike!

The Past Perfect Formula

The formula for the past perfect tense is had + [past participle]. It doesn't matter if the subject is singular or plural; the formula doesn't change.

Past Continuous Tense

The past continuous tense, also known as the past progressive tense, refers to a continuing action or state that was happening at some point in the past. The past continuous tense is formed by combining the past tense of to be (i.e., was/were) with the verb's present participle (-ing word).

There are many situations in which this verb tense might be used in a sentence. For example, it is often used to describe conditions that existed in the past.

Example

The sun was shining every day that summer.

As I spoke, the children were laughing at my cleverness.

It can also be used to describe something that was happening continuously in the past when another action interrupted it.

The audience was applauding until he fell off the stage.

I was making dinner when she arrived.

The past continuous can shed light on what was happening at a precise time in the past.

At 6 o'clock, I was eating dinner.

It can also refer to a habitual action in the past.

She was talking constantly in class in those days.

One final caution: Though the irregularities are few, not every verb is suited to describing a continuous action. Certain verbs can't be used in the past continuous tense. One common example is the verb to arrive.

At noon, he was arriving. Incorrect

At noon, he arrived. Correct

Conclusions

Simple Present

I read nearly every day.

Simple Past

Last night, I read an entire novel.

Simple Future

I will read as much as
I can this year.

Present Continuous

I am reading Shakespeare
at the moment.

Past Continuous

I was reading Edgar Allan
Poe last night.

Future Continuous

I will be reading Nathaniel
Hawthorne soon.

Present Perfect

I have read so many books
I can't keep count.

Past Perfect

I had read at least 10 books
by the time I was twelve.

Future Perfect

I will have read at least 20 books
by the end of the year.

Present Perfect**Continuous**

I have been reading since
I was four years old.

Past Perfect**Continuous**

I had been reading for at least a year
before my sister learned to read.

Future Perfect**Continuous**

I will have been reading for
at least two hours before
dinner tonight.

We form positive and negative statements in the simple present tense with the verb 'to be' (is/am/are) like this.

Subject	verb 'to be'	
	Positive (+)	Negative (-)
I	am ('m)	am not ('m not)
We You (singular) You(plural) They	are ('re)	are not (aren't)
He She It	is ('s)	is not (isn't)
	e.g. I am twelve years old.	e.g. I am not twelve years old.
	e.g. We are very good students. You are a handsome boy. You are my friends.	e.g. We are not very good students. You are not a handsome boy. You are not my friends.
	e.g. He is the class monitor. She is my sister. It is a lovely dog.	e.g. He is not the class monitor She is not my sister. It is not a lovely dog.

Exercise 1

Fill in these sentences using the correct form of the verb 'to be' and the words in the brackets. Then write the words in the blanks.

- I _____ happy.(not)
- He _____ sad.
- You _____ Japanese.(not)
- We _____ Chinese.
- They _____ busy.(not)
- Tigers _____ big cats.
- Cheung Chau _____ in Kowloon.(not)
- His name _____ Billy..
- We _____ good friends.
- She _____ my mother.
- You _____ the monitor.
- I _____ thirteen years old.
- He _____ 2 years old.(not)
- They _____ good football players.(not)

With most verbs, we add -s to the verb when it is used with the third person singular. With other verbs, we change the verb in different ways:

Verbs	you should...
With most verbs	+ s
e.g. run →runs	
sleep →sleeps	
Ending in a consonant + y	- y + ies
e.g. Fly →flies	
carry →carries	
Go/ Do	+es
Ending in ss, x, sh, ch	+ es
e.g. Kiss →kisses	
Fax →faxes	
Wash →washes	
switch →switches	

Exercise 2

Say these sentences using the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Then write the words in the blanks.

- (1) Susie _____ shopping in Causeway Bay.(love)
- (2) Causeway Bay _____ very busy.(be)
- (3) Betty _____ early.(not get up)
- (4) I _____ fruit.(not like)
- (5) School always _____ at eight o'clock in the morning.(start)
- (6) We usually _____ at school at half past seven.(arrive)
- (7) The dog _____ me. (like)
- (8) Henry _____ a nice school bag.(have)
- (9) She _____ television every night. (not watch)
- (10) I _____ that dress.(not like)

Exercise 3

Say these sentences using the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Then write the words in the blanks.

