Now that we have a general overview of how the tenses are used, it is time to look the individual tenses in more detail.

The present tenses

The simple present. The simple present tense is the unmarked tense. In a sense, anything that has not been assigned to one of the other tenses is left to the simple present; consequently, it has multiple functions and uses which are only made clear by the various other elements in the sentence or, at least, in the context.

The simple present example often reports a generalization about the world rather than reporting an actual event. Needless to say, generalizations cannot be pointed to, nor can they be recorded with a camera; only instances (tokens) of generalizations can actually be seen.

Notice that the example describes a generalization, not an actual event.

Sally practices the piano as much as possible. Simple present.

It is also not a description of what is ongoing at the moment; if it were, it would be in the present progressive (Sally is practicing the piano), not in the simple present. Because of this and similar examples, this usage is often characterized as general, timeless, generic, gnomic, or habitual. In philosophical terms, the simple present often reports a type.

In addition to generalizations, the simple present can also report actual states existing at the moment of speaking. As a consequence, certain verbs that usually describe states most frequently occur in the simple present.
Do you see the snake over near the administration building?
I hear the noise from the room next door.
This cloth *feels* very rough.

The simple present cannot, however, be used to report actual events or processes that are normally thought of as *dynamic*, or ongoing.

*Are* you *looking at* the snake near the administration building?
Don’t move! The whole table *is rocking!*
Ivan *is working* in the library.

As these examples make obvious, the present progressive, not the simple present, is used to report such actual, ongoing events and processes.

**The present progressive.** The present progressive reports a specific, on-going instance of a tangible, real-world event. It can actually be pointed to in progress. For reasons that are obvious, this usage is often characterized as referential, temporary, progressive, specific, and definite. In philosophical terms, the present progressive reports a *token*.¹

The present progressive itself is used to describe an event in progress as it is being described—this, and nothing more. Other characteristics often associated with the present progressive follow from the fact that it describes an inprogress event. If an event is in progress, it follows that it must have some duration; if it is still in progress, it follows that it is still incomplete; and if it is still in progress, it has a certain immediacy, and, hence, a certain vividness.

**The present perfect.** Semantically, the present perfect is used to relate past events to the present time, that is, to relate past events to our current interests.

---

¹ Of course, a sentence such as *Sally is studying Spanish* can be made into a generalization by adding a phrase such as *...almost every day*. 
Present perfect: past events related to the present

Remember that the present perfect is a present tense because it begins with *have (or has)*, a present tense verb—a label based on its form. Labelling it present tense makes sense not just because of its form but also because of its function: its *use* always implies a relationship with the present.

**Meaning.** The basic function of the present perfect is used to relate past events to the present time-axis. To be taught effectively, it is necessary that the present relevance of the event in the text containing it be obvious to the student.

When it occurs with events that started in the past and are still continuing in the present, the relationship to the present time is obvious.

Finian has taught English for several years now.
Henry has been on drugs for almost two years.

The present perfect occurs with actions or states that began in the past and which have “present relevance”.

If you tell a friend that you are thinking about seeing a movie that is playing at the theater, one reply might be, "I have seen that movie. It is great! You should see it."

The use of the present perfect makes sense because your friend's experience is relevant to your present interest in seeing the movie.
If a trainer says to one of his fighters, "Your next opponent has knocked out his last four opponents," the present relevance of the statement is again obvious since his fighter is currently training to fight the other fighter.

Often the present perfect is used in reporting past experiences relevant to some present interests. The present relevance of the past events is obvious in the following examples.

If someone asks how the food is in a particular restaurant, the reply, "I have only eaten there once," is clearly relevant to the question that was asked.

Similarly, if you are talking to someone about to leave for a year in Singapore, the comment, "I have lived in Singapore off and on for years," has obvious relevance.

The present perfect occurs with what is sometimes termed “hot news”, that is, with announcement of something that has just happened. However, in the examples below, it is not clear why the events have present relevance.

Kim has just fallen asleep again.
Graham has lost his glasses.

