***THE USES OF THE PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE TENSES***

**THE PRESENT Simple Present Tense**

The Simple Present is used: -

(1) To express a habitual action; as,

He drinks tea every morning.

I get up every day at five o'clock.

My watch keeps good time.

(2) To express general truths; as,

The sun rises in the east.

Honey is sweet.

Fortune favours the brave.

(3) In exclamatory sentences beginning with here and there to express what is actually taking place in the present; as,

Here comes the bus !

There she goes !

***Present Continuous Tense***

The Present Continuous is used

(1) For an action going on at the time of speaking ; as,

She is singing (now).

The boys are playing hockey.

(2) For a temporary action which may not be actually happening at the time of speaking; as,

I am reading ‘Davit! Copperfield’ (but I am not reading at this moment).

(3) For an action that has already been arranged to take place in the near future; as,

I am going to the cinema tonight.

My uncle is arriving tomorrow.

It has been pointed out before that the Simple Present is used for a habitual action. However, when the reference is to a particularly obstinate habit-something which persists, for example, in spite of advice or warning- we use the Present Continuous with an adverb like always, continually, constantly.

My dog is very silly: he is always running out into the road.

221. The following verbs, on account of their meaning, are not normally used in the continuous form:

(1) Verbs of perception, e.g., see, hear, smell, notice, recognize.

(2) Verbs of appearing . e.g., appear, look, seem.

(3) Verbs of emotion, e.g., want, wish, desire, feel, like, love, hate, hope, refuse, prefer.

(4) Verbs of thinking, e.g., think, suppose, believe, agree, consider, trust, remember, forget, know, understand, imagine, mean, mind.

(5) have (= possess), own, possess, belong to, contain, consist of, be (except when used in the passive), e.g.

**Wrong -- Right**

These grapes are tasting sour -- These grapes taste sour.

I am thinking you arc wrong -- I think you are wrong.

She is seeming sad -- She seems sad.

He is having a cellular phone -- He has a cellular phone.

However, the verbs listed above can be used in the continuous tenses with a change of meaning:

She is tasting the soup to see if it needs more salt.

(taste= lest the flavour of )

I am thinking of going to Malaysia.

(think of = consider the idea of)

They are having lunch, (have = eat)

***Present Perfect Tense***

The Present Perfect is used

(1) To indicate completed activities in the immediate past (with just): as;

• He has just gone out.

• It has just struck ten.

(2) To express past actions whose time is not given and not definite; as,

Have you read "Gulliver's Travels'?

I have never known him to be angry.

Mr. Hari has been to Japan.

(3) To describe past events when we think more of their effect in the present than of the action itself; as,

Gopi has eaten all the biscuits (i.e., there aren't any left for you).

I have cut my finger (and it is bleeding now).

I have finished my work (= now I am free).

(4) To denote an action beginning at some time in the continuing up to the present moment (often with since- and/or-phrases); as,

• I Have known him for a long time.

• He has been ill since last week.

• We have lived here for ten years.

• We haven't seen Padina for several months.

***Present Perfect Continuous Tense***

The Present Perfect Continuous is used for an action which began at some time in the past and is still continuing; as,

He has been sleeping for five hours (and is still sleeping).

They have been building the bridge for several months.

They have been playing since four o'clock.

This tense is also sometimes used for an action already finished. In such cases the continuity of the activity is emphasized as an explanation of something.

'Why are your clothes so wet?' - 'I have been watering the garden'.

***THE PAST***

**Simple Past Tense**

The Simple Past is used to indicate an action completed in the past. It often occurs with adverbs or adverb phrases of past time.

The steamer sailed yesterday.

I received his letter a week ago.

She left school last year.

Sometimes this tense is used without an adverb of time. In such cases the time may be either implied or indicated by the context.

I learnt Hindi in Nagpur.

I didn't sleep well (i.e, last night).

Babar defeated Rana Sanga at Kanwaha.

The Simple Past is also used for past habits; as,

He studied many hours every day.

She always carried an umbrella.

***Past Continuous Tense***

The Past Continuous is used to denote an action going on at some time in the past. The time of the action may or may not be indicated.

We were watching TV all evening.

It was getting darker.

The light went out while I was reading.

When I saw him, he was playing chess.

As in the last two examples above, the Past Continuous and Simple Past are used together when a new action happened in the middle of a longer action. The Simple Past is used for the new action.

This tense is also used with always, continually, etc. for persistent habits in the past.

He was always grumbling.

***Past Perfect Tense***

The Past Perfect describes an action completed before a certain moment in the past; as,

I met him in New Delhi in 1996. I-had seen him last five years before.

If two actions happened in the past, it may be necessary to show which action happened earlier than the other. The Past Perfect is mainly used in such situations. The Simple Past is used in one clause and the Past Perfect in the other; as,

When I reached the station the train had started (so I couldn't get into the train).

I had done my exercise when Han came to see me.

I had written the letter before he arrived.

***Past Perfect Continuous Tense***

The Past Perfect Continuous is used for an action that began before a certain point in the past and continued up to that time; as,

At that time he had been writing a novel for two months.

When Mr. Mukerji came to the school in 1995, Mr. Anand had already been teaching there for five years.

***THE FUTURE***

There are several ways of talking about the future in English: The Simple Future Tense, the going to form, the Simple Present Tense, etc.

***Simple future tense***

The Simple Future Tense is used to talk about things which we cannot control. It expresses the future as fact.

I shall be twenty next Saturday.

It will be Diwali in a week.

We will know our exam results in May.

We use this tense to talk about what we think or believe will happen in the future.

I think Pakistan will win the match.

I'm sure Helen will get a first class.

As in the above sentences, we often use this tense with I think, and I'm sure. We also say

I expect ---, I believe ---, Probably ---, etc.

We can use this tense when we decide to do something at the lime of speaking

It is raining. I will take an umbrella.

“Mr. Sinha is very busy at the moment.” – “All right. I'll wait.”

***Future Continuous Tense***

We use the Future Continuous Tense to talk about actions which will be in progress at a time in the future.

I suppose it will he raining when we start.

This time tomorrow I will be sitting on the beach in Singapore.

“Can I see you at 5 o'clock?” – “Please don t come then I will be watching the tennis match on TV.

We also use this tense to talk about actions in the future which are already planned or which are expected to happen in the normal course of things.

• I will be staying here till Sunday.

• He will be meeting us next week.

• The postman will be coming soon

***Future Perfect Tense***

The Future Perfect Tense is used to talk about actions that will be completed by a certain future time.

I shall have written my exercise by then.

He will have left before you go to see him.

By the end of this month I will have worked here for five years.

***Future Perfect Continuous Tense***

The Future Perfect Continuous tense is used for actions which will be in progress over a period of time that will end in the future.

By next March we shall have been living here for four years.

I’ll have been teaching for twenty years next July.

This tense is not very common.