
UNIT STARTER: PAST TENSES AND THE PRESENT PERFECT



TENSES TO EXPRESS PAST TIME

- PAST SIMPLE

- *I extended the deadline for the review last Friday*

- PAST CONTINUOUS

- *I was explaining participle clauses, when I saw Belén dancing.*

- PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

- *I have just finished writing rephrasings*

- PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

- *I have been cooking the whole morning.*

- PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

- *I had arrived home when it started raining*

- PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

- *They had been reviewing their writing before submitting it*

CONTINUOUS FORMS

- Past continuous
- Present perfect continuous
- Past perfect continuous

- Not to be used with stative verbs (*know, own, have, agree love, like, ...*)
- BE CAREFUL!! This does not mean that they cannot take –ing.
- REMEMBER: in English we use –ing after prepositions: “After owning a house, he thought of buying a car”

MEANINGS

SIMPLE PAST

- To talk about a completed action in the past

The class finished at 10:00 am

- To talk about a repeated action in the past

He played chess at weekends

PAST CONTINUOUS

- To talk about an action in progress around a point in the past/ an action interrupted by another

I was studying Lengua III when the phone rang

- To emphasize that two events were happening simultaneously

I was preparing rephrasings while they were studying Lengua III

- With “always”, “forever” to talk about repeated actions

She was always helping me when I needed her

MEANINGS

PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

- Emphasizes the result
They have cooked the tasty food
- To talk about past actions that extend to the present often focusing on actions being complete
He has prepared lunch for all of us. Let's have lunch!
- Gives the idea that something is permanent
She has been a painter all her life
- To talk about repeated actions mentioning how many times it has been repeated
I have phoned him twice this morning

Not used with words that specify the moment when it happened (*last year, yesterday,...*)

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

- Emphasizes the action
They have been cooking many dishes over the holidays; they must be tired
- To talk about past events (also repeated events) which continue up to the present or recent past, often focusing on actions being incomplete
It has been raining the whole morning and it has not stopped yet
- Gives the idea that something is temporary
She has been smoking over the last 10 years, but now she has given it up
- To talk about repeated actions without a specific duration
I have been phoning him this morning

Not used to refer to specific past times

MEANINGS

PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

- Similar to present perfect but instead of referring to actions up to the present, it refers to actions before a particular time in the past

I returned to my office because I had forgotten my books

- Unlike present perfect, it can refer to specific times in the past

When I arrived, my friends had already left

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

- Similar to present perfect continuous but instead of referring to actions up to the present, it refers to actions before a particular time in the past
- Unlike present perfect continuous, it can refer to specific times in the past

I had been waiting for hours, when she finally arrived

REPHRASINGS

I imagine she regrets starting living in that house

WISHES

I imagine she _____ into that house

REPHRASINGS

Douglas didn't speak with Ann because he didn't see her

OF

If Douglas _____ with Ann

REPHRASINGS

It's years since the lift in the hall worked.

OUT

The lift _____ years

REPHRASINGS

I missed the train because I was late at the train station.

BY

The train _____ at the train station



Alex really should make a decision about where to go on holiday.

up



It is high _____ about where to go on holiday



- I haven't heard from Sheila for weeks.

TOUCH

Sheila _____ weeks

- 
- 
- It's a long time I have not written an email to my family. I should do it.

TIME

It is _____ my family a line