



Chapter 1

Overview of Verb Tenses

CHAPTER SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE: To provide a general overview of all twelve verb tenses. The intention is for students to understand that some logical relationships exist among the verb tenses. This chapter will serve as a review for many students and will strengthen students' ability to recognize and use the verb tenses.

APPROACH: Students at this level are probably somewhat familiar with all of the verb tenses (with the possible exceptions of the future perfect and future perfect progressive, two little-used tenses). In presenting the initial charts in this chapter, you can help the students understand the overall patterns in the English tense system (for example, that all progressive tenses indicate that an activity is / was / will be in progress or that all perfect tenses indicate that one activity occurs before another activity or time.) Then as you proceed through the chapter, you can refer to Chart 1-5 to put each tense within the framework of English verb tenses. For example, you can relate the use of the past progressive (*I was sitting in class at this time yesterday*) to present progressive (*I am sitting in class right now*).

TERMINOLOGY: Simple tenses are formed without an auxiliary or helping verb, and the tense is indicated in the ending of the verb.

"Progressive" is also called "continuous," and always contains an *-ing* participle in addition to a helping verb. This form is used to indicate verbs that are in progress.

Perfect verbs include a form of the verb *have* and indicate that one action is completed in relation to another one.

You may want to review the terms "main clause" and "time clause" with students, in preparation for this chapter.

EXERCISE 1. Let's talk: interviews and introductions. Page 1
Time: 15–20 minutes

This exercise assumes that students know how to ask and answer basic questions in English. (You may wish to give a short review of question word order if the need arises during class discussion, but primarily this first exercise is not intended to focus on any grammar in particular. You may, however, wish to refer the students to the Appendix if problems such as word order arise). This exercise also assumes that the students don't know each other. If all the students are already acquainted, they could pretend to be famous persons being interviewed by television reporters and make up entirely different questions.

- First, write your name in sentence form. For example:
My name is Martha.
- Then ask students what question they would need to ask in order to get this information from you, prompting the following response, which you should also write on the board:
What is your name?
- As a class, in pairs, or groups, have students create a correct question for each topic.
- Write students' questions on the board and discuss whether they ask for the desired information. For example:
If a student suggests *How you say your name?* to obtain the information for item 2, help students correct the question in terms of grammar and vocabulary to *How do you spell your name?*
- Now ask students to interview one another, and review as a class. Circulate and jot down common mistakes for later review.

Optional Vocabulary

origin
current residence
field

EXERCISE 2. Let's talk: preview of verb tenses. Page 1
Time: 10–15 minutes

This exercise can be used to introduce almost all the essential information contained in Charts 1-1 through Chart 1-5 by discussing each item in detail and drawing the diagrams of various tenses from Chart 1-5 on the board. Or this exercise can simply be used as a quick review of the tenses prior to individual presentation of Charts 1-1 through 1-5.

- Introduce the exercise by writing the following sentence (or any other sentence that will lead students to *What are you doing right now?*) on the board.
I am teaching grammar class.
- Write **what** + form of **do** on the board and ask students to form a related question.
What are you doing right now?
I am teaching grammar class.

- Then draw the time line of that verb tense and write another practice sentence on the board if needed.
- Work through the other verb tenses in this manner.
- Divide students into pairs and instruct them to help one another decide which tense is needed.
- See the Teaching Suggestions in the front of this book for a variety of ways to teach this type of exercise.

CHART 1-1. The Simple Tenses. Page 2

Time: 10 minutes

The purpose of this chart is to help students understand the relationships in form and meaning among the three simple tenses. Not all possible uses of each tense are included in this chart. This chart and the subsequent charts in this chapter are meant as an overview. A more detailed discussion of the individual tenses occurs in subsequent chapters.

- Draw the basic diagram from the book, with arrows indicating now, past, and future.
- Read the name of the first tense (simple present) and draw the illustrating tense time line next to it.
- Write two example sentences illustrating form and meaning of the tense on the board beneath the time line, and highlight the verb.
- Use the example sentences given or generate your own. If you generate your own, be sure to use regular verbs to clearly show the verb form. For example:

Marta practices yoga every day.

Chi-Wei walks to class every morning.

- Follow the same procedure with the other two simple tenses. Write the name of the tense, draw the appropriate time line, and write two sample sentences to illustrate the form of each tense.
- Explain that time words and phrases such as *every day* used in chart example (b), *yesterday* used in (c), *last night* used in (d), *tomorrow* used in (e), and *tonight* used in (f) are important indicators of which tense to use.

EXERCISE 4. Let's listen and talk. Page 2

Time: 10–15 minutes

- Play the audio through once without stopping. Then replay the audio one item at a time, giving students time to write their answers.
- Review the audio answers as a class.
- Give students a few minutes to decide whether each item is true for them.
- Have pairs or small groups share their answers.
- Then ask specific questions to engage students and learn a bit more about them. For example:

You said you didn't cook your own dinner last night, Maria. Did you go out to eat?

