English Verb Tenses:

An informal reference

for ESL students, the good folks who teach them,
and the idly curious

by
Kent Uchiyama
copyright 2006

Contents

How to Use (and Not to Use) This Guide: Some Suggestions

1. Don't read this guide from beginning to end

You probably shouldn't try to read this book from cover to cover. Some of the information in the book will be helpful for beginning students, but not for advanced students. Other information in this book will be helpful for more advanced students, but not for beginning or intermediate students. You'll find some guidelines about which parts of this guide will be useful for you in #2 below.

As a general rule, I think this guide will be most helpful if you just use it as a reference when you want more explanation about one of the tenses or when you have a specific question. This guide contains a lot of information, and so I've tried to make it easy to find the information you want. Here are some steps that will help you:

1. Look in the Table of Contents (p2) for the verb tense you want.
2. Look over the Basic Stuff about that verb tense.
3. If the answer to your question isn't in the Basic Stuff section, look in the More Stuff section. You won't have to read everything; use the titles of each point to help you find your answer.
4. If you don't find the answer to your question in the More Stuff section, try the Extra Stuff section.
5. If you can't find the answer to your question in this guide, see #4 below.

Important points about using verb tenses are in blue. References to other parts of the book where you can find more information are in red.

2. The parts of this guide you'll probably find most useful

Here are some rough guidelines about which parts of this book will probably be useful to you. These are only rough guidelines; your individual needs and interest may differ from what I've suggested here.

High beginning and low intermediate students (ESL 110a students)
The Tenses and Their Main Uses
Which Verb Tense Should I Use?

Basic Stuff about
- Simple Present
- Present Progressive
- Simple Past
- Past Progressive
- Future Tense

More Stuff...about
- Simple Present
- Present Progressive
- Simple Past
- Past Progressive
- Future Tense

Intermediate Students (ESL 110b students)
The Tenses and Their Main Uses
Which Verb Tense Should I Use?
Basic Stuff about
- Simple Present
- Present Progressive
- Simple Past
- Past Progressive
- Future Tense
- Future Progressive
- Past Perfect

A Short Survival Guide to Present Perfect
More Stuff...about
- Simple Present
- Present Progressive
- Simple Past
- Past Progressive
- Future Tense

High Intermediate Students (ESL 110c students)
The Tenses and Their Main Uses (as review)
Which Verb Tense Should I Use? (as review)
Basic Stuff about all the tenses
A Short Survival Guide to Present Perfect

More Stuff...about all the tenses

Low Advanced and Advanced Students (ESL 110d students and above)
Basic Stuff about all the tenses (as review)
A Short Survival Guide to Present Perfect (as review)
More Stuff...about all the tenses
Extra Stuff about the tenses according to your needs and interests

3. What you won't find in this guide

I only had one semester to write this guide, and so I didn't have time to include everything about verb forms in English. Unfortunately, you WON'T find the following verb forms here:

*the passive
*conditionals
*modals
*reported speech
*gerunds and infinitives
*participial phrases (reduced adjective and adverb clauses)

As time goes by, I may try to add these topics to this guide. In the meantime, you can find pretty good discussions of them in many grammar texts. I've listed a few texts I like on p144 in Books and Websites You Might Find Useful.

4. If you have a question about verb tenses that isn't answered in this guide

Please e-mail me your question. My e-mail address is kuchiyama@chabotcollege.edu. I'll try to include the answer in future versions of this guide, and if I have time I'll try to send you an answer to your question. If you're a student at Chabot, please drop by my office with your question. Most grammar questions are much easier to explain in person than by e-mail, so it can save me a lot of time if we speak in person.

5. What this book can and can't do for you.

This book can (I hope)

- answer many of your questions about verb tenses, and
- explain some points about verb tenses that you won't find in other grammar books.

This book CANNOT take the place of a good ESL class.

Learning a language is a lot like learning how to dance; it's almost impossible to learn just by reading a book. When we learn to dance, nearly all of us need to practice, interact with many different people, make mistakes, observe what other people are doing, and learn to move easily without really thinking about it. The same things are true when we learn a language. A well-taught ESL class can give you all these things, but a book can't. A book can give you a clear understanding, but almost everyone needs more to learn how to use a language.

6. This guide probably won't be helpful for everyone.

As I mentioned earlier, learning a language is a lot like learning to dance. No one can learn to dance without actually dancing, and no one can learn a language without actually using it (a lot).

However, different people learn best in different ways. When some people learn to dance, they learn more quickly and easily if someone explains the movements to them step by step before they get on the dance floor. For other people, explanation isn't helpful at all. These people often learn more easily if they just watch the dance steps for a while and then start trying them.

Similarly, some students really like detailed explanations of grammar; they find that a clear explanation helps them learn more easily. Other students might find that detailed explanations are frustrating or even confusing.

If you try using this guide and it isn't helpful, it doesn't mean that you have a problem. You may learn better by just "jumping in" and using the language. You might want to come back to the guide after a year or two to see if it seems more helpful after some time has passed. Maybe it will, or maybe it won't. The important thing is that you find out what most helps you learn English.

7. A note for other teachers

In this guide, I'm trying to stake out some new territory, so if you

- see something that seems inaccurate,
- find an important omission, or
- have a better way to explain something,

I'd deeply appreciate hearing from you. My e-mail here at stately Chabot College is kuchiyama@chabotcollege.edu. (I'd also appreciate a heads up if you find any typos; I'm sure there are still some lurking about.)

If you'd like to use any of the material here in your classes, feel free to do so, but give an attribution of the source.

While we're on the subject of using this guide, I want to stress that although I hope this book will be a useful supplement to the grammar textbooks already available to our students, I think it would make a lousy ESL textbook itself. There are no exercises, and the sheer amount of material could be overwhelming for many students, especially if a teacher tried to teach the book cover-to-cover. I therefore want to discourage anyone from trying to use it as one. It's meant to be a reference--specifically, a reference for students who find grammatical explanations useful and maybe for teachers who'd like to explore verb tenses in a little more depth.

8. A note for grammatical purists

In the following pages, I've split infinitives, ended clauses with prepositions, used *their* with a singular antecedent, and began sentences with conjunctions. (And I just ended point #7 by using an adjective clause to modify an entire clause instead of a noun.) These practices are not born of ignorance or a desire to annoy you; I just don't hold much truck with the outlook that underlies the rules I'm disregarding. However, if you are convinced of the intellectual (or moral) superiority of schoolhouse grammar, I doubt that I can convince you otherwise. (Years of effort have not succeeded with mom.) I can only extend my sincere (but more or less unrepentant) apologies in advance, along with my honest hope that you'll still find the following information helpful in some way. And if you do see something that seems to arise from my ignorance or negligence rather than my attitude, I would deeply appreciate your correction.

The Tenses and Their Main Meanings

(These are only the main meanings; for more complete information, see the section on each tense.)

Past Tenses

Simple Past

Main Meaning

◇ This action ended in the past.

*John **did** his homework last night.*

Note: Simple past is correct for most actions in the past. There are only a few times when we absolutely need to use other past tenses.

Past Progressive

Main Meaning

◇ This action happened over time in the past.

Most common use: to show this action was happening over time when something happened.

*John **was doing** his homework when the earthquake started.*

Past Perfect

Main Meaning

◇ We use past perfect when we want to make it clear that this action happened before something in the past.

*Norton **had eaten** breakfast when he left for work. (This means Norton ate breakfast before he went to work.)*

Note: If it's already clear which happened first, simple past is also okay.

Past Perfect Progressive

Main Meaning

◇ We use past perfect progressive when we want to make it clear that this action was happening over time before something in the past.

*The kitchen smelled wonderful because Norton **had been cooking** dinner.*

Present Tenses

Simple Present

Main Meanings

- ◇ This action is a habit or repeated now.
  *I usually **drive** to school.*
- ◇ This is a fact that's always (or almost always) true.
  *Wood **floats** in water.*

Present Progressive

Main Meanings

- ◇ This action is happening right now.
  You **are reading** this sentence.
- ◇ This action isn't finished, but might not be happening right now.
  *John **is studying** English this semester, but he isn't studying right now; he's eating dinner.*
  Note: Don't use present progressive with stative verbs.

Present Perfect

Main Meanings

- ◇ With a length of time, present perfect usually means this action started in the past and has continued until now.
  *Ralph's a bus driver. He **has worked** as a bus driver for 10 years.*
  Note: Present Perfect Progressive can often be used to say the same thing (but not with stative verbs).
- ◇ With no time phrase, present perfect usually means the action ended in the past, but the time is not clear.
  *Ralph isn't hungry because he **has eaten** dinner.*
  Note: In American English, simple past can usually be used to say the same thing.

Present Perfect Progressive

Main Meaning

- ◇ This action started in the past and has continued until now.
  *Ralph's a bus driver. He **has been working** as a bus driver for 10 years.*
  Note: Don't use present perfect progressive with stative verbs.

Future Tenses

Future Tense

Main Meaning

◇ This action will happen in the future.

*Ralph and Norton **will play** cards tomorrow night.*

Note: Future tense is correct for most actions in the future. There are only a few times when I absolutely need to use other future tenses.

Future Progressive

Main Meaning

◇ This action will happen over time in the future.

Most common use: to show this action will be happening over time when something happens.

*I'll start to study at 7:00, so I'**ll be studying** when you arrive at 7:`10.*

Future Perfect

Main Meaning

◇ We use future perfect when we want to make it clear that this action will happen before something in the future.

*Martha **will have finished** her homework when she comes to class tomorrow.*

Note: If it's already clear which action will happen first, future tense is also okay.

Future Perfect Progressive

Main Meaning

◇ This action will happen over time before something in the future

*When I retire, I **will have been teaching** for over forty years.*

Note: Future perfect progressive is a pretty rare tense; we don't use it very much.

Which Verb Tense Should I Use?
A Very Rough Guide

Actions in the Past

For *most actions in the past:*
simple past
- ◇ *I **ate** breakfast at 7:00 this morning before I **went** to work.*
- ◇ *I'm a little tired today because I **went** to bed late.*

When I need to make it clear that this action was *in progress when something happened:*
past progressive
- ◇ *I **was taking** a bath when you called, so I couldn't answer the phone.*

When I want to show that an action *started in the past and has continued until now:*
present perfect progressive (for most verbs)
- ◇ *I **have been teaching** at Chabot for fourteen years.*
- ◇ *John **has been thinking** about buying a new car.*

OR

present perfect + a length of time (for stative verbs)
- ◇ *George Bush Sr. **has hated** broccoli **since he was a child.***

When I want to show that an action happened *before something in the past:*
past perfect
- ◇ *At 5:00, Fred **had finished** work for the day.* (This means that Fred finished work before 5:00.)

  (NOTE: We can say, *At 5:00, Fred finished work for the day,* but this sentence has a different meaning. It means that Fred finished work **at** 5:00, not before.)

When I need to make it clear that this action was happening *over time before another action (or a time) in the past:*
past perfect progressive (for most verbs)
- ◇ *Barney **had been studying** for six hours when he fell asleep at his desk.*

OR

past perfect + a length of time (for stative verbs)
- ◇ *Ralph **had loved** Alice for many years before he asked her to marry him.*

For actions that have *never happened in someone's life:*
present perfect
- ◇ ***I've** never **seen** a flying elephant.*

For questions asking *if someone has ever done something in their life:*
present perfect
- ◇ ***Have** you **seen** the Grand Canyon?*

For *repeated actions that might happen again:*
present perfect
- ◇ *Hoku **has seen** that movie eight times.*

Actions in the Present

For a *present habit:*
simple present
- ◇ *I **don't drive** to work; I usually **take** BART.*

For something that is *always or usually true:*
simple present
- ◇ *Wood **floats** on water.*
- ◇ *Rocks **don't float**. They **sink**.*

For an action happening *right now:*
present progressive (for most verbs)
- ◇ *Norton isn't home now. He**'s studying** at the library.*

OR

simple present (for stative verbs only)
- ◇ *Right now, I **understand** my calculus homework, but tomorrow I may be confused again.*

For an action that *isn't finished yet:*
present progressive (for most verbs)
- ◇ *Martin **is working** at the library this semester, but he isn't there now because today's Sunday and library's closed.*

Actions in the Future

For *predictions* (things we think will happen):
future tense

- *Fred's plane **will arrive** at 8:00.*
- *Fred's plane **is going to arrive** at 8:00.*

For actions that will be *happening over time when something happens:*
future progressive

- *When Lucy's plane arrives tomorrow, Ricky **will be waiting** for her at the airport.*

For *future plans:*
be going to

- *Ralph and Alice **are going to visit** Yosemite National Park next month.*

For *time clauses* and *if-clauses* *in the future:*
simple present (almost always)

- *When Ralph **gets** home tomorrow night, he's going to take Alice out to dinner.*
- *If Yoko **buys** a car next Friday, she'll drive it to school on Monday.*

When I need to make it clear that this action will be *finished before something in the future:*
future perfect

- *The train always leaves at 12:00. If you get to the station at 12:05, the train **will have** already **left**.*

When I need to make it clear that this action will happen *over time before something in the future:*
future perfect progressive (for most verbs)

- *Next September, I **will have been working** at Chabot for 10 years.*

OR

future perfect + a length of time (for stative verbs)

- *At its anniversary in 2011, Chabot College **will have existed** for fifty years.*

Simple Present

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Simple Present

1. What does simple present tense mean?

Usually, simple present tense means

1) that the action is a habit (or another type of repeated action) in the present

or

2) that the action is always or usually true.

Examples:

I usually **eat** lunch at the school cafeteria. (This is a habit in the present.)
What time do you usually feed your pet dinosaur? (I'm asking about a habit in the present.)
Ralph and Norton sometimes **go** bowling on Thursday nights. (This is a habit in the present.)
George usually **doesn't buy** bananas at Albertson's. (This is a habit in the present.)
Wally never **comes** late to class. (This is a habit in the present.)
The moon **travels** around the earth. (This is always or usually true.)
Wilma **makes** good gravelberry pies. (This is always or usually true.)
Does the **sun** rise in the east or in the west? (I want to know if this is always or usually true.)
Government officials often **don't tell** the truth. (This statement is usually true.)

Simple present can also have other uses. You can find these in the "More Stuff You Should Know about Simple Present" section on p20.

2. How do I make simple present?

Statements

1. If the subject is *I*, *you*, *we*, or *they*, use the simple form of the verb.

Examples:

I **go** to bed at 11:00.
You **go** to bed at 11:00.
We **go** to bed at 11:00.
George and Gracie (they) **go** to bed at 11:00.
I usually **walk** to the store.

2. If the subject is *he*, *she*, or *it*, add *-s* or *-es* to the simple form of the verb.

Examples:

Ralph (he) **goes** to bed at 11:00.
Alice (she) **goes** to bed at 11:00.
Carmen's pet elephant (it) **goes** to bed at 11:00.
Ahmed usually **walks** to the store.

Negative Statements

***do/does* + <u>not</u> + simple form**.

Examples:

Americans usually **do not eat** soup for breakfast.
I usually **don't buy** lunch on Thursdays.
John **does not play** tennis.
Ralph often **doesn't drive** to work.

Questions[1]

(Question word) + *do* + subject + simple form

Examples:

Does your pet gorilla **bite**?
Do you **buy** your groceries at Alberstons?
What **do** Norton and Trixie usually **do** on weekends?
Where **does** Alice **buy** her groceries?

---

[1] Remember : Questions that ask <u>who did something</u> or <u>what did something</u> don't follow the normal question patterns. See "Appendix: Questions about the Subject" on p142.

Why **do** leaves **turn** brown in the autumn?
When **does** Ward **eat** dinner?

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Simple Present

1. The verb *be*

The verb *be* in English is just plain weird. It almost never follows the same rules as other verbs. For the verb *be*,

- simple present statements,
- negative statements, and
- questions

are all formed in unusual ways. Although you probably learned the information below in one of your very first English lessons, here it is again for the sake of completeness.

Simple Present Statements with *Be*

If the subject is *I*, use ***am***.

Examples:

I **am** a teacher.
I'**m** often absent-minded.
I **am** in class every Wednesday at 10:00.

If the subject is *you*, *we*, or *they*, use ***are***

Examples:

You **are** my sunshine, my only sunshine (from an old song).
We'**re** so happy that you didn't eat our cat!
Fred and Ethyl **are** in the kitchen with Lucy and Ricky.

If the subject is a *he*, *she*, or *it*, use ***is***.

Examples:

Arnold Schwarzenegger (he) **is** the governor of California. (This sentence was true in 2005, when this guide was written. California may have a new governor by the time you read this.)
Paris Hilton**'s** rich. She isn't an English teacher.

My car (it) **is** in the parking lot at beautiful Chabot College.

Simple Present Negative Statements with *Be*
Add *not* after ***be***.
Examples:

I **am not** a millionaire or a rock star.
I**'m** not rich or famous.
I'**m** probably not in Paris Hilton's address book.
You **are not** my boss, so stop telling me what to do.
Bats **aren't** birds.
We**'re not** in Kansas any more.
George W. Bush **is not** my uncle.
A wet cat **isn't** very happy.
It**'s not** cold; you don't need to wear a coat.

Simple present questions with *Be*[2]
Put *be* in front of the subject
Examples:

Am I taller than your cousin in Utah?
Are George and Gracie married?
Where **are** my car keys?
Why **is** the sky blue?

2. Stative verbs use simple present, not present progressive.

Some verbs, such as *want*, *understand*, and *know*, don't use present progressive; instead, they usually use simple present even if the action is happening right now. This point is explained more on p29 in More Stuff...about Present Progressive.

[2] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See "Appendix: Questions about the Subject" on p142.

3. Simple present in future time clauses and if-clauses

Time clauses and if-clauses in the future do not use future tense; instead, they use one of the present tenses, usually simple present.

Examples:

After I ~~will go~~ **go** to the store tomorrow, I'll give you a call.
Before Trixie ~~will leave~~ **leaves** for school next Tuesday, she's going to do her English homework.
When Mohammed ~~will get~~ **gets** home tonight, he will cook dinner and then help his kids with their homework.
If John ~~will find~~ **finds** a new job, he's going to have a party.
I'll be at the library tonight if you ~~will need~~ **need** to find me.

This point is explained a little more in More Stuff...about Future Tense on pp63 & 64.

We can use some other present tenses, like present progressive or present perfect in future time clauses and if-clauses; however, these usually aren't necessary. You can find them explained in the Extra Stuff about Future Tense section on pp70 & 71.

4. Scheduled events in the future

If you want to, you can use simple present for future scheduled events such as plane arrivals & departures, classes, and so on. You can't do this for most future actions; you can only do it for actions that are scheduled. It's not necessary to use simple present for scheduled events; the future tense is also okay.

Examples:

My class **will start** tomorrow morning at 9:00.
My class **starts** tomorrow morning at 9:00.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

John's plane **is going to arrive** tonight at 10:00.
John's plane **arrives** tonight at 10:00.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

The BART train to Richmond **will arrive** in five minutes.
The BART train to Richmond **arrives** in five minutes.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

My brother ~~calls~~ **will call** me sometime tomorrow. (I can't use simple present in this sentence because this action isn't scheduled.)

5. Simple present when discussing literature

In academic situations, especially when writing papers, it's traditional to use simple present as the main tense to tell the story of a work of fiction like a novel, a play, or a short story, even if the work itself is written in the past tense.
Example:

Romeo and Juliet **tells** the tragic story of two young lovers. Two families in the town of Verona, the Capulets and the Montagues, **hate** one another. Romeo **is** the son of the Montague family and Juliet **is** the daughter of the Capulets. Romeo and Juliet **meet** at a party, **fall** in love, and secretly **make** plans to get married.

Soon after the young couple **marry**, Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, **kills** Romeo's closest friend. Romeo, in a blind rage, **kills** Tybalt. This **starts** a series of events that **ends** in the two lovers' deaths.

There are also other tenses that we can use together with simple present to make the order of events clearer. You can read more about these in Extra Stuff about Simple Present on p24.

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Simple Present (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. More about simple present when discussing literature

Normally, we use simple present to summarize a work of fiction, but there are other tenses that we can use together with simple present to make the order of events clearer.

We can use
present perfect tenses to show that an action began before the time we're discussing and
future tenses to show that an action will happen after the time we're discussing.

Examples:

In the fairy tale "The Little Mermaid," a handsome prince falls in love with a mermaid who **has given** her voice to a witch for a pair of legs. (Present perfect makes it clear that the mermaid traded her voice before the prince fell in love with her.)

When Romeo and Juliet meet, their families **have hated** one another for many years, and recently they **have been** openly **fighting** in the streets of the city. (Both these actions start before the time we're discussing and have continued until that time. We can show this by using present perfect + a length of time or present perfect progressive. For more about using these tenses see More Stuff...about Meaning #1 on p86.

Tybalt's death starts a series of events that **will end** in the two lovers' deaths. (The events will end later in the story, and we can emphasize this by using future tense.)