Notice that the following would be better examples for the learners working on the present perfect:

Kim has just fallen asleep again. She'll never get ready for the test that way.
Graham has lost his glasses, again. He can't read his notes without them.

What makes this second set of examples better is that the present relevance is now far more obvious.

No definite time markers. The present perfect cannot co-occur with a definite past time marker. For example, the sentence He has taken the medicine *at 3:00 yesterday afternoon is not possible. The ungrammaticality of this sentence is due to the fact that it contains two incompatible time axes: the present perfect has taken relates the event to the present time-axis, while the phrase at 3:00 yesterday afternoon relates the event to a past time axis.

In casual conversation, native speakers use this tense with great frequency since one of the most obvious reasons for mentioning past events is that they are somehow relevant to what is happening now. And, because it is their relevance to the present that is in focus, the past time is left indefinite. In fact, it is so common for indefinite past events to be reported in present perfect Crowell (1964:388) goes as far as to advise students to choose the present perfect whenever the reader has no way of knowing the exact time when the action took place.
Some sample materials

As in many current textbooks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Perfect Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishes a relationship between a past event and the present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INDEFINITE or UNSPECIFIED TIME IN THE PAST**
- We *have been* there before.  
  ![Diagram](image)
  ![Diagram](image) (now)

**UNFINISHED EVENT or STATE IN THE PAST, CONTINUING TO THE PRESENT**

- Patty *has smoked* since 1980.  
  ![Diagram](image)
  ![Diagram](image) now  
  ![Diagram](image) she still smokes  

- **continuous event:**
  - I *have been* to Hawaii three times so far.  
    ![Diagram](image)
    ![Diagram](image) now  
    ![Diagram](image) I may go again  

- **repetitive event:**
  - We *'ve just bought* a new car, so we can't afford to take a vacation.  
    ![Diagram](image) recently  
    ![Diagram](image) now

- *I've just broken* my watch, so I don't know the time.  
  ![Diagram](image) recently  
  ![Diagram](image) now
As with appropriate adjustments:

### Present Perfect Tense

Establishes a relationship between a past event and the present.

- **We have been** there before. We know exactly where it is.

  ![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

- **Patty has smoked** since 1980.

  ![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

- **I have been** to Hawaii three times so far. I may go again.

  ![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

- **We've just bought** a new car, so we can't afford to take a vacation.

- **I've just broken** my watch, so I don't know the time.

  ![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**Teaching the present perfect**

Although the present perfect has a rather straightforward function—it is used to relate past events to the present time-axis, explaining this notion (essentially, the notion ‘current relevance’) to students is certainly of questionable value, if not counter-productive.
Illustrating the notion may be the only viable alternative. Here, several different ways of illustrating the present perfect are provided. Note that all of these are really just different ways of looking at the same thing, but nonetheless they may prove helpful.

The idea behind the materials is simple: the descriptions start from what one has to say and proceed to how to say it. The assumption is that learners proceed in this way. Taken as a whole, these three situations cover essentially the range of the present perfect. It is recommended, however, that each of them be taught separately—that is, at different times. Experience suggests that attempts to compress them all into a single unified teaching unit is counter-productive.

1. **Literal instances of ‘present relevance’**. The present perfect occurs with actions or states that began in the past and have literally continued up to and into the present. This use is frequently found with the time words *since, so far, up to now,* and *up to the present.* See discussion of the use of ‘trigger' words, and see the sample materials for an illustration of this use.

