



ESL

DeMYSTiFieD[®]

Ed Swick



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chapter 4

Present Perfect, Past Perfect, and Future Tenses



In this chapter you will encounter the conjugational forms that verbs take in the present and past perfect tenses, as well as in the future tense forms. Like the present and past tenses, these tenses each have three varieties that are used in specific ways.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Present and past perfect and future tense sentences that indicate a habitual action
- Present and past perfect and future tense sentences that indicate an incomplete or ongoing action
- Present and past perfect and future tense sentences that are an emphatic reply
- Irregular verbs in these tenses

The Perfect Tenses

When a present tense conjugational form of the verb **have** is accompanied by a past participle, the tense is called the present perfect tense. For example: **I have walked, you have lived, she has invited, we have learned, they have fixed.** The past participle of regular verbs is identical to the past tense of regular verbs.

Infinitive	Past Tense	Past Participle
cook	cooked	(have) cooked
hope	hoped	(have) hoped
look	looked	(have) looked
name	named	(have) named

TAKE NOTE *Keep in mind that the verb **have** has three specific meanings:*

Transitive verb/shows ownership = I have a new car.

Auxiliary/synonym of **must = I have to study tonight.**

Perfect tense auxiliary = I have learned the poem by heart.

When a past tense conjugational form of the verb **have** is accompanied by a past participle, the tense is called the past perfect tense. For example: **I had walked, you had lived, she had invited, we had learned, they had fixed.**

There is a difference, of course, between the present perfect tense and the past perfect tense. The present perfect describes an action that was begun in the past and that ended in the present. For example:

I have worked here for ten years. *I began working here ten years ago. I still work here.*

She **has played** the piano for two months. *She began playing the piano two months ago. She still plays the piano.*

My neighbors **have raised** two nice children. *My neighbors have two children, whom they have raised since birth. They still are in the process of raising their children, or the children are adults now.*

The past perfect tense describes an action that was begun in the past and that ended in the past. For example:

She **had worked** in Los Angeles for two years. *She had worked in Los Angeles for two years before she was promoted to her present position.*

Tom **had played** tennis in college. *Several years ago in college, Tom was a tennis player. After graduation, he found he no longer had time to practice and dropped tennis altogether.*

My friends **had raised** ducks on their farm. *Several years ago, my friends began raising ducks on their farm. A few years later they stopped raising ducks.*

Oral Practice

Read each line in the dialogue aloud.

Bob: Have you lived in New Orleans for a long time?

Sara: No, I had lived in Boston before I came here.

Bob: I have studied geology for a long time, but I hope to find a job soon.

Sara: Have you always been interested in geology?

Bob: Yes. But before studying geology, I had assisted a professor of botany.

Sara: I envy you. I have never liked the sciences.

When asking questions with perfect tense verbs, the auxiliary **do/does/did** is not required. A general question begins with the auxiliary **have**.

Have you learned your lesson?

Has she always helped you?

Had he never visited a museum?

Had your father walked to work in the past?

Written Practice 4-1

Reword each present or past tense sentence in the present perfect and the past perfect tenses. For example:

Jack works in a large factory.

Jack has worked in a large factory.

Jack had worked in a large factory.

1. My parents dined at a very nice restaurant.

2. Someone wants to dance with you.

3. We never travel by rail.

4. A friendly dog followed me home.

5. My wife always brushes her hair before bed.

6. Do you talk to your neighbors?

7. Did Sara close all the windows?

8. Does the rain damage the fragile plants?

9. That boy sometimes copies my homework.

10. Bill joined a fitness club.

Irregular Past Participles

Many verbs form an irregular past participle. They are introduced by the auxiliary **have** and form the present and past perfect tenses. Many irregular

past participles end in **-en**, but still others make a stem change or end in a consonant. For example:

I have driven	we had kept
you had said	they have read
she has spoken	

Some past participles are identical to the present tense.

Present Tense	Present and Past Perfect Tenses
I cut	I have cut
you put	you had put
he beats	he has beat
she sets	she had set
we burst	we have burst
they cast	they had cast
it costs	it has cost

Refer to the downloading instructions on the copyright page to see a complete list of irregular past participles.

Habitual or Complete Actions

The form of the present and past perfect tenses (**have plus past participle**) previously illustrated is used to describe a *habitual or complete action* in the past. Let's look at some sentences that tell what a person did habitually. Sometimes an adverb that suggests that *an action takes place more than once* can be added to the sentence.

My son has spoken French all his life.
 We had written her letters every day.
 I have sent her roses ever since the first day we met.
 Bill had often heard her singing.