If we tell the events of a story in the order they happen, from beginning to end, then present perfect or future tenses aren't necessary; simple present will work. However, if the order of events isn't already clear, we can use the other tenses so show the reader which actions happened earlier and which actions will happen later.

2. Simple present when telling a story

When Americans are telling a story about something that happened in the past, you'll often hear them start to use simple present as the basic tense. Other tenses can be used in the same way we use them to discuss literature (point #1 above). Because it's informal and because Americans don't do this consciously, Americans will often switch back and forth between simple present and past tenses when they use simple present this way.

Here's an example of how Americans use simple present in this way:

Ralph: Hey, Norton! How did you get that dent in your fender?
Norton: Well, I was driving to the store to get some bananas, okay? (Notice that Norton starts his story in the past.) I **get** off the freeway (Here Norton switches to simple present.) and I'm coming down Hesperian when this guy in red SUV **pulls** into my lane without looking and **dents** my fender. We both **pull** over and he**'s** very apologetic. He **tells** me that he was talking (Here Norton has switched back to past tenses.) on his cell phone and wasn't paying attention to the road.

Americans talk like this when they're speaking informally, but it's not standard English. You never need to use simple present this way; in fact, if you're speaking in a formal situation or if you're writing, you should probably avoid it. Still, you'll hear Americans do this a lot.

3. Time clauses used with simple present main clauses

If the main clause of a sentence uses simple present tense, then a time clause in that sentence will usually use simple present too.

Example:

After George **brushes** his teeth each morning, he **goes** to the kitchen and starts the coffee.

However, if the action in the time clause happens first, we can also use present perfect:

Example:

After George **has brushed** his teeth each morning, he goes to the kitchen

and starts the coffee. (This means the same thing as the first sentence.)

Here's another example:

Every evening after he **cooks** dinner, Ralph washes the pots and pans.

Every evening after he **has cooked** dinner, Ralph washes the pots and pans. (These two sentences mean the same thing.)

So far as I can tell, in this type of time clause (present habit / the action in the time clause happens first), both simple present and present perfect are always correct, so you never really need to use present perfect here. If you'd like to read more about present perfect in time clauses, check out Some Final Points about the Present Perfect on p113.

Present Progressive

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Present Progressive

1. What does present progressive mean?

Usually, present progressive tense means

1) the action is happening right now

or (more generally)

2) the action is unfinished and still continuing.

Examples:

You**'re reading** a booklet about verb tenses. (This action is happening right now.)

John isn't in class. He'**s taking** care of his son, who's sick today. (This action is happening right now.)

Is Norton **doing** his homework? (I want to know if this action is happening right now.)

This is my friend Joe. He'**s writing** a book titled *Who Moved My Chicken Soup from Venus?* (The action of writing is unfinished and still continuing, so I use present progressive even if Joe is not writing right now.)

Where **is** Ralph **studying** English this semester? (This action is unfinished and still continuing, so I use present progressive even if Ralph is not studying right now.)

Present progressive can have other meanings and uses. You can find out about them in More Stuff...about Present Progressive.

2. How do I make present progressive?

Statements

am/is/are **+ verb-ing**

Examples:

I **am writing** this book on the computer in my living room.
We **are studying** verb tenses.
Norton **is learning** to drive.

Negative Statements

am/is/are **+** ***not*** **+ verb-ing**

Examples:

John **isn't watching** TV; he's playing with his dog.
Trixie and Norton **aren't eating** dinner now.
You **are not reading** a book about elephants; this is a book about verb tenses.
I**'m not writing** this book in the bathtub. I'm writing it on my computer.

Questions[3]

(question word) + ***am/is/are*** **+ subject + verb-ing**

Examples:

Is John eating dinner now?
Are you taking a math course this semester?
Where is Alice studying?
Why are you looking at me?

[3] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See "Appendix: Questions about the Subject" on p142.

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Present Progressive

1. Stative verbs usually don't use present progressive

Some verbs such as *want*, *understand*, and *know* don't usually use present progressive (or other progressive tenses); instead, they use simple present even if the action is happening right now. These verbs have several different names: **stative verbs**, **non-action verbs, nonprogressive verbs**, or **noncontinuous verbs**; all these names mean the same thing.

Examples of stative verbs:

Right now, I ~~am wanting~~ **want** to go home. (We usually can't use stative verbs in progressive tenses.)

Ah! Now I ~~am understanding~~ **understand** what you mean. (We usually can't use stative verbs in progressive tenses.)

My mother ~~isn't liking~~ **doesn't like** George W. Bush. (We usually can't use stative verbs in progressive tenses.)

I didn't know Norton last year, but now I ~~am knowing~~ **know** him well. (We usually can't use stative verbs in progressive tenses.)

Some Common Stative Verbs

agree	doubt	love	remember
amaze	envy	look*	resemble
appreciate	equal	matter	see*
be*	exist	mean	seem
believe	fear	mind*	smell*
belong	feel*	need	sound
care*	forget	owe	taste*
concern	hate	own	think*
consist	have*	please	understand
contain	hear	possess	want
dislike	know	prefer	wish
disagree	like	recognize	weigh*

You'll notice that some of these verbs are marked with asterisk (*). These

are stative verbs which are also often used as active verbs (verbs that use simple present and present progressive the same way that most verbs do). I'll explain the two of the most common ones (*think* and *have)* in point #2 below. I explain a few more stative verbs in point Extra Stuff about Present Progressive on p34..

2. Two very common stative verbs that are sometimes progressive: *think* and *have*

A. Think

Stative meaning of think

Sometimes *think* means the same as *believe*. When we use *think* this way, it's stative.

Examples:

Maria **thinks (believes)** that English is difficult to learn.
I **think (believe)** that the movie starts at 7:00, but I'm not sure.
Do you **think (believe)** it's going to rain?

Active meanings of *think*

When *think* doesn't mean *believe*, it's just an action verb. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.

Examples:

Right now, you**'re thinking** about verb tenses, right?
Ralph **is thinking** about buying a new bowling ball.
Would you please turn down the TV? I**'m thinking.**

B. Have

The verb *have* has A LOT of different meanings and uses in English. Some of these meanings are stative, and some not. Here are some guidelines to help you figure out when *have* is stative and when it isn't.

Stative meaning of *have*

Most of the time, *have* means about the same as *own* or *possess*. When we use *have* in this way, it's stative.

Examples:

Minnie Mouse **has** a boyfriend named Mickey Mouse.
Mickey Mouse **has** big ears and a friendly smile.
Mickey and Minnie **have** a dog named Pluto.
Mickey's sick today. He **has** the flu. (In English, diseases are something that we own. We can have diseases, and we can also give diseases to other people.)
Mickey **has** a job on a steamboat. (In English, we also think of jobs as something we own or possess. We can also lose our jobs or give them to someone.)
Minnie is drinking a second cup of coffee because she **has** ten more minutes before she needs to leave for work. (In English, we often think that we can possess time. We can also give time to other people.)

Active meanings of *have*

Sometimes we use *have* to show other meanings (not possession). When we use it this way, it's almost always an active verb. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.

Examples:

Mickey and Minnie **are having** a party! (*Having a party* means the same as *giving a party* or *throwing a party*.)
Right now, everyone **is having** cake and ice cream. (*Having cake and ice cream* means the same as *eating cake and ice cream*. *Have* can mean *eat* or *drink*.)
Everyone'**s having** a wonderful time! (*Having a wonderful / good / lovely / fun / bad / difficult / terrible, etc. time* is a common expression in English. In this expression, *have* is an action verb, not a stative verb.

A Note about Possession in English

You might be wondering, "Wait! How can I know for sure when *have* shows possession and when it doesn't? Why do English speakers think that they can possess a disease but they can't possess a party? And why can English speakers possess amounts of time, but they can't possess a wonderful time? Who made these crazy rules, anyway?"

I have some bad news and some good news. The bad news is that English probably has ideas about possession that are different from the ones in your native language. That's the bad news. If you use the rules of your native language when you speak English, you'll probably make some mistakes. Some languages (like Spanish and French) are pretty similar to English in their ideas about possession. Other languages, like Japanese and Vietnamese, have a lot more differences. But so far as I know, no language thinks about possession in exactly the same way.

Here's the good news. The examples above can show you some of the more common times that *have* shows possession, and if you want a really complete and painstaking explanation of the different meanings of *have*, the *Longman Advanced American Dictionary* (or another good ESL dictionary) is a good place to look.

After a while, you'll develop an intuition for when *have* means possession and when it doesn't. It will help develop this intuition if you listen carefully when you're talking to English speakers and pay attention to the way *have* is used when you read. Another point to remember: *Have* is usually stative. If you're not sure and you have to guess, it's usually safer to use it statively.

And by the way, the British made these rules. You can blame them. 8-)

One more important time we use *have*.

In English, we make perfect tenses using *have* + past participle. When we use *have* to show that a tense is perfect, then it isn't doesn't have a stative meaning and it doesn't have an action meaning. It means that this verb is in one of the perfect tenses.

4. We can use present progressive for future plans

If we want to, we can use present progressive for plans in the future. It can't be used for all future actions; it can only be used for plans.

Examples:

Fred and Ethyl are going to have a party next Friday.
Fred and Ethyl **are having** a party next Friday.
(Both sentences mean the same thing; they show a future plan.)

I'm going to go to Hawaii next summer.
I**'m going** to Hawaii next summer.
(Both sentences mean the same thing; they show a future plan.)

Ricky and Lucy will get married in July.
Ricky and Lucy **are getting** married in July.
(Both sentences mean the same thing; they show a future plan.)

BUT

I think it i~~s raining~~ **will rain** tomorrow. (Rain is not something that we can plan, so we can't use present progressive.)

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Present Progressive (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. More stative verbs that are sometimes progressive

A. Be

Stative meaning of *be*

Be is stative nearly all of the time. When *be* is stative, it shows that someone (or something) has a characteristic or a quality.

Examples:

Norton **is** stubborn. He usually doesn't change his mind.
Moe **is** rude. He almost never thinks about the way other people feel.
Jack **is** friendly. He almost always has a smile for everyone.
Bill **is** a dad. He has three kids.
I**'m** really happy today!
Ralph and Trixie **are** sick, so they're staying home today.

Active meaning of *be*

If we're talking about the way that someone is acting, then we use *be* in present progressive (or another progressive tense) to show this.

Examples:

Ralph'**s being** stubborn. He knows that he's wrong, but he won't apologize to Alice for forgetting her birthday. (When I say Ralph **is being** stubborn, I mean that he is acting stubborn now because he won't apologize. This sentence doesn't tell us how he is usually; maybe he's usually stubborn and maybe he isn't.)

Homer's eating all the food at the party! He'**s being** really rude and thoughtless. (When I say Homer is being rude, I mean that he is acting rude now. This sentence doesn't tell us how he is usually; maybe he's usually rude and maybe he isn't.)

Bill **is being** really friendly towards Laura, but she knows he only wants to borrow her car. (When I say Bill **is being** friendly, it means that Bill is acting friendly now, but maybe he isn't really friendly.)

Bill used to be wild and crazy when he was young, but now that he has teenage children, he's really strict. I'm not surprised by his change in attitude; Bill **is** simply **being** a dad. (When I say Bill's being a dad, it means that Bill is acting like a dad; in this sentence, I'm not saying that he is a dad, even though this is true.)

B. *FEEL*

Feel has a lot of meanings in English, some of which are stative and some of which aren't. Here are some of the more common ones.

Stative Meanings of *Feel*

When we use *feel* as a linking verb to talk about the tactile characteristics of an object, it's stative. (If you're sitting there thinking, "What the heck are tactile characteristics?" here's a simpler (but a little less accurate) rule: If the subject is a thing, then *feel* is almost always stative.

Examples:

This blanket **feels** really soft.

This piece of wood **feels** rough now, but after we sand it will be as smooth as glass.

Fred hasn't shaved today. His face **feels** like sandpaper.

When *feel* means about the same as *believe*, it's stative.

Examples:

I **feel (believe)** that you're making a big mistake, George.

The Dalai Lama **feels (believes)** that compassion and kindness are the essence of religion.

A Meaning of *Feel* That Can Be Either Stative or Active

When we use *feel* to talk about someone's health or mood, then we can use it as a stative verb or an active verb. Both are okay.

Examples:

I **feel** sick; I need to go home.

I**'m feeling** sick; I need to go home.

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Elmer **feels** light headed and happy; he's in love.
Elmer **is feeling** light headed and happy; he's in love.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Active Meaning of *Feel*

When we use *feel* to mean about the same as *touch*, then it's an action verb. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.
Examples:

Barney **is feeling (touching)** the water in the swimming pool with his toe.

George: Why **are** you **feeling (touching)** that melon?
Laura: I**'m feeling (touching)** it to see if it's ripe.

C. *LOOK*

Stative Meanings of *Look*

When we use *look* to mean about the same as *seem* or *appear*, then it's usually stative.
Examples:

That house **looks** (appears) empty.
My dog **looks** (appears) ugly, but he has a heart of gold.

When we use *look like* to mean about the same as *resemble*, then *look* is a stative verb .
Examples:

Do you think that I **look like (resemble)** Tom Cruise?
Whales **look like (resemble)** big fish, but they aren't really fish. They're mammals.

A Meaning of *Look* That Be Either Stative or Active

When we use *look* to talk about someone's health or mood, then we can use it as a stative verb or an active verb.
Examples:

John **looks** sick. Maybe he should go home now.

John **is looking** sick. Maybe he should go home now.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

You **look** really happy. What's up?
You**'re looking** really happy. What's up?
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Active Meanings of *Look*

Look can have a lot of other meanings and uses. So far as I can tell, in all of the other meanings, *look* is an active verb. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.
Examples:

John **is looking** at his watch. Maybe it's time to go home.
I**'m looking over** a four-leaf clover. (from an old song)
Norton **is looking** forward to his next vacation.
Don't worry. I**'m looking out** for you.
Clark **is looking** for his keys.

D. *SEE*

Stative Meanings of *See*

See is usually stative. It has so many meanings that I can't explain them all, but here are some common meanings of *see*:
When we are talking about using our eyes, *see* is stative. Examples:

AAAHHH! I **see** a ghost! (I'm using my eyes.)
I **don't see** John now. He probably went home. (I'm using my eyes.)

Also, when *see* means about the same as *understand*, it's stative.
Examples:

Does Ralph **see (understand)** why Alice is mad?
Do you **see (understand)** what I mean?

Active Meanings of *See*

When *see* means about the same as *meet with*, then it's an active verb. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.
Examples:

The doctor's busy now. He**'s seeing** (meeting with) a patient.
I**'m seeing** (meeting with) my brother in an hour, but I can talk to you now.

E. *SMELL*

Stative meaning of *smell*

When we use *smell* to talk about the olfactory characteristics of an object, then it's a stative verb. Again, if you're wondering "What in heaven's name are olfactory characteristics?!" then here's the simpler (but less accurate) rule: When the subject is a thing, then *smell* is stative.

Examples:

That bean soup **smells** delicious!
Melvin, your socks **smell** terrible! Take them off and put them in the laundry right now!
Mary's perfume **smells** like roses.
If your refrigerator **smells,** you should put in a box of baking soda. The baking soda will absorb the odors.
I **smell** like oil and gasoline because I just finished working on my car. I need to take a shower. (Do you remember that I said the simple rule isn't 100% accurate? This example doesn't follow the simple rule because the subject is not a thing. Can you see why this sentence is okay even though it doesn't follow the simple rule?)

Active meaning of *smell*

When we're talking about someone (or an animal) that is using their nose, then *smell* is an active verb. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.

Examples:

Trixie: Norton, why **are** you **smelling** that t-shirt?
Norton: I**'m smelling** it to find out if it's clean.

F. *TASTE*

Stative Meaning of *Taste*

If we're talking about the gustatory characteristics of an object, then *taste* is stative. If that rule is a little confusing, here's a much simpler (but a little less

precise) rule: If the subject is food, then *taste* is stative.
Examples:

This milk **tastes** sour! We should throw it out.
The food at Taco Bell **tastes** okay, but it **doesn't taste** like real Mexican food.
Cannibal: Wow! This missionary **tastes** great! (Here, the missionary is food.)

Norton: Hey Ralph, what **do** chocolate-covered grasshoppers **taste** like?
Ralph: I don't know, Norton. I've never eaten chocolate-covered grasshoppers.

Active Meaning of *Taste*

When we're talking about someone (or an animal) that is using their tongue to get information, then *taste* is an active verb. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.
Examples:

The cook **is tasting** the soup to make sure it's okay.

Ralph: Norton! Stop eating my sandwich!
Norton: Whoa! Calm down, Ralphie-boy! I'm not eating your sandwich! I**'m** just **tasting** it!

G. *WEIGH*

Stative meaning of *weigh*

When we tell how much someone or something weighs, *weigh* is stative.
Examples:

My cat **weighs** six pounds.
I **weigh** 150 pounds.
Wow! Your book bag **weighs** a lot!
Mary **weighs** less than she did last year.

Active meanings of *weigh*

So far as I can tell, *weigh* is an active verb in all it's other meanings. It uses present progressive and simple present the same way that most verbs do.

Examples:

The grocer **is weighing** some apples.
Ralph **is weighing** himself in the bathroom.
Norton is calling a talk radio program. He**'s weighing in** on the topic of sewer renovation.
I feel sad. All these worries **are weighing** me **down**.
I**'m weighing** my alternatives. Maybe I'll buy a Honda, or maybe I'll buy a Volvo.

A final note about stative verbs that can be used progressively

In addition to the exceptions I've explained here, there are many more small exceptions to the general rules for using stative and active verbs. I wish I could give you a single, clear rule, but I don't think that one exists. This is just one of those points in English that you will learn by a lot of listening, reading, and practicing. Again, blame the British. 8-)

2. We use present progressive with simple present to show "This action happens over time."

Usually present progressive shows that an action is happening right now, but it can also be used with simple present to show that an action happens over time when the other action happens. That sounds a little obtuse, so let's look at some examples which might help make it clearer.

Example #1:

Every day when Alicia gets home, her roommate **is studying** English.

In this sentence, *is studying* (present progressive) doesn't mean that the action is happening right now. It means that the action is happening over time everyday when Alicia gets home. In other words, the roommate starts to study before Alicia gets home, and the roommate is still studying when Alicia arrives. This is very similar to the way we usually use past progressive (see More Stuff...about Past Progressive on p51).

Note: We also use present progressive this way in future time clauses (see p70) and future if-clauses (see p65).

If I use simple present instead of present progressive in this case, the meaning is different.
Example #2:

Every day when Alicia gets home, her roommate **studies** English.

In this sentence, Alicia's roommate always starts to study at about the same time (and a little bit after) Alicia gets home. This is different from Example #1, in which the roommate always starts studying before Alicia arrives.

The one exception I can think of is the verb *be*. When we use *be* in this type of sentence, it can have two meanings:

*it can mean the same thing as if we used present progressive: that the action started before the time we're talking about and has continued until that time.

Example:

Every day when Alicia gets home, her roommate **is** in the kitchen. (This means that the roommate went into the kitchen before Alicia got home.)

or

*it can mean that the action happened shortly after the other action (like most verbs).

Example:

Every day when Alicia gets home, her roommate **is** really happy to see her. (This sentence means that the roommate became happy at about the same time (and a little bit after) Alicia got home.)

So, you're probably wondering, "How do I know when *be* has the first meaning and when it has the second meaning?" As far as I can tell, the only way to know is context. You just have to look at the situation and guess what the speaker means.

4. Present progressive (and other progressive tenses) can be used for temporary habits

Present progressive can show a temporary habit in the present

When you first started to study verb tenses, you probably learned that we use simple present for present habits and present progressive for actions that are happening right now (actions still in progress). That's true. But we also use present progressive (and sometimes the other progressive tenses) to show temporary habits.

If the present habit is temporary, we show this by using present progressive instead of simple present.

Examples:

Usually I drive to school, but this semester ~~I take~~ I**'m taking** BART. (Present progressive shows that the habit is temporary. I'll probably start driving again sometime in the future.)

Because it's Lent, Maria and Jorge ~~eat~~ **are eating** fish instead of meat. (Present progressive shows that the habit is temporary. It suggests that Maria and Jorge will start eating meat again when Lent is finished.)

It's Ramadan, so Suhaila and Ahmed ~~fast~~ **are fasting** every day from sunrise to sunset. (Present progressive shows that the habit is temporary. It suggests that Suhaila and Ahmed will stop fasting when Ramadan ends.)

Other tenses can also be used for temporary habits

We can use the other progressive tenses to show temporary habits, but unlike present progressive, we can also use the nonprogressive form and (as far as I can tell) the meaning is always the same.

Examples:

Simple past and past progressive both can show a temporary habit in the past:

The week before his wedding, Ralph **woke up** every night in a cold sweat.

The week before his wedding, Ralph **was waking** up every night in a cold sweat.

