

TIME AND TENSE

The Function of Tenses

A Tense may be defined as that form of a verb which indicates the time and the state of an action or event. In this manner a verb may refer to.

(A) Time and Action (Tense)

Example :-

- (1) He reads a book (Present time of an action)
 - (2) He read a book. (Past time of an action)
 - (3) He will read a book (Future time of an action)
- From the above sentences, It will be clear to the students that there are three main Tenses

(I) Present Tense

(II) Past Tense

(III) Future Tense

(B) State of an Action (Function of Tenses)

For example :-

(I) I write letters regularly (Present Tense, Habitual Function)

(II) I am writing a letter. (Present continuous, Progressive function)

(III) I have just written a letter. (Present perfect, preceding function)

(IV) I have been writing a letter for some time (Present perfect continuous tense)

Tense and Their functions

1. Present Indefinite Tense:-

This Tense generally used to denote, habit, custom, practice, repeated action, permanent activity, generate Truth etc.

This ideas are expressed by the adverbs of frequency such as-

Often , seldom, usually, never, normally, occasionally, sometimes, generally, always, frequently, rarely, daily.

Example :-

(I) Father goes to office in the morning.

(II) He often sleeps in afternoon

(III) Ran akwats takes tea in the morning

(IV) We seldom play hockey

Note- This tense is also used to make a statement in the present showing permanent nature and activity of the subject and eternal principles-

Example-

(I) I Know him well.

(II) The cow gives milk.

(III) She teaches in Gupta classes Institute.

FORMULA

Positive Sentence – If subject is singular or with this pronouns- He, She, It

Subject = S

Hepling verb= H.V

Verb = V

Object = O

+Ve= S+V+S/es+O

-Ve S+does not +V1 +O

Interrogative Ist-

Does+ S+V+O+?

Interrogative 2nd-

Question word+ H.V(Does)+S+V1+O+?

Positive sentence(+Ve) with plural subject and I,we, you ,they

S+V1+O

(Ve) S+do not +V1+O

Interrogative Ist – Do +S+V1+O+?

Interrogative 2nd – Question word+Do+S+V1+O+?

2 Present Continuous Tense-

“An action going on at the time of speaking.”

Example- He is going

They are reading

Helping verb +Is/Am/ Are + V+ing

Structure :- S+Is/am/are+v +ing +O

He,She, It and singular noun- It

I – An/ I , we, you, they , plural noun- Are

There are some of the verbs which sometime do not admit of progressive action such verbs are called Non-Progressive (Stative verbs)

For example-

(1) Verb of perception- See, Taste, Smell, hear, prefer, please, notice, recognise.

(2) Verb of Thinking process – Think ,know, mean, mind, remember, suppose

(3) Verbs showing possession- Own, have, belong, comprise, possess, contain, consist.

(4) Verb Expressing feelings or state of mind- Believe ,Like, Love, want, wish, desire, Hate.

(5) Verb in General- Look, Seem, Appear, Affect, Resemble, cast, require, stand, face, Become

→ Study these sentences Carefully→

(1) She is owning a car (wrong)

She owns a car (right)

(2) This house is belonging to me (wrong)

This house belongs to me (right)

(3) I am not hating him (wrong)

I do not hate him (right)

(4) I am not meaning this (wrong)

I do not mean this (right)

Present Perfect Tense

This tense is a mixture of present and past. At the time of speaking the action is already complete in the past. It always implies a strong connection with the present thought action took place in the past.

He has written a letter.

Structure-

S+Has/have+V3+O

Has→ He, she, it and singular subject have- I, we, you, they, and plural, subject

She has done her work.

They have bought a pen

Generally the following adverbs and conjunctions are used to express the preceding action→

“Ever, Just, recently, already, yet, so far, of late, lately, upto now.

Example

(1) He has Just seen your brother.

Present Perfect Conntinuous Tense

Perfect continuous Tense denotes an action continuing from the past in to the present. It implies the duration of an action.

