

TENSE

Tense refers to the changes in verb form that express distinctions of time. There are six tense **present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect.**

The tenses of verbs are formed from their three **principal parts: infinitive, past tense form, and past participle** with the help of one or more auxiliary verbs. Thus, if you learn the principal parts of the commonly used verbs and the auxiliary verbs that are used to form the various tenses, you will be able to express any distinction of time that is required by the sentence meaning.

Present Tense

The tense expresses an action or state of being that exists now; it may also indicate habitual, emphatic, or, somewhat informally, future action (for example, “I *leave* for Rome tomorrow.”)

I *attend* concerts regularly. (present tense)

I *am singing* the song. (present tense)

I *walk* to school every day. (habitual action)

I *do study* hard for finals. (emphatic action)

I *live* in Boston. (state of being—present tense)

When the *to* (the sign of the infinitive) is dropped, a form known as the **simple infinitive** or **present stem** is the result. *To go* becomes *go*; *to walk* becomes *walk*. This form is the present tense in all persons (singular and plural) except for the third person singular, where *-s* or *-es* is added to the present stem or simple infinitive: *sings, goes, sees, does*.

SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

<i>Person</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
First	I walk	we walk
Second	you walk	you walk
Third	he, she, it walks	they walk

Present stem *walk, walk + -s*

Past Tense

This tense expresses complete action in the past. It is formed by adding *-d*, *-ed*, or *-t* to the present stem.

SIMPLE PAST TENSE

<i>Person</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
First	I walked	we walked
Second	you walked	you walked
Third	he, she, it walked	they walked

Future Tense

This expresses action that occurs sometimes in the future. It is formed with the auxiliary *shall* or *will* and the present stem.

SIMPLE FUTURE TENSE

<i>Person</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
First	I shall/will walk	we shall/will walk
Second	you will walk	you will walk
Third	he, she, it will walk	they will walk

We *shall/will* go tomorrow.

He *will* leave later in the day