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Past perfect and past perfect progressive both can show a temporary habit

that happened before something in the past:

Vlad **had practiced** every day before his piano recital, so he played beautifully.

Vlad **had been practicing** every day before his piano recital, so he played beautifully.

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Present perfect and present perfect progressive both can show a temporary habit that started in past and has continued until now:

John **has gotten up** at 4:30 every morning ever since he got that job at the bakery.

John **has been getting up** at 4:30 every morning ever since he got that job at the bakery.

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Future tense and future progressive both can show a temporary habit in the future:

During finals week, I**'ll grade** papers every night until midnight.

During finals week, I**'ll be grading** papers every night until midnight.

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Future perfect and future perfect progressive both can show a temporary habit that will happen before something in the future.

When they finally pay off their mortgage, John and Marsha **will have made** a house payment every month for thirty years!

When they finally pay off their mortgage, John and Marsha **will have been making** a house payment every month for thirty years!

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

A little more this point can be found in Extra Stuff about Past Progressive on p57 and Extra Stuff about Future Progressive on p77

5. Another time we can use present progressive for habits: present progressive + *always*

English speakers sometimes use present progressive with *always* to talk

about a habit. The most common time that we do this is when we're complaining about someone's habit that we find annoying. Simple present can be used with the same meaning, but then it sounds more like a statement of fact rather a complaint. We can also use *keep* + verb-ing for this type of complaint.
Examples:

Norton's driving me crazy! He**'s always leaving** his dirty socks on the living room floor!
Norton's driving me crazy! He **always leaves** his dirty socks on the living room floor!
Norton's driving me crazy! He **keeps leaving** his dirty socks on the living room floor!
(These three sentences mean the same thing.)

My son **is always getting** parking tickets! He needs to learn to pay more attention when he parks his car.
My son **always gets** parking tickets! He needs to learn to pay more attention when he parks his car.
My son **keeps getting** parking tickets! He needs to learn to pay more attention when he parks his car.
(These three sentences mean the same thing.)

However, you'll sometimes hear Americans use present progressive + *always* when they're not complaining. I haven't been able to figure out a rule about when this sounds natural to Americans and when it doesn't, but here are some examples:
Examples"

Hakim is such a hard worker! He**'s always staying** late at the office to finish his work!
Diedre is really kindhearted; she**'s always helping** people.

Simple Past

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Simple Past

1. What does simple past mean?

The simple past tense usually means that this action ended in the past. Simple past can be used for most past actions; we can use it for

- actions that happened quickly,
- actions that happened over time, or
- actions that were habits in the past.

Here's a very rough rule: If an action happened in the past, you'll probably be correct if you use simple past for it. However, there are some exceptions to this rule. To find out about them, go to More Stuff You Should Know about Simple Past p47.

Examples:

I **arrived** home at five. (This happened in the past.)

Yesterday I **worked** on my math homework for three hours. (This happened over time in the past.)

When he was five, my son Hoku **watched** the videotape *The Land Before Time* every day. (This was habit in the past.)

I **didn't drink** coffee in college, but I **drank** it a lot in grad school. (These were habits in the past.)

Did you **cal**l me last night? (I want to know if this happened in the past.)

Where did Rob **sleep** last night? (I want to know where this happened in the past.)

When you were traveling in Asia, **did** you **call** your parents every week? (I want to know if this was a habit in the past.)

Bill **didn't tell** his wife about the snakes in the bathtub. (This didn't happen in the past.)

When I was in high school, I **didn't study** very much. (This wasn't a habit in the past.)

Simple past has other uses and meanings. You can find out more about them in More Stuff You Should Know about Simple Past.

2. How do I make simple past?

Statements

verb-*ed* or **irregular past form (if the verb is irregular)**

Examples**:**

Ralph **called** his mother to wish her happy birthday.
I **taught** high school for seven years before teaching at Chabot.
Wayne and Garth **studied** Chinese in college.
Yesterday I **cut** my finger while I was opening a can of cat food.

Negative Statements

***did* + *not* + simple form**

Examples:

George W. Bush **did not attend** Chabot College.
I **didn't see** Betty at the mall.
The kids **didn't eat** their vegetables at dinner tonight.

Questions[4]

(question word) + *did* + subject + simple form

Examples:

Did you **wash** the dishes?
Why did you **pour** ketchup on my head?
Did I **tell** you about the party that Rosa is having next Friday?
When did Shakespeare **write** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

[4] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142.

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Simple Past

1. When should I use simple past?

Most past actions can use simple past tense. As I wrote earlier, if an action ended in the past, you're pretty safe using simple past. However there are some (but not too many) times when you need to use **past progressive**, **present perfect**, **past perfect**, or **past perfect progressive** instead.

To find out when you should use these tenses instead of simple past, check the sections that explain them:

past progressive--p51
present perfect--p99
past perfect--p122
past perfect progressive--pp128

2. The verb *be*

In More Stuff...about Simple Present (p20), we saw that *be* is a mighty strange verb in simple present; questions and negative statements using *be* follow a different pattern than questions and negative statements using other verbs. The same is true with simple past; the patterns we follow with the verb *be* are different from the the patterns we usually follow.

Statements with *be*

If the subject is *I*, *he*, *she*, or *it*, use ***was***.

Examples:

I **was** a high school teacher before I started teaching college.

Arnold Schwarzenegger **was** a famous body builder before he became an actor.

Tina **was** at work when the Loma Prieta earthquake hit.

The weather **was** warm yesterday, but it's cold and windy today.

If the subject is *you*, *we*, or *they*, use ***were.***
Examples:

My mother often tells me, "You **were** always a stubborn child."
Fred and Ethyl **were** upset when Lucy and Ricky wanted to break their lease.
Did you see us at the movie? We **were** in the third row.

Negative statements with *Be*
Add *not* after ***be***.
Examples:

Norton **was not** a football player when he was in high school.
I **wasn't** at the White House last night.
President and Mrs. Bush **were not** at my house last night, either.
Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver **weren't** at my house last night.
We **weren't** surprised to learn that John got the job.

Questions with *Be*
Put *be* in front of the subject
Examples:

Was I noisy when I was a baby?
Were you in class last Tuesday? I was sick, so I need to get the homework.
Why **was Trista** so sad last week?
How long **were you** at the store?

3. Unreal conditionals (subjunctive)

Simple past is also often used in unreal if-clauses in the present (e.g.--If Ralph **had** $1,000,000.00 right now, he would quit his job in the blink of an eye). I didn't have time to include this grammar point in this guide, but you can find a pretty good discussion of conditionals in *Understanding and Using English Grammar* chapter 20. There's a more complete explanation that includes progressive tenses in unreal conditional sentences in *Grammar Links 3* chapter 19.

Past Progressive

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Past Progressive

1. What does past progressive mean?

Progressive tenses always happen over time, so past progressive means that the action happened over time in the past.

Examples:

I **was studying** all night for that history test! (This action happened over time in the past.)

Were you **sleeping** when I called? (I want to know if this action was happening over time when I called.)

No, I **wasn't sleeping** when you called. (This action was not happening over time when you called.)

While Norton and Ralph **were bowling**, they ran into Fred and Barney. (This action was happening over time in the past when Norton & Ralph met Fred and Barney.)

If you have a really good memory, you might remember I said that simple past can also be used to show actions that happened over time in the past. This brings us to an important question: **When should I use simple past for an action that happened over time in the past, and when should I use past progressive?** You'll find the answer to this question in More Stuff You Should Know about the Past Progressive, p51.

2. How do I make past progressive?

Statements

was /were* + verb-*ing

Examples:

Norton **was watching** T.V. when the microwave exploded.

While Thelma and Louise **were driving** down the highway, they noticed that a police car **was following** them.

Marilyn and I **were sleeping** when the earthquake happened.

Negative Statements

was /were* + *not* + verb-*ing

Examples:

When I woke up, I knew that it was still nighttime because the sun **was not shining**.

Eddie and Lumpy **weren't studying** yesterday afternoon; they were watching the Lakers game.

I'm sorry; could you say that again? I **wasn't listening.**

Questions[5]

(question word) + *was /were* + subject + verb-*ing*

Examples:

Was Governor Schwarzenegger **cooking** dinner when you called him last night?

Why **was** Eddie **doing** his math homework in English class?

What **were** you **reading** last night?

---

[5] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Past Progressive

1. When should I use past progressive? A simple rule.

Both the simple past and the past progressive can be used to show actions that happened over time in the past. Because of this, there are many times when both tenses are okay.

Examples:

While John **studied** for his history test, Ludwig **watched** TV.
While John **was studying** for his history test, Ludwig **was watching** TV.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Miguel **played** soccer all yesterday afternoon.
Miguel **was playing** soccer all yesterday afternoon.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

However, there are some times when only one tense is okay.

Examples:

Ward ~~drove~~ **was driving** to work when his car ran out of gas.
When Lucy called, Fred and Ethyl ~~ate~~ **were eating** dinner, so they didn't answer the phone.
When I backed my car out of the driveway, a red Toyota suddenly ~~was hitting~~ **hit** the rear of my car.

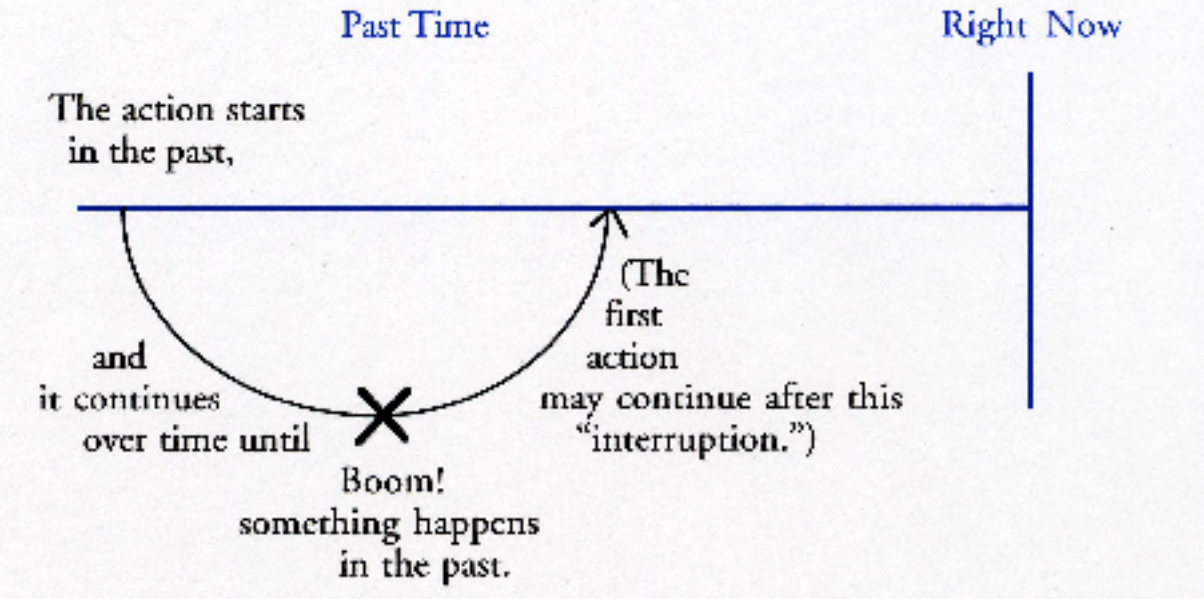
Okay, so when should I use past progressive and when should I use simple past? The rules for this are kind of complicated, so in this section I'm going to give you a simple rule. If you follow this rule, you'll write correct sentences even though there may be other correct ways to say the same thing. If you're interested you can find a more complete (but more complicated) explanation in Extra Stuff about Past Progressive section on p54

Here's the simple rule:

SIMPLE RULE FOR USING PAST PROGRESSIVE:

Use past progressive for actions that were happening over time when something else happened.[6]

If we draw a picture of this type of action, it looks like this:



The past progressive action started first and was happening over a period of time. In the middle of the past progressive action, another action (one that happened pretty quickly) occurred. (Sometimes, instead of another action, a time, like "at 10:00" or "at the end of the movie," will happen in the middle of the past progressive action.)

Examples:

I **was thinking** about you when you called. (I started to think about you first, and this action was happening over time when you called.)

At 10:00 last night, Bill **was studying** his math homework. (Bill started to study first, and this action was happening over time when 10:00 came.)

While Lucy **was shopping**, she met her friend Ethyl in the produce section. (Lucy started shopping first, and this action was happening over time when she met Ethyl.)

---

[6] For other times that an action happened over time in the past, simple past is almost always okay. See pages 122 and 128 for the times we need to use past perfect and past perfect progressive.

Everyone in the theater **was crying** at the end of the movie. (Everyone started crying first, and this action was happening over time at the end of the movie.)

Was Ralph **walking** down the street when the elephant bit him? (I want to know if this action was happening over time when the elephant bit Ralph.)

2. *When* and *while*

When we use past progressive with simple past (see point #1), we can use either *when* or *while* to join the two clauses. *When* comes at the beginning of a clause that uses simple past, and *while* comes at the beginning of a clause that uses past progressive. Either clause can come first.

Examples:

While Barney **was eating** dinner, the cat **jumped** into the soup!
Barney **was eating** dinner **when** the cat jumped into the soup!
The cat **jumped** into the soup **while** Barney **was eating** dinner!
When the cat **jumped** into the soup, Barney **was eating** dinner.

All these sentences basically mean the same thing: Barney started eating dinner first, and this action was happening over time when the cat jumped in the soup.

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Past Progressive (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. I want to know more than the simple rule; what's the difference between past progressive and simple past?

Let's start by reviewing what we already know about these two tenses. First, simple past can be used for several different types of actions:

- actions that happened quickly,
- actions that happened repeatedly, or
- actions that happened over time.

Past progressive, on the other hand, can be used for only one type of action:

- actions that happened over time.

Now that we've established that, let's look at the different ways we use these two tenses.

A. A single action

If we're only talking about one action that happened over time, then often both simple past and past progressive are okay, but we can use past progressive when we want to emphasize that the action happened over time.

Examples:

Lisa **rode** her bike all morning.
Lisa **was riding** her bike all morning.
(These sentences have basically the same meaning, but the second sentence emphasizes that Lisa rode her bike over a period of time.)

Eddie: So Wally, what did you do last night?
Wally: I **worked** on that report for history class. What about you?

or

Eddie: So Wally, what did you do last night?
Wally: I **was working** on that report for history class. What about you?
(These sentences have basically the same meaning, but the second sentence emphasizes that Wally worked over a period of time.)

Dolly **worked** from 9:00 to 5:00 yesterday.
Dolly **was working** from 9:00 to 5:00 yesterday.
(These sentences have basically the same meaning, but the second sentence emphasizes that Dolly worked over a period of time.)

Although you have a choice here, it's always okay (at least in all the examples I can think of) to use simple past. If you want to keep your grammatical life simple, you can use simple past all the time in this situation.

B. An action that happened over time and was "interrupted" by another action that happened quickly

This is the same situation you read about in the simple rule on p51 . For this situation, use past progressive for the action that was happening over time and simple past for the action that happened quickly.

- Examples:

While Norton **was working** in the sewers, he **found** a bag full of money.
When Norton **got** home, Trixie **was talking** to Alice in the kitchen.
Two Jehovah's Witnesses **rang** the doorbell while Pam **was eating** dinner.
I **was sleeping** when the Martians **came** in through the bedroom window.

C. Two actions that happened over time together.

There are three ways we can express this idea. They all mean the same thing.

i. Past progressive and past progressive

Use *while* to join the two clauses. Either clause can come first.
Examples:

While Ward **was grilling** the hamburgers, June **was making** her famous potato salad.
Erika **was reading** her history textbook at the kitchen table while her husband **was talking** on the phone
Milton got a ticket because he **was trying** to dance the Macarena while he

was driving his car down the freeway.

ii. Simple past and simple past

Use *while* to join the two clauses. Either clause can come first.

Examples:

While Ward **grilled** the hamburgers, June **made** her famous potato salad.

Erika **read** her history textbook at the kitchen table while her husband **talked** on the phone.

Milton got a ticket because he **tried** to dance the Macarena while he **drove** his car down the freeway.

iii. Simple past and past progressive

Use *while* to join the two clauses. Either clause can come first.

Examples:

While Ward **was grilling** the hamburgers, June **made** her famous potato salad.

While Ward **grilled** the hamburgers, June **was making** her famous potato salad.

Erika **was reading** her history textbook at the kitchen table while her husband **talked** on the phone.

Erika **read** her history textbook at the kitchen table while her husband **was talking** on the phone.

Milton got a ticket because he **was trying** to dance the Macarena while he **drove** his car down the freeway.

Milton got a ticket because he **tried** to dance the Macarena while he **was driving** his car down the freeway.

At this point you might be saying, "Wait! Some of these sentences look just like the sentences in section B on p55! (*while* + past progressive clause / simple past clause) You're right.

When we use this form, context is often the only way that we can tell the difference between this type of sentence and the type of sentence in section B. If you don't like this ambiguity, you don't have to use this form. Remember that there are two other ways you can use to say the same thing (see parts i and ii).

2. Past progressive can be used to show a temporary habit in the past.

When a habit in the past is temporary, we can use past progressive. Simple past is also okay and means the same thing.

Example:

Before the karate tournament, Tony **was practicing** five hours every day.
Before the karate tournament, Tony **practiced** five hours every day.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Tony didn't always practice karate for three hours every day; he only did this before the tournament. Because it was a temporary habit, we can use past progressive or simple past.

But if the habit lasted for a long time, we only use simple past.

Example

When Jackie Chan was a little boy, he ~~was practicing~~ **practiced** karate five hours every day.

Here we're looking at a much longer time: the time that Jackie was child. Because it was a pretty permanent habit, not a temporary one, we can't use past progressive.

If you want to keep your life simple, you can just use simple past for habits in past; as far as I know, it's never necessary to use past progressive for temporary habits.

For more about temporary habits and more examples, see Extra Stuff about Present Progressive on p42.

3. Unreal conditionals (subjunctive)

Past progressive is also often used in unreal if-clauses in the present (e.g.--

If I were eating lunch with President Bush now, I'd tell him my opinions about politics.). I didn't have time to include this grammar point in this guide, but you can find a pretty good discussion of it in *Grammar Links 3* Chapter 19.

Future Tense
Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Future Tense

1. What does future tense mean?

Future tense is pretty straightforward; it means that the action will happen in the future, in other words, sometime after this moment.[7] Like simple past, it can be used for actions that will

- happen quickly,
- happen over time, or
- happen repeatedly.

Examples:

John'll be here in a second or two. (This action will happen in the future.)

Tomorrow, Milton **will apply** for a job at beautiful Chabot College. (This action will happen in the future.)

Norton **is** probably **going to study** his math homework for a few hours at the library. (This action will happen in the future.)

Tonight George and Gracie **will watch** TV for a few hours after they get home. (This action will happen over time in the future.)

Is Ralph **going to bring** his CD's to the party? (I want to know if this action will happen in the future.)

When **is** Ricky **going to wash** the dishes? (I want to know when this action will happen in the future.)

Barney **won't eat** dinner with George W. and Laura Bush tonight. (This action will not happen in future.)

When I'm 75 years old, **I'll play** with my grandchildren every day. (This will be a habit in the future.)

---

[7] Sometimes a student will ask, "How can you **know** that an action will happen in the future? Nobody knows for sure what will happen in the future." These students are absolutely right; we can never be 100% sure about the future. Future tense just means we're pretty darn confident.

There are some times in the future when I can't use future tense. Take a look at More Stuff...about Future Tense on pp63 & 64 to find out about these times.

By the way, you may get a teacher who tells you that English doesn't have a future tense. Although that's technically true, most ESL teachers use the words "future tense" to talk about *will* and *be going to*. It's a clear and simple way to talk about these forms.

2. How do I make future tense?

The future tense can be made two ways

a) with *will*
b) with *be going to.*

Statements

Statements using *will*

***will* + simple form**

Examples:

John **will do** his homework after he eats dinner.
I'll call you tomorrow.
The beatings **will continue** until morale improves.

Statements using *be going to*

***am/is/are going to* + simple form**

Examples:

John **is going to do** his homework after he eats dinner.
I'm going to call you tomorrow.
The beatings **are going to continue** until morale improves.

Negative statements

Negative statements using *will*

***will* + *not* + simple form**

Examples:

Wayne **won't go** to the party because he needs to finish the homework for

his Chinese class.
I **will not marry** you, Beauregard!
Fred and Barney **won't attend** the lodge meeting tomorrow.

Negative statements using *be going to*
***am/is/are* + *not going to* + simple form**
Examples:
Wayne **isn't going to go** to the party because he needs to finish the homework for his Chinese class.
I **am not going to marry** you, Beauregard!
Fred and Barney **aren't going to attend** the lodge meeting tomorrow.

Questions[8]

Questions using *will*
(question word) + *will* + subject + simple form
Examples:
Will you be in class tomorrow?
"When **will** I **find** the love of my dreams?" sighed Snow White.
Who **will** Mortimer **ask** to the prom?

