THE 12 ENGLISH VERB TENSES

**Simple Tenses**

**Simple Present**
- "I eat."

**Simple Past**
- "I ate."

**Simple Future**
- "I will eat."

**Perfect Tenses**

Form progressive tenses using HAVE + Past Participle

**Present Perfect**
- "I have eaten."

**Past Perfect**
- "I had eaten."

**Future Perfect**
- "I will have eaten."

**Progressive Tenses**

Form perfect tenses using BE + Present Participle ("—ing" verb)

**Present Progressive**
- "I am eating."

**Past Progressive**
- "I was eating."

**Future Progressive**
- "I will be eating."

**Perfect-Progressive Tenses**

Form perfect-progressive using HAVE + BEEN + Present participle ("—ing" verb)

**Present Perfect Progressive**
- "I have been eating."

**Past Perfect Progressive**
- "I had been eating."

**Future Perfect Progressive**
- "I will have been eating."

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**EXPRESSING PAST TIME**

There are five verb tenses and two special verb expressions that express some aspect of past time:

- **Use simple past** for a single past event
  - "I walked to the grocery store."

- **Use past progressive** for a past action that was happening when it was interrupted by another
  - "I was eating dinner when the phone rang."

- **Use present perfect**:
  - **a past action or situation that continues now**
    - "I have lived in Orlando for 7 years."
  - **a recent past action that is important to the current situation**
    - "I have shut the door so we can talk in private."
  - **a past experience (indefinite past time)**
    - "I have been to Argentina before."
  - **with the word yet to indicate a past indefinite action**
    - "I have not finished my homework yet."
  - **with a superlative to indicate a past indefinite action**
    - "Pizza is the most delicious food I have ever tasted."
  - **Repetition of an action before now (exact time is not important)**
    - "I have flown in an airplane over fifty times."

- **Use past perfect** for a past action that was completed before a second past action
  - "I had already finished lunch by the time my friend arrived."

- **Use past perfect progressive** for an action that began in the past before a second past action (with emphasis on the duration of the action)
  - "I had been waiting for forty-five minutes before the doctor finally saw me."
Special Expressions for Past Time:

"Used to" and "Would"

- Use the special expression used to for an action that happened many times in the past but is no longer true; frequently opens a past narrative
  - "I used to go fishing with my dad every weekend as a kid."

- Use the word would for smaller actions that happened repeatedly in a past narrative but are no longer true
  
  Note: When telling a story, we often used "used to" to set the scene, and "would" for all subsequent details
  - "When I was little, I used to bring peanut butter sandwiches to school every day for lunch. Every morning, I would pull the bread out of the pantry, and then I would layer it with a thick spoonful of peanut butter. Sometimes, I would get so hungry as I was making my sandwich that I would eat the whole thing for breakfast. When that happened, I would have to start over and make another one to bring to school."

  Note: Don’t use "would" with non-action verbs
  - When I was little I would be very shy.

EXPRESSING FUTURE TIME

Even though we have four future tenses, we rarely use them.

Instead, we tend to express future in the following ways:

1. "Be going to" (Present Progressive):
   - We use "be going to" to express an event in the future, especially one that is already planned
   - Common Mistakes when using "be going to":
     o Forgetting to use "be"
       - "I going to the beach on Sunday."
     o Forgetting the word "to"
       - "I am going the beach on Sunday."
     o Using "-s" or "-ed" or "-ing" after "to"
       - "I am going to bakes a cake for my sister’s birthday.
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     o Using "-s" or "-ed" or "-ing" after "to"
       - "I am going to baking a cake for my sister’s birthday."
   - Common Mistakes:
     o Neglecting to establish future time in the conversation
       - "I am going to the car wash." (When??)

2. Simple present
   - We use simple present to express a future action marked by a specific future adverb
     - "I go back to work tomorrow."
   - OR…a future action in a dependent clause (NOTE: We don’t use the future tense in a dependent clause)
     - "When I go to the bank tomorrow, I must remember to deposit my paycheck."
   - Common Mistakes:
     o Using simple present tense for a future action without a future time marker
       - "I go back to work." (When??)
     o Using "will" or "be going to" in a future time clause
       - "When I will go to the bank tomorrow, I must remember to deposit my paycheck."