*Sample materials with discussion:*

The accompanying time chart not only illustrates this use graphically but also suggests at least one way to teach it. The students are given the completed version.
Present perfect (partially blank chart):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>last year</th>
<th>now</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>race car driver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>film star</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV repairman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>designer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>professor</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Present Perfect (filled-in chart for the students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>last year</th>
<th>now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>college student</td>
<td>Shizuka</td>
<td>Shizuka</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yasu</td>
<td>Yasu</td>
<td>Yasu</td>
<td>Yasu</td>
<td>Ayumi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoko</td>
<td>Yoko</td>
<td>Ayumi</td>
<td>Ayumi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politician</td>
<td>Misato</td>
<td>Yoko</td>
<td>Yoko</td>
<td>Yoko</td>
<td>Yoko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>Misato</td>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Andy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>race car driver</td>
<td>Anara</td>
<td>Anara</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>Omar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Robert</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>convict</td>
<td>Graham</td>
<td>Graham</td>
<td>Misato</td>
<td>Misato</td>
<td>Misato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Pa</td>
<td>Pa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>film star</td>
<td>Nawaf</td>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Shizuka</td>
<td>Shizuka</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Andy</td>
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<td>Ayumi</td>
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<td>designer</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Anara</td>
<td>Anara</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>professor</td>
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<td>Nawaf</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Graham</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chart has all of the information on it. The names are the names of the students; the activities are activities that interest them. A chart with all the names removed is shown on the overhead (or written on the blackboard) and the students are asked questions such as *What is Sally doing now?* If the response is incorrect, the correction will come quickly from fellow students.

Once something has been established as true in the present, it is then appropriate to ask *How long has she been...?* Note that in discussing activities on the chart the present perfect is used when an activity was true in the past and is still true now; the usage here is quite graphic. Correction is similarly graphic; if a student makes a false statement such as *Henry has been a wino for two years,* it is enough to point out that this is false, because Henry isn’t a wino now.

### 2. Experiential instances of ‘present relevance’

The present perfect occurs with experiences or actions that are relevant to some topic being discussed. This experiential use is relatively easy to teach, by having a discussion that asks about some of the students’ experiences.

Let’s talk about Disneyland. How many of you have visited Disneyland? How many of you haven't been there? Have you ever been there? You haven't? Have you? You have?

Sometimes we do things that are dangerous. Have you ever done something that you knew was dangerous but you did it any way? You have? What was it?

### Other notes:

**The progressive form.** The contrast between the present perfect and the present perfect progressive is of minimal importance. The major distinction is that it is usually necessary for the action to be still occurring for the present perfect progressive to be used. However, even then it is not necessary to use the progressive; when it is used, it seems to emphasize the duration of the action:
She *has lived* in Fresno for twenty-six years.  (non-progressive)
She *has been living* in Fresno for twenty-six years.  (progressive)

An additional difference lies in the possible meanings for these forms. Without any further information, a non-progressive sentence like *Sharon has lived in Paris for five years...* could be finished with *now*, in which case it would mean that she is still living in Paris. Or, it could be finished with *and London for two*, in which case it would mean that at different times she has had the experience of living in both cities.

In contrast, no matter what is added to a progressive sentence like *I have been living in Fresno*, it can only be understood to mean that I am still living in Fresno.

**b. Teaching according to the use not according to the form.** The temptation to organize the teaching around the form rather than the use of the form should be resisted. Thus, from a learner’s viewpoint, there is not one but a number of separate phenomena involved, organized in terms of the various uses rather than in terms of the form itself.

Note: All beginning teaching goes from the use to the form. That is, the direction of teaching should be from the meaning to be expressed to the form necessary to express it and not vice versa. For teaching, the meaning—the use—precedes the form.

c. “*Trigger words*”. The temptation to depend on “trigger” words to cue the answers rather than a larger context should be resisted. In this case, the present perfect is taught as the tense used when words such as *for four years now* or *since 1985* are also present. Since this practice uses form to cue other forms, the amount of carry-over value is extremely limited. In addition, students develop a tendency to use the form only when the trigger is present.

**The past tenses (review)**

**The simple past.** The past tense does little more than mark that an event happened in the past. However, if we want to show that something in the past happened habitually or that a certain state used to exist, one way that we can do this is by using the phrase *used to*...

Sharon *used to* swim competitively, but she doesn't anymore.
Bill *used to* be an accountant, but he ran off and joined the circus.
The past perfect. The past perfect marks that something happened before—often long before—something else in the past. That is, the past perfect, like all perfects, marks that one event happened before another event. Usually, the event marked with the past perfect happened much earlier and is being reported not as a part of the ongoing sequence of events but as background information.