Example : I have been reading this book for two hours.

Formulae

Sub+has/have been+V+ing+obj+V+since/for+Time.

We are teaching you since I am 'use of 'since' and 'for'

Since -(Point of time)

Since+Monday/ Evening.

Since +The beginning, since 2008

Since+time immorial, since 7. Pm.

Since last year.

'Since is used with calander, clock.

Etc-

Monday, Tuseday etc.

Since+7th may' 8th July etc.

2005, 2007, etc

March, May etc

Holi, Dewali ,etc

7 clock, 8 P.M. 2 A.M.

Childhood , adolescence etc.

Morning , last night, noon etc.

'FOR' Period of Time'

Two hours, for+ lat two years.

Days, years, menute, hours weeks.

Past Indifinate Tense

This tense is used for a past habit, indicated generally by-

Often , seldom usually, normally, generally, occasionally, sometimes, never, always, Frequently, rarely, daily, used to, would.

Example:-

They never took milk.

I used to go to meerut by bus.

"This tense is also used for a single act completed in the past.

Definite point of time is denoted by.

"Since 'ever since' earlier ago, back, last, before, yesterday, the other day.

(1) I meet your brother yesterday (wrong)

I meet your brother yesterday (right)

(2)She has bought a pen two days ago (wrong)

She bought a pen tow days ago(right)

Formulae- S+V2+O (+ve)

(-ve) Negative sentence- S+Did not+V1+O

Introgrative 1st =Did+ S+ V1+ V+O+?

Interrogative 2nd = Question word +did+S+V+obj+?

Note :-

It is time+ S+V 2

It is time you studied

Past continous Tense(Progressive Action)

This tense is chiefly used for past action in progress.

Example-

I was still reading when he came here.

Formula -

+Ve- S+ was/were+V1 +ing+O

-Ve - S+ was/were+ not+V 1+ing to

I, we, They, you/ plural noun+ were

He, she, it/ singular noun +was

You were playing cricket.

She was helping the poor.

"While still, then, at that moment may help the students to express progressive action in the past".

Past Perfect Tense

"This tense is used when out of two actions It is necessary to emphasize that the preceding action was completely finished before the succeeding action started.

For example:

(I) She had done her work before I slept

(II) He had gone to Meerul last month(wrong)

(because proceding action is not implied here).

Sometimes preceding action is implied and is indicated by the use of→

Ever, just, recently, already, yet, by the time, before after.

(1) She had already taken dinner.

(2) They had come here before he did the work.

(3) I had written this essay just now.

Formulae-

Past perfect continuous Tense

Formulae-

S+Had been+V+ing +obj+since/ for+time

(1) They had been living in meerut since 2008 (right)

(2) He had been singing a song for two hours (right)

Future Indefinite Tense

"This tense expresses an action that is to take place in future-

For example-

Soon' , shortly, in a few moments, tomorrow, presently(soon), next year/ month/day/ week etc..

undicate future action.

Example :

(1) He will come soon

(2) They will take coffee tomorrow.

Shall/will

Formulae- S+will/shall+V1+O

I,we+shall

He, she, it, they/ Noun+will

I shall not help my brother you will go to Delhi.

(1) "Shall use 2nd person subject-'you' 3rd person subject -

He, She, It, they commond, promise, threat,

determination, compulsion advice express .

(a) Commond - you shall leave the room at once.

(b) Promise- They shall be rewarded

(c) Threat - I will punish you.

(d) Determination- I will do this work.

(2) Let us/ Let's Imperative sentence question tag 'shall use

Example :- Let us dance together, shall we?

Future Continuous Tense

“This tense is used to express an action that will be in progress with a point of time in future.

For example :-

We shall be taking the exam at this time, next month.

Formulae-

+Ve +S+will/shall+be+v+ing +O + Ve+S+will/shall+not +be +V1 +ing+O

Example :

(1) They will be going to school.

