

“Respice, adspice, prospice”— look to the past, look to the present, and to the future. Verb tense does exactly that! Tense describes when an action takes place. The three major moments in time are past, present, and future. Below is a table breaking down each tense with the verb **walk**.

	Past	Present	Future
Simple	<p>Yesterday, I walked to campus.</p> <p><i>The action started and ended at a specific time in the past.</i></p>	<p>I walk to the park every evening.</p> <p><i>The action occurs habitually or generally.</i></p>	<p>I will walk five miles a day to become healthier.</p> <p><i>The action will happen in the future.</i></p>
Continuous/ Progressive	<p>I was walking to meet up with my friend.</p> <p><i>The action happened continuously in the past. Use was/were with present participle.¹</i></p>	<p>I am walking to the train now.</p> <p><i>The action is happening now and may continue. Use is/are/am with present participle.¹</i></p>	<p>I will be walking to the movie theater tomorrow.</p> <p><i>The action will occur and last some time in the future. Use will with present participle.¹</i></p>
Perfect	<p>I had walked for two hours before I finally found the gas station.</p> <p><i>The action took place before another action in the past. Use had with past participle.²</i></p>	<p>I have not walked to that monument in years.</p> <p><i>The action has happened at an unspecified time.³ Use have/has with past participle.²</i></p>	<p>I will have walked 100 miles by the end of the year.</p> <p><i>The action will be completed before another event happens. Use will have with past participle.²</i></p>
Perfect Continuous	<p>I had been walking to the bank when I found a lost dog.</p> <p><i>The action started and ended before another past action. Use had been with present participle.¹</i></p>	<p>I have been walking since two o'clock.</p> <p><i>The action started in the past and may or may not be completed. Use has/have been with present participle.¹</i></p>	<p>I will have been walking for two hours by the time I arrive at the bank.</p> <p><i>The action is ongoing and will be completed at some point in the future. Use will have been with present participle.¹</i></p>

Notes

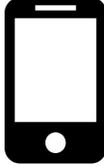
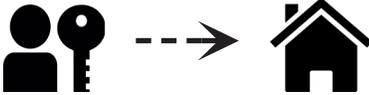
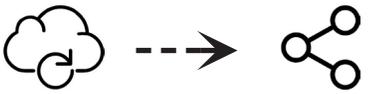
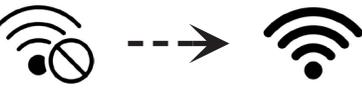
¹ The present participle of a verb is formed by adding -ing to the base form of that verb.

² The past participle of most regular verbs ends in -ed.

³ Prepositions such as **never, ever, yet, since, and for** can help to express action that happened at an unspecified time.

VERB TENSES : ALTERNATE EXAMPLES

Here is a set of alternative explanations using the multimedia design jargon that should be familiar to you.

	Past	Present	Future
Simple	 <i>Action completed</i> You successfully downloaded the file.	 <i>Action relates to general truth or routine</i> I own a smart-phone.	 <i>Action may happen in the future</i> I will be off social media tomorrow.
Continuous/ Progressive	 <i>Past action that took place over a period of time</i> I was watching movies last night.	 <i>Activity in progress</i> Your file is buffering .	 <i>Future action that will take place over a period of time</i> Six other friends will be attending a two-day event.
Perfect	 <i>Past event or condition completed before another event in the past</i> I had entered 7 incorrect passwords before I accessed the main menu.	 <i>Action occurred at an unspecified time in the past</i> I have never updated my apps.	 <i>Action will be completed by or before a specified time in the future</i> I will have completed my purchase before the system empties my cart.
Perfect Continuous	 <i>Action lasted some time in the past and stopped before another past action</i> I had been syncing the large file to the cloud before sharing it with you.	 <i>Action began in the past, has continued into the present, and may continue into the future</i> The file has been downloading for hours, and it hasn't finished yet.	 <i>Action will last some time in the future and will be completed before another future action</i> I will have been working off-line for a week when a technician finally restores my wifi.