



## The Past Tense

### Definition:

The past tense describes actions that happened in the past or conditions that existed in the past.

**There are four forms of the past tense:**

1. Simple Past Tense
2. Past Continuous Tense
3. Past Perfect Tense
4. Past Perfect Continuous Tense

### 1. Simple Past Tense

Used to describe an action that happened in the past and is no longer happening.

#### Structure:

Sentence Type	Structure	Example
Affirmative	Subject + past form of verb	I played.
Negative	Subject + did not + base verb	I did not play.
Interrogative	Did + subject + base verb?	Did I play?
Negative Interrogative	Did + subject + not + base verb?	Did I not play?

#### Usage:

- To express an action completed at a specific time in the past.

E.g., I met him yesterday.

- To express past habits.

E.g., We usually swam in the river for hours.

#### Common Adverbs Used:

- Yesterday, last night, last week, ago, in 2001, etc.

### 2. Past Continuous Tense

Describes an action that was ongoing at a particular time in the past.



## Structure:

Sentence Type	Structure	Example
Affirmative	Subject + was/were + verb + ing	I was eating.
Negative	Subject + was/were + not + verb + ing	He was not singing.
Interrogative	Was/were + subject + verb + ing?	Was I singing?
Negative Interrogative	Was/were + subject + not + verb + ing?	Was he not singing?

## Usage:

- To describe an action in progress in the past.  
E.g., She was writing a letter.
- To show simultaneous actions in the past.  
E.g., I was reading while she was cooking.
- To describe an interrupted past activity.  
E.g., I was studying when the phone rang.

## 3. Past Perfect Tense

Used to describe an action completed before another past action.

## Structure:

Sentence Type	Structure	Example
Affirmative	Subject + had + past participle	I had eaten.
Negative	Subject + had + not + past participle	I had not eaten.
Interrogative	Had + subject + past participle?	Had I eaten?
Negative Interrogative	Had + subject + not + past participle?	Had I not eaten?

## Usage:

- For an action that finished before another past action.  
E.g., He had left before I came.

- To express a reason/cause for another past action.

**E.g.,** The woodcutter was crying because he had lost his axe.

#### 4. Past Perfect Continuous Tense

Used to show an action that began before a certain time in the past and continued up to that time.

##### Structure:

Sentence Type	Structure	Example
Affirmative	Subject + had been + verb + ing	He had been working.
Negative	Subject + had + not + been + verb + ing	She had not been reading.
Interrogative	Had + subject + been + verb + ing?	Had you been studying?
Negative Interrogative	Had + subject + not + been + verb + ing?	Had he not been waiting?

##### Usage:

- To express an action that was ongoing in the past and continued until another action occurred.

**E.g.,** I had been working before she came.

- To show repeated past action.

**E.g.,** He had been asking for help.

- To express a just-finished action before a past moment.

**E.g.,** It had been raining since morning.

##### Points to Remember:

- Simple Past = completed action.
- Past Continuous = action in progress at a specific past time.
- Past Perfect = action completed before another past action.
- Past Perfect Continuous = action that started in past and continued up to another point in the past.