TAKE NOTE *The adverb **never** belongs to the category of adverbs that describe an action that takes place more than once. It is the negative of **ever** or **forever**. Compare the meaning of the following pairs of sentences.*

It seems like I have lived in Buffalo **forever**.
 I have **never** lived in Buffalo.
 Have you **ever** worked for the social media?
 Have you **never** worked for the social media?

Written Practice 4-2

Give the past participle for each infinitive provided. Refer to the downloading instructions on the copyright page for additional material if necessary.

1. sing _____
2. understand _____
3. come _____
4. go _____
5. eat _____
6. drink _____
7. kneel _____
8. send _____
9. say _____
10. teach _____
11. grow _____
12. hold _____
13. bring _____
14. let _____
15. draw _____

Oral Practice

Track 15

Read each line in the dialogue aloud.

Mr. Winters: Have you found a place to live yet?

Phillip: No. A few months ago I had visited some rental apartments, but I didn't like them.

Mr. Winters: My aunt has lived in a nice condo on the East Side for several years.

Phillip: I had forgotten about how nice the East Side is.

Mr. Winters: She has spent her retirement years there and likes it a lot.

Phillip: I'll look into it. Have you already rented an apartment for yourself?

Mr. Winters: Two months ago. And I have bought some new furniture for the place.

Progressive Perfect Tenses

Just like the present and past tenses, the present perfect and past perfect tenses have a *progressive* conjugational form. And like the present and the past, the perfect tenses indicate *an action in progress or incomplete*. A progressive conjugation in the present perfect or the past perfect consists of a form of **have** plus **been** plus a **present participle**. For example:

We **have been living** in Vermont. *We began living in Vermont some time ago and still do.*

Had you **been dining** out a lot? *Did you do a lot of dining out back in the early 2000s? (You no longer do a lot of dining out.)*

The secretary of state **has been** traveling throughout Asia. *The secretary of state began traveling in Asia early in the current administration and continues to do so.*

I **had been standing** in the rain for an hour. *A few hours ago I stood in the rain for an hour, but eventually I got home and was able to dry off.*

Notice that there are not problems when dealing with the differences of regular and irregular verbs. It is the past participle **been** that always occurs in this structure, and the accompanying verb is always a present participle. This means that irregularities are not a concern. For example:

Infinitive	Past Participle	Progressive Perfect Tense
learn	learned	have been learning
drink	drunk	have been drinking
find	found	have been finding
go	gone	have been going
keep	kept	have been keeping
speak	spoken	have been speaking

This conjugational form is used to describe an action that was in progress when an interruption occurred. The clause that describes the interruption can begin the sentence or follow the main clause. The preferred progressive tense is the past perfect.

Interruption	Main Clause
When Jack came into the room	I had been taking a nap.
When the taxi hit my car	Bill had been texting with his girlfriend.

Main Clause

My husband **had** been fixing the roof
 The woman **had** been chatting
 in the garden

Interruption

when lightning struck a nearby tree.
when the storm came up.

Oral Practice

Read each line in the dialogue aloud.

Dora: Have you been working at this job long?

Nick: No, I had been selling magazines door-to-door before this.

Tom: Has your brother been taking flying lessons?

Jane: No, he had been serving in the air force and was trained in California.

Luis: Have you been sitting here a while?

Dale: Yes, I have been thinking about home and paying my parents a visit.

Michael: You looked so embarrassed. What had you been doing?

Laura: When my aunt came into the living room, Carlos and I had been kissing.

Written Practice 4-3

Reword each present or past tense sentence in the present perfect tense and the past perfect tense. Careful! Some sentences describe a habitual action, others describe an action in progress. For example:

They were talking about work.

They have been talking about work.

They had been talking about work.

1. Tom is taking the dog for a walk.

2. Maria bought an expensive sweater.

3. My grandparents always drink only tea.

4. Phillip was speaking with Mr. Jackson.

5. Did you see a lunar eclipse?

6. Is the team traveling out of state? (for example, from New York to Pennsylvania)

7. The children were very naughty.

8. Why are those men following us?

9. Dr. Schwartz was giving lectures on smoking.

10. I am finally spending less money.

Oral Practice

Track 16

Read each sentence aloud, paying attention to the tense and meaning of the verbs.

We have been walking for over an hour. Where is that hotel?
Ms. Olson has never developed a relationship with her neighbors.
Have your parents driven to Canada every summer?

When the door slammed, I had been napping on the sofa.
 Allison had been window-shopping at the mall when she saw her
 boyfriend coming.
 Had he been drinking when the accident happened?
 I have participated in the marathon for years.
 The twins had never known their grandparents.