1. Sam _____ (wash)his face every day.
2. Susie _____ (kiss)Mum every night.
3. Dad often _____ (carry)Susie's books.
4. Nick _____ (cook) dinner for his family every evening.
5. He _____ (brush)his hair every morning.
6. May often _____ (read)books.
7. Kitty _____ (wash) the dishes every night.
8. My bird _____ (fly) beautifully.
9. The dog _____ (like) eating bones.
10. My baby sister _____ (cry) every night.
11. Jenny always _____ (do) her homework on time.
12. Vincent _____ (love) Flora.
13. Ron _____ (take) his dog for a walk every afternoon.
14. Mable usually _____ (buy) vegetables at the market.
15. The lion _____ (run) very fast.

Simple present tense(4)

We form positive and negative statements in the simple present tense with the verb 'to have' like this:

Positive (+)	Negative(-)
I You You have a good book. We They	I You You <u>do not (don't)</u> have a good book. We They
He She has a good book. It	He <u>does not(doesn't)</u> She have a good book. It

Exercise 4

Say these sentences using the correct form of the verb 'to be' or 'to have' and the word in brackets. Then write the words in the blanks.

1. He _____ (have/not) any brothers.
2. Betty _____ (have) one sister.
3. Yuki _____ (have/not) a very nice dress.
4. The cat _____ (have) a very good place to live at.
5. They _____ (have/not) a very big house.
6. We _____ (have) a very kind class teacher.
7. Peter and Jason _____ (have) a powerful computer.
8. I _____ (have) 5 members in my family.
9. She _____ (have/not) long hair.
10. He _____ (have) white teeth.
11. Sally _____ (have) 6 members in her family. She _____ (have) 3 sisters but she _____ (have/not) any brothers. Sally _____ (have) short hair but all her sisters _____ (have) long and straight hair. Sally and her sisters _____ (have) a pet cat called Dolly.

Simple present tense (Questions 1)

With the verb 'to be', we use 'Am'/'Are'/'Is' to ask a question in the simple present tense. The answer is always 'Yes' or 'No'.

Am	I		Yes,	I	am.
	you	busy?		you	
Are	we	Chinese?		we	are.
	they	happy?		they	
Is	he/she/it		No,	he/she/it	is.
				I	am not/'m not.
				you	
				we	are not/aren't.
				they	
				he/she/it	is not/isn't.

Exercise 1

Say these questions and answers using the correct form of the verb 'to be'. Then write the words in the blanks.

- _____ he early? Yes, he is.
- _____ I late? No, you aren't.
- _____ you sick? No, I'm not.
- _____ they friends? Yes, they are.
- _____ she at school? No, she isn't.
- _____ we in the hall? No, you aren't/we aren't.
- _____ I in Class 1S? Yes, you are.
- _____ she your friend? Yes, she is.
- _____ they police? No, they aren't.
- _____ we good friends? Yes, we are.

Simple present tense (Questions 2)

We can also use 'Do'/'Does' to ask a question in the simple present tense with other verbs. The answers is always 'Yes' or 'No'.

Do I you we they <hr/> Does he/she/it	like English? love Kelly Chen? read comics?	Yes,	I you we they <hr/> he/she/it do.
		No,	I you we they <hr/> he/she/it do not/don't.
			I you we they <hr/> he/she/it does.
			I you we they <hr/> he/she/it does not/doesn't.

Exercise 2

Say these questions and answers using the correct form of the verb 'to do'. Then write the words in the blanks.

1. _____ you like English? Yes, I do/we do.
2. _____ Bobby like noodles? No, he doesn't.
3. _____ we have a test now? Yes, you do/we do.
4. _____ they have a test this morning? No, they don't.
5. _____ Susie like ice cream? Yes, she does.
6. _____ Tommy walk to school? Yes, he does.
7. _____ you understand? Yes, I do.
8. _____ I read English books? No, you don't.
9. _____ you remember me? Yes, I do.
10. _____ we have to stay after school? No, you don't.