

Module 1 – Verb Tenses & Narrative

Title: "Making Sense of Time in English"

Opening

Hello and welcome!

In this lesson, we're going to explore how English verb tenses help us express time clearly and accurately — especially when we tell stories or talk about experiences.

We'll focus on three key areas:

1. Present perfect vs. past simple
2. The past perfect
3. Future forms — and a short look at the "future in the past"

Let's get started!

[Section 1 – Present Perfect vs. Past Simple]

Let's begin with something that often causes confusion: the difference between the present perfect and the past simple.

Compare these two sentences:

*I **have lived** in London for five years.*

*I **lived** in London for five years.*

They seem similar, but they give different messages.

→ *I **have lived** in London for five years*

→ This connects the past and present. It suggests I still live there now.

→ *I **lived** in London for five years*

→ This refers to a completed time in the past. I don't live there anymore.

Use the present perfect for:

- Life experiences (I have visited Japan.)
- Unfinished time periods (I've seen her today.)
- Actions with present relevance (I've lost my keys!)

Use the past simple for:

- Finished time periods (I saw her yesterday.)
- Clear past events (We met in 2010.)

Let's try a few more comparisons:

Have you ever **tried** sushi? → **experience**

Did you **try** the sushi last night? → **specific moment**

[Section 2 – Past Perfect]

Now, let's go deeper into the past: the past perfect.

The past perfect helps us show that one past action happened before another.

Example:

*I **had lived** in Paris before I moved to London.*

Here's an example of a timeline of past events:

1. *I **lived** in Paris* → **earlier**

2. *I **moved** to London* → **later**

Without the past perfect, the meaning is less clear.

Correct sentence using past perfect:

*I **had lived** in Paris before I moved to London.*

Why it's clearer:

"had lived" (past perfect) shows the earlier action.

"moved" (past simple) shows the later action.

Let's try another:

*She **had finished** dinner when the guests arrived.*

→ First she finished eating, then the guests came.

So remember: past perfect = past of the past.

We often use it in storytelling, to show background or explain a sequence of events.

[Section 3 – Future Forms]

English has more than one way to talk about the future. Here are the main ones:

Will used to express

- **Decisions at the moment of speaking:** *I'll help you!*
- **Predictions:** *It'll rain tomorrow.*

Be going to used to express

- **Plans and intentions:** *I'm going to study law.*
- **Predictions based on evidence:** *Look at those clouds — it's going to rain.*

Present continuous used to express

Fixed arrangements: *I'm meeting Anna at 6.*

Quick comparison:

Expression	Use
I'll call her	spontaneous decision
I'm going to call her	planned action
I'm calling her tonight	confirmed arrangement

[Section 4 Mini-section – Future in the Past]

A brief but useful note: sometimes we talk about the future from a past perspective.

This is called: **future in the past**.

Example:

I knew he was going to win.

She said she would call me.

Would is often used as the past of will. This is very common in stories and reported speech.

[Recap & Outro]

Let's review what we've learned:

Use present perfect for life experience and present relevance

Use past simple for finished past events

Use past perfect to show one event happened before another in the past

Use will, going to, and present continuous for different types of future

Use would and was going to for future in the past

In the next lesson, we'll look at modal verbs — how to express certainty, obligation, and advice in English.
See you there!

