

VERB TENSE RULES-PROGRESSIVE TENSES

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

First, be aware that a progressive tense is also known as a **continuous** tense. Because of this important concept, all progressive tenses have to do with an action that continues at some point in time. Any verb in a progressive tense does not, by itself, describe a finished action.

The present progressive best describes an action that is going on "right now." If we took a picture of the action at this very moment, it would be an action that is still continuing now.

Examples:

He is playing soccer.

I am sitting in class.

We are eating dinner.

The way to create a present progressive verb is to have a form of "to be" as a helping verb [there are only three--am, is, are] and a main verb plus an "ing" ending.

Because of this helping verb of a "be" form, there is no reason to use "do" or "have" as a helping verb in the present progressive. Only use am, is, or are and a main verb + ing.

--The negative form is "be" form plus not plus verb with "ing" ending.

PAST PROGRESSIVE

Past progressive verbs are used when an action was ongoing in the past. It usually provides background information about a newer event, which is in the simple past.

Examples:

I was eating lunch when you saw me.

I was playing tennis yesterday afternoon.

I was doing my homework as class started.

--The idea in past progressive is that if a picture was taken a time in the past, that action was taking place right at that time.

The key difference between past progressive and present progressive is that each covers a different time frame. Use the past progressive for actions in progress in the past. Use present progressive for actions in progress now.

--The helping verb here is either was (singular) or were (plural) before your main verb with "ing."

--The negative form is was/were not plus verb with "ing" ending.

FUTURE PROGRESSIVE

The future progressive tense is used when an action will be ongoing in the future.

Examples:

We will be working on our essay today.

We will be eating cake at 2PM.

--While this tense does not need a time clause necessarily, it may need some element of time, such as an adverb or prepositional phrase of time to make the future time clearer.

--The idea of this tense is that an action has not started yet, but when it does, after that moment, the action will be ongoing.

If you use future progressive with an action that has started before the future, use an adverb like still or already in the sentence construction.

Examples:

We will still be eating cake at 3PM.

We will already be playing soccer by 3PM.

The helping verb here is "will" for all subjects and pronouns, and you will then use "be" plus the main with "ing" ending.

--The negative form is will+not+be+main verb plus "ing" ending.

VERB TENSE RULES-PERFECT PROGRESSIVE TENSES

PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

Present perfect progressive is used when writing or speaking about an action that was started in the past, happened until now, and will continue into the future.

Examples:

I have been living in San Marcos for many years.

I have been working at Palomar College for over four years.

Present perfect progressive has two elements: It contains a "perfect" element, which shows that it is crossing through a point of now, where it could be finished. However, it also has a progressive element, which indicates that it is continuing after the point of now.

In other words, I started working at Palomar in the past and at this point, I have worked at Palomar for over four years. However, I am still an employee here, so the time will continue, making it progressive.

--The way to create a present perfect progressive verb is to have a form of "have" (has or have) before the past participle of "been" and a main verb plus an "ing" ending.

--The negative form is "have (or has) not been" plus the main verb with an "ing" ending.

PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

Past perfect progressive verbs are used when one action in the past lasted a long time before another action in the past.

Due to the difference between the past tenses, we use the past perfect progressive for actions that were in progress in the past when, or before, another action happened; this newer action should be in simple past.

Example:

I had been talking to my friend when you called me.

--The idea in past perfect progressive is that an action that you saw someone doing in the past was already started in the further past.

The key difference between this tense and past progressive is that in past progressive, the action did not have to have been started in the further past.

--We make the past perfect progressive with "had" before the past participle of "been" and a main verb with "-ing." In addition, the expectation will be a second event. That event with the time clause will be in simple past.

--The negative form is "had not been" plus verb with "ing" ending.

FUTURE PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

The future perfect progressive is used to talk about ongoing actions that started in the past, present, or future and that will still be in progress at a certain time in the future.

Example:

We will have been working on our essays for three hours by the time the next class starts.

--This tense can use a time clause or an adverb of time. If "the time the next class starts" is replaced by "tomorrow," the sentence still works.

We will have been working on our essays for three hours by tomorrow.

If you use future perfect progressive with an action that started before the future, use an adverb like still or already in the sentence construction.

Examples:

We will still have been studying by the time you join us.

--We make the future perfect progressive with "will have" before the past participle of "been" and a main verb plus an "ing" ending.

--The negative form is "will not have been" plus the main verb with an "ing" ending.