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Tense and aspect

Part 2 · Duration and future viewpoints





Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
Measure activity up to now	has/have been + -ing	She has been walking since ten.
Measure activity before then	had been + -ing	She had been walking for an hour when it rained.
Look inside or back from later	will be doing / will have done	At six she will be walking. By eight she will have arrived.
Measure duration by later	will have been + -ing	By noon she will have been walking for two hours.

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

p. 6 Simple and continuous
p. 7 Perfect and perfect continuous

TENSE AND ASPECT

Present perfect continuous, results and states



Lily began watering at 9:00 and is still watering at 9:20. Another task has produced three completed plant labels. Report duration for the ongoing activity and completed output for the labels. The team has known Noor since June; that state normally does not use a continuous form.

Have been or has been with an -ing form can emphasise activity over time. Use since for a starting point and for for a duration.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Track duration	Lily has been watering for twenty minutes.	Has been watering focuses on activity from the earlier start up to now.
Count completed output	The team has written three labels.	Has written focuses on completed output, not the duration of writing.
Describe a continuing state	The team has known Noor since June.	Known reports a continuing state. Know normally does not take a continuous form in this meaning.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Activity duration	Completed output	Continuing state
has been watering for twenty minutes	has written three labels	has known Noor since June

Does perfect continuous always mean still happening now?

No. It may describe recent activity with current evidence. In this chapter it is still happening because the log explicitly says so.

YOUR TURN

Choose a duration phrase.

for two hours / since two hours

> **Answer • for two hours**
> For gives a length of time.

TENSE AND ASPECT

Past perfect continuous and a past reference



Yesterday Lily began watering at 8:40. At the 9:00 bell she was still watering, and the log records twenty minutes of work by that point. We report now, but measure the activity up to the past bell rather than up to now.

Had been with an -ing form looks back on activity in progress before a past reference point.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Measure up to the past bell	Lily had been watering for twenty minutes when the bell rang.	Had been watering emphasises duration leading up to a past reference.
Look inside at the bell	Lily was watering when the bell rang.	Past continuous shows what was happening then without itself giving the earlier duration.
Report prior completion instead	Lily had watered the second plant before the bell rang.	This separate record reports a completed result before the bell, rather than duration of the ongoing first task.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Duration before a past point	At the past point	Completed before the point
had been watering for twenty minutes	was watering	had watered the second plant

Is past perfect continuous just a longer version of past continuous?

No. It looks back over activity leading up to a past reference, often emphasising duration or explaining a past result. The reference relationship changes the report.

YOUR TURN

Duration before yesterday's arrival: choose the form.

They have been travelling for hours when they arrived. / They had been travelling for hours when they arrived.

> Answer • They had been travelling for hours when they arrived.
> The reference is a past arrival.

TENSE AND ASPECT

Future continuous versus future perfect



The schedule puts watering at 9:00–9:20 tomorrow, with an inspection at 9:30. At 9:10 the planned action will be in progress; by 9:30 it is expected to be complete. The team is projecting a plan, not proving a future outcome.

Will be doing looks inside a future activity. Will have done looks back on its expected completion by a future point.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Look inside tomorrow's work	At 9:10 tomorrow, Lily will be watering.	Will be watering views the action as in progress at a future reference.
Look back from inspection	By 9:30 tomorrow, Lily will have watered the plant.	Will have watered projects completion no later than the future inspection.
Keep the plan conditional	According to the schedule, the watering will be complete by inspection.	This reports an expectation based on the plan. A schedule is not observed proof of what will happen.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Inside future activity	Completed by future point	Source of prediction
will be watering at 9:10	will have watered by 9:30	according to the schedule

Does by 9:30 mean exactly at 9:30?

No. It gives a latest boundary, allowing completion earlier. At 9:30 locates a point; by 9:30 sets a deadline-like boundary.

YOUR TURN

Inside the planned journey at noon tomorrow: choose the form.
Noor will be travelling at noon. / Noor will have travelled by noon.

> Answer • Noor will be travelling at noon.
> Future continuous gives the requested inside view.