Emphatic Responses

Emphatic responses function in the perfect tenses as they do in the present and past tenses. However, the auxiliary **do/does/did** is not used in the response. Instead, the auxiliary **have** is intoned strongly. If the emphatic response is in the negative, the adverb **not** is intoned strongly. When the response contains an adverb that contradicts the negative statement, the contradictory adverb can be intoned strongly instead of the auxiliary **have**. For example (words with accents are strongly intoned):

Statement	Emphatic Response
You have never understood me.	I háve always understood you. (I have álways understood you.)
Martin has been eating too much.	Martin has nóted been eating too much.
I had not heard from my son.	You hád heard from your son.
John had been driving too fast.	John had nóted been driving too fast.
You had seldom visited me there.	I hád fréquently visited you there. (I had fréquently visited you there.)

Oral Practice

Read each line aloud. Intone the emphasized word in the emphatic response.

My boss has not paid me yet. Your boss has already paid you.
 Doris has been complaining a lot. Doris has not been complaining a lot.
 Someone had taken my lunch. Someone had not taken your lunch.
 (No one had taken your lunch.)
 Mr. Roberts had been gambling again. Mr. Roberts had not been
 gambling again.
 The French girl has often spoken of Bill. The French girl has not spoken of
 Bill. (The French girl has seldom spoken of Bill.)
 I had been skiing when the blizzard began. You had not been skiing when
 the blizzard began.

Written Practice 4-4

Give an appropriate emphatic response to each statement. Take note that the statements are in various tenses.

1. I have been writing a novel.

2. Jack speaks only of his former girlfriend.

3. Your daughter had not yet received my gift.

4. The temperature is very high today.

5. Jean has not been receiving her magazines.

6. You have never trusted me.

7. Carla has no idea what that word means.

8. Jim has been dating someone from Africa.

9. A large tree had fallen near the garage.

10. Someone has been slamming the door.

IDIOMS DEMYSTIFIED

The idioms **to paint the town red** (*go out to several clubs and party*) and **to put on airs** (*to act haughty or superior*) can be used in the perfect tenses. When using these idioms in those tenses, you must be aware of the nuance of meaning they provide.

To Paint the Town Red

Tim and John have been painting the town red since graduation. (*An ongoing period of partying began in the past [since graduation] and continues now.*)

He had been painting the town red when he suddenly came to his senses. (*His ongoing partying was interrupted when he realized that he was headed for trouble.*)

The wedding party has painted the town red. (*The wedding party's partying continued until the present but is now complete.*)

You had painted the town red with your brother. (*An emphatic response to the statement "I had not painted the town red with my brother."*)

To Put on Airs

Mark has been putting on airs since he won the Mr. Muscle contest. (*Mark began acting superior and continues to do so since he won the Mr. Muscle contest.*)

Until her father scolded her, Maria had been putting on airs. (*Maria's haughty behavior was interrupted by her father's scolding.*)

My cousin had never put on airs. (*In the past, my cousin never acted haughty.*)

That pretty girl has never put on airs. (*An emphatic response to the statement: "That pretty girl has always put on airs."*)

The Future Tenses

A future meaning is given in two forms: the *simple future tense* and the *future perfect tense*. These two tense forms tell what happens in the future but in distinct ways.

Simple Future Tense

The simple future tense can be formed in three ways.

Simple Future with the Present Tense

The simplest of these is the use of a *present tense sentence that implies a future tense meaning*. This is not a rare form of the future tense; it is used throughout the

English-speaking world. Be aware that a verb in its habitual or progressive form can be used in the future tense in this way. The difference of meaning between the habitual and progressive conjugations also applies in this tense. For example:

Tomorrow I **fly** to London.
 Next week, we **are planning** a surprise party for Mary.
 On Monday, someone **has to** wash that filthy car.
 The football game **starts** in ten minutes.

Simple Future with Will and Shall

A second version of the future tense is composed of the auxiliary **will** or **shall** and an infinitive. **Shall** is typically used with the first person singular and plural (**I, we**). **Will** is used with the other persons, but there is a tendency to use **will** for all persons. For example:

I **shall/will** spend time in South America.
 You **will** find your gloves in that drawer.
Will he recognize me after all these years?
 We **shall/will** help you all we can.
 They **will** send a spacecraft to Mars.

If a progressive verb is used with **shall** or **will**, a progressive infinitive (**be going, be singing, be learning**) accompanies the auxiliary. For example:

I shall/will **be correcting** your essays.
 The usher will **be taking** your tickets at the door.
 They will **be staying** overnight in the dormitory.