In her youth, Sally had studied law, but now she made her money gambling. Julie had solved the problem long before Jack even got his pencil sharpened.

The past progressive. The progressive aspect shows that an event at least in part overlaps with a particular time or with another event. This at least partial overlap can be seen in these examples.

As her plane was about to land, Samantha looked around. Some passengers were waking up. Others were gathering their luggage. Still others were checking to see what their next connection would be.

What is being reported here is not a sequence of events but a description of what was happening—more or less simultaneously—when Samantha looked around.

A light rain was coming down, but from the window of her room, she saw the whole street clearly. Near the corner, three young boys were playing tag. The grocer across the street was just opening his shop. And, a young girl was eating an apple, as she hurried to school.

Again, what is being reported here is not a sequence of events but a description of what she saw happening—more or less simultaneously—when she looked out the window.

The “future-in-the-past”. The “future-in-the-past” is to show, as the term suggests, future plans and expectations about the future but set in the past. In the example, Jim's expectations about the future are indicated by the construction was going to...

Saturday morning Jim got up early. He showered quickly. As he shaved, he rehearsed his plans for the evening. He was going to have dinner with Marilyn. He
was going to pick her up and the two of them were going to drive to the new French restaurant on Simpson Street. He was planning to ask her to marry him. Suddenly he cut himself shaving and he realized he had better pay attention to what he was doing or he was going to cut himself again.

Another way of indicating the “future-in-the-past” is with would… With would… a past setting (he rehearsed…) is combined with a future expectation or plan (…that he would have dinner with Marilyn).

Saturday morning Jim got up early. He showered quickly. As he shaved, he rehearsed his plans for the evening. He would pick her up and the two of them would drive to the new French restaurant on Simpson Street. Then, when the time was right, he would ask her to marry him. Suddenly he cut himself shaving and he realized he had better pay attention to what he was doing or he would cut himself again.

Note that if the tense of was/were going to… and would… is changed,¹ we have is/am/ are going to… and will… ²

The "future" tenses

The “future” tenses. In English, the “future” is marked not by a separate set of future tenses, but by other means, for example, by …be going to… and by will… These forms show future plans and future expectations.

Shirley will eat the salad.
Shirley is going to eat the salad.

simple “future”

1. Was/were going to… and would… show future projections from a past time axis; …be going to… and will… show future projections from a present time axis.

These forms also have progressive and perfect variants, for example, …would be driving, …would have driven, …was going to have…, and so on.

2. Parallel to the “future-in-the-past”, which is a future projection from the past time axis, these future-marking forms are a future projection from the present time axis.
These “future” forms also occur with progressive and perfect variants. The progressive variant indicates some sort of partial overlap or partial simultaneity between itself and some other time or some other event. For instance, the example given is incomplete without some reference either to the time of Shirley's eating or else to something else that was happening at the same time as Shirley's eating.

Shirley *will be eating* the salad... “future” progressive
...is going to be eating...

The perfect variant is incomplete without some reference either to a time marking the completion of Shirley's eating or else to some event that happened after Shirley's eating.

Shirley *will have eaten* the salad... “future” perfect
...is going to have eaten...

Note that if the tense of *be going to*... and will... is past, we have *was/were going to*... and *would*...

**Examples and Exercises**

**SAMPLE QUESTION:**

Your task is (i) to label the tense and aspect of the italicized verb and (ii) to tell why this form is being used. The first set of exercises illustrates the patterns; the second set is for you to practice on.

Example:

Mr. Samuels *has been* the chairman of board for ten years now, but we all hope that he will retire soon. The company needs to modernize to keep up with the competition, but he seems to have lost touch with the modern business world.

Answer:

(i) present perfect tense
(ii) shows that something that started in the past is relevant to something currently happening. The present relevance is obvious from the fact that it is still continuing now.