Expansion: Write the following professions on stick-on name tags, index cards, or pieces of scrap paper. Tape one on the back of each student so that no student can see which professional role he or she is wearing.

<i>accountant</i>	<i>construction worker</i>
<i>farmer</i>	<i>salesperson</i>
<i>doctor</i>	<i>administrative assistant</i>
<i>lawyer</i>	<i>computer programmer</i>
<i>bus or train driver</i>	<i>delivery person</i>
<i>physicist</i>	<i>teacher</i>
<i>professional athlete</i>	<i>plumber</i>

Explain that the purpose of this game is to use the present tense to create sentences that will help each person guess the profession on their tag or card. Give students a few minutes to get up and look at each other's name tags and jobs without telling each other what his / her jobs are. Have students sit down again, and model one profession with a student. For example, if the student's tag says "accountant," you could create sentences such as these:

This person uses math daily.

This person likes numbers.

This person balances the checkbooks for companies.

CHART 1-2. The Progressive Tenses. Page 3

Time: 10–15 minutes

As their name indicates, progressive tenses show actions in progress at a given point in time. These tenses are also referred to as "continuous."

In present progressive, this time is either right now or occasionally, these days, or these times. For example:

Gas prices are rising.

In past progressive tense, the time is in the past and the action in progress is often "interrupted" by a simple past tense verb.

Future progressive is used to describe an action that will be in progress and is often interrupted by a simple future verb.

It is critical that students understand whether the action **is**, **was**, or **will be** in progress. A second action (often indicated by a simple past or simple future action) may interrupt the verb in progress and can serve as a time reference.

- Write the name of the first progressive tense (present progressive) from the chart and draw its tense time line on the board.
- Write two sample sentences on the board to illustrate the time line. You can copy the exact sentences from the chart or make up examples of your own.
- Follow the above procedure when presenting the other progressive tenses, taking time to highlight the *be* auxiliary verb and the *-ing* participle.
- Emphasize the usefulness of the secondary verb (used in the time clause) in each sample sentence by explaining the following:

In (b) Tom was sleeping when I arrived.

"When I arrived" is in the past tense and interrupted the action in the main clause, which was already in progress in the past.

In (c) Tom will be sleeping when we arrive.

"When we arrive" indicates future, and this action will interrupt the prediction that Tom will be sleeping.

□ **EXERCISE 6.** Let's listen and talk. Page 3
Time: 10 minutes

- Write the following cues on the board as a reference for students as they listen:

now = is / are + -ing

past = was / were + -ing

future = will be + -ing

- When asking students to supply additional information, write their answers on the board with correct verb forms for further reinforcement. For example:

At midnight last night, Marco wasn't sleeping.

You ask: What were you doing, Marco?

Write the student reply on the board: I was finishing my homework at midnight last night.

CHART 1-3. The Perfect Tenses. Page 4
Time: 10–15 minutes

Students may need more explanation of this chart than for the preceding two charts. With all perfect tenses, an action has either been completed at an indefinite time in the past (present perfect), had been completed before a more recent event in the past (past perfect), or will have been completed by a particular time in the future (future perfect).

It is important to emphasize the idea of completion with each perfect tense. It may also be helpful for students to know that many Americans don't use the past perfect when speaking and that future perfect is also not very common. Future perfect is unique — in order to understand its meaning and use, students must view the future from the perspective of a particular future action already having been completed.

As you generate sentences, make sure to use regular verbs in order to keep the focus on the general uses of the perfect tenses. Irregular tenses will be dealt with in more detail in later chapters.

- Present each tense in turn. Write the name of the tense, draw and label the appropriate time line for each tense, and write the example sentences beneath each one.
- After you highlight each perfect tense, take time to ask students which action (in the case of past perfect and future perfect) happened or will have happened first.

□ **EXERCISE 8.** Let's listen and talk. Page 4
Time: 10–15 minutes

- Let students know that this exercise has two parts; first they are going to listen and fill in the blanks, then they are going to circle *yes* or *no*.
- Play the audio through once without stopping. Then play it again, pausing after each item to give students time to write.
- In pairs, have students compare their answers.

- Then play the audio again to check answers. Replay as necessary whenever questions arise.
- Give students a few minutes to decide which questions are true for them. Then put students in small groups to discuss their answers.
- After they have had time to discuss their answers, ask specific questions to reinforce the grammar, such as:

You: I heard Max say that before he went to bed last night, he hadn't finished all of his homework. Max, what had you finished before you went to bed last night?

Max: I had finished an email to my girlfriend in Germany.

You: Okay, so before Max went to bed last night, he had finished an email to his girlfriend.

Which action happened first?

□ **EXERCISE 9.** Warm-up. Page 5
Time: 10–15 minutes

This exercise can be teacher-led or done as pairwork. Regardless, taking the time to review student answers and ask individual students the warm-up questions will help ensure that enough time is allotted for each tense.

