

English tenses

tense	Affirmative/Negative/ Question	Use	Signal Words
Simple Present	A: He speaks. N: He does not speak. Q: Does he speak?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> action in the present taking place once, never or several times facts actions taking place one after another action set by a timetable or schedule 	always, every ..., never, normally, often, seldom, sometimes, usually if sentences type I (If I talk, ...)
Present Progressive	A: He is speaking. N: He is not speaking. Q: Is he speaking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> action taking place in the moment of speaking action taking place only for a limited period of time action arranged for the future 	at the moment, just, just now, Listen!, Look!, now, right now
Simple Past	A: He spoke. N: He did not speak. Q: Did he speak?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> action in the past taking place once, never or several times actions taking place one after another action taking place in the middle of another action 	yesterday, 2 minutes ago, in 1990, the other day, last Friday if sentence type II (If I talked, ...)
Past Progressive	A: He was speaking. N: He was not speaking. Q: Was he speaking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> action going on at a certain time in the past actions taking place at the same time action in the past that is interrupted by another action 	when, while, as long as
Present Perfect Simple	A: He has spoken. N: He has not spoken. Q: Has he spoken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> putting emphasis on the result action that is still going on action that stopped recently finished action that has an influence on the present action that has taken place once, never or several times before the moment of speaking 	already, ever, just, never, not yet, so far, till now, up to now



Present Perfect Progressive	A: He has been speaking. N: He has not been speaking. Q: Has he been speaking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • putting emphasis on the course or duration (not the result) • action that recently stopped or is still going on • finished action that influenced the present 	all day, for 4 years, since 1993, how long?, the whole week
Past Perfect Simple	A: He had spoken. N: He had not spoken. Q: Had he spoken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • action taking place before a certain time in the past • sometimes interchangeable with past perfect progressive • putting emphasis only on the fact (not the duration) 	already, just, never, not yet, once, until that day if sentence type III (If I had talked, ...)
Past Perfect Progressive	A: He had been speaking. N: He had not been speaking. Q: Had he been speaking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • action taking place before a certain time in the past • sometimes interchangeable with past perfect simple • putting emphasis on the duration or course of an action 	for, since, the whole day, all day
Future I Simple	A: He will speak. N: He will not speak. Q: Will he speak?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • action in the future that cannot be influenced • spontaneous decision • assumption with regard to the future 	in a year, next ..., tomorrow If-Satz Typ I (If you ask her, she will help you.) assumption: I think, probably, perhaps