**EXERCISE 6.1: SOME SAMPLES**

**Showing overlap or a flashback to something earlier?**

1. I arrived around 10:00. Sharon *had gone* home before I got there, but she left me a message.

Answer:
   (i)
   (ii)

Further notes:

In sentences with *when* rather than *before* or *after*, the past perfect may be necessary to show that the actions were sequential:

Sharon *left* when I arrived.
(overlapping or sequenced actions) The tense only shows past!

Sharon *had left* when I arrived. (the tense shows sequential actions)
Sharon *was leaving* when I arrived. (the tense shows overlapping actions)

2. Although they *had learned* a lot last semester, they have forgotten just as much this semester.

Answer:
   (i)
   (ii)
3. What was happening when the gunfire broke out?

Answer:
(i)
(ii)

4. The students were strolling along Shaw Avenue when the car ran into the taxi.

Answer:
(i)
(ii)

5. Detective James, who had planned to eat before the arrest, found he was far too short of time.

Answer:
(i)
(ii)

Present perfect

6. Bob has been on one diet or another for years now, but nobody would ever suspect it. He is as heavy as he ever was.

Answer:
(i)
(ii)

7. The family has visited Disneyland many times, but last summer we enjoyed ourselves more than ever before.

Answer:
(i)
(ii)
8. It just *stopped* raining a few minutes ago.

Note:

Only the simple past is possible. The past rather than the present perfect is necessary because of the phrase *a few minutes ago*. The present perfect cannot occur with a definite time phrase. Why do you suppose this is so?

Answer:
(i)
(ii)

**“Future” or present?**

9. Jeff *picks up* his check tomorrow at six.

Note:

Despite the fact that ESL students often answer with *will pick up*, in sentences containing phrases such as *next week*, and *tomorrow*, native speakers of English often use and even prefer the simple present. Cf. also:

Robert Burch *leaves* for Thailand next week.
Harry's train *arrives* tomorrow at ten o'clock.

Notice that the future time is shown by *next week* or by *tomorrow at ten o'clock*, not by the simple present.

Answer:
(i)
(ii) the future is shown by *tomorrow at six*
10. a. Jane’s work *will continue* to fascinate her for years.
    b. Old soldiers *die* when their time comes.

Note:

In sentence 10a, *will continue* is in the “future” tense because it describes an expected “future” action, that is, what is in effect a prediction. In contrast, in sentence 10b *die* is used in the simple present tense because it is not an expected “future” action but a generalization, rather than some sort of prediction.

Answer: (10a)
   (i)
   (ii)

Answer: (10b)
   (i)
   (ii)

11. There *will never be* another Leonardo di Vinci.

Answer:
   (i)
   (ii)

**Other**

12. Whenever I go to the Bay Area, I *visit* old friends and try to take in a play.

Answer:
   (i) simple present
   (ii) generalization
13. One of my friends who used to eat a lot now eats a lot less.

Answer:
   (i) 
   (ii) 

Exercise 6.2: Some more exercises.

Your task is to (i) label the tense and aspect of the italicized verb and (ii) to tell why this form is being used. The preceding set of exercises illustrated the uses for you; this second set is for you to practice on.

1. It is still raining lightly right now.

Answer:
   (i) present progressive
   (ii) describes something which is ongoing now

2. Although this pen has been used for years, it shows no signs of wearing out.
3. Experimental physics has become more and more complex.
4. The class has studied five chapters already, so we only have ten more chapters to finish.
5. Three years ago, Susan finally (a) got the job she wanted and (b) has worked there since then. Before this, she (c) had held a dozen different jobs.
6. Dorothy, Marcel, Tony, and I ran into old friends as we were eating in the Red Wave Inn last night.
7. Throughout history, man has attempted to control the forces of nature.
8. Because I spent the last four summers overseas, I (a) have grown tired of traveling overseas and (b) will stay at home next summer.
9. Mr. Cantu has been a teacher for years now, but he certainly has no plans to retire.
10. I used to play a lot of basketball, but I am too old now.
11. While Mr. Nunley was telling his story again, his wife fell asleep.
12. The weather *has been* hot every summer for as long as I can remember so we can expect this summer to be hot too.

