English Tenses Chart

All 12 tenses: the form, an example and the signal words; uses and the most common mistake on page 2. Practise each tense online — scan the code.

TENSE	FORM + / − / ?	EXAMPLE	SIGNAL WORDS
Present Simple A1	+ I/you/we/they **work** · he/she/it **works** − I/you/we/they **don't work** · he/she/it **doesn't work** ? **Do** I/you/we/they **work**? · **Does** he/she/it **work**?	*My brother works in a hospital.*	always, usually, often, sometimes, never, every day, on Mondays
Present Continuous A1	+ I **am working** · he/she/it **is working** · you/we/they **are working** − I'**m not working** · he/she/it **isn't working** · you/we/they **aren't working** ? **Am** I **working**? · **Is** he/she/it **working**? · **Are** you/we/they **working**?	*Be quiet — the baby is sleeping.*	now, right now, at the moment, today, this week, Look!, Listen!
Present Perfect A2	+ I/you/we/they **have worked** · he/she/it **has worked** − I/you/we/they **haven't worked** · he/she/it **hasn't worked** ? **Have** I/you/we/they **worked**? · **Has** he/she/it **worked**?	*I've lost my keys, so I can't get in.*	ever, never, before, for, since, so far, How long…?
Present Perfect Continuous B1	+ I/you/we/they **have been working** · he/she/it **has been working** − I/you/we/they **haven't been working** · he/she/it **hasn't been working** ? **Have** I/you/we/they **been working**? · **Has** he/she/it **been working**?	*I've been waiting for you for an hour.*	for, since, How long…?, all day, all morning, recently, lately
Past Simple A2	+ I/you/he/she/it/we/they **worked** · irregular verbs: **went**, **saw**, **took** − I/you/he/she/it/we/they **didn't work** ? **Did** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **work**?	*We visited our grandparents last weekend.*	yesterday, last night, last week, two days ago, in 2019, When…?
Past Continuous A2	+ I/he/she/it **was working** · you/we/they **were working** − I/he/she/it **wasn't working** · you/we/they **weren't working** ? **Was** I/he/she/it **working**? · **Were** you/we/they **working**?	*At eight o'clock I was having dinner.*	while, when, at that moment, at six o'clock yesterday, all evening
Past Perfect B1	+ I/you/he/she/it/we/they **had worked** − I/you/he/she/it/we/they **hadn't worked** ? **Had** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **worked**?	*When we got to the station, the train had already left.*	already, before, after, by the time, by then, never … before
Past Perfect Continuous B2	+ I/you/he/she/it/we/they **had been working** − I/you/he/she/it/we/they **hadn't been working** ? **Had** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **been working**?	*We had been walking for hours when it started to rain.*	for, since, How long…?, all day, by the time, when
Future Simple (will) A2	+ I/you/he/she/it/we/they **will work** · short form: I'**ll work** − I/you/he/she/it/we/they **won't work** (will not) ? **Will** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **work**?	*I think it will rain tomorrow.*	tomorrow, next week, soon, I think, probably, I'm sure
Future Continuous B2	+ I/you/he/she/it/we/they **will be working** − I/you/he/she/it/we/they **won't be working** ? **Will** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **be working**?	*This time tomorrow I'll be flying to Rome.*	this time tomorrow, this time next week, at eight o'clock tomorrow, all day tomorrow
Future Perfect B2	+ I/you/he/she/it/we/they **will have worked** − I/you/he/she/it/we/they **won't have worked** ? **Will** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **have worked**?	*By six o'clock I'll have finished the report.*	by Friday, by then, by the time, by the end of the month, before
Future Perfect Continuous B2	+ I/you/he/she/it/we/they **will have been working** − I/you/he/she/it/we/they **won't have been working** ? **Will** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **have been working**?	*Next month I'll have been working here for five years.*	for, by, by the time, by then, How long…?, all day