Questions using *be going to*:
(question word) + *am/is/are* + subject + *going to* + simple form
Examples:
Are you going to be in class tomorrow?
"When **am** I **going to find** the love of my dreams?" sighed Snow White.
Who **is** Mortimer **going to ask** to the prom?

[8] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Future Tense

1. Sometimes *will* and *be going to* are different--Simple rules.

Most of the time, *will* and *be going to* have the same meaning. There are a few times, however, that only one sounds right to an American. The complete rules are pretty involved and have a bunch of exceptions, but if you follow the rules below, you'll be okay nearly all of the time. (If you want a more complete explanation, see Extra Stuff about Future Tense on p67.)

A. You can use both *will* and *be going to* to show that someone thinks that this action will happen in the future (predictions).

Examples:

Ricky and Lucy **will visit** Havana next month.
Ricky and Lucy **are going to visit** Havana next month.
(These two sentences mean the same thing: I think Ricky and Lucy will visit Havana .)

The newspaper says that it **will rain** tomorrow.
The newspaper says that it **is going to rain** tomorrow.
(These two sentences mean the same thing: The weatherman for the newspaper believes it will rain.)

B. If you are volunteering to help or promising to do something, use *will*.

Examples:

Jose: Dang! I lost my pencil.
Maribel: Here, ~~I'm going to~~ **I'll loan** you one of mine. (Maribel is volunteering to help, so she uses *will*. *Be going to* sounds strange here.)

Lois: Help us, Superman! A giant robot is destroying Metropolis!
Superman: Have no fear! ~~I'm going to~~ **I'll stop** him. (Superman is volunteering to help, so he uses *will*. *Be going to* sounds strange here.)

Lumpy: Hey, Eddie, do you want to go to a movie tonight?
Eddie: Sure. ~~I'm gong to~~ **I'll call** you after I finish washing my Lamborghini. (Eddie is promising to call, so he uses *will*. *Be going to* sounds strange here.)

C. If you are describing a plan that was made in the past but will be completed in the future, it's safer to use *be going to*. *Will* often sounds wrong.

Example:

Ralph: Norton! Why are you carrying that shotgun?
Norton: There's a mosquito in my room. ~~I will~~ **I'm going to kill it!**. (Norton made the plan to kill the mosquito in the past, so he uses *be going to*. Will sounds wrong here.)

2. Don't use the future tense in time clauses

Most time clauses are logical; past time clauses use past tenses, and present time clauses use present tenses, but future time clauses are strange; they don't use future tenses. Instead, future time clauses usually use simple present. There is no logical reason for this. It is simply one of many dumb things about English. Sorry.

Examples of different types of time clauses:

Past time clauses:

I called my mom after I **got** home from work. (Past time clauses are normal; they use past tenses.)

Present time clauses:

I usually call my mom after I **get** home from work. (Present time clauses are normal; they use present tenses.)

Future time clauses

I'll call my mom tomorrow after I **get** home f rom work. (Future time clauses are strange; they usually use simple present.)

Before I **go** to bed tonight, I'm going to write a letter to my brother. (Future time clauses are strange; they usually use simple present.)

I'll mow the lawn while you **go** shopping tomorrow. (Future time clauses are strange; they usually use simple present.)

Because it is almost always correct to use simple present in future time clauses, in this section, I'm not going to explain when you can use other present tenses in them. However, if you would like to know the other tenses that you can use in future time clauses, check out Extra Stuff about Future Tense on pp70 & 71.

3. Don't use future tense in (most) future if-clauses

Like future time clauses, future if-clauses don't use future tense (with one exception--you can read about it at the end of this point). Past if-clauses use past tenses. Present if-clauses use present tenses. But future if-clauses almost always use simple present. Other tenses are also possible, but they're less common. Let's look at each one individually.

i. Simple present in future if-clauses

Most future if-clauses use simple present. In fact, it's so common that this is the only form that most ESL grammar books teach. If you're writing a future if-clause and you're not sure which tense to use, use simple present. You'll probably be right.

Examples:

If Azumi **buys** a car next week, she'll teach her sister how to drive. (Future if-clauses usually use simple present.)

If I **go** to the store, I'll buy some bananas for you. (Future if-clauses usually use simple present.)

I'll call you if I**'m** in town next week. (Future if-clauses usually use simple present.)

Man: Why are you selling lemonade for $500.00 a glass? No one will buy it.

Little Boy: Maybe, but if I only **get** one customer, I'll be rich!

ii. Present progressive in future if-clauses

When the action in a future if-clause is going to start first and still be in progress when the other action happens, then we use present progressive to show this. For this meaning, we can't use simple present.

Examples:

If ~~you drive~~ you**'re driving** when the next earthquakes hits, you should pull over to the side of road and wait until the shaking stops. (We use present progressive here to show that the driving will start before the next earthquake and this action may be in progress when the earthquake happens. We can't use simple present here.)

We'll go to a movie at 8:00 if John ~~doesn't study~~ **isn't studying**. (We use present progressive to show that we'll go to the movie if John's studying is not in progress when it's time to leave. We can't use simple present here.)

If Ralph and Alice ~~eat~~ **are eating** when we arrive, maybe they'll invite us for dinner! (We use present progressive to show that maybe Ralph and Alice's dinner will be in progress when we get there. We can't use simple present to show this meaning.)

iii. Present perfect in future if-clauses

This form is possible,but we almost never need to use it. For this reason you'll find it in Extra Stuff about Future Tense on p71.

iv. Simple past in future unreal if-clauses

Highly unlikely statements about the future (future unreal conditionals) use past verb forms (e.g.-- "If I went to the moon tomorrow, I'd bring you back a souvenir.") I don't explain conditionals in this booklet, but you can find a short discussion in Chapter 20 of *Understanding and Using English Grammar*. There's a more complete explanation of conditional sentences in *Grammar Links 3* Chapter 19.

The exception: As we saw earlier, we usually don't use future tense in if-clauses. The only exception is when *if* starts a noun clause. (Usually, *if* starts an adverb

clause.) When *if* starts a future noun clause, then we just use future tenses in normal way.
Note: This type of if-clause can also start with *whether*. If you have a good intuition for English, this is one way that you can tell if you have a noun clause. When you can substitute *whether* for *if*, then it's noun clause.
Examples:

I don't know if (whether) John ~~calls~~ **will call** me tonight.
Can you tell me if (whether) Norton ~~is~~ **will be** at the party next Friday?

3. Sometimes other verb tenses can be used for future events.

In some situations, you can use other verb tenses instead of future if you want, but it's not necessary; the future tense is also okay in all these situations.

*Simple present can be used for scheduled events in the future (see More Stuff about Simple Present p22).
*Present progressive can be used for future plans (see More Stuff about Present Progressive p32.).
*Future progressive can be used for future plans (see More Stuff about Future Progressive p76).

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Future Tense (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. I want more than the simple rule! What are the differences between *will* and *be going to*?

I'd guess that over 90% of the time, *will* and *be going to* mean the same thing, and even when they are different, the difference often isn't very important. We looked at the most important differences in More Stuff...about Future Tense on p62, but here's a more complete explanation.

A. Times that we can use both *will* and *be going to*

i. Predictions

We can use either *will* or *be going to* talk about things that we think will happen in the future. (For more about this, see More Stuff about Future Tense on p62.) This will probably be the vast majority of the times that you use future tense

ii. Refusals

We can use either *won't* or *be not going to* to refuse to do something.

Examples:

Randy: I'm really worried about my karate test tomorrow. Will you help me practice, Bob?

Bob: Forget it! **I'm not going to help** you study tonight. The last time I helped you, you broke my arm!

or

Bob: Forget it! I **won't help** you study tonight. The last time I helped you, you broke my arm!

(For refusals, both *won't* and *be not going to* sound okay.)

Donald: I love you Daisy! Will you marry me?

Daisy: Never! For the last time, Donald, I **am not going to marry** you!

or

Daisy: Never! For the last time, Donald, I **won't marry** you!
(For refusals, both *won't* and *be not going to* sound okay.)

B. Times that we should only use *be going to*

i. Future plans that were made in the past

If we're talking about a plan that someone made in the past, then it's best to use *be going to*.

Example:

Fred: Got any plans for spring break?

Barney: Yeah, Fred. ~~I will~~ **I'm going to** paint my house. (*Will* sounds wrong because Barney is obviously talking about a plan that he made in the past.)

However, it's often hard to know whether a sentence is a prediction or whether it's explaining a plan. In these cases, either *will* or *be going to* usually sounds okay.

Example:

Fred and Ethyl have a lot planned for their vacation! First, they**'re going to drive** down to LA and visit Disneyland for three days; then they**'re going to head** east and visit the Grand Canyon. On their way home, they**'re going to stop** at Yosemite National Park.

or

Fred and Ethyl have a lot planned for their vacation! First, they**'ll drive** down to LA and visit Disneyland for three days; then they**'ll head** east and visit the Grand Canyon. On their way home, they**'ll stop** at Yosemite National Park.

or even

Fred and Ethyl have a lot planned for their vacation! First, they**'ll drive** down to LA and visit Disneyland for three days; then they**'re going to head** east and visit the Grand Canyon. On their way home, they**'ll stop** at Yosemite National Park.

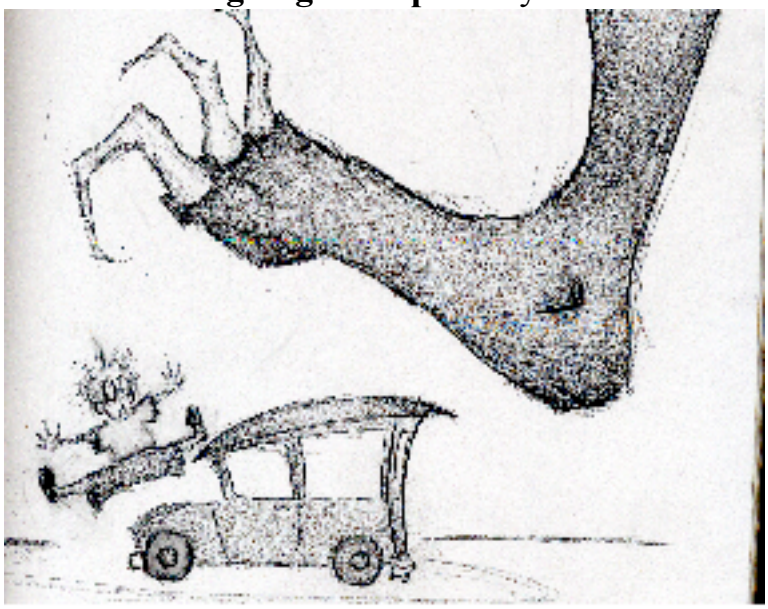
That's starting to get a little confusing, isn't it? Bottom line: If you want to be safe, remember that *be going to* always sounds okay both for predictions and for plans, so if you're not sure, it's a very safe bet.

ii. When we see that something is about to happen

When we see (or hear or feel or maybe even smell) that something is about

to happen, then we use *be going to* instead of *will*.
Examples:

Listen! There's a noise coming from this egg! ~~It will~~ It**'s going to hatch**!
Help! Godzilla ~~will~~ **is going to step** on my car!



Call the police! Dracula ~~will~~ **is going to bite** President Bush!

Normally, this use happens in spoken English rather than written English. Again, this isn't a very important difference; if you use *will*, everyone will still understand you, even if it sounds a little strange. Also, if Dracula really is going to bite someone, nobody will care if what you say sounds a little odd.

C. Times When We Should Use *Will*

i. When we volunteer to help or when we promise to do something.

If we're volunteering or promising to do something, we need to use *will* instead of *be going to*. *Be going to* sounds wrong to Americans when we use it this way.

Examples:

Randy: I'm really worried about my karate test tomorrow. ~~Are you going to~~ **Will** you **help** me practice, Bob? (Randy is asking if Bob will volunteer to help her study.)

Bob: Sure, ~~I'm going to~~ **I'll help** you practice. (Bob's volunteering to help, so he uses *will* instead of *be going to*.)

Donald: I love you Daisy! ~~Are you going to~~ **Will** you **marry** me? (Donald is asking if Daisy will promise to marry him.)

Daisy: Oh yes, Donald! ~~I'm going to~~ **I'll marry** you! (Daisy is promising to marry Donald, so she uses *will* instead of *be going to*.)

Did you notice that these are almost the same examples as the ones I used in the explanation of refusing on p67? Volunteering and promising are like the opposites of refusing, so they happen in similar situations. But remember: I can only use *will* to volunteer or promise but to refuse, either *will* or *be going to* is okay.

2. Present progressive in future time clauses

If an action in a time clause will be in progress (happening over time) when another action happens, we can use present progressive to show this. So I far as I can tell, this is never necessary. In all the examples I can think of, simple present is also okay. In some cases, present progressive sounds a bit more natural to me,

but I can't think of a rule to explain why. If you can think of a good rule, please send me an e-mail.

Examples:

Norton will give Trixie a call tomorrow while he**'s working** in the sewers.
Norton will give Trixie a call tomorrow while he **works** in the sewers.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

While Lupe **is taking** her kids to school tomorrow, she'll stop at the store to pick up some milk.
While Lupe **takes** her kids to school tomorrow, she'll stop at the store to pick up some milk.
(These two sentences mean the same thing, but present progressive sounds a little more natural to me.)

3. Present perfect in future time clauses

If the action in a time clause will happen first, then you can use present perfect if you want. So far as I can tell, in future time clauses, you never need to use present perfect; simple present is always fine, and both tenses mean the same thing.

Examples:

Norton and Trixie will eat dinner after Trixie **has called** her mom.
Norton and Trixie will eat dinner after Trixie **calls** her mom.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

When George **has** finally **fixed** his car, he's going to drive to San Jose.
When George finally **fixes** his car, he's going to drive to San Jose.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

4. Present perfect in future if-clauses

Like future time clauses, future if-clauses usually use simple present. If the

action in the if-clause happens first, I can almost always use either simple present or present perfect, and the meaning will be the same.

Examples:

Mary will be grouchy tomorrow if she **doesn't get** enough sleep.
Mary will be grouchy tomorrow if she **hasn't gotten** enough sleep.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

If Ralph **cooks** dinner before Norton and Trixie arrive, the food will be ready when they get there.
If Ralph **has cooked** dinner before Norton and Trixie arrive, the food will be ready when they get there.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

Sometimes (VERY rarely), when we need to show that one action in a future if-clause will happen before another, we need to use present perfect to mark the action that will happen first.

Example:

If Ralph **has cooked** dinner when Norton and Trixie arrive, the food will be ready when they get there. (In this sentence, Ralph will cook dinner before Norton and Trixie arrive. Using present perfect tells the reader that *cook* will happen first.)

but

If Ralph **cooks** dinner when Norton and Trixie arrive, they'll help him chop the vegetables. (In this sentence, Ralph will cook dinner at about the same time [and a little bit after] Norton and Trixie arrive. The time is very different from the sentence above.)

If that seems confusing, I have some advice for you: Don't worry about it. This type of sentence is very, very uncommon. If you use simple present for all your future if-clauses, you will probably never make a mistake, even if you live to be 105. You can find more information about using present perfect to show that one thing happens before another in Some Final Points about Present Perfect on p113.

Future Progressive

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Future Progressive

1. What does future progressive tense mean?

Basically, future progressive means that an action will happen over time in the future. It's used in the same way as past progressive, except that we are talking about the future instead of the past.

Examples:

I'll be studying all night for that history test! (This action will happen over time in the future.)

Will you **be sleeping** at 11:30 tonight? I might need to call you if I need a ride home from work. (I want to know if this action will be happening over time at 11:30.)

No, I**'m not going to be sleeping** at 11:30. Feel free to call me until 1:00. (This action will not be happening over time at 11:30.)

Norton and Ralph **will be bowling** when Trixie gets home from work. (This action will be happening over time when Trixie gets home from work.)

Future present has another common meaning: it can also show a future plan. To find out more about it, you can read More Stuff You Should Know about Future Progressive on p76.

2. How do I make the future progressive tense?

The future progressive tense can be made two ways

a) with *will*

b) with *be going to*.

Statements

Statements using *will*:

***will* + *be* + verb-ing**

Examples:

Ricky **will be working** at 3:00 tomorrow afternoon.

Tomorrow Norton and Ralph **will be fixing** the plumbing in Ralph's apartment.

I leave for Hawaii on Sunday, and on Monday **I'll be body surfing** at Sandy Beach.

Statements using *be going to*:

***am/are/is going to* + *be* + verb-ing**

Examples:

Ricky **is going to be working** at 3:00 tomorrow afternoon.

Tomorrow Norton and Ralph **are going to be fixing** the plumbing in Ralph's apartment.

I leave for Hawaii on Sunday, and on Monday **I'm going to be body surfing** at Sandy Beach.

Negative Statements

Negative Statements using will:

***will not be* + verb-ing**

Examples:

Barney **won't be working** tomorrow. He has the day off.

Fred and Ethyl usually eat dinner at 6:00, so they **won't be eating** dinner if you call them at 7:30.

Negative Statements using be going to:

***am/are/is not going to* + *be* + verb-ing**

Examples:

Barney **isn't going to be working** tomorrow. He has the day off.

Fred and Ethyl usually eat dinner at 6:00, so they **aren't going to be eating** dinner if you call them at 7:30.

Questions[9]

Questions using *will*:

(question word) + *will* + subject + *be* + verb-ing

Examples:

Will you **be working** at 11:00 tomorrow?

Where **will** John **be going** to school next year?

Questions using *be going to*:

(question word) + *be* + subject + *going to be* + verb-ing

Examples:

Are you **going to be working** at 11:00 tomorrow?

Where **is** John **going to be going** to school next year?

[9] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Future Progressive

1. Future progressive for future plans

If you want to, you can use future progressive for future plans. In fact, there are three tenses you can use for future plans: future tense, present progressive, and future progressive. All of these are correct, and all mean the same thing. (If you'd like more information about future plans, see p63 and p32.)

Examples:

Trixie **is going to meet** Norton in San Jose this weekend. (Future tense to show a future plan.)

Trixie **is meeting** Norton in San Jose this weekend. (Present progressive to show a future plan.)

Trixie **will be meeting** Norton in San Jose this weekend. (Future progressive to show a future plan.)

(These sentences mean the same thing.)

We**'re going to buy** a new car next week! (Future tense to show a future plan.)

We**'re buying** a new car next week! (Present progressive to show a future plan.)

We**'ll be buying** a new car next week! (Future progressive to show a future plan.)

(These sentences mean the same thing.)

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Future Progressive (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. Future progressive can be used to show a temporary habit in the future.

When a habit in the future will be temporary, we can use future progressive. Future tense is also okay and means the same thing.

Example:

John's going to Hawaii next week! While he's there, he**'ll be surfing** every day.

John's going to Hawaii next week! While he's there, he**'ll surf** every day.

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

If you want to keep your life simple, you can just use future tense for habits in the future; as far as I know, its never necessary to use future progressive.

For more about temporary habits and more examples, see Extra Stuff about Present Progressive on p42.

Present Perfect

Introduction

Present perfect can have four very different meanings, depending on how we use it:

We can use present perfect

*with a length of time (meanings #1 and #1b)
*with no time phrase (meaning #2)
*with a time phrase that includes the present (meaning #3)

Because present perfect has so many meanings, most of my students agree that of all the English verb tenses, it's the most confusing. That's the bad news for beginning English learners. The good news for beginners is that there aren't very many times when we absolutely need to use present perfect. Very often, another tense works just as well.

This chapter on the present perfect is organized differently from the others because there is so much information. I'm going to start with "A Short Survival Guide to Present Perfect," in which you'll find the basic information you'll need to deal with present perfect. After that, I'll explain each of the four main meanings of present perfect in a separate section.

Present Perfect: A Short Survival Guide

1. How do I make present perfect?

Statements

***have/has* + past participle**

Examples:

Ralph **has won** many bowling trophies.
I **have** often **wondered** why Ludwig is always late.
Ricky **has been** a nightclub singer for many years.

Negative Statements

***have/has not* + past participle**

Examples:

I **have not washed** the dishes yet.
John and Marsha **haven't seen** each other since 1987.
Melvin **hasn't had** an easy life.

Questions[10]

(question word) + *have/has* + subject + past participle

Examples:

Have you **seen** the movie *Cecil B. Demented*?
Where **have** all the flowers **gone**? (from a song by Pete Seeger)
How**'s** your mom **been**?

[10] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

2. How do I know what present perfect means when I read it or hear it?

A. With a Length of Time

If you see present perfect used with a phrase that shows a length of time, then it almost always means that the action started in past and has continued until now.

Examples:

Ralph and Alice **have lived** in their apartment **since 1994**.
Norton **has worked** in the sewers **for eleven years**.
Have you **lived** in Hayward **a long time**?