13. Whenever his current wife is bored, she (a) *goes* shopping. His former wife (b) *used to watch* the soaps.

14. Carol *had thought about* how to solve the problem long before any of the current researchers realized that there was one.

15. When *I had eaten* the whole meal, we began to talk about how to solve the problem.

16. Whenever her current husband is bored, he (a) *goes* bowling. Her former husband (b) *used to watch* wrestling.

**EXERCISE 6.3: SOME EXERCISES**

While Mr. Nunley (1,2) **was telling** his story again, his wife fell asleep.

(1) Name the tense.
   A. past
   B. past progressive
   C. past perfect
   D. past progressive of 'go'
   E. present perfect

(2) In this example, what does the tense indicate?
   A. past time
   B. overlap
   C. out-of-sequence
   D. present relevance
   E. 'future' from a past perspective

He (3,4) **has played** basketball for years.

(3) Name the tense.
   A. past
   B. past progressive
   C. past perfect
   D. past progressive of 'go'
   E. present perfect

(4) In this example, what does the tense indicate?
Whenever her present husband is bored, he (5,6) **watches** television. Her former husband (7,8) **used to go** bowling.

(5) Name the tense.
   A. present
   B. present progressive
   C. past
   D. future (with 'will')
   E. present perfect

(6) In this example, what does the verb tense indicate?
   A. generalization
   B. ongoing event
   C. future time
   D. present relevance
   E. past habit

(7) Name the tense.
   A. past
   B. past progressive
   C. past perfect
   D. past progressive of 'go'
   E. present perfect

(8) In this example, what does the verb construction indicate?
   A. generalization
   B. ongoing event
   C. future time
   D. present relevance
   E. past habit

Only after he returned home did he realize how much he (9, 10) **had learned** when he was
living overseas in Malaysia.

(9) Name the tense.
   A. past
   B. past progressive
   C. past perfect
   D. past progressive of 'go'
   E. present perfect

(10) In this example, what does the tense indicate?
   A. past time
   B. overlap
   C. out-of-sequence
   D. present relevance
   E. 'future' from a past perspective

Dorothy, Marcel, Tony, and I ran into old friends as we (11, 12) were eating in the Red Wave Inn last night.

(11) Name the tense.
   A. past
   B. past progressive
   C. past perfect
   D. past progressive of 'go'
   E. present perfect

(12) In this example, what does the tense indicate?
   A. past time
   B. overlap
   C. out-of-sequence
   D. present relevance
   E. 'future' from a past perspective

It (13, 14) is raining outside right now.

(13) Name the tense.
   A. present
   B. present progressive
   C. future (with 'go')
   D. future (with 'will')
E. present perfect

(14) In this example, what does the tense indicate?
A. generalization
B. ongoing event
C. future time
D. present relevance
E. past habit

People frequently (15, 16) visit the Virgin Islands on honeymoons.
(15) Name the tense.
A. present
B. present progressive
C. future (with 'go')
D. future (with 'will')
E. present perfect
(16) In this example, what does the tense indicate?
A. generalization
B. ongoing event
C. future time
D. present relevance
E. past habit

Next Friday at 4:30 the Samuels (17, 18) will depart for Kathmandu.
(17) Name the tense.
A. past
B. past progressive
C. past perfect
D. future (with 'go')
E. future (with 'will')
(18) In this example, what does the tense indicate?
A. past time
B. overlap
C. out-of-sequence
D. present relevance
E. 'future' expectation
The man (19, 20) **has written** eleven books on the topic so it is possible that he could write the introduction to the collection of essays on the subject.

(19) Name the tense.

A. past  
B. past progressive  
C. past perfect  
D. past progressive of 'go'  
E. present perfect  

(20) In this example, what does the tense indicate?

A. past time  
B. overlap  
C. out-of-sequence  
D. present relevance  
E. 'future' from a past perspective
Teaching notes:

Which of the following would you teach first to non-English speakers: the simple present or the present progressive? Why?