(2) He will be going to Pune by car today.

Future perfect Tense

This tense is used when out of two actions it is necessary to emphasize that the preceding action will be completely finished before the succeeding action starts in future.

Sometimes preceding action is implied and indicated by the use of

Ever, just, already, recently, yet, so far, before, by the time ,after

For example-

(1) She will have already prepared food.

(2) They will have done their work recently.

(3) He has not completed work yet.

Formulae- I, we+ shall have+V3

He, she, it, they, noun+ will have+V3

Future perfect continuous Tense

Formulae- S+will have been+V+ing+ Shall have been Since/ for+ time

Since – point of time

For- Period of time

Example – They will have been playing cricket since 4 P.M.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| | He was driving a car. He was not driving a car. Was he driving a car? |
| Past perfect | S+had+V ₃ +O. S+had+not+V ₃ +O. Example: They had completed the assignment by yesterday. They had not completed the assignment by yesterday. Had they completed the assignment by yesterday? |
| Future Indefinite | S+Will/Shall+V ₁ +O S+will/shall+Not+V ₁ +O Example: She will buy a car. She will not buy a car. Will she buy a car? |
| Future perfect | S+will/shall +have+V ₃ +O S+will/shall+Not+have+V ₃ +O Example: You will have started the job. You will not have started the job. Will you have started the job? |

Common errors in the use of tenses

Rule 1. Here the error lies in using the present continuous instead of the present perfect continuous. We use the present perfect continuous to talk about an action which started in the past, has gone on till the present and is still continuing.

Examples

- Incorrect: It is raining for two days.
- Correct: It **has been** raining for two days.

Rule 2. Here the error lies in using the present perfect tense instead of the simple past tense. The present perfect is a present tense. It can't be used with adverbs of past time.

Examples

- Incorrect: I have taught him yesterday.
- Correct: I **taught** him yesterday.

| Tense | Active Voice |
|---------------------------|--|
| Present Indefinite | S+V ₁ /V ₁ +s/es+obj Sub+Do/does+Not+V ₁ +obj. Example : He sings a song. He does not sing a song. Does he sing a song? |
| Present Continuous | S+is/are/am+Ving+O S+is/are/am+Not +Ving+O Example: I am writing a letter. I am not writing a letter. Am I writing a letter? |
| Present Perfect | S+Has/have+V ₃ +O S+has/have+Not+V ₃ +O Example: She has finished her work. She has not finished her work. Has she finished her work? |
| Past Indefinite | S+V ₂ +O. S+Did+Not+V ₁ +O Example: I killed a snake. I did not kill a snake. Did I kill a snake? |
| Past Continuous | S+Was/were+Ving+O S+Was/were+Not+Ving+O Example: |

Rule 3. It is wrong to use the future tense in the subordinate clause when the verb in the main clause is in the imperative mood.

Examples

Incorrect: See that you will not do any damage.

Correct: See that you **do not** do any damage.

Rule 4. When the verb in the main clause is in the future tense, the verb in the subordinate clause should be in the present and not in the future.

Examples

- Incorrect: he will call you when the dinner will be ready.
- Correct: he will call you when the dinner **is** ready.
- Incorrect: she will help if you will ask him.
- Correct: she will help if you **ask** him.

Rule 5. Here the error lies in using the past perfect tense instead of the simple past. The past perfect is not used simply to say that something happened sometime ago. This meaning is conveyed by using the simple past.

Examples

- Incorrect: I **had written** to him last week.
- Correct: I **wrote** to him last week.
- Incorrect: We **had gone** to the pictures last night.
- Correct: We **went** to the pictures last night.

Rule 6. Here the error lies in using the simple past instead of the past perfect or the past continuous instead of the past perfect continuous.

The past perfect denotes an action completed at some point in the past before some other past action commenced. When two actions in the past have to be referred to, the past perfect should be used for the earlier action, and the simple past for the later one.

