

THE FUTURE

Introductory Remarks

Time is a concept which is related to our perception of reality. There are three times: the past, the present, and the future.

Tense, on the other hand, is a grammatical category which is marked by verb inflection and expresses when an event or action happens in the flow of time. Strictly speaking, therefore, only two English tenses are marked by the inflection of the verb:

- the past (**walked**)
- the present third person (**walks**).

Other tenses are marked by the auxiliaries **be** and **have**:

- past continuous (**was/were** walking)
- past perfect (**had** walked)
- past perfect continuous (**had been** walking)
- present continuous (**am/are/is** walking)
- present perfect (**has/have** walked)
- present perfect continuous (**has/have been** walking)

Aspect refers to a property of verbs. Unlike tense, “which describes the verb’s fixed position in time as either past or present,” aspect describes how an event can be viewed in relation to time, rather than when exactly it happened. With respect to English conjugation, there are two aspects:

- the **perfective** aspect – which describes a bounded event, i.e. an event with identifiable boundaries.
- The **continuous** aspect – which describes an unbounded event, i.e. an event that will be/is/was continuing for some time before stopping.

As one of the common ways for expressing the future time is with the modal **will + infinitive** and not with an inflection, the forms with **will** (*will walk, will be walking, will have walked, will have been walking*) are not **technically** considered tenses. But for the sake of convenience and consistency, we will refer to them as **tenses**.

As such, twelve (12) basic tenses can be identified in English, as shown on the table below:

	Simple	Continuous	Perfect	Perfect continuous
Past	Past simple	Past continuous	Past perfect	Past perfect continuous
Present	Present simple	Present continuous	Present perfect	Present perfect continuous
Future	Future simple	Future continuous	Future perfect	Future perfect continuous

It is essential to note that certain tenses in English may refer to a different time than that expressed by their names. The following exercise will help you disambiguate between tense and time.

Exercise 1.

Consider the following sentences. Carefully examine the *italicized bolded verb(s)* in them and indicate the **tense**, **time**, and **aspect** of the verb.

- No doubt I'll ***see*** you next week.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
- He ***plays*** football every Tuesday.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
- I had a BMW, but I ***sold*** it.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
- Our people ***had been walking*** the forest long before it took that fussy name.
 - Tense
 - Time

- Aspect
5. She said she **quit** because of stress created in her branch to meet the new customer-service measures.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
 6. Ma **has** lately **become** a mix of futurist, business seer, and conference-circuit speaker.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
 7. This wasn't supposed to be life, he **had been thinking** lately.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
 8. Now, finally, an American family **is filing** paperwork to adopt Jai Jai.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
 9. At the third and final ball, Trump **dances** again, **eats** cake and **speaks** to troops stationed in Afghanistan.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
 10. She **eats** a healthy diet and **exercises**, but was curious about her DNA and decided to sign up for the study.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
 11. She eats a healthy diet and exercises, but **was** curious about her DNA and **decided** to sign up for the study.
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
 12. Do you think Putin **will be going** to The Miss Universe Pageant in November in Moscow?
 - Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect

13. The Ground is one of the last projects at The Contemporary launched during the eventful tenure of executive director Deanna Haggag, who *departs* next month to head the Chicago-based arts organization United States Artists.
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
14. There's advertisers that *have been pulling out* of this program because he did defend Roy Moore at the beginning.
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
15. The parade *will have ended* by the time Chester gets out of bed.
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
16. When I turn thirty, I *will have been playing* piano for twenty-one years.
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
17. This time next week, I *will be sun-bathing* in Bali.
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
18. *Will Jim be coming* with us?
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
19. Come here. I *forgot* to give you something.
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect
20. The orchestra is playing a Mozart symphony after this.
- Tense
 - Time
 - Aspect