The present progressive. Why? Although the form of the present progressive is somewhat complex (it involves some form of be plus the -ing form of the main verb), the meaning is extremely easy to illustrate (and, thus, easier to teach and learn). Students tend to learn the meaning quickly. Even the form of the progressive—the various forms of be accompanying the -ing marked verb—may not be a problem as students may already have learned the forms in other, earlier contexts.

Terms

To check yourself, see if you can briefly describe each of the following terms and illustrate it in a phrase or sentence (underlining the relevant part).

tense:
  past
  present
  “future”

aspect:
  perfect
  progressive

present perfect
  “present (or, ‘current relevance’) relevance”

Answers to Exercise 6.1:

1. past perfect; shows something reported out-of-sequence.
2. past perfect; shows something reported out-of-sequence.
3. past progressive; shows overlap.
4. past progressive; shows overlap.
5. past perfect; shows something reported out-of-sequence.
6. present perfect; shows present relevance of an activity that began in the past.
7. present perfect; shows present relevance of past activities, particularly their relevance to the conversation in which these activities are being reported.
8. past tense; shows something that happened in the past.
9. present tense; here, the future time setting of the sentence comes from the phrase tomorrow at six.
10. a. ‘future’ tense; indicates the future.
    b. present tense; shows a generalization.
11. future tense; shows the future
12. simple present tense; shows a generalization
13. past tense; the used to… construction indicates a past habit

Answers to Exercise 6.2:

Note that the answers are short answers. For more detailed answers, reread the relevant parts of the preceding text.

1. (i) present progressive; (ii) it describes something in process now.
2. (i) present perfect (passive) [As you have not yet been introduced to the passive, you are not expected to have included (passive) in your own answers]; (ii) shows that something that started in the past and is relevant to the present as it is still continuing now.
3. (i) present perfect; (ii) shows that something that started in the past and is still continuing to happen.
4. (i) present perfect; (ii) shows that something that happened in the past is relevant to the present assessment of how much work remains.
5. a. (i) past; (ii) happened in the past;
   b. (i) present perfect; (ii) shows that something that started in the past and is relevant to the present in an obvious sense as she still works there;
   c. (i) past perfect; (ii) indicates a series of earlier events being reported out of sequence.
6. (i) past progressive; (ii) marks eating as partially overlapping, in this case with the running into old friends.
7. (i) present perfect; (ii) started in the past and still continues today, with the growing tired beginning in the past and continuing to today.
8. a. (i) present perfect; (ii) started in the past and is relevant since it is still happening;  
   b. (i) “future”; (ii) refers to a future expectation or intention.
9. (i) present perfect; (ii) started in the past (and still continuing) and is relevant to the 
   present as it is something still happening currently.
10. (i) past; (ii) the used to... construction form indicates a past habit.
11. (i) past progressive; (ii) it shows an event that is partially overlapping with another 
   event.
12. (i) present perfect; (ii) it shows a pattern that has been true for the past so we are 
   assuming that it is relevant to our predicting of the future, that is, it is relevant to what 
   we are doing in the present.
13. a. (i) simple present; (ii) it shows a present habit (or, a generalization);  
   b. (i) past; (ii) the used to... form indicates a past habit.
14. (i) past perfect; (ii) marks that this event is being reported out-of-sequence.
15. (i) past perfect; (ii) shows sequencing, that is, that the event of the when-clause was 
   completed before the event of the main clause.
16. a. (i) simple present; (ii) it shows a present habit (or, a generalization);  
   b. (i) past; (ii) the used to... form indicates a past habit.

Answers to Exercise 6.3:

(1) past progressive;  (2) indicates overlap
(3) present perfect;  (4) present relevance
(5) present tense;  (6) generalization
(7) past tense;  (8) past habit
(9) past perfect;  (10) out-of-sequence
(11) past progressive;  (12) overlap
(13) present progressive;  (14) ongoing event
(15) present tense;  (16) generalization
(17) future tense;  (18) future (with ‘will’) 
(19) present perfect;  (20) present relevance