Examples

- Incorrect: The man complained that his watch was stolen.
- Correct: The man complained that his watch **had been stolen**.
- Incorrect: The doctor concluded that the man died twelve hours ago.
- Correct: The doctor concluded that the man **had died** twelve hours ago.

Rule 7. If first sentence is given in past second sentence can not be used in present or future tense.

(1) He told me that he will write (wrong)
He told me that he would write (right)
(2) Mother told me that honesty is the best policy(right)
(Universal truth/general truth sentence can not be changed in past tense)

(2) Two conjunction can not be used together.

(1) He has told me that he will come (right)
He has told me that when he will come (wrong)

**(i) before +V2 +O ,S+ had+V3
S+had+ V3 + before+ S+V2 +O**

He had gone to school before they came.

**(ii) After +had+V3, S+V2+O
S+V2+O after S+had+V3+O**

My father went to the office after she spoke the truth.

(iii) It is time /high time/ right time+ v2 (past indefinitr tense)

It is time you should start your work.(wrong)
It is time you started your work. (right)

Rule 8. In Present Indefinite Sentences, the number and person of the subject play very important role.

If the subject is singular number third person,affix `s' or 'es' to the verb. If the verb ends in any of the following ss, o, x, z, sh,ch. add, `es' instead of 's' with the verb. Like : Pass, Miss, Do, Mix, Fix, Whiz, Buzz,Catch, Fetch, Clash, Rush etc.

Rule 9. When the main verb is in future, use Present Simple in clauses with; if till, as soon as, when,unless, before, until, even, if, in case and as.

Examples

- (a) We shall wait till she arrives.
- (b) I shall not go there, even if it rains.

Rule 10. Present Simple must be used instead

of the Present Continuous with verbs of perception (feel, hear, smell etc.), Verbs of cognition (believe, know, think etc.), verbs of emotion (hope, love, hate etc.) which cannot be used normally in continuous form.

Example-

Incorrect We are seeing with our eyes.

Correct We see with our eyes.

Incorrect Are you hearing a strange noise?

Correct Do you hear a strange noise?

Incorrect We are smelling with our nose.

Correct We smell with our nose.

Incorrect The water is feeling cold.

Correct The water feels cold.

But these verbs can be used in progressive form in the following cases

1. The Session Judge is hearing our case.
2. We are thinking of going to USA next year.
3. He is minding (looking after) the children, while his wife is away.
4. I am seeing my lawyer today.
5. I am having some difficulties with this puzzle.

Rule 11. One must not use adverbs of past time like; yesterday, last year, last month, ago, short while ago etc. with Present Perfect Tense.

Example

He has completed his book yesterday. **(Incorrect)**

He completed his book yesterday. **(Correct)**

Rule 12. Use of Since/For Students commit mistakes in using 'Since' or 'For'. Please note, 'For' is used for 'Period of Time' and 'Since' is used for 'Point of Time'. With morning, evening etc., use since and with 'some time', 'hours', 'months', etc. use 'for'.

Rule 13. The use of Simple Past with, 'Wish' and 'If only' shows 'unreal past' and present state of things.

Examples

- (a) I wish I were a millionaire! (I am not a millionaire)
- (b) If only I knew her! (I don't know her)

Rule 14. Use of Past Continuous with 'When' and 'While', 'When' is usually used when one action was completed and another while action was going on.

Examples

When he arrived, his wife was washing her clothes.

'While' is used when two actions were going on at a time.

Example

While she was cooking, I was washing the clothes.

Rule 15. Past Perfect Continuous is used when the action began before the time of speaking in the past, and continued up to that time.

Examples

It was now eight and she was tired because she had been cleaning the house since dawn.

Rule 16. Future Perfect is also used for such incidents/actions, about which we presume that another person already had the knowledge of that incident or the action is already completed by that time.

Examples

- (a) You will have heard about Mother Teresa.
- (b) He will have read the newspaper so far.