CHART 1-4. The Perfect Progressive Tenses.
Page 5
Time: 15–20 minutes

The perfect progressive tense expresses an action that has already been in progress when interrupted by another action (either in past or future). Unlike the perfect tenses just explored, the focus here is on progress and continuation rather than completion. However, like past perfect and future perfect tenses, these progressive perfect tenses are used to show one action in relation to another.

- Explain that the perfect progressive tenses show actions that have not yet been completed, in relation to another point in time (or event).
- Present each section of the chart, writing the name of the tense, drawing the time line and writing sample sentences beneath each one.
- Draw each progressive time line with an arrow indicating continuation.
- Highlight the targeted form *have / has + been + -ing* for each example sentence.

CHART 1-5. Summary Chart of Verb Tenses.
Pages 6–7
Time: 15–20 minutes

This two-page chart is an overview of the verb tenses. If you have not already made a wall chart or transparency of the verb tense chart, you may want to create one as a handy reference for Chapters 2–4. Students are likely to be less comfortable with the tenses presented in the second half of this chart. Be prepared to take more time with these sections.

By the end of this section of Chapter 1, students should feel prepared to explore the perfect tenses at length in upcoming chapters. As with the first part of Chart 1-5, reinforce comprehension by having students assist you in drawing the simple time lines and writing example sentences on the left-hand side of the board before contrasting these with the progressive forms on the right-hand side.

- Draw each simple tense time line and corresponding sentence on the left side of the board.
- On the right side of the board, do the same with the progressive tenses and sentences.
- Highlight the relationships both vertically (present, past, future) and horizontally by contrasting the various tenses.

EXERCISE 11. Looking at grammar.
Pages 6–7
Time: 10–15 minutes

- Have students complete the first part of Exercise 11 as instructed.
- Then have students compare their answers, using the chart as a guide.

Expansion: Write the names of all the verb tenses on the board and number them. Draw all twelve diagrams and letter them. Then ask students to match the tense names with the correct diagram.

EXERCISE 12. Let's talk. Page 8
Time: 10 minutes

The purpose of this exercise is to consolidate the information the students have received to this point. This exercise is essentially only additional examples of tense usage. It also seeks to promote the learning of the names of the tenses, which is helpful for student-teacher communication during units on verb tense usage.

Expansion: If you are doing this as a class, draw the Chart 1-5 time lines on the board and ask students to identify which diagram applies to which example. If students are working in pairs or small groups, have them draw the time lines that represent each tense.

EXERCISE 15. Warm-up: listening. Page 9
Time: 10–15 minutes

This activity is a good chance to assess students' grasp of spelling rules.

- Play the example part of the audio, and then answer any questions.
- Play the audio through once without stopping.
- Then play it again, pausing after each item.
- Have students compare answers with a partner.
- Assign a student to each item, and have them write their answer on the board.
- As a class, correct spelling as needed.

CHART 1-6. Spelling of *-ing* and *-ed* Forms.
Page 10
Time: 15–25 minutes

Briefly discuss the spelling rules illustrated by each group of examples so that students become familiar with the content of the chart and can refer to it later.

Refer back to this chart as you work through Exercises 16 and 17.

Another option is to work through this chart as you review the answers to the Warm-up (Exercise 15).

- Present each category as listed on the left by first writing the numbered description on the board. For example:
 1. *Verbs That End in a Consonant and -e*
- Write one of the base forms given in the book next to the category on the board. For example:

hope
- Ask students if they know the *-ing* and the *-ed* form, and ask for the spelling. If no one knows the answer, explain how to make the transformation and write it on the board.
- Present the two spelling exceptions below the chart, reminding students that particularly with spelling rules, certain exceptions always exist.

EXERCISE 16. Looking at spelling. Page 10
Time: 10–15 minutes

Even if students don't know the meaning of some of the words in these exercises, they should be able to spell the forms correctly. After the students have written the correct forms, supply vocabulary definitions for the class as necessary.

- Complete one part at a time, giving students a few minutes to write their answers.
- Then have students check their work by comparing answers with a partner.

- As a class, review the correct answers by asking various students to write their answers on the board.

Expansion: Have students come up with sentences to go with each of the verbs now written on the board.

□ **EXERCISE 17.** Looking at spelling. Page 11
Time: 10–15 minutes

Optional Vocabulary

ruin	boil
pat	tape
earn	

□ **EXERCISE 19.** Let's talk and write. Page 12
Time: 5–10 minutes

This exercise works well as a homework assignment because it gives students a chance to produce the tenses on their own. In addition, it gives them an opportunity to practice English outside of class.

- Prepare students for each of the activities by discussing what types of questions they will need to ask in order to successfully write about a classmate, a native speaker, or a particular place.
- Have students brainstorm what tenses they will need to use for each of the writing activities before choosing one.