When the future auxiliaries **shall** or **will** are used, negative adverbs stand between the auxiliary and the infinitive. For example:

I shall/will **not** be going to your anniversary party.
 We shall/will **never** be in favor of such a law.
 You will **not** be taking part in the play this year.
 He will **never** learn to play the flute.

There are times when the first person pronouns should be used with **shall**, and **will** should be avoided. When asking someone to make a decision or a choice, **shall** begins the question. For example:

Shall I help you get down from the ladder? (*What is your decision?*)
Shall we go to a concert or a movie tonight? (*Which do you choose?*)
Shall I order a pizza or a couple hamburgers? (*Which do you prefer?*)

When questions like these are negated, the negative adverb stands between the subject and the infinitive: **Shall we *never* get to meet your fiancé? Shall I *not* worry about your behavior?**

There is also a tendency to use **shall** in the first person in a statement that is a response to a “yes” or “no” reply to a posed question. The use of **shall** is for emphasis. For example:

Posed question: Is this the dress you want me to wear to your wedding?

Reply: Yes, it’s perfect for you.

Response: Then I **shall** not be coming to your wedding!

and

Posed question: Can this project be done cheaply?

Reply: No, it will cost double what we first thought.

Response: Then we **shall** have to find more funds somehow.

Oral Practice

Read each sentence aloud, paying attention to the form of the future tense.

Mr. Garcia goes to Havana on Friday.

I shall never understand why you put on airs.

Is someone having a birthday party for Tom next week?

You will have to be prepared for an exam in the near future.

We will be depending upon your support of our idea.

When do you travel to Russia? Next month?

My uncle’s collie will have pups soon.

Written Practice 4-5

Reword each past tense sentence in the two forms of the future tense. Add an appropriate adverb to each future tense sentence. For example:

John was going to the library.

John is going to the library tomorrow.

John will be going to the library tomorrow.

1. My professor was speaking about evolution.

2. My wife drove to Connecticut.

3. Were you leaving on vacation?

4. My son was spending the summer at a camp in Michigan.

5. The foreign tourists arrived around 4 p.m.

Simple Future with to Be Going

A third future tense structure is comprised of the phrase **be going to** with an infinitive. There is a slight difference in meaning with this phrase. It implies that the action is something the speaker or writer *intends* to do in the future. Compare the following pairs of future tense sentences and notice how they differ in meaning.

Future action: I will buy a new car next week.

Intended action: I **am going to** buy a new car next week.

Future action: Bill will solve his money problems.

Intended action: Bill **is going to** solve his money problems.

Future action: The young men will enroll in college.

Intended action: The young men **are going to** enroll in college.

Future action: Will you repair that old car?

Intended action: **Are you going to** repair that old car?

Because **be going to** is not a true future tense auxiliary, it can be used in other tenses, the most common of which is the past tense. The use of other tenses can sound awkward and should be avoided. The meaning is still an intended action. For example:

I **was going to** buy a new car next week.

Bill **was going to** solve his money problems.

The young men **were going to** enroll in college.

Were you going to repair that old car?

Note that a future tense sentence with **be going to** can be used with a progressive tense verb: **I am going to *be working* in the garage. My wife is going to *be singing* in the choir. Are they going to *be learning* German?** The meaning, of course, implies an ongoing or incomplete action.

Written Practice 4-6

Reword each past tense sentence in the future tense with **shall/will** and **be going to**. For example:

Richard went to the movies.

Richard will go to the movies.

Richard is going to go to the movies.

1. Who was riding in the convertible?

2. My in-laws [*my spouse's parents*] were traveling in Guatemala.

3. Did I borrow more money from him?

4. Bob sent her an important e-mail.

5. The ambassador spoke with the other diplomats.

Future Perfect Tense

The future perfect tense differs from the future tense in that the auxiliary **shall/will** is accompanied by a *participial infinitive* rather than an infinitive. A participial infinitive is composed of the auxiliary **have** and a past participle—either regular or irregular. For example:

I shall have spoken.
 You will have discovered.
 She will have written.
 We shall have worked.
 They will have driven.

This conjugational form is used to show a habitual or completed action. But the present perfect tense can use a participial infinitive in the progressive form. In that case, it is composed of the auxiliary **shall/will** plus **have been** followed by a present participle. For example:

I shall have been learning.
 You will have been making.
 She will have been sleeping.
 We shall have been reading.
 They will have been dancing.

As in other tenses, this verb structure indicates an ongoing or incomplete action.

