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Of Time and Tense: An Analysis of the English Verb Tense System for the ESL Teacher

William David Helz

School for International Training

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OF TIME AND TENSE:

An Analysis of the English Verb
Tense System for the ESL Teacher

William David Hels

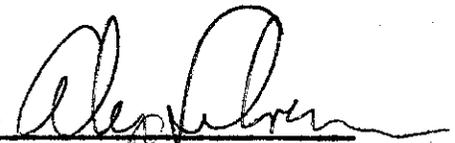
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the
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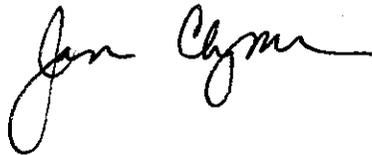
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The intent of the writer with this paper is to provide the ESL instructor with the knowledge necessary to effective planning for and teaching of lessons concerning the verb tenses of English.

The analysis given in the paper is an attempt at viewing the verb tenses as comprising a system which is basically symmetrical and surprisingly logical. As such, it is felt that through exploring the relationships tenses share with one another, we have found the key to demonstrating tense usage and meaning effectively for students and to planning drills and exercises which will zero in on the primary conceptual distinctions among the tenses.

Where one tense is, in form or meaning, analogous to another tense in another time frame, we can exploit that relationship to reinforce learning of both tenses. By the same token, where conceptual distinctions between two tenses are subtle and a potential cause of learning interference, we can separate out the territory of each far better by viewing them in contrast to one another than by presenting and practicing each of them in isolation.

The writer deals with both form and meaning of a tense and hypothesizes that each tense form has a primary meaning and each tense meaning a primary form. Tense form is often changed due to limiting surface structure requirements in the language. For example, use of a modal inhibits a Past tense meaning from surfacing in a Past tense form; it must instead take a Present Perfect form.

At the same time, tense forms are called on to express secondary time-reference meanings. For example, Present Simple can be used, in addition to its more prominent use of expressing Present habit, as a means of expressing future scheduled time, a concept more primarily associated with one of the Future (will or be going to) tenses.

Here the writer recommends that instructors and students play "Percentage English". If this secondary usage is of relative unimportance and/or the concept can be expressed just as well with a more primary form and/or use of this secondary form can lead to interference in the student's ability to internalize basic tense usage, the writer feels it should be taught for recognition value at most and that students should be discouraged from producing it until they have mastered use of the basic system of tenses.

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INTRODUCTION

Plan and Scope

When an ESL teacher enters the classroom to teach grammar to his students, he must be armed with both the knowledge of his subject and the technique to demonstrate structural form and meaning and to get his students to practice it effectively.

In my experience of several years as a teacher observer/evaluator, I have had occasion to see many lessons that flowed beautifully— where rapport was solid, student participation high, and activities varied and orchestrated with the elan of the true showman— but where little was learned due to a teacher's failure to focus adequately on the learning point of the lesson, often because he himself did not really understand it.

The purpose of this paper is to present an analysis of an important part of English grammar— the verb tense system— as a reference for the ESL instructor. Unlike many another analysis, the one presented here is made for the purpose of teaching grammar in the ESL classroom rather than as simply a theoretical linguistics exercise in parsing. The analysis made herein is based on the writer's eight-plus years as a teacher, curriculum developer, trainer, observer and evaluator of teachers, and administrator in the field of ESL. Still, it is far from being a definitive analysis, but merely purports to offer a fresh perspective from which to view a highly complex subject.

In this paper I will analyze the twelve "symmetrical" verb tenses of English and attempt to show the importance of the relationships

between these tenses. I have not included such important tenses as Future in the Past (was going to/ would) or Past Habit (used to) or such important verbal forms as infinitives and gerunds for primary analysis; nor have I dealt in much detail with such important topics as modality or passive voice. Rather, my aim has been to create a foundation of understanding to which structures not discussed can later easily be related.

The twelve tenses under primary consideration here will be: Present Simple and Present Continuous, Past Simple and Past Continuous, Future Simple and Future Continuous, Present Perfect and Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous, and Future Perfect and Future Perfect Continuous.