(For more examples and explanation, see Meaning #1 on p83.)

B. Without a Time

If you see present perfect used without a time phrase, it almost always means that the action happened in the past, but the time is not known or not important.

Examples:

John's **finished** his homework, so he might go to a movie tonight.
Arnold Schwarzenegger **has won** many bodybuilding contests.
Have you **met** my cousin Ludwig?

(For more examples and explanation, see Meaning #2 on p98.)

C. With a Time Phrase that Includes the Present

If you see present perfect used with a time phrase that includes the present (like *today*, *this week*, or *this month*), then it means almost exactly the same as simple past.

Examples:

Today, Fred and Ethyl **have washed** the windows.
Lucy **has dyed** her hair twice **this month**.
Have you **eaten** lunch **this afternoon**? (If it's afternoon)

(For more examples and explanation, see Meaning #3 on p110.)

3. When do I need to use present perfect?

There are a lot of times when you can use present perfect, but only a few times when it's absolutely necessary. Most of the time, another tense will work instead. As far as I can tell, there are only a few times you absolutely need to use present perfect:

A. "in your life" sentences,
B. stative verbs that started in the past and have continued until now,
and
C. Meaning #1b sentences.

Let's look at each of these:

A. "In Your Life" Sentences (For more about these, see More Stuff...about Meaning #2 on p100.)

"In your life" sentences tell about someone's life from the time a person was born until now. There are four types of "in your life" sentence. :

i. Asking if someone has ever done something in her or his life

Examples:

Have you **(ever) visited** Yosemite National Park?
Has John **(ever) lived** in Japan?

ii. Saying that someone has never done something in his or her life

Examples:

I **have never eaten** dog meat, have you?
John is lucky. He **has never** broken a bone in his life.

iii. Superlatives "in someone's life"

Examples:

That's **the ugliest** dog I**'ve seen** in my life!
That was **the hardest** test I**'ve ever taken** (in my life)!
I'm going to cook you **the best** dinner you**'ve** ever **eaten** in your life!

iv. Telling how many times someone has done something in her or his life if it might happen again.

Examples:

Diep **has visited** San Diego **three times**. (It might happen again.)

Elizabeth Taylor **has been** married **eight times**. (It might happen again.)

You can find out more about "in your life" sentences in More Stuff...about Present Perfect Meaning #2, p100.

B. A stative verb that started in the past and has continued until now.

If you want to show that the action of a stative verb started in the past and has continued until now, use present perfect + a length of time.

Examples:

I've owned (stative verb) this book **since I was little kid**.

Garth **has seemed** (stative verb) sad **for the past few days**. I hope he's okay.

C. Meaning #1b sentences

Present perfect meaning #1b is when we use present perfect with a length of time AND we indicate the number of times the action happened (For more about them, see Present Perfect Meaning #1b, p93)

Examples:

Ralph**'s eaten** dinner at Solomon's Deli **three times since it opened last week**.

How many times have you **called** your parents since you came to the United States?

Quentin **has watched 232** movies since he joined Netflix.

John **hasn't eaten** meat **once** since he visited the local slaughterhouse.

Note--When we use meaning #1b with an action that happened once, sometimes we'll leave out the word "once." This can be confusing to ESL students because now the sentence doesn't look like a meaning #1b sentence. Usually we only do this with questions and negative sentences. If you want, you can find more about this type of sentence in Extra Stuff about Meaning #1b, p96.

In the meantime, here are some examples:

Julia **hasn't eaten** meat **(even once)** since she visited the local slaughterhouse.

Ludwig! I **haven't seen** you **(even once)** since were in high school together!

Have you **called** your parents **(at least once)** since you came to the United States?

Present Perfect Meaning #1

Present perfect + a length of time

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Meaning #1

1. What does present perfect meaning #1 mean?

When I use present perfect with a phrase that shows a length of time like "for two hours," "since 1911," "since I came to America" or "twenty minutes," then it usually means that the action started in the past and has continued until now.

Examples:

Norton **has studied** English **for the past three semesters**. (Norton started studying three semesters ago and has continued until now.)

Ludwig **has worked** at McDonald's **since last March**. (Ludwig started working there last March and has continued until now.)

Fred and Ethyl **have owned** this building **a long time.** (Fred & Ethyl bought the building in the past and have continued to own it until now.)

Has Lulu **worked** at Costco **since she graduated from high school**? (I want to know if Lulu started working when she graduated and has continued until now.)

Dick Cheney **has never kissed** a cow. (This situation [not kissing a cow] started in the past and has continued until now.)

Why **have** you **been** quiet **for so long**? (I want to know why you started to be quiet in the past and have continued to be quiet until now.)

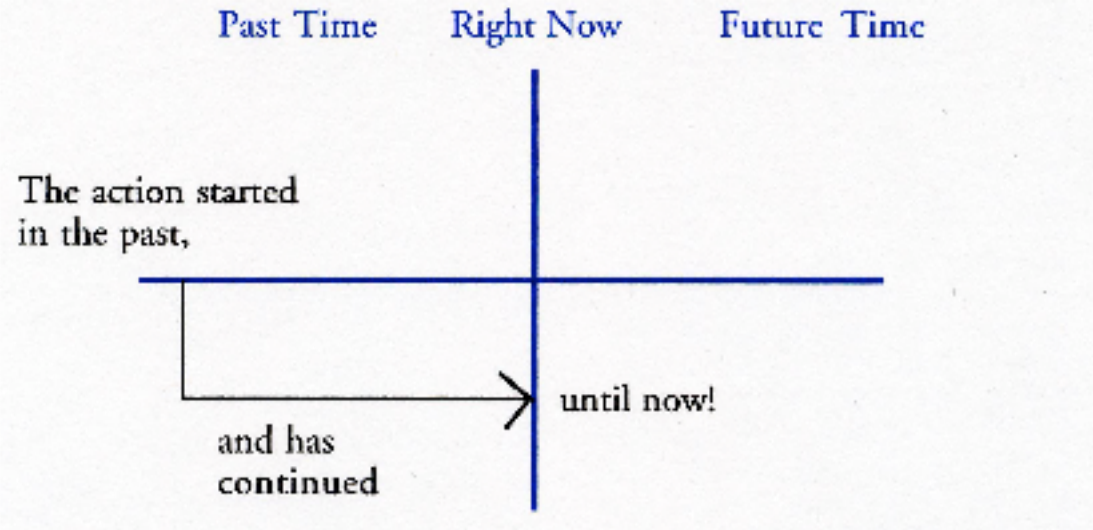
Joe **hasn't smoked ever since his doctor told him to stop.** (Joe stopped smoking when his doctor told him to and this situation has continued until now.)

Melvin **has smoked since he was seventeen**. (He started this habit when he was seventeen and has continued the habit until now.)

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Present Perfect Meaning #1

1. When should I use present perfect meaning #1?--A simple rule

Present perfect meaning #1 and present perfect progressive mean the same thing; they both mean that the action started in the past and has continued until now. If we draw a picture of this meaning, it looks like this:



If present perfect meaning #1 and present perfect progressive mean the same thing, that raises the question, "How do I know when to use present perfect and when to use present perfect progressive?" I'm going to give you a simple rule that you can use. If you follow it, you'll always create a correct sentence, even though there may be other correct ways to say the same idea:

SIMPLE RULE:

When you want to show that an action started in the past and has continued until now,

*for most verbs, use present perfect progressive, but

*for stative verbs, use present perfect meaning #1 (in other words, present perfect + a length of time).

Examples:

Betty and Barney **have been eating** dinner for forty-five minutes. (For most verbs, use present perfect progressive)

Wayne **has been doing** his Chinese homework since 7:00. (For most verbs, use present perfect progressive)

Barney **has known** Fred **since they were little kids**. (For stative verbs, use present perfect + a length of time.)

Homer **has loved** Marge **since they were in high school**. (For stative verbs, use present perfect + a length of time.)

If you want the complete story on when we use present perfect meaning #1 and when we use present perfect progressive, see Extra Stuff about Meaning #1, p88

2. Using *since*, *for*, and *in*

We often use s*ince*, *for* and *in* with present perfect meaning #1 to show a length of time. Let's look at each one individually.

A. Using *since* with meaning #1

*We almost always use *since* with a point in time.[11]

Examples:

I have taught at Chabot since 1992.
since June, 1992.
since June 12, 1992.
since 10:00 a.m. on June 12, 1992.
since I moved to El Cerrito.

Sometimes you'll hear American use *since* + a present perfect clause (e.g.--I'm so blue since you**'ve been** away), which is different from *since* + a point in time. It's also a lot less common. If you'd like to find out more about it, there's a brief discussion in Extra Stuff about Meaning #1 on p90.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

[11] Since can have another meaning; it can also mean *because.* For example: "Since (because) she was feeling sleepy, Lucy decided to make a pot of coffee." This is a completely different meaning from *since* + a point in time.

Since + a point in time is only used with perfect tenses. Theoretically, it can be used with any perfect tense (although we don't use it very much with future perfect tenses. *For* is a lot more common with future perfect and future perfect progressive).

Examples:

Ricky **has worked** at the Copacabana **since 1998**. (present perfect)

Wayne **has been studying** Cantonese ever **since he fell in love with a Chinese girl**. (present perfect progressive.)

Melvin was crushed when he learned the truth. He **had believed** in Santa Claus **since he was a child**. (past perfect)

Mary pulled over to the side of the road for a nap. She **had been driving since the sun came up**. (past perfect progressive.)

John's going to be exhausted when he gets off work tonight; he **will have been working since five this morning**. (future perfect progressive.)

IMPORTANT POINT TO REMEMBER: If you use *since* + a point of time, you need to use a perfect tense!

B. Using *for* with meaning #1

We use *since* with a point in time, but we use *for* with a length of time.

Examples:

I have taught at Chabot **for thirteen years**.
for two months.
for three weeks.
for ten minutes.

If we want, we can omit *for* and just say a length of time:

Examples:

I have taught at Chabot **thirteen years.**
two months.
three weeks.
ten minutes.

Although *since* + a time is only used with perfect tenses, *for* can be used

with almost any tense. (The exception is present progressive. We almost never use time phrases with present progressive.)

Examples:

Trixie has lived in New York for fifteen years. (present perfect)

When I was young, I lived in Hawaii for two years, but now I live in California. (simple past)

Don't cry, honey. I'll only be in prison for a few months. (future)

Fred and Barney were bowling for three whole hours last night. (past progressive)

Using *in* with meaning #1

If we want to tell the length of time a person has not done something, then we can use either *for* or *in*. Both are okay and they mean the same thing when we use them in this way.

Examples:

You haven't written your mother **for a long time**. You should write her today. She may be getting worried about you.

You haven't written your mother **in a long time**. You should write her today. She may be getting worried about you.

(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

John hasn't practiced the piano **for two years**, but he wants to start playing again soon.

John hasn't practiced the piano **in two years**, but he wants to start playing again soon.

We only use this meaning of *in* with present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect.

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Meaning #1 (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. I want to know more than the simple rule! How are meaning #1 and present perfect progressive different?

This point will take a while to explain because there are several things you need to know. (Remember: if you want to skip this LONG explanation, you can always use that SIMPLE RULE on p86.) Are you still here? Okay, let's get started:

First, you need to know that present perfect meaning #1 and present perfect progressive mean the same thing: the action started in the past and has continued until now. Very often, we can use both tenses to say the same idea.

Examples:

I have taught at Chabot for twelve delightful years.
I have been teaching at Chabot for twelve delightful years.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Has Mary lived in Hayward since 1992?
Has Mary been living in Hayward since 1992?
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Okay, now we know that present perfect meaning #1 and present perfect progressive have the same meaning. However, there's a problem: present perfect meaning #1 sounds wrong with some verbs. With these verbs, when we use present perfect + a length of time, it doesn't sound right to American ears.

Examples:

Barney ~~has fixed~~ the TV for an hour. (Sounds wrong to an American.)
Mina ~~has written~~ her history paper since 2:00. (Sounds wrong to an American.)

The next question that comes up is, "Which verbs sound strange with present perfect meaning #1?" Okay, here's the answer: Verbs that have a clear

result or ending point often don't sound right with meaning #1; for these verbs I need to use present perfect progressive instead. I know that probably sounds a little unclear, so let's look at some more examples:

Norton ~~has baked~~ **has been baking** a cake for an hour. (*Bake a cake* has a clear result: the cake, so we don't use meaning #1. We use present progressive instead.)

Ralph ~~has washed~~ **has been washing** the dishes for about twenty minutes. (*Wash the dishes* has a clear ending point, so we don't use meaning #1. We use present perfect progressive instead.)

George and Gracie ~~have eaten~~ **have been eating** dinner for about half an hour. (*Eat dinner* has a clear ending point, so we don't use meaning #1. We use present perfect progressive instead.)

Barney ~~has fixed~~ **has been fixing** the TV for an hour. (*Fix the TV* has a clear result: a working TV, so we don't use meaning #1. We use present perfect progressive instead.)

Mina ~~has written~~ has been writing her history paper since 2:00. (*Write her history paper* has a clear result: the history paper, so we don't use meaning #1. We use present perfect progressive instead.)

Because some verbs sound wrong with present perfect meaning #1, it's usually safer to use present perfect progressive for actions that start in the past and have continued until now.

At this point you may be thinking, "Okay! Maybe I can forget about present perfect meaning #1! I'll just use present perfect progressive all the time." Well, you're almost right, but there's one more thing you need to know: We can't use present perfect progressive with stative verbs. (That's because we usually can't use stative verbs in progressive tenses [see p29].)

To show this meaning (the action started in the past and has continued until now) with stative verbs, we have to use present perfect meaning #1.

Examples:

George ~~has been loving~~ **has loved** Gracie since the night they met. (*Love* is a stative verb, so I can't use present perfect progressive. To show the action started in the past and has continued until now, I need to use present perfect meaning #1.)

Wayne ~~has been understanding~~ **has understood** Chinese ever since he studied it in college. (*Understand* is a stative verb, so I can't use

present perfect progressive. To show the action started in the past and has continued until now, I need to use present perfect meaning #1.)

Ahmed ~~has been believing~~ **has believed** in God since he was a child. (*Believe* is a stative verb, so I can't use present perfect progressive. To show the action started in the past and has continued until now, I need to use present perfect meaning #1.)

Okay, let's summarize what we've learned:

When we want to show an action started in the past and has continued until now,we can use either present perfect meaning #1 or present perfect progressive for many verbs,

BUT

*I can't use present perfect meaning #1 with verbs that have a clear result or ending point.

*I can't use present perfect progressive with stative verbs.

That's a lot to remember, isn't it? If that seems like a bit too much, remember that you can always follow the SIMPLE RULE on p86. If you follow this rule, you'll always make a correct sentence.

2. *Since* + a present perfect clause

Usually English speakers use *since* + a point in time, but sometimes you'll also hear people use *since* + a present perfect clause, like this:

Wilma must be a good cook! Fred's gained ten pounds since they**'ve been** together.

When we use *since* + a present perfect clause, it means something like "during this time." So the sentence about Fred means that he's gained ten pounds during the time that he's been married to Wilma.

The main clause can be simple present, present progressive, present perfect or present prefect progressive.

Examples:

My life **seems** empty **since you've been gone.** (simple present)

John **is looking** really fit **since he's started working out**. (present

progressive)
Luisa **has made** a lot of friends **since she's come to the United States.**
(present perfect)
Luisa **has** also **been going** to a lot of parties **since she's been here.**

You'll also sometimes hear people use *since* + a present perfect progressive clause.
Examples;
Wally looks so happy **since he's been dating** Betty Lou.
Your English has really improved **since you've been taking** those ESL classes!

Weird, huh? Nonetheless, you'll hear it pretty often.
There are a couple things that I'm not sure about when it comes to this structure.
First, I'm not 100% sure this is a standard usage. I hear it a lot, but I almost never see it written.
Second, I'm not completely sure about the rules that govern this usage. Sometimes it sounds okay to me as a native speaker, and sometimes it doesn't, but I can't always tell why. I haven't found it mentioned in any grammar books, and so far I haven't been able to figure out exactly what's going on here. (If you know, please e-mail me and fill me in: kuchiyama@chabotcollege.edu. Thanks!)

The good news, however, this form is never necessary; you can always create a sentence using present perfect meaning #1 or present perfect progressive to mean the same thing.
Examples:
My life **has seemed** empty **since you left.**
John'**s been looking** really fit **since he started** working out.
Luisa **has made** a lot of friends **since she came** to the United States.
Luisa **has** also **been going** to a lot of parties since she came here.
Wally has looked so happy **since he started** to date Betty Lou.
Your English has really improved **since you started** those ESL classes!

3. If it's already clear, we don't need to say the length of time with meaning #1.

If the length of time is clear to both of us, then I can leave it out. However, it's always okay to leave it in, and we actually do leave it in nearly all the time.

Examples:

Juan's cousin from Mexico is visiting me. She**'s** really **enjoyed** her time here (since she arrived). (Because it's clear that I mean "since she arrived, I can leave it out, but it's also okay to say it.)

John and Martha got married forty years ago, and they **have had** a wonderful life together (since that day). (Because it's clear that I mean "since the day they were married," I can leave it out, but it's also okay to say it.)

Leaving out the length of time makes meaning #1 look like meaning #2, which can be confusing. In your own writing, it's usually best to include the length of time to make sure that your meaning is clear, especially if you're not 100% confident about it.

Present Perfect Meaning #1b:

Present perfect + the number of times something happened + *since* + a point in time

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Meaning #1

1. What does present perfect meaning #1b mean?

As we learned earlier, when I use present perfect meaning + *since* & a point in time, it means that the action started at the point of time and has continued until now (present perfect meaning #1).

However, if I say the number of times an action happened, the meaning of present perfect changes. To see how the meaning changes, let's look at a few sentences. First, here's a sentence that uses present perfect meaning #1.

Liz h**as loved** Mickey Mouse since she was a little kid. (She started to love Mickey Mouse in the past, and this action (loving Mickey) has continued over time until now.)

But now look at this sentence:

Liz **has visited** Disneyland **ten times** since she was a little kid.

When I say the number of times something happened, it means the action didn't happen over time; instead, the action happened repeatedly.

Examples:

I've tried to call John **seven times since he broke his leg**.
Norton **has written seven** reports **since the semester started**.
Ricky and Lucy **have seen three** movies **since last July.**

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Present Perfect Meaning #1b

1. We can only use *since* for this meaning

If I use present perfect meaning #1b, I can use *since* & a point of time, but I can't use *for* + length of time.

Examples:

I've tried to call John **seven times** ~~for two weeks~~ **since he broke his leg.**

Norton **has written seven** reports ~~for three months~~ **since the semester started.**

Ricky and Lucy **have seen three movies** ~~seven weeks~~ **since last July.**

That's because *for* means *this action happened over this period of time*. "I've played basketball for half an hour" means that the playing happened over a period of half an hour.

Since has slightly different meaning. It means *this action happened between this point of time and the time we're talking about*. "I've played basketball since 6:30" means that the playing happened between 6:30 and now. "I've played basketball three times since last Tuesday" means that the playing happened three times between last Tuesday and now.

2. Present perfect progressive doesn't work for meaning #1b

Remember that for meaning #1 of present perfect, it's often safer to use present perfect progressive (see p86). However, for meaning #1b (when I say the number of times something happened), I can't use present perfect progressive; I need to use present perfect.

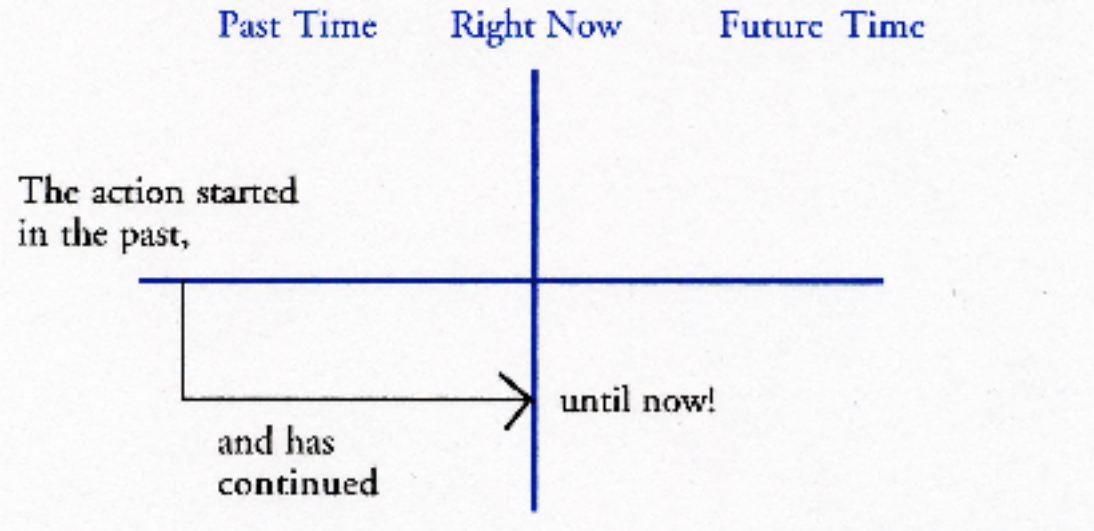
Examples:

Barney ~~has been going~~ **has gone** bowling **three times** since I last saw him.