The future perfect tense is used most often to describe an action that occurs in the present or future and ends in the future. Such sentences are usually accompanied by a clause or phrase that tells when the action will end. For example:

Anne will have arrived in Denver **by 10 p.m.**
By the time the sun sets, the hikers will have been going down the trail for six hours.
 I will have taken eight tests **before the semester ends.**

In casual speech, it is common to substitute the future tense for the future perfect tense. This avoids the awkwardness of working complex combinations of verbs into informal conversation.

Anne will arrive in Denver **by 10 p.m.**
When the sun sets, the hikers will have been going down the trail for six hours.
 I will take eight tests **before the semester ends.**

Oral Practice

Track 17

Read each sentence aloud, paying attention to the verbs and their meaning.

Will John have earned his first paycheck by the end of the week?

We will have been living in San Francisco for two years next month.

I doubt that anyone will have noticed the problem before the automatic system corrects it.

When morning comes, they will finally have arrived in Paris.

Will the fields have been sown by the end of spring?

Next week, Ms. Singh will have been teaching our class for two months.

My cousin will have earned enough for his vacation by May.

Written Practice 4-7

Reword each present tense sentence in the future and future perfect tenses. Add a clause or phrase that tells when the action will end in the future perfect sentence. For example:

Laura makes a chocolate cake.

Laura will make a chocolate cake.

Laura will have made a chocolate cake by the end of the afternoon.

1. Bob is walking for two hours.

2. Mr. James pays off the loan.

3. That girl dances with every boy.

4. Do you write a lot of poems?

5. I perfect my English.

6. Sophia is living with her grandmother for a month.

7. He gets a bad cold.

8. My brother finds a job in the city.

9. The dolphins chase the shark away.

10. The young chemist develops a new formula.

Auxiliaries

Auxiliaries can be added to sentences in the various tenses to change the *shade of their meaning*. You encountered this function of auxiliaries in Chapter 4. For example:

Jack Stands Up.

Jack **is able to** stand up. (*Ability.*)

Jack **must** stand up. (*Obligation.*)

Jack **wants to** stand up. (*Desire.*)

We Learn Spanish.

We **should** learn Spanish. (*Mild obligation.*)

We **need to** learn Spanish. (*Necessity.*)

We **might** learn Spanish. (*Possibility.*)

Speakers of English use auxiliaries in the perfect and future tenses. It is wise to avoid this tense, however, because the future perfect becomes awkward when auxiliaries are added. For example:

My Aunt Has to Visit a Neighbor. (*Obligation*)

My aunt has **had to** visit a neighbor.

My aunt had **had to** visit a neighbor.

My aunt will **have to** visit a neighbor.

Bill Needs to Earn More Money. (*Necessity*)

Bill has **needed to** earn more money.

Bill had **needed to** earn more money.

Bill will **need to** earn more money.

Take note that the auxiliaries **have to**, **need to**, **want to**, **be able to**, and **be supposed to** are the only ones that can be used in the perfect and future tenses. Although **be supposed to** can technically be used in these tenses, it is avoided because it sounds awkward.

When **can** is in the past tense, it changes to **could**. But when it is used in the perfect and future tenses, **be able to** is substituted for **can**. **Must** is only used in the present tense. In all other tenses, it changes to **have to**. For example:

I Can Run Fast.

I have **been able to** run fast.

I had **been able to** run fast.

I will **be able to** run fast.

We Must Hurry.

We have **had to** hurry.

We had **had to** hurry.

We will **have to** hurry.

Written Practice 4-8

Complete each sentence twice with any appropriate phrases.

1. I have been able to _____

I have been able to _____

2. Mary will have to _____

Mary will have to _____

3. No one had wanted to _____

No one had wanted to _____

4. Will you need to _____?
 Will you need to _____?
5. The tourists had wanted to _____
 The tourists had wanted to _____

QUIZ

Choose the letter of the word or phrase that best completes each sentence.

- I _____ never wanted to travel to Seattle.
 A. do
 B. have
 C. did
 D. am having
- The vacationers had _____ camping along the lake.
 A. been
 B. had
 C. being
 D. having
- _____ we take a little stroll around the park?
 A. Are supposed to
 B. Were able
 C. Had
 D. Shall
- Has _____ found the keys to my desk?
 A. you
 B. the children or you
 C. one of you
 D. him
- Tom will have been napping for an hour _____.
 A. yesterday
 B. by the time supper is ready
 C. where
 D. wanted to
- Marie had _____ when someone knocked on the door.
 A. been reading.
 B. noticed
 C. found the remote
 D. sitting and waiting
- Have you always _____ wear glasses?
 A. wanted
 B. be able to
 C. needing to
 D. had to