A thorough analysis will be given here to Present Simple and Present Continuous as they are the most basic of tenses. They set the tone for understanding the rest of the tense system and the time frame (present) from which all other tenses, in relationship, derive their meanings. Issues such as auxiliary verbs, adverbials, modality and indirect speech will then be discussed before going into the primary usage of each of the other tenses and the important relationships that these tenses share.

There are two important points that this paper will attempt to make:

- 1.) The tenses of English comprise a system that is highly (though not perfectly) symmetrical and logical in terms of both form and meaning. When teaching one structure, we can not ignore structures that are related. For example, Past Continuous and

Future Continuous are analogous structures, both in terms of form (future be + -ing vs. past be + -ing) and meaning (point in time during an event in the future vs. point in time during an event in the past).

Such a phenomenon deserves recognition by the instructor as it can ease the learning process in providing both a point of departure from which a new structure can be learned and a means of reinforcement for previously learned structures.

2.) Tenses are traditionally described in terms of form. But it is imperative for the student to make the linkage between form and meaning and to realize that what may exist in the deep structure as, for example, "past tense", may be forced to surface in the guise of another structure, like Present Perfect, due to constraints imposed by the surface form environment.

Thus, the idea of

Perhaps he went yesterday.

which is clearly a past tense concept may be forced to gain surface expression as

He may have gone yesterday.

if use of a modal is employed because of restrictions placed on tense of verbs and auxiliaries following modals.

In the same vein, one important and disruptive thread that runs through all of 'tense-dom' is the fact that certain verbs can not take continuous forms even when their time-reference meaning is one that is normally associated with a continuous

tense. This has to be one of the most over-looked phenomena in the language and failure to cope with it in a detailed sense can, I feel, undermine a student's logical base for dealing with tense usage.

To what extent can this analysis be applied to teaching students in the classroom? The answer to this really depends on a number of things.

If we are, for example, advocates of an audio-lingual approach, we probably are not much interested in having our students reason out form or meaning and relationships. I have applied the concepts discussed in this paper in the classroom by means of a primarily cognitive approach. I find it useful for students to generate their own sentences and feel it is important for them to understand both the meaning of what they are saying and the reason for saying it in the manner they do.

The difference between the target language and the native language is also an issue. Where the native language and English are closely related, it may be counter-productive to dwell on a relationship or point of logic that may only complicate what otherwise transfers well from one language to the other. I have, for example, found an approach based on this analysis more productive with my Thai and Iranian students than with my Portuguese-speaking Brazilian students. Thai, for example, is so vastly different from English while Portuguese, by comparison, is not. Thai culture is not time-oriented, as English-speaking cultures generally are, and this facet of culture carries over into the language, which is tenseless. Thus, a framework for understanding a whole new concept—that of tense—needs to be devel-

oped systematically.

Finally, college and university students, who thrive on understanding in a logical manner, may fare better with an approach based on such an analysis than may non-academic-oriented students.

One further aspect concerning application in the classroom is pertinent here. I call it playing percentage English. This means that certain structures, while having viability and even currency in native speaker usage, are best taught for only recognition value when: (a) a form more primarily associated with the concept can be used to mean the same thing; or (b) when the structure in question is one more normally associated with another meaning; or (c) when use of the structure with its secondary meaning might cause interference in production of either the structure itself with its primary meaning or of the other structure.

Thus, for example, I would not— until all basic usage had been internalized— teach students to produce Simple Present tense for future scheduled meaning, as in

He arrives tomorrow.

when either will or be going to future tenses are more prevalent:

He will arrive tomorrow.

He is going to arrive tomorrow.

and when misuse of Present Simple in future time can result in errors like

She dies soon.

I go out in a few minutes.

especially since it's already hard enough to discourage students from using Present Simple tense as a catch-all for any and all possible

time reference.