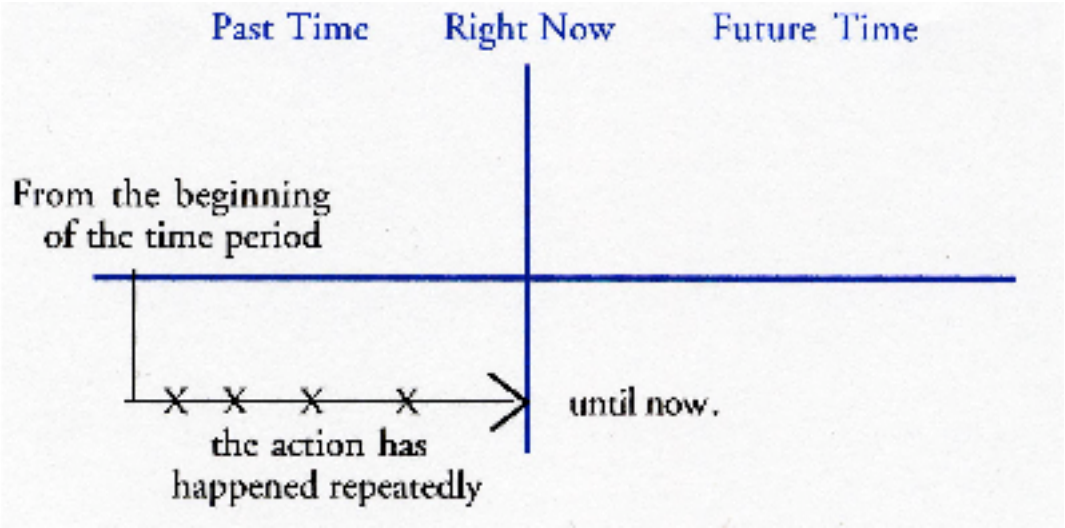
Fred ~~has been seeing~~ **has seen five movies** since last November.

Since the semester started, we ~~have been having~~ **have had five tests**.

That's because present perfect progressive (like all progressive tenses) shows that I'm thinking of the action happening over time, like this:



But if I say the number of times, it means the action happens repeatedly, like this:



Usually, we can't use progressive tenses to show repeated action; we almost always use it for actions that happen over time. There's an interesting, but not very important, exception to this idea: progressive tenses to show temporary habits. If you'd like to know about this point, you can find it on p42.

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Meaning #1b (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. Sometimes meaning #1b can be used for actions that only happened once.

Usually we use present perfect meaning #1b for actions that happen more than once.

Examples:

Thuy and Ngoc **have written** their parents **three times** since the semester started.

Fred's mother-in-law **has come** to visit **ten times** since he married Wilma.

However, it's possible to use meaning #1b for actions that have only happened once.

Examples:

Thuy and Ngoc **have written** their parents **once** since the semester started.

Fred's mother-in-law **has come** to visit **once** since he married Wilma.

Sometimes when an action has happened only once, we don't say the number of times, but we don't usually do this in affirmative statements. I think that this may be because the sentence looks just like present perfect meaning #1, which can be confusing.

Examples:

Thuy and Ngoc **have written** their parents since the semester started.

Fred's mother-in-law **has come** to visit since he married Wilma.

(Both sentences are possible, but they sound a little clunky to my ear.)

It's a lot more common to see questions and negative sentences that use meaning #1b in this way.

Examples:

Have Thuy and Ngoc **written** their parents since the semester started? (I want to know if they have written their parents once, or maybe more, since the semester started.)

Has Fred's mother-in-law **come** to visit since he married Wilma? (I want to know if Fred's mother-in-law has come to visit once, or maybe more, since he married Wilma.)

Mortimer **hasn't dated** anyone since Mildred broke his heart. (Mortimer hasn't dated anyone even once since Mildred broke his heart.)

I **haven't gone** skiing since I broke my leg last on the bunny slope last winter. (I haven't gone skiing even once since I broke my leg.)

Note: When we use present perfect meaning #1b this way in negative sentences, we have another (kind of strange) option. Usually, we can't use *for* + a length of time with meaning #1b; we can only use *since*, as in the examples above. However, in a negative sentence like this (the action didn't happen even once), then we CAN use *for* + a length of time. I don't know exactly why this is; I have a few speculations, but I think it would more confusing than helpful if I explained them here. Instead, let me just give a few examples and leave it at that. Examples"

Mortimer **hasn't dated** anyone **for a long time**.

I **haven't gone** skiing **for over a year**.

If you have a good explanation of why we can use *for* in these sentences, I'd be really interested to hear it.

Present Perfect Meaning #2

Present perfect without a time phrase

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Meaning #2

1. What does present perfect meaning #2 mean?

Present perfect meaning #2 means that the action was finished in the past, but the time is not known or not important. When you see present perfect used without a time phrase, it's almost always meaning #2.

Examples:

Wayne and Garth **have visited** Disneyland. (It happened before now but it's not clear when.)

Mary **has e-mailed** President Bush thirty-seven times. (It happened before now, but it's not clear when.)

I **have** already **finished** my homework. (It happened before now, but it's not clear when. *Already* is not really a time phrase. It just emphasizes that the action happened before now.)

Have you **visited** Disneyland? (I want to know if this happened sometime in your life, but the time is not important.)

Have you ever **kissed** a duck? (I want to know if this happened sometime in your life, but the time is not important.)

Have you **washed** the dishes? (I want to know if this happened before now, but the time is not important.)

Yes, I**'ve washed** them already. (It happened before now, but it's not clear when.)

You might be wondering, "If present perfect meaning #2 happened in the past, how is it different from simple past?" Good question! 8-). This point is explained in "More Stuff You Should Know about Meaning #2 on p99.

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Meaning #2

1. When should I use meaning #2?--The simple rule.

Both simple past and present perfect meaning #2 show things that happened in the past, and so we can often use either tense and the meaning will be the same.[12]

Examples:

We can drive to the store now because John **fixed** the car.
We can drive to the store now because John **has fixed** the car.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Did you **wash** the dishes?
Have you **washed** the dishes?
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Ron: Wow! Mortimer is a wonderful dancer!
Sherry: He should be. He **studied** with the New York City Ballet.
or
Sherry: He should be. He**'s studied** with the New York City Ballet.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

Alice is mad because Ralph **didn't take** out the trash.
Alice is mad because Ralph **hasn't taken** out the trash.
(These two sentences mean the same thing.)

At this point, many students ask, "Okay! I can see that both present perfect meaning #2 and simple past mean that the action ended in the past! Can I always use both tenses for past actions?"

That would make life a lot simpler for ESL students, but sadly, the answer is "No." There are many times when both of these tenses are okay, but sometimes only one is correct. I'm going to give you a simple rule here. If you'd like to

[12] This is in American English. I am told in British English there is a clear difference between the two.

know more, take a look at "Extra Stuff about Meaning #2" on p104.

SIMPLE RULE

For most actions in the past, use a past tense. Simple past is okay nearly all of the time. The only times that I absolutely need to use present prefect for past actions are

- "in your life" sentences (see the examples below) and
- sentences that show that an action hasn't happened up to now (see the examples below).

"In Your Life" Sentences

i. Asking if someone has ever done something in her or his life until now

Examples:

Have you ever **visited** Yosemite National Park (in your life)? (Usually we don't use the words i*n your life*; sometimes we use the word *ever* to show this idea, and sometimes we leave it out and assume that the other person understands.)

Has John **lived** in Japan?

Have Fred and Ethyl **visited** Hollywood?

Has the United States ever **lost** a war? (The USA isn't a person,but we can think of it in a similar way.)

ii. Saying that someone has never done something in his or her life until now

Examples:

I **have never eaten** dog meat, have you?

Clarence Keokolenui lives in Hawaii, so he **has never seen** snow.

John is lucky. He **has never** broken a bone in his life.

Chabot College **has never offered** courses in the Basque language. (Chabot College isn't a person, but we can think of it in a similar way.)

iii. Superlatives "in someone's life" until now

Examples:

That's **the ugliest** dog I**'ve seen** in my life!

That was **the hardest** test I**'ve ever taken** (in my life)!

I'm going to cook you **the best** dinner you**'ve** ever **eaten** in your life!

iv. Telling how many times someone has done something in her or his life until now if it might happen again.

Examples:

Diep **has visited** San Diego **three times** in her life. (This might happen again. We can use the words *in her life*, but usually we leave them out.)

Elizabeth Taylor **has been** married **eight times**. (This might happen again.)

My son's friend Amanda **has written many** poems. (This might happen again.)

Shakespeare ~~has written~~ **wrote** many poems. (This won't happen again because Shakespeare is dead, so we can't use meaning #2. Instead, we use simple past)

Amnesty International **has helped many** victims of torture around the world. (Amnesty International isn't a person, but we can think of it in a similar way.)

If you're not sure whether to use simple past or present perfect meaning #2, you can often solve your problem easily just by stating the time that the action happened in the past.

If I say the time that an action happened in the past, or if the time is clear, then I can't use present perfect; I have to use a past tense instead.

Examples:

Last night Ralph ~~has eaten~~ **ate** dinner with his friend Andre. (I can't use present perfect because I said the time: *last night.*)

I ~~have gone~~ **went** swimming almost every summer day **when I was a child**. (I can't use present perfect because I said the time: *when I was a child*.)

Liz ~~has met~~ **met** Mickey Mouse **when she visited Disneyland**. (I can't use present perfect because I said the time: *when she visited Disneyland*.)

2. Using *already* and *yet*.

We often use *already* and *yet* with present perfect meaning #2. So far as I

can tell, these words are never absolutely necessary, but they add a little extra meaning.

Already emphasizes that the action happened before now. We use it with affirmative statements and questions.

Examples:

Have you already written your English paper?
Yes, I've already written it.

Yet also emphasizes that we're talking about a time before now. We use *yet* with questions and negative statements.

In questions, *yet*, suggests that I think that if the action hasn't happened before now, it will happen sometime.

In negative statements, *yet* suggests that the action hasn't happened before now, but that I think that it will happen sometime.

Examples:

Have you written your English paper yet? (*Yet* emphasizes that I think that either you've already written your paper or you will do it sometime.)
No, I haven't written it yet. (*Yet* emphasizes that I haven't written the paper before now, but that I plan to write it.)

In informal English, Americans often use *yet* and *already* with simple past to mean the same thing as present perfect meaning #2: that this action was finished before now. This isn't standard English, but you'll hear Americans say it when they're talking informally.

Examples:

Formal:	Informal:
Have you **eaten yet**?	Did you eat yet?
Yes, **I've already eaten**.	Yeah, I ate already.
No, I **haven't eaten yet**.	No, I didn't eat yet.

Using *already* and *yet* with simple past is informal, but we can use them formally with other tenses. When we use them with other tenses, *already* and *yet* have a meaning that's similar to the meaning that they have with present perfect meaning #2.

Examples:

It's only September, but Angela **is already buying** Christmas presents for her family. (*Already* emphasizes that Angela started buying presents

before the normal time.)

It's only September! Why **is** Angela **already buying** her Christmas gifts? (*Already* emphasizes that Angela started buying presents before the normal time.)

We tried to stop John but he **had already married** the gorilla by the time we arrived. (*Already* emphasizes that John married the gorilla before we arrived.)

Khatol's baby **doesn't walk yet**. (*Yet* emphasizes that I think that the baby will start to walk sometime in the future.)

Does Mariam's baby **walk yet**? (*Yet* emphasizes that I think that the baby will start to walk sometime in the future if she doesn't walk now.)

My son finished college last month, but he **isn't working yet**. (*Yet* emphasizes that I think he will start working and that he will not be sleeping on my couch forever.)

Again, as far as I can tell, *already* and *yet* are never absolutely necessary. We can take them out of all the sentences above, and the basic meaning stays the same. Therefore, that's all I'm going to say about these two words here, but if you'd like to know more about them, you can find more information in Extra Stuff about Meaning #2 on p106.

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Meaning #2 (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. More about the differences between meaning #2 and simple past.

Present perfect meaning #2 and simple past are both used for actions that ended in the past. In fact, these two tenses are so similar that Americans sometimes use them side by side when talking informally:

I **have** often **walked** down this street before, but the pavement always **stayed** beneath my feet before. (From a song in the movie *My Fair Lady*)

But there are some important differences. If you don't want to memorize them all, you can just use the Simple Rule on p100. However, if you're the type of person that likes more explanation, here's a rundown of the main differences:

A. If the time is stated or clear, use simple past, not meaning #2.

Remember: Present perfect meaning #2 means that an action ended in the past, but the time is not known or not important. If we say the time that the action happened or if the time is already clear between us, then we can't use meaning #2, we have to use simple past.

Examples:

President Bush ~~has called~~ **called** his mother **yesterday**. (We can't use meaning #2 because the time is stated: yesterday.)

When Tam was a little boy, he ~~has ridden~~ **rode** his bicycle to school. (We can't use meaning #2 because the time is stated: when Tam was a little boy.)

B. If you're telling a story about the past, use simple past, not meaning #2.

Usually we use present perfect meaning #2 to briefly mention something that happened in the past. If we are telling the story about the past, even a short one, then we use simple past.

Examples:

I've called my mom. (This is okay because the time isn't clear and it's only briefly mentioning an action in the past.)

I've called (or called) my mom. She ~~has said~~ **said** that we should come home soon. She also ~~has said~~ **said** to stop and get some milk on the way home. (As we explain more about what happened, present perfect doesn't sound okay anymore; this has started to become a story, so I need to use simple past.)

C. Use simple past, not meaning #2, for statements about people who are dead.

Examples:

George Washington ~~has chopped~~ **chopped** down a cherry tree. (Even though the time isn't clear, we can't use meaning #2 because George Washington is dead; we need to use simple past.)

My grandfather ~~has arrived~~ **arrived** in America with no money, no English, and a lot of hope. (Even though the time isn't clear, I can't use meaning #2 because my grandfather is dead; I need to use simple past.)

D. Use meaning #2 for "in your life" sentences.

Remember that "in your life sentences" are sentences

i. Asking if someone has ever done something in her or his life

ii. Saying that someone has never done something in his or her life

iii. Telling how many times someone has done something in her or his life if it might happen again.

If you'd like to read a more complete explanation of "in your life sentences, it's back in More Stuff...about Meaning #1 on p100.

And again, if that seems like too much to keep in mind, remember that you always use the Simple Rule on p100.

2. More about *already* and *yet*

` Because *already* and *yet* are often used with present perfect, sometimes students think that they can only be used with this tense, but this isn't true. *Already* and *yet* can be used other tenses as well. Even though it doesn't directly relate to present perfect, I thought it might be good to explain these words a little more here.

As we discussed in More stuff about Meaning #2 (p101), *already* and *yet* don't change the basic meaning of tense. *Already* emphasizes that the action happened or started before the time we're talking about, and *yet* suggests that I think the action happened or will happen. Again, it's never absolutely necessary to use *already* and *yet*.

***Already* with progressive tenses**

With progressive tenses, *already* emphasizes that the action started before the time we're discussing.

Examples:

It's only 6:00 a.m., but Fred **is already mowing** his lawn.
Is Fred **already mowing** the lawn? It's only 6:00!
When Lucy went to kiss Little Ricky goodnight, he **was already sleeping**.
Fred usually starts work at the gravel pit at 9:00, so tomorrow at 10:00 **he'll already be working**.
Fred usually starts work at the gravel pit at 9:00, so tomorrow at 10:00 **he'll already have been working** for an hour.

***Already* with perfect tenses**

With perfect tenses, *already* emphasizes that the action was finished before the time we're discussing.

John told his wife to come quickly, but when she came to the window, the dinosaur **had already left**.
Ralph is amazing! We've only been eating for seven minutes and **he's already eaten** five hamburgers!
Will Vice President Cheney **have already eaten** dinner when you visit him tonight?

***Already* with simple tenses**

When we use it with simple tenses, *already* suggests different meanings

depending on whether the verb is stative or action verb and on whether we're using formal or informal English.

Action verbs in simple tenses

When we use *already* with action verbs in simple tenses, it means that action was a habit or something that was/is/will be always or usually true. (In other words, the meaning is similar to the usual meaning of simple present with action verbs.)

Examples:

Before he became a professional musician, John **already practiced** his tuba for four hours a day. (This was a habit before he became a professional musician and it continued until he became one.)

Juanita should apply for the job in Tokyo; she **already speaks** fluent Japanese. (This was true before now, and it has continued until now.)

Did Linda Lee **already practice** kung fu when she married Bruce Lee? (I want to know if she had this habit before she married Bruce Lee.)

Stative verbs in simple tenses

When we use *already* with stative verbs in simple tenses, it means that the action started before the time we're discussing and continued until that time. (This is very similar to the meaning we get when we use *already* with progressive tenses.)

Examples:

John **already liked** American food when he moved to the United States. (He started to like American food before he moved, and this continued until [and probably after] he moved.)

Did Herman **already hate** opera when Hildegard started singing lessons? (I want to know if he started to hate opera before this time.)

I'm getting old! It's only 10:00 and I**'m already** tired! (I started being tired before now, and this has continued until now.)

Already--formal and informal usage

As we saw in More Stuff...about Meaning #2 (p102), Americans sometimes use *already* with simple past to mean the action was finished before now. This is an informal usage.

Examples:

John **already washed** the car. (informal)

Mother: Jeremy, you can't watch TV until you finish your homework.
Jeremy: But Mom, I **already did** my homework! (informal)

In more formal American English, we need to use *already* + present perfect or simple past alone to show this meaning.

Examples:

John **has already washed** the car.

or

John **washed** the car.

Mother: Jeremy, you can't watch TV until you finish your homework.
Jeremy: But Mom, I**'ve already done** my homework!

or

Jeremy: But Mom, I **did** my homework!

Using *yet*

***Yet* in negative statements**

When we use *yet* in a negative statement, it means that the action didn't happen before the time we're discussing, but I think that action either happened later or that it will happen in the future.

Examples:

It's only eight o'clock, so Barney **isn't mowing** his lawn **yet**; he's still in bed. (Barney hasn't started mowing, but I think he will later.)

When Lucy went to kiss Little Ricky goodnight, he **wasn't sleeping yet**. (Little Ricky hadn't started sleeping when Lucy came in, but I think he probably went to sleep later.)

Fred usually starts work at the gravel pit at 9:00, so tomorrow at 8:30 **he won't be working yet**. (Fred won't be working when 8:30 comes, I think he will start work later.)

However, Nora's baby **doesn't read yet**. (Nora's baby doesn't read now, but I think she will in the future.)

***yet* in questions**

When we use yet in questions, it shows that we expect that the action will happen if it hasn't happened before now.

Your baby is so cute! **Does** she **talk yet**? (*Yet* emphasizes that I think that she will talk if she hasn't already started.)

When you called him last night, **had** Melvin **washed** the dog **yet**? (*Yet* emphasizes that I think Melvin washed the dog, either before you called or later.)

Present Perfect Meaning #3

Present perfect + a time phrase that includes the present

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Meaning #3

1. What does present perfect meaning #3 mean?

If we use a time phrase that includes the present (such as *today*, *this week*, *this month*, *this year*, *this morning* [when it's morning], *this afternoon* [when it's afternoon] and so on) we can use either the present perfect or the simple past; they are both correct and they mean almost exactly the same thing.

Examples:

I **have eaten** breakfast **today**.
I **ate** breakfast today.
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

Have you **brushed** your teeth **today**?
Did you **brush** your teeth today?
(Both sentences mean the same thing.)

That's pretty simple, huh?

As you read this, you may be thinking, "A simple meaning of present perfect? That's too good to be true! There must be exceptions or something to make this more complicated..." Well, you're right, but the additional points we need to make here aren't all that important. There's a slight difference in meaning between meaning #3 and simple past

*when we say the number of times something happened,
*in negative statements, and
*in questions.

But these differences are pretty small. If you want, you can read more about them in More Stuff...about Meaning #3 on p111.

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Meaning #3

1. Sometimes meaning #3 and simple past are a little different

As we saw in Part 1 (p110), meaning #3 of present perfect and simple past usually mean pretty much the same thing. However, there are a couple of times when the meaning is a little different. Let's look at each of these.

A. When we say the number of times something happened

When we say the number of times that an action happened with present perfect meaning #3, it suggests that I think this action may happen again during this period of time. Simple past suggests that I think this probably won't happen again during that period of time.

Examples:

Norton **has gone** bowling **three times this week**. (Present perfect suggests that I think he may go bowling again this week.)

Norton **went** bowling **three times this week**. (Simple past suggests that I think he probably won't go bowling again this week.)

