

The 12 verb tenses in English

	Past	Present	Future
Simple	<p>I <i>ate</i> fruit yesterday.</p> <p>The business <i>made</i> a profit.</p> <p>S + V₂ + O</p>	<p>I <i>eat</i> fruit every day.</p> <p>The business <i>makes</i> a profit.</p> <p>S + V₁ + O</p>	<p>I <i>will eat</i> fruit tomorrow.</p> <p>The business <i>will make</i> a profit.</p> <p>S + 'will' + V + O</p>
Continuous	<p>I <i>was eating</i> fruit when you arrived.</p> <p>The business <i>was making</i> a profit at the time.</p> <p>S + 'was/were' + (V+ing) + O</p>	<p>I <i>am eating</i> fruit right now.</p> <p>The business <i>is making</i> a profit right now.</p> <p>S + 'am/is/are' + (V+ing) + O</p>	<p>I <i>will be eating</i> fruit when you arrive.</p> <p>The business <i>will be making</i> a profit soon.</p> <p>S + 'will be' + (V+ing) + O</p>
Perfect	<p>I <i>had eaten</i> all of the fruit when you arrived.</p> <p>The business <i>had made</i> some profit prior to the economic downturn.</p> <p>S + 'had' + V₃ + O</p>	<p>I <i>have eaten</i> all of the fruit.</p> <p>The business <i>has made</i> a profit.</p> <p>S + 'have/has' + V₃ + O</p>	<p>I <i>will have eaten</i> all of the fruit by the time you arrive.</p> <p>The business <i>will have made</i> a profit within the next two years.</p> <p>S + 'will have' + V₃ + O</p>
Perfect Continuous	<p>I <i>had been eating</i> fruit for an hour when you arrived.</p> <p>The business <i>had been making</i> a profit for some time.</p> <p>S + 'had been' + (V+ing) + O</p>	<p>I <i>have been eating</i> fruit for an hour.</p> <p>The business <i>has been making</i> a profit for over a year.</p> <p>S + 'have/has been' + (V+ing) + O</p>	<p>I <i>will have been eating</i> fruit for an hour when you arrive.</p> <p>The business <i>will have been making</i> a profit when the annual report arrives.</p> <p>S + 'will have been' + (V+ing) + O</p>
<p>Key: S = Subject O=Object V=Verb (V₁ = present, V₂=past, V₃ = past participle)</p>			

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	Past	Present	Future
Simple	<p><i>I ate</i> fruit yesterday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate a past habit – or an action already completed. Can be used with or without adverbs of time. 	<p><i>I eat</i> fruit every day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To express habits or general truth. To indicate a future event on a chosen date as part of a plan or arrangement. With 'mental action' verbs: like, love, want, need, believe and so on. 	<p><i>I will eat</i> fruit tomorrow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate an action, condition or circumstance, which has not taken place yet.
Continuous	<p><i>I was eating</i> fruit when you arrived.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An uncompleted action of the past (with or without time reference). To indicate persistent habits of the past (with for example, always, continuously, forever). 	<p><i>I am eating</i> fruit right now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An action going on at the time of speaking. Temporary action, which may not be happening at the time of speaking. With habitual action verb, as a stubborn habit. 	<p><i>I will be eating</i> fruit when you arrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate what will be going on at some time in the future. To indicate planned future events.
Perfect	<p><i>I had eaten</i> all of the fruit when you arrived.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate a completed action of the past that happened before another event took place. 	<p><i>I have eaten</i> all of the fruit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate past action which is not defined by a time of occurrence. To indicate an action which started in the past and has continued up until now. 	<p><i>I will have eaten</i> all of the fruit by the time you arrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate an action that will be complete before another event takes place.
Perfect Continuous	<p><i>I had been eating</i> fruit for an hour when you arrived.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate an action in the past that began before a certain point in the past and continued up until that time. 	<p><i>I have been eating</i> fruit for an hour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate an action which started at some point in the past and may or may not be complete. 	<p><i>I will have been eating</i> fruit for an hour when you arrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To indicate an action that will have happened for some time and may not be complete yet at a certain point in the future.