TENSE AND ASPECT

Future duration and mixed reference points



For tomorrow's longer session, the team plans continuous watering from 9:00 to 9:30. If that plan holds, the work will have lasted thirty minutes at the inspection.

Will have been doing measures the expected duration of an activity up to a future point. Find that point before choosing a form.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Project future duration	By 9:30 tomorrow, Lily will have been watering for thirty minutes.	Will have been watering measures projected activity up to a future point under this new plan.
Recall today's duration	Lily has been watering for twenty minutes.	This separate current record measures activity up to now, not up to tomorrow.
Recall yesterday's duration	Lily had been watering for twenty minutes when the bell rang.	This separate past record measures activity up to yesterday's bell.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Up to now	Up to a past point	Up to a future point
has been watering	had been watering	will have been watering

Is the longest verb group the most accurate or advanced answer?

No. The right form matches the requested meaning and evidence. Has known may be better than has been knowing; watered yesterday may be better than has watered yesterday. Complexity is not the goal.

YOUR TURN

Projected duration up to a future point: choose the complete group.

will have waiting / will have been waiting

> **Answer • will have been waiting**
> Will have been takes an -ing activity form.

VERB FORM REFERENCE / 1 OF 2

Simple and continuous

Follow one writer through three time frames. Read across each row to see how a statement becomes a negative or a question.

FORM AND USE	STATEMENT	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
base verb; he/she/it adds -s • A regular activity			
Present simple	Noor writes every day.	Noor does not write every day.	Does Noor write every day?
am/is/are + -ing • An activity in progress now			
Present continuous	Noor is writing now.	Noor is not writing now.	Is Noor writing now?
past form; did + base in questions • A completed event at a finished time			
Past simple	Noor wrote yesterday.	Noor did not write yesterday.	Did Noor write yesterday?
was/were + -ing • An activity in progress at a past point			
Past continuous	Noor was writing at noon.	Noor was not writing at noon.	Was Noor writing at noon?
will + base verb • An expectation about a later event			
Future with will	Noor will write tomorrow.	Noor will not write tomorrow.	Will Noor write tomorrow?
will be + -ing • An activity in progress at a future point			
Future continuous	Noor will be writing at noon.	Noor will not be writing at noon.	Will Noor be writing at noon?

BUILD THE VERB GROUP

Simple statements use write, writes or wrote. In negatives and questions, do, does or did takes the tense and write stays in its base form. Continuous forms use be + writing.

VERB FORM REFERENCE / 2 OF 2

Perfect and perfect continuous

A perfect form looks back from a reference point. Compare a completed result with time spent on an activity.

FORM AND USE	STATEMENT	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
have/has + past participle • A result connected to now			
Present perfect	Noor has written the note.	Noor has not written the note.	Has Noor written the note?
have/has been + -ing • Activity over a period up to now			
Present perfect continuous	Noor has been writing since ten.	Noor has not been writing since ten.	Has Noor been writing since ten?
had + past participle • Completion before a past reference point			
Past perfect	Noor had written it by noon.	Noor had not written it by noon.	Had Noor written it by noon?
had been + -ing • Ongoing activity up to a past point			
Past perfect continuous	By noon, Noor had been writing for an hour.	By noon, Noor had not been writing for an hour.	Had Noor been writing for an hour by noon?
will have + past participle • Completion by a future reference point			
Future perfect	Noor will have written it by Friday.	Noor will not have written it by Friday.	Will Noor have written it by Friday?
will have been + -ing • Duration measured at a future point			
Future perfect continuous	By noon, Noor will have been writing for an hour.	By noon, Noor will not have been writing for an hour.	Will Noor have been writing for an hour by noon?

BUILD THE VERB GROUP

Perfect = have + written. Perfect continuous = have + been + writing. Change the first helper for the time frame. Put not after that helper to negate, or move it before the subject to ask.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

What will the clock tell us?

A walk starts at 9:00 tomorrow and continues past noon. At noon, look back on the time spent walking.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

By noon tomorrow, we will have been walking for three hours.

Noon is the future reference point. Three hours measures the activity up to it.

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