Laura Bush is mad because her husband **has left** cracker crumbs in the bed **four times this week**. (Present perfect suggests that I think he may eat crackers in bed again this week.)

Laura Bush is mad because her husband **left** cracker crumbs in the bed **four times this week**. (Simple past suggests that I think he probably won't eat crackers in bed anymore this week.)

B. Negative statements.

In negative statements, present perfect meaning #3 suggests that I think the action still may happen during this time. Simple past suggests that I think it won't happen during this time.

Examples:

Vice President Cheney **hasn't invited** me over for dinner **this month**. (Present perfect suggests that I think he might invite me later this

month.)

Vice President Cheney **didn't invite** me over for dinner **this month**. (Simple past suggests that I don't thinks he's going to invite me later this month.)

Gracie **hasn't bought** bananas **this month.** (Present perfect suggests that I think she might buy bananas later this month.)

Gracie **didn't buy** bananas **this month.** (Simple past suggests that I don't think she'll buy bananas at all this month.)

C. Questions

Questions using present perfect meaning #3 are similar to negative statements. Using meaning #3 suggests that that action might happen if it hasn't happened already, but using simple past suggests that if it hasn't happened by now, it probably won't.

Examples:

Have you eaten breakfast today? (Present perfect suggests that if you haven't eaten breakfast today, you might eat it later.)

Did you eat breakfast today? (Simple past suggests that if you haven't eaten breakfast today, you probably won't.)

Has Fred washed his car this week? (Present perfect suggests that if Fred hasn't washed his car this week, he might polish it later.)

Did Fred wash his car this week? (Simple past suggests that if Fred hasn't washed his car this week, he probably won't.)

Some Final Points about the Present Perfect

1. When we use it with simple present, present perfect means "this happens first."

Generally, perfect tenses show that the action happens before something.

- Past perfect shows that an action happened before something in the past:
  Norton was tired when he got home last night because he **had worked** all day long in the sewers. (Past perfect makes it clear he worked before he got home.)

- Future perfect shows that an action will happen before something in the future:
  Norton's going to be tired when he gets home tonight because he **will have worked** all day long in the sewers. (Future perfect makes it clear he's going to work before he gets home.)

We can also use present perfect to show that something happens before a simple present action:

Norton is always tired when he gets home because he **has worked** all day long in the sewers. (Present perfect makes it clear he works before he gets home.)

We only use present perfect this way in times when we normally use simple present. In most of these cases, we don't need to use present perfect; simple present is okay if it's easy to see which action happens first. For example, if I say,

"Norton is always tired when he gets home because he **works** all day long in the sewers,"

you'll probably understand that he works before he gets home. That's why he's tired.

Some other times that I can use present perfect in this way are
*future time clauses and if-clauses (See Extra Stuff about Future Tense pp70-72 for more about these.)
*time clauses in simple present sentences. (See Extra Stuff about Simple Present p25)

Present Perfect Progressive

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Present Perfect Progressive

1. What does present perfect progressive mean?

Unlike present perfect, present perfect progressive has only one meaning (thank goodness!) Present perfect progressive always means this action started in the past and has continued until now (or almost until now). In other words, present perfect progressive means the action has been happening over time until now.

Examples:

I've been cleaning my house since eight this morning. (This action has been happening over time until now.)

I'**ve been cleaning** my house. (This action has been happening over time until now.)

Ralph **hasn't been getting** enough sleep since he started working nights. (This action has been happening over time until now.)

Norton **has been writing** a term paper titled *Wabbit Dweams: Jungian Symbolism in the 1940's-50's Looney Tunes Oeuvre*. (This action has been happening over time until now.)

Norton and Trixie's hair is wet because they**'ve been walking** in the rain. (This action has been happening over time until (or almost until) now.)

Have you **been using** my razor? (I want to know if this action has been happening over time before now.)

If you have a good memory, you might be thinking, "Hey! this is the same meaning as present perfect meaning #1!" You're right, present perfect with a length of time almost always means the same as present perfect progressive. That raises some questions: "Are present perfect and present perfect progressive

always the same? And if they're not, when should I use present perfect, and when should I use present perfect progressive? You'll find the answers to these questions in More Stuff You Should Know about Present Perfect Progressive.

2. How do I make present perfect progressive?

Statements

***have/has been* + verb-ing**

Examples:

John **has been thinking** about getting a tattoo.
Betty and Barney **have been remodeling** their garage.
We**'ve been studying** verb tenses for so long that now we're going crazy.

Negative Statements

***have/has not been* + verb-ing**

Examples:

My car **hasn't been running** smoothly. I think I'll take it to the mechanic.
Manuel **hasn't been doing** his homework since he got a third job.
I'm going to stay home from work today. I **haven't been feeling** well lately.

Questions[13]

(question word) + *have/has* + subject + *been* + verb-ing

Examples:

Has Fred **been working** nights? He looks tired.
Why **have** you **been avoiding** me?
Where **have** you **been keeping** yourself? (An informal way of saying "I haven't seen you in a long time.")

[13] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Present Perfect Progressive

1. How is present perfect progressive different from present perfect?

The biggest difference between these two tenses is that present perfect has a lot of meanings, but present perfect progressive has only one meaning.

Present perfect is a bit of a headache because it has three (!) different meanings depending on the time phrase that I use with it. If we count meaning #1b, then it's even worse: four different meanings! (see p80 for more about this). Just in case you need a review of these, here are meanings 1, 2, and 3.

Meaning #1: Ms. Hunt **has taught** ESL 110c **since the beginning of the semester**. (When I use present perfect + a length of time, it means the action started in the past and has continued until now.)

Meaning #2. Ms. Hunt **has taught** ESL 110c. (This sentence has a different meaning. When I use present perfect without a time phrase, it means the action ended in the past, but the time is not clear.)

Meaning #3. Ms. Hunt **has taught** ESL 110c **today**. (This sentence has yet a different meaning. When I use present perfect with a time phrase that includes the present, it means about the same as the simple past.)

Present perfect progressive on the other hand, is nice and simple. It only has one meaning, which is the same as present perfect meaning #1; it always means this action has been happening over time until now (or almost until now). With present perfect meaning #1, we almost always need to use a length of time to show it's meaning #1, not meaning #2 or meaning #3. But with present perfect progressive, it doesn't matter if I use a time phrase or not; it always means the same thing.

Examples:

I **have been reading** a good book since last Tuesday. (This action has been happening over time until now.)
I **have been reading** a good book. (This action has been happening over time until now.)
I **have been reading** a good book today. (This action has been happening over time until now.)

2. When should I use present perfect progressive?--A simple rule.

As I mentioned earlier, present perfect progressive means the same as meaning #1 of present perfect, so we can often use either one and the meaning will be the same.

Examples:

I **have taught** at Chabot **for eight years**.
I **have been teaching** at Chabot for eight years.
(These two sentences mean the same thing: This action has been happening over time until now.)

Norton **has worked** in the sewers **for many, many years**.
Norton **has been working** in the sewers for many, many years.
(These two sentences mean the same thing: This action has been happening over time until now.)

It would be great if we could <u>always</u> use either tense, but unfortunately, sometimes only one sounds correct to native speakers (e.g.--"Barney has eaten dinner for an hour" sounds wrong.) When should we use present perfect progressive and when should we use present perfect meaning #2? The actual rule for this is complicated, but if you follow this simpler rule, you'll always be okay. (If you really want to know the whole story, look at "Extra Stuff about Meaning #1" on p88.)

SIMPLE RULE FOR USING PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE:

*When an action <u>started in the past and has continued until now</u>, **use present perfect progressive** EXCEPT for the **stative verbs**. For these, use

present perfect + a length of time (present perfect meaning #1).
Examples:

Ms. Murray **has been teaching** ESl since she was 22. (This action started in the past and has continued until now. *Teach* isn't a stative verb, so I used present perfect progressive.)

Ever since he was a child, Jim **has believed** in treating others kindly. (This action started in the past and has continued until now, but I have to use present perfect + a length of time because believe is a stative verb.)

Norton **has been trying** to fix that toaster for hours. (This action started in the past and has continued until now. *Try* isn't a stative verb, so we use present perfect progressive.)

Ralph **has known** Norton since they were both twelve. (This action started in the past and has continued until now, but I have to use present perfect + a length of time because *know* is a stative verb.)

You can find lists of stative verbs More Stuff...about Present Progressive on p29.

Past Perfect

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Past Perfect

1. What does past perfect mean?

Past perfect usually means that this action finished before something in the past.

Examples:

Ralph **had eaten** dinner before he started his homework. (He ate dinner first, and later he started his homework.)

When Alice got home, Ralph **had finished** his homework . (He finished his homework first, before Alice got home.)

I got a low grade on the test because I **hadn't studied**. (I didn't study before the test.)

Had Ishmael **eaten** breakfast when he left the house this morning? (I want to know if Ishmael ate breakfast before he left the house.)

Past perfect can also have another meaning. Past perfect + a length of time means about the same as past perfect progressive, but we can't use it all the time. To read more about this, see More Stuff....about the Past Perfect on p123

Most of the time,we don't need to use past perfect; simple past is usually okay. To find out more about this, take a look at More Stuff....about the Past Perfect" on p122.

2. How do I make past perfect?

Statements

had + **past participle**

Examples:

Lucy and Ethyl **had worked** at the candy factory for only three hours before they quit.

Ricky loved Havana because he **had grown up** there.

Norton and Trixie invited me to dinner, but I said no because I **had** already **eaten**.

Negative Statements

had not + **past participle**

Examples:

I felt nervous when I got to class because I **had not done** my homework.

Maria was overjoyed to see her mother because she **hadn't seen** her for three months!

Someone stole Ralph's car because he **had forgotten** to lock the doors.

Questions[14]

(question word) + ***had*** **+ subject + past participle**

Examples:

Had you ever **eaten** American food before coming to the United States?

Wilma saw that Betty was crying after she talked to Barney. **What had** he **told** her?

[14] Remember : Questions that ask <u>who did something</u> or <u>what did something</u> don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Past Perfect

1. We often don't need to use past perfect

Past perfect works like an extra signal that this action happened before something in the past. If it's already obvious that the action happened first, we can also use simple past and the meaning will be the same.

Examples:

Trixie got home after Norton **had washed** the dishes .

Trixie got home after Norton **washed** the dishes. (These two sentences mean the same thing. I can use simple past because it's obvious that Norton washed the dishes before Trixie got home. The word *after* clearly shows which action happened first.)

Norton **had washed** the dishes before Trixie got home.

Norton **washed** the dishes before Trixie got home. (These two sentences mean the same thing. I can use simple past because it's obvious that Norton washed the dishes before Trixie got home. The word *before* clearly shows which action happened first.)

However, if we need to make it clear that one action happened first, then we should use past perfect to show that this action happened before the other one.

Examples:

Norton **washed** the dishes when Trixie got home. (Unlike *before* and *after*, *when* doesn't really show that one action happened first. It means that the two actions happened at about the same time. If both actions are in simple past, as in this sentence, the action in the when-clause usually happens a little bit earlier than the other action. So this sentence means that Trixie got home first, and then Norton washed the dishes at about the same time.)

Norton **had washed** the dishes when Trixie got home. (This sentence means something completely different. The past perfect shows that the action *wash* happened first. So this sentence means that Norton

washed the dishes first, and he was finished when Trixie got home.)

Trixie walked through the apartment door and her jaw dropped in surprise. Norton **had washed** the dishes! (In this sentence, there isn't a time word to show that Norton washed the dishes before Trixie got home, so we use past perfect to make this point clear.)

There's another time that we need to use past perfect instead of simple past (when we use the words *by the time*), but it's not very common, so I'm putting in Extra Stuff about Past Perfect on p124.

2. Past perfect + a length of time means the same as past perfect progressive

Often, past perfect + a length of time can be also used to mean about the same as the past perfect progressive.

For example, these two sentences mean the same thing:

I was really tired because I **had been studying** since 7:00. (past perfect progressive)

I was really tired because I **had studied** since 7:00. (past perfect)

However, I can't do this with all verbs. Sometimes only past perfect + a length of time is correct, and sometimes only past perfect progressive is correct. See "More Stuff...about Past Perfect Progressive" on p128 for a rule about when to use past perfect and when to use present perfect progressive.

3. Past perfect in unreal conditional (subjunctive) sentences

Another time that you may see past perfect is in unreal conditional sentences such as "I'd be able to write Japanese if I **had gone** to school in Japan." I didn't have time to include this grammar point in this guide, but you can find a pretty good discussion of conditionals in *Understanding and Using English Grammar* chapter 20. There's a more complete explanation that includes progressive tenses in unreal conditional sentences in *Grammar Links 3* Chapter 19.

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Past Perfect (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. One more time that we need to use past perfect

Another time that we usually use past perfect instead of simple past is when we use the words *by the time*. *By the time* and *before* mean the same thing when they're followed by a clause. However, we usually only use *by the time* with perfect tenses[15] . Therefore, the first three sentences mean the same thing, but the last sentence doesn't sound correct.

Norton **had washed** the dishes **before** Trixie got home. (Sounds okay.)
Norton **had washed** the dishes **by the time** Trixie got home. (Sounds okay.)
Norton **washed** the dishes **before** Trixie got home. (Sounds okay.)
~~Norton washed the dishes **by the time** Trixie got home~~. (Sounds odd because we usually only use *by the time* with perfect tenses).

[15] The one exception I know to this is when we use a stative verb in the main clause. In this case, the meaning is a little different. It means that the action started in the past and has continued until the time we're discussing, e.g.-- "By the time the semester ended, everyone **hated** Professor Martinet."

Past Perfect Progressive

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Past Perfect Progressive

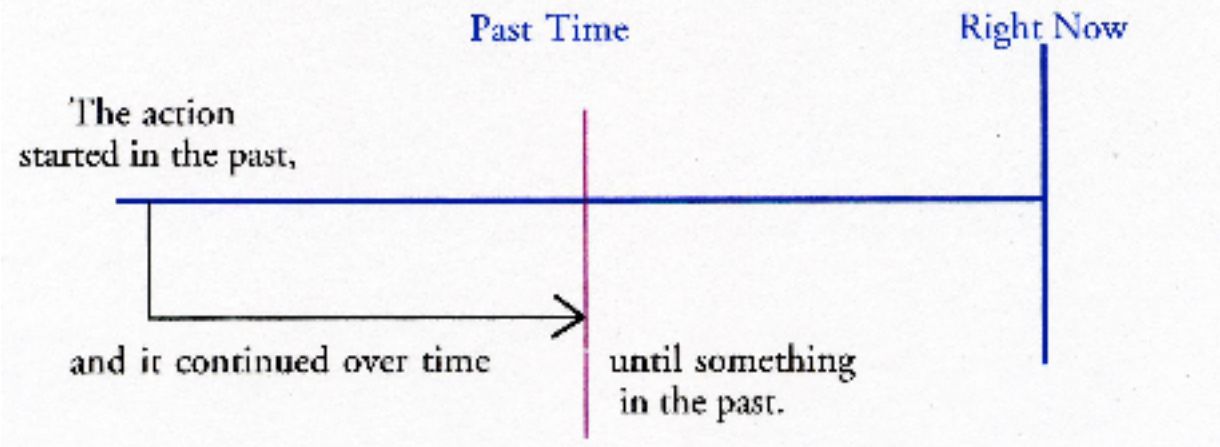
1. What does past perfect progressive mean?

Perfect actions happen before something. Progressive actions happen over time. We use past perfect progressive when we want to make it clear that the action was happening

*over time
*until (or almost until) something
*in the past.

Another way to say the same thing is that we use past perfect progressive to show that an action started before a time in the past and that the action continued until (or almost until) that time.

If we draw a picture of past perfect progressive, it looks like this:



Examples:

When the earthquake occurred, Barney **had been watching** the World Series on T.V. (Barney started watching T.V. before the earthquake and was watching until (or almost until) the earthquake hit.)

Mortimer and Ludwig were acting strange last night. **Had** they **been**

drinking before they came to the party? (I want to know if they were drinking shortly before they arrived.)

Ralph almost had an accident; he **hadn't been paying** attention to the road. (Ralph was not paying attention for a period of time until he almost had an accident.)

Where **had** Ralph and Trixie **been living** before they found the apartment they have now? (I want to know where Ralph and Trixie were living until they found their new apartment.)

At twelve o'clock **I had been correcting** papers for three hours. (I was correcting papers for three hours before twelve o'clock.)

The main questions my students usually have about past perfect progressive are

*When should I use past perfect progressive?
*How is past perfect progressive different from past perfect?
*How is past perfect progressive different from past progressive?

You'll find the answers to these questions in More Stuff You Should Know about Past Perfect Progressive.

2. How do I make past perfect progressive tense?

Statements

***had been* + verb-ing**

Examples:

When Trixie finally arrived, Norton **had been waiting** for 20 minutes.

Lucy's eyes were red. Ricky could tell she **had been crying**.

Wilma was exhausted. She **had been cooking** all afternoon.

Negative Statements

***had not been* +verb-ing**

Examples:

Betty looked so thin the last time we met! I think she **hadn't been eating** properly.

Billy's teacher sent a note to his parents saying that he **had not been doing** all of his work.

After the camping trip, Barney had a beard because **he hadn't been**

shaving for a couple weeks. .

Questions[16]

(question word) + *had* + subject + *been* + verb-ing

Examples:

What had Fred been doing before Wilma got home?

Where had Ricky been working before he got his job at the Copacabana?

[16] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Past Perfect Progressive

1. When should I use past perfect progressive?--A simple rule

We use past perfect progressive to make it clear that an action happened over time until something in the past. A lot of the time, we can also use past perfect + a length of time to show this. Often, both tenses are okay and they both mean the same thing.

Example:

I **had studied** for three hours before the test.
I **had been studying** for three hours before the test.
(These sentences mean the same thing.)

Unfortunately, sometimes only one of these tenses is correct. I'm going to give you a simple rule here; it won't tell you everything, but if you follow this rule, you'll create correct sentences. If you're interested in a more detailed explanation, you can go to "Extra Stuff about Past Perfect Progressive" on p128.

SIMPLE RULE:

If you want to show that an action was happening over time until something in the past,
*use past perfect progressive with most verbs
*use past perfect + a length of time with stative verbs

Example:

Ricky **had been washing his car** when it started to rain. (We can use past perfect progressive because *wash* isn't a stative verb.)

Fred loved Ethyl. He **had loved** her since the day they met. (*Love* is a stative verb, so we can't use past perfect progressive. Instead, we need to use past perfect + a length of time.)

Note: This is almost exactly the same rule that I use for
*present perfect vs. present perfect progressive and
*future perfect vs. future perfect progressive.

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Past Perfect Progressive (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. I want to know more than the simple rule! How are past perfect and past perfect progressive different?

In "More Stuff You Should Know about Past Perfect Progressive" I gave you a simple rule about when to use past perfect progressive and when to use past perfect + a length of time. Here's the more detailed explanation that lies behind that rule.

A lot of the time, both past perfect progressive and past perfect + a length of time are okay.

Example:

Fred **had been driving** for six hours when he almost had an accident.`
Fred **had driven** for six hours when he almost had an accident.
(In this case, both sentences are correct, and they mean the same thing.)

But sometimes one of these tenses isn't correct. This can happen for two reasons:

A. Stative verbs can't be used in progressive tenses, so they can't be used in past perfect progressive. For stative verbs, we have to use past perfect + a length of time.

Example:

Captain Ahab ~~had been hating~~ **had hated** Moby Dick for many years before Ishmael joined the crew. (I can't use past perfect progressive because hate is a stative verb. I have to use past perfect + a length of time.)

B. Some verbs sound strange to Americans when we use them with a perfect tense + a length of time.

Example:

John and Marsha ~~had eaten~~ **had been eating** dinner for about twenty minutes by the time we got there. *(Had eaten dinner for about twenty minutes* sounds strange to Americans. I need to use past perfect progressive:)

You're probably wondering, "Okay, how can I know which verbs sound strange when we use them in past perfect + a length of time?" They're the same verbs that sound strange when we use them with present perfect + a length of time. You can find them explained in Extra Stuff about Meaning #1 on p88

2. There are other ways to say the same thing.

Past perfect progressive is one way to show that an action was happening over time until something in the past. There are also other ways that we can show the same information. If we use these other ways, we don't need to use past perfect progressive; we can use other past tenses.

Examples:

Governor Schwarzenegger **had been lifting** weights when the reporters arrived for a press conference . (In this sentence, past perfect progressive shows that the action *lift* was happening over time until (or almost until) the reporters arrived.)

Governor Schwarzenegger **had lifted** weights for an hour when the reporters arrived for a press conference. (In this sentence, past perfect + a length of time shows that the action *lift* happened over time until the reporters arrived.)

