


THE PROGRESSIVE TENSES

(A SIMPLE TENSE OF BE + the PRESENT PARTICIPLE)

PAST PROGRESSIVE	PRESENT PROGRESSIVE	FUTURE PROGRESSIVE
		
I WAS WALKING IN THE PARK WHEN WE MET.	I AM WALKING IN THE PARK NOW.	I SHALL BE WALKING IN THE PARK WHEN THE SUN SETS.

Discussion

The *-ing* form of the verb is the mark of the *progressive tense*. This tense always describes an action which is going on at the moment mentioned. The simple progressive tenses are "snapshot" tenses: all they ever show are actions at a given instant.

The *past progressive* mentions an action going on at the instant some other past action occurred.

The *present progressive* mentions an action going on now.

The *future progressive* states that a certain action will be going on at the instant of some other future action.

THE PERFECT PROGRESSIVE TENSES		
(A SIMPLE TENSE OF HAVE BEEN + the PRESENT PARTICIPLE)		
PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE	PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE	FUTURE PERFECT PROGRESSIVE
		
I HAD BEEN WALKING IN THE PARK SINCE BREAKFAST WHEN WE MET.	I HAVE BEEN WALKING IN THE PARK SINCE BREAKFAST BUT I SHALL NOT STOP.	I SHALL HAVE BEEN WALKING IN THE PARK SINCE BREAKFAST WHEN WE MEET.




Discussion

The *perfect progressive* tenses describe actions which continue at the moment in question, just as the simple progressive tenses do. But the *perfect progressive* also enables you to indicate the duration or starting point of the continuing action. It gives a picture of an action going on over an appreciable length of time. Thus it is correct to say "I had been walking for two hours," but it is incorrect to say "I was walking for two hours."

Understanding Tenses

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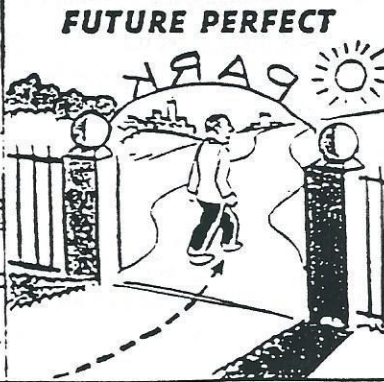
THE SIMPLE TENSES

PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
		
<p><i>I WALKED IN THE PARK LAST NIGHT.</i></p>	<p><i>I WALK IN THE PARK EVERY DAY.</i></p>	<p><i>I SHALL WALK IN THE PARK TOMORROW MORN- ING.</i></p>

Discussion

The simple tenses are used for making simple statements of fact about actions and events. They seldom express or imply relationships between different events. A crisp, concise style often is characterized by the use of the simple tenses, but overuse may result in primer-type prose. It takes practice and skill to avoid monotony with such a style. Following, you will find examples of various compound tenses and their uses. Each tense is named, but for identification purposes only. It is not essential for students to remember the names, but it is essential for them to develop a "feeling" for the right tense in any particular situation.

THE PERFECT TENSES
(Sense of HAVE the PAST PARTICIPLE)

PAST PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	FUTURE PERFECT
		
<p><i>I HAD WALKED IN THE PARK THE DAY WE MET.</i></p>	<p><i>I HAVE WALKED TWO MILES, AND NOW I SHALL REST.</i></p>	<p><i>I SHALL HAVE WALKED IN THE PARK BEFORE THE SUN SETS.</i></p>

Discussion

The perfect tenses describe actions which stop before a new action begins.
The past perfect tense is used for an action which ended before another past action began.
The present perfect is always used to describe actions which have continued up to the present, but may not go on; presumably something else is about to happen.
The future perfect indicates a future action which will end before another future action begins.
 Be sure you understand the difference between "I did not take my morning walk (and now it is too late.)" and "I have not taken my morning walk (but I can still do it before lunch)."