

# The 12 Basic English Tenses (EnglishClub.com/search)

## The English Tense System

The links below are to lessons for each of the **12 basic English tenses\***. For each tense we look at:

- **Structure:** How do we make the tense?
- **Use:** When and why do we use the tense?

Some lessons look at additional matters, and most of them finish with a quiz to check your understanding.

- **Present Simple**  
*I do, I do do*
- **Present Continuous**  
*I am doing*
- **Present Perfect**  
*I have done*
- **Present Perfect Continuous**  
*I have been doing*
  
- **Past Simple**  
*I did, I did do*
- **Past Continuous**  
*I was doing*
- **Past Perfect**  
*I had done*
- **Past Perfect Continuous**  
*I had been doing*
  
- **Future Simple**  
*I will do*
- **Future Continuous**  
*I will be doing*

- **Future Perfect**

*I will have done*

- **Future Perfect Continuous**

*I will have been doing*

**EnglishClub TIP**

Many English learners worry too much about tense. If you stopped 100 native English speakers in the street and asked them about tense, 1 of them might give you an intelligent answer - if you were lucky. The other 99 would know little about terms like "past perfect" or "present continuous". And they would know nothing about aspect, voice or mood. But they can all speak fluent English and communicate effectively. Of course, for ESL it helps to know about tenses, but don't become obsessed with them. Be like those native speakers! **Speak naturally!**

\*Some grammarians consider that strictly-speaking there are only two English tenses. Others argue six or other quantities. For the sake of simplicity, Learners of English as a Foreign or Second Language are usually taught that - taking into account aspect and future modals - there are 12 tenses in English.