Governor Schwarzenegger **was lifting** weights **before** the reporters arrived for a press conference. (In this sentence, past progressive shows that the action *lift* was happening over time. The word *before* shows that it happened before the reporters arrived. When I use *before* together with past progressive, it suggests that the action continued until the reporters arrived.)

Governor Schwarzenegger **lifted** weights for an hour **before** the reporters arrived for a press conference. (In this sentence, the words *for an hour* show that the action happened over time, and the word *before* shows that it happened. When I use *before* together with *for an hour*, it suggests that the action continued until the reporters arrived.)

(These sentences all mean the same thing.)

3. *For* and *Since* with past perfect progressive

When we use past perfect progressive with a time clause, we usually use *for* + a length of time (or just a length of time) instead of *since* + a point in time.

Examples:

John **had been running** ~~since 10:00~~ **for three hours** when he finally crossed the finish line of the marathon.
When June got home, Ward **had been grilling** hamburgers ~~since 6:00~~ **for about 10 minutes.**

4. Unreal conditionals (subjunctive)

Past perfect progressive is also used in unreal if-clauses in the present (e.g.--Thank goodness John is safe! He might have been killed if he had been driving on the Bay Bridge when the earthquake hit.). I didn't have time to include this grammar point in this booklet, but you can find a pretty good discussion of it in *Understanding and Using English Grammar* Chapter 20. There's a more complete discussion that includes progressive tenses in unreal conditional sentences in Grammar Links 3 Chapter 19.

Future Perfect

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Future Perfect

1. What does future perfect mean?

Future perfect means that this action will happen before something in the future. It has exactly the same meanings as past perfect, except the time is the future.

Examples:

When Betty gets home this evening, Barney **will have washed** the dishes. (Barney will wash the dishes before Betty gets home.)

You **will have studied** twelve verb tenses by the time you finish reading this booklet. (You'll study the verb tenses before you finish the booklet.)

I have eight more chapters to study! I **won't have finished** by the time we have the test tomorrow. (I will not finish before the test.)

Will you **have finished** your homework before it's time to go to the party? (I want to know if you will finish your homework before it's time to leave for the party.)

NOTE--As with past perfect, I don't need to use future perfect if it's already clear which action happened first. I can also use future tense and the meaning will be the same. Because of this, most of the time, I don't need to use future perfect.

Examples:

Ralph **will have cooked** dinner before Alice gets home.

Ralph **will cook** dinner before Alice gets home. (These two sentences mean the same thing. I can use future tense instead of future perfect because it's obvious that Ralph will cook dinner first. The word *before* makes this clear.)

Another meaning: Future perfect + a length of time has the same meaning as future perfect progressive. For more about this, take a look at More Stuff You

Should Know about Future Perfect on p134.

2. How do I make future perfect?

Statements

***will have* + past participle**

Examples:

I **will have eaten** dinner before I go to bed.

By the time they go on vacation, Wilma and Fred **will have packed** their bags.

When we get to the airport, Norton's plane **will have** already **arrived**.

NOTE: We usually don't use be going to in future perfect. It's not really wrong to do this, but it makes the verb so long that we generally avoid it. It sounds clunky.

Negative Statements

***will not have* + past participle**

Examples:

The mail usually comes at 1:00, so at 12:00 tomorrow, the mail probably **won't have arrived** yet.

Dinner is taking longer to cook than I thought. When our guests arrive, I **will not have finished** making dinner.

We're going to arrive at the bus station early. The bus to Tahoe **will not have left** by the time we get there.

Questions[17]

(question word) + *will* + subject + *have* + past participle

Examples:

How many cities **will** Ralph and Trixie **have visited** by the time they finish their vacation?

Will you **have washed** the car when I get home?

[17] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Future Perfect

1. Future Perfect + a length of time has the same meaning as future perfect progressive.

When I use it with a length time, future perfect can also mean the same as the future perfect progressive. For example, these two sentences mean the same thing:

When we finally get to Los Angeles, I **will have driven** for six hours. (future perfect)

When we finally get to Los Angeles, I **will have been driving** for six hours. (future perfect progressive)

However, I can't use this meaning of future perfect with all verbs. See More Stuff...about Future Perfect Progressive on p138 for a rule about when to use future perfect to show this meaning.

Future Perfect Progressive

Part 1:
Basic Stuff about Future Perfect Progressive

1. What does future perfect progressive mean?

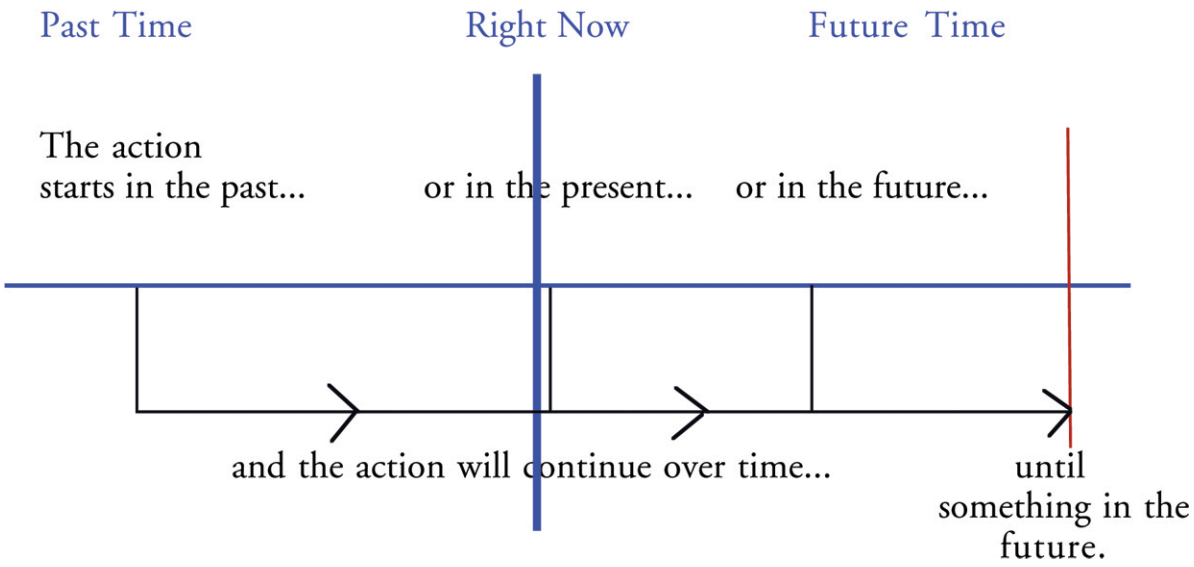
Future perfect progressive is a verb tense that you might never use; it's pretty rare and almost never necessary. Personally, I would bet $5.00 that I haven't used future perfect progressive in the last two years (except when I was teaching grammar).

Future perfect progressive has almost exactly the same meaning as past perfect progressive; the difference is that it happens in the future, not the past. We use future perfect progressive when we want to make it clear that the action will happen

*over time
*until (or almost until) something
* in the future.

That's one reason we don't use this tense very much; it doesn't happen often that we need to say that something will happen over time until something in future. Another reason is that we can usually use other tenses instead of future perfect progressive.

If we draw a picture of future perfect progressive, it looks like this (see next page):



Examples:

When I go to bed tonight, I **will have been working** on this darn verb tense book for three hours. (I started working about half an hour ago, and I will continue working until I go to bed later tonight.)

How long **will** Ralph **have been driving** a bus when he retires? (Ralph probably started driving a bus in the past and will continue until he retires.)

Fred said that dinner will start at 6:30. We'll get there a little late, probably at 6:45, so by the time we get there, they **won't have been eating** long.

2. How do I make future perfect progressive?

Statements

will have been **+ verb-ing**

Examples:

I hope that when I get home tonight, my son **will have been doing** his homework.

When June gets home, Ward **will have been grilling** the burgers for about 10 minutes.

John's shift at work starts at 8:00 tonight, but Marsha's starts at 6:00. That means that Marsha **will have** already **been working** a couple of hours before John arrives.

NOTE: We usually don't use *be going to* in future perfect progressive. It's not exactly wrong to do this, but it makes the verb so long that we generally avoid it. It sounds clunky.

Negative Statements

***will not have been* + verb-ing**

Example:

Don't worry. The movie starts at 7:00, and we should get to the theater at about 7:05, so the movie **won't have been playing** very long when we get there. We won't have missed much.

(It's hard to think of good examples for future perfect progressive! Like I said, we don't use it very much. I hope one example is enough. If you can think of some good examples of negative future perfect progressive, please e-mail me and I may include them in the website.)

Questions[18]

(question word) + *will* + subject + *have been* + verb-ing

Examples:

How long **will** John **have been driving** that old piece of junk when he finally gets his new car next week?

How many years **will** Barney **have been working** on his novel when he finally finishes it?

I'll be going to the study group after I finish work, so I'll get there at about 6:45. **Will** you guys **have been studying** long before I arrive? Will I miss much?

[18] Remember : Questions that ask who did something or what did something don't follow the normal question patterns. See Appendix: Questions about the Subject on p142

Part 2:
More Stuff You Should Know about Future Perfect Progressive

1. We usually use future perfect progressive with a length of time.

Usually (not always, but usually) we use future perfect progressive with a length of time. (*For*) + a length of time is most common; it's less common to use *since* + a point of time in this case.

Examples:

When she finishes the marathon, June **will have been running** for three hours!

How long **will** you **have been training** in karate when you get your black belt?

2. When should I use future perfect progressive?--A simple rule

As we already learned, we use present perfect progressive to show that an action will happen over time before something in the future. In many cases, we can also use future perfect + a length of time to show the same idea. Usually, both of these verb tenses sound correct and mean the same thing, but similarly to past perfect progressive and present perfect progressive, sometimes only one of them sounds correct. If you want to learn the complete story, you can check out Extra Stuff about Future Perfect Progressive on p140, but if you follow the simple rule below, you'll always create correct sentences.

SIMPLE RULE

When you want to show that an action will happen over time before something in the future

*use present perfect progressive for most verbs

*use present perfect + a length of time for stative verbs

Examples:

Fred and Ethyl's wedding anniversary is next Friday. On that day, they

will have been living as husband and wife for thirty years. (*Live* is not a stative verb, so future perfect progressive is okay.)

Fred and Ethyl's wedding anniversary is next Friday. On that day, they **will have been** (~~will have been being~~) husband and wife for thirty years. (*Be* is a stative verb, so I can't use future perfect progressive. Instead, I use future perfect + a length of time.)

Part 3:
Extra Stuff about Future Perfect Progressive (You May Not Need to Know This)

1. I want to know more than the simple rule! How are future perfect and future perfect progressive different?

Future perfect progressive and future perfect + a length of time mean the same thing, and often we can use both tenses to show that an action will be happening over time before something in the future. Sometimes, however, only one verb tense is okay. There are two times that this happens:

A. Stative verbs can't be used in progressive tenses, so they can't be used with future perfect progressive.

Because we can't use stative verbs with progressive tenses, we have to use future perfect + a length of time for them.

Example:

Chabot College was founded in 1961. In 2011, Chabot ~~will have been existing~~ **will have existed** for 50 years! (Because *exist* is a stative verb, I need to use future perfect + a length of time, not future perfect progressive.)

B. Some verbs sound strange to Americans when we use them with a perfect tense + a length of time.

Example:

John and Marsha ~~will have eaten~~ **will have been eating** dinner for about twenty minutes by the time we get there. *(Eat dinner* sounds strange to Americans when we use future perfect + a length of time. I need to use present perfect progressive.)

That raises a question: "How do we know which verbs sound strange when we use them in future perfect + a length of time?" They're the same verbs that sound strange when we use them with present perfect + a length of time. You can find them explained in Extra Stuff about Meaning #1 on p88.

2. There are other ways we can say the same thing.

If we use other ways to make it clear that an action will happen over time until something in the future, then we can use other tenses and the meaning will be the same.

Examples:

I **will have been working** on this book when I go to bed tonight at 12:00. (In this sentence, future perfect progressive shows that the action *work on this book* will happen over time before the action *go to bed*.)

I **will have worked** on this book for three hours when I go to bed tonight at 12:00. (In this sentence, future perfect shows that the action *work on this book* will happen before the action *go to bed* and the words *for three hours* show that the action will happen over time.)

I**'ll be working** on this book until I go to bed tonight at 12:00. (In this sentence future progressive shows that the action will happen over time and the word *until* shows that it will happen over time before I go to bed.)

I**'ll work** on this book until I go to bed tonight at 12:00. (In this sentence the word *until* shows that the action will happen over time before I go to bed.)

These sentences "feel" a bit different to a native speaker of English, but they all mean about the same thing: I'll work on the book over time until I go to bed.

3. *For* and *Since* with future perfect progressive

When we use future perfect progressive with a time clause, we usually use *for* + a length of time (or just a length of time) instead of *since* + a point in time.

Examples:

I **will have been working** on this darn verb tense guide ~~since 8:00~~ **for three hours** before I go to bed tonight.

When June gets home, Ward **will have been grilling** hamburgers ~~since 6:00~~ **for about 10 minutes.**

Appendix I:
Questions about the Subject

1. Questions about the subject are always different.

Questions in English nearly always follow the patterns I've explained in this guide, but there's an important exception: Questions about the subject always follow a different pattern. If we want to ask

- who did something or
- what did something,

then we need to use this special pattern.

- THE SPECIAL PATTERN:

who + the verb and the rest of the sentence using the same word order that you use in a statement

or

what + the verb and the rest of the sentence using the same word order that you use in a statement

That's all! Don't use *do*. Don't change the verb. The question looks just like statement except for two differences:

a. It uses *who* or *what* for a subject.
b. There's a question mark at the end.

Examples:
Who usually **mows** Ward's lawn?
I want to know who does this action, so I need to use the special pattern. We can't say
~~Who does usually mow~~ / ~~Does who usually mow~~ Ward's lawn?
Instead, this question looks like a statement: Wally usually mows Ward's lawn**.**

What is making that noise**?**
I want to know <u>what is doing this action</u>, so I need to use the special pattern. We can't say
~~Is what making that noise~~ / ~~Does what is making that noise~~?
Instead, this question looks like a statement: My cat is making that noise.

Who ate my sandwich?
I want to know <u>who did this action</u>, so I need to use the special pattern. We can't say
~~Who did eat~~ / ~~Did who eat~~ my sandwich?
Instead, this question looks like a statement: Norton ate my sandwich.

Who was fixing your car last Tuesday when I came by?
I want to know <u>who was doing this action</u>, so I need to use the special pattern. We can't say
~~Was who fixing~~ / ~~Did who was fixing~~ your car last Tuesday when I came by?
Instead, this question looks like a statement: John's cousin was fixing your car when I came by.

Who'll pay for this broken window?
I want to know <u>who will do this action</u>, so I need to use the special pattern. We can't say
~~Will who pay~~ for this broken window?
Instead, this question looks like a statement: I'll pay for this broken window.

What has happened here?
I want to know <u>what has done this action</u>, so I need to use the special pattern. We can't say
~~What did happen~~ / ~~Has what happened/Did what has happened~~ here?
Instead, this question looks like a statement: Something has happened here.

I haven't given an example for every tense, but I hope that's enough to be clear.

Appendix II:
Books and Websites that You Might Find Useful

While I was doing research for this book, I looked at a lot of ESL grammar books. Boy! You'd be amazed at how many really horrible ESL grammar books are being sold these days. Here are a few books that I liked.

Individual Books

***The ELT Grammar Book* by Firsten, Richard (Alta Books, 2000)**

This is a wonderful book for folks who are interested in ESL grammar. It's written for ESL teachers, but it would be very helpful for advanced ESL students. Mr. Firsten writes in a friendly, easy-to-understand style and covers a wide range of grammar topics in insightful ways that I haven't seen in other grammar books.

***Grammar Express* by Marjorie Fuchs & Margaret Bonner (Longman Publishers, 2000)**

This is the book that we use at Chabot for the ESL grammar review course. It presents the grammar in small units, and it has an answer key in the back so students who are studying on their own can do the exercises and check their own work. I wish that the authors explained more about some of the topics, but it's a fun and easy-to-use book for a review of grammar basics.

Books that Come in a Series

The Azar Grammar Series (Longman Publishers)

Basic English Grammar by Betty Shchrampfer Azar (1999)
Fundamentals of English Grammar by Betty Shchrampfer Azar (2005)
Using and Understanding English Grammar by Betty Shchrampfer by Azar, (1999)

These are some of the first ESL grammar books, and they have a lot to

recommend them. They give the student a lot of exercises and you can get editions with answer keys in the back so you can check your own work. The explanations are almost always clear and accurate. Because they cover a lot of grammar points, they're good to have as reference books, especially *Using and Understanding English Grammar*, the most advanced book in the series.

The *Grammar Links* Series (Houghton Mifflin Publishers)
Grammar Links 1 by Linda Butler & Janet Podnecky (2003)
Grammar Links 2 by Kathleen M. Mahnke & Elizabeth O'Dowd (2004)
Grammar Links 3 by Janis van Zante, Debra Daise, Charl Norloff, & Randee Folk (2005)

I used the third book in this series in the Chabot's grammar review class for several semesters. If you can find it, I like the first edition better than the second edition. The explanations are very complete and accurate; unfortunately, the information was too detailed for a fast grammar review class. But if you want more detailed explanations than you'll find in most grammar books, this is a good book to turn to. The books don't come with the answers in the back, but you can probably order an answer key from the publisher. (Chabot students can stop by my office, and I'll loan you my copy.)

The *Clear Grammar* Series (The University of Michigan Press)
Clear Grammar 1 by Keith Folse (2003)
Clear Grammar 2 by Keith Folse (2003)
Clear Grammar 3 by Keith Folse (2003)
Clear Grammar 4 by Keith Folse (2003)

I've never used these books to teach a class, but I came across them while I was doing research for this guide. The explanations seem clear and accurate and there's an answer key in the back so that you can check you work.

The *Grammar Sense* Series (Oxford University Press)
Grammar Sense 1 by Cheryl Pavlik (2004)
Grammar Sense 2 by Cheryl Pavlik (2004)
Grammar Sense 2 by Susan Kesner Bland (2003)

This is another series that I've never used in a class, but it looks good. The explanations seem clear and there's a reasonable number of exercises.

Unfortunately, these books don't come with an answer key.

Websites

You can find a lot of websites with information on verb tenses if you Google the words *English verb tenses*. Most of these sites are okay, although there are a few that give some pretty squirrelly explanations. The vast majority of the okay sites just give simple explanations and charts, the type of thing that you can find in the Azar books. (And Azar usually does a better job.) Here are some websites that provide more than basic information.

Activities for ESL Students
http://a4esl.org/

This website offers a HUGE number of exercises, quizzes, and puzzles for ESL students. There are also many bilingual activities for speakers of many different languages from Arabic to Zulu.

Dave's ESL Cafe
http://www.eslcafe.com/

This is a good site with forums where you can post questions about English and receive answers from teachers and other students. The site also offers information on phrasal verbs, idioms, slang, and pronunciation as well as quizzes on many topics.

English Page
http://www.englishpage.com/index.html

This site offers grammar information and exercises on many, many topics. The information isn't extremely detailed, but it gives a good overall view of a wide range of grammar points.

ESL Blues
http://ww2.college-em.qc.ca/prof/epritchard/trouindx.htm

This site offers LOTS of information! Many grammar tutorials and quizzes from the beginning to intermediate levels. A very good site for students.

The Plan of the English Verb
http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/cill/exercises/choosing-verbs.htm#pt

This is a very cleverly designed interactive tutorial on English verbs. It provides basic information about verb tenses in a fun and interesting format (although all the different colors can be a little hard on your eyes after a while).

Virtual ESL Grammar
http://www.james.rtsq.qc.ca/Virtgram/#PRPEPR

A very extensive site offering explanations and quizzes on an immense number of grammar topics. This is a very well put-together site. Highly recommended.

A Few Thank-You's

I'd like to gratefully acknowledge the many folks who helped in creation of this guide. My sincere thanks to (in mostly alphabetical order)

Steven Grant for the introduction to Dreamweaver.
Hisako Hintz for the detailed and fascinating information about concepts of possession in Japanese, as well as for her remarkably skillful proofreading.
Lisa Ikeda for suggesting point #5 in the Extra Stuff about Present Progressive section.
Debbie Mejia, for kindly looking over the rough draft and making many incredibly helpful and sensible suggestions (You can thank her for the color-coding) as well as providing valuable background information on both Spanish and Farsi.
Carol Murray for her advice and support during my application process.
Tam Pham for the wonderful explanations about Vietnamese that she so kindly provided when I asked her for help and for sending me a really helpful e-mail pointing out a number of typos that had slipped into the first version I posted online.
Hoku Uchiyama for the cool drawing of Godzilla's foot as well as for showing me how to use the scanner and Photoshop. (And check out his website: www.rosethemovie.com !)
The Chabot Sabbatical Committee for giving me a semester to finally write this darn thing.
And finally, thanks to my all my wonderful students, whose questions have served as the impetus and foundation for this guide.