When to use each tense

TENSE	USES	COMMON MISTAKE
Present Simple	Habits and routines: I **get up** at seven every day. Facts and things that are always true: The sun **rises** in the east. Permanent situations: She **lives** in Madrid. Timetables and schedules: The train **leaves** at ten tomorrow morning.	~~She work in a bank.~~ → She works in a bank.
Present Continuous	Actions happening now: Look — it's **raining**. Temporary situations around now: I'**m staying** with friends this week. Changing situations: Our town **is getting** busier every year. Arrangements for the future: We'**re meeting** Anna at six tomorrow.	~~I am knowing the answer.~~ → I know the answer.
Present Perfect	Life experience: *ever*, *never*, *before*: I'**ve** never **tried** sushi. A past action with a result now: Someone **has broken** the window. Up to now: *for*, *since*, *How long…?*: We'**ve known** each other since 2015. Recent actions: *just*, *already*, *yet* (American English often uses the past simple here): She'**s** just **left**.	~~I have seen him yesterday.~~ → I saw him yesterday.
Present Perfect Continuous	An activity that started in the past and is still going on: She'**s been working** here since March. A recent activity with a visible result: Your eyes are red — **have** you **been crying**? How long an activity has lasted: We'**ve been driving** for six hours.	~~I am waiting here since ten o'clock.~~ → I've been waiting here since ten o'clock.
Past Simple	Finished actions at a finished time: I **saw** Tom two days ago. A series of past events: She **opened** the door, **looked** outside and **smiled**. Past habits and states: When I **was** a child, I **walked** to school every day. Questions with *When…?*: When **did** you **arrive**?	~~I didn't went to work yesterday.~~ → I didn't go to work yesterday.
Past Continuous	An action in progress at a past moment: At midnight I **was** still **working**. An action interrupted by another (past simple): I **was cooking** when the phone **rang**. Two actions in progress at the same time: She **was reading** while he **was watching** TV. The background of a story: The sun **was shining** and the birds **were singing**.	~~We was watching TV when you called.~~ → We were watching TV when you called.
Past Perfect	The earlier of two past actions: When I got home, my sister **had** already **gone** to bed. The reason for a past situation: She was tired because she **hadn't slept**. Experience up to a past moment: It was the first time I **had flown**. Reported speech: He said he **had lost** his phone.	~~By the time we arrived, everyone left.~~ → By the time we arrived, everyone had left.
Past Perfect Continuous	An activity that lasted up to a past moment: I **had been working** there for five years when the company closed. The cause of a past situation: The ground was wet because it **had been raining**.	~~He was tired because he has been working all day.~~ → He was tired because he had been working all day.
Future Simple (will)	Predictions and opinions about the future: I think you'**ll like** this book. Decisions made at the moment of speaking: It's cold. I'**ll close** the window. Offers and promises: I'**ll call** you tonight. Plans already decided: usually *going to* or the present continuous: We'**re going to paint** the kitchen. · I'**m meeting** Sam on Friday.	~~I will to call you later.~~ → I'll call you later.
Future Continuous	An action in progress at a future moment: At ten tomorrow I'**ll be driving** to work. Something that will happen anyway, as part of a plan or routine: I'**ll be seeing** Maria at work tomorrow, so I can give her the message. Polite questions about someone's plans: **Will** you **be coming** to the meeting?	~~This time tomorrow I will lie on the beach.~~ → This time tomorrow I'll be lying on the beach.
Future Perfect	An action completed before a future moment: By the end of the year they'**ll have built** the new bridge. Looking back from a point in the future: Next month we'**ll have lived** here for ten years.	~~By the time you will arrive, I'll have left.~~ → By the time you arrive, I'll have left.
Future Perfect Continuous	How long an activity will have lasted at a future moment: By ten o'clock we'**ll have been driving** for six hours. The reason for a future situation: She'll be tired when she gets home — she'**ll have been working** all day.	~~By June I will be working here for ten years.~~ → By June I'll have been working here for ten years.