Background

I was just a cut above the warm body so prevalent in the ESL classroom when I walked into my first grammar class in Ayuthaya, Thailand. Peace Corps training had accomplished its aim in providing me with technique and assurance to prepare me for my two year junket as a PCV in a Thai teachers college. In the best traditions of the audio-lingual mold, I could spout multiple moveable slot substitution drills with nary a second thought. All was idyllic as I settled into my Sydney Poitier ("To Sir With Love") role and my "kids" and I forged the kind of mutual admiration rapport every volunteer thrives on. But as we moved from lesson to lesson in our L. G. Alexander grammar, I began to realize that while we were indeed practicing hard, we were really achieving very little in the way of progress. While students were able to perform any form transformation or substitution drill set up for them, they could not apply what they were practicing outside of a drill situation. Meeting students on the street, I would still be greeted with a "Where do you go?" or a "What do you do?". I realized that, like the "do-re-mi" of the Julie Andrews song, what we'd been doing in class "didn't mean anything".

And, so, I decided to find out for myself what it all really meant so that I could make it meaningful for my students.

As with most grammar books and courses, at the core of our curriculum and text was the verb tense, and while my efforts at discovering grammatical meaning went further than "just" the verb, it was the

verb to which my attention kept returning as I continually met up with yet another difficulty I couldn't readily account for and as I began to realize that, in all of its complexity, the verb was the key to understanding the grammar of English.

In order better to understand English grammar in general, and the verb in particular, I did several things.

First, I read — nothing too technical, of course, for my knowledge of linguistics and its ethereal jargon was even less than it now is— but, I read explanations from Mastering American English (the Pilgrim, Hayden et al version) and Jean Praninskas' Rapid Review of English Grammar. This was a valuable starting point for me. It gave me a general idea of the meaning carried by each tense and of tense usage. But I continued to encounter prominent exceptions and issues that these, and other books, either ignored or only briefly touched on. And some of the explanations still seemed vague and, even, inapplicable.

So, I began doing several other things. I listened to native speakers for what they were saying and how they were saying it and tried to analyze the reasons why such things were being said. While driving my wife crazy and thoroughly boring friends on occasion, I continue even now to pick up valuable insights in this way.

I also began analyzing the errors Thai speakers, with varying levels of proficiency, were making in both spoken and written English and tried to reason out how and why these errors had occurred. This was also a highly productive source.

For example, I still clearly remember the fresh insight into yet another aspect of the Present Perfect tense that I gained in this way. Every Monday I would go to a hotel in Bangkok after work to buy Stars and Stripes, the only newspaper obtainable which reported in detail an account of the preceding day's American football action. On some Mondays I would be greeted by the desk clerk with "It didn't come" and would disappointedly turn away sans the knowledge of how my beloved Redskins had fared. One Monday, after being informed that "It didn't come", instead of leaving I decided to have dinner at the hotel. After dinner, I was crossing the lobby when I noticed a stack of Stars and Stripes on a lobby counter and promptly purchased a copy.

In later analyzing what had happened, I came to realize a truth about Present Perfect that had previously eluded me and that I hadn't encountered in any of my reading. What the hotel clerk had of course meant was "It hasn't come". When he used the Past tense structure, my unconscious expectation was "...and it won't". If he had instead employed a Present Perfect construction, I would have conjectured: "...not yet, but it will (or might)", and would have sat down to await its arrival.

Through this experience and others I became gradually aware of another fact about verb tenses: that they can really be understood only in relationship to other tenses.

Prior to this realization, I had followed the plan of the text I was using, presenting each grammar point in isolation from everything else and doing little to tie it all together. Now, I began to use

that which the students knew to introduce new concepts. Target structures would then be practiced in contrast to related structures already learned (or studied, anyway). And, before going on to a new structure, the structure that had just been studied would be fit into the entire system the student was building for himself through both oral and written practice. This retrenching aspect provided the student with a solid foundation and an ability to see how and where any structure he learned fit into the overall plan. With every tree in its place, students could now see the forest.

Finally, I began to deviate from the standard substitution/transformation drill and dialogue format of standard audio-lingual procedure with the ubiquitous and non-descript Tom and Jane and endless manipulation of form. I began to depend more heavily on presenting and practicing structures in meaningful terms, using objects and events in the students' environment and lives and used audio-lingual drills chiefly in situations where concepts had been established but forms needed to be better anchored in students' minds. Thus, long before I knew what a "cognitive approach" meant, I'd decided that "language without meaning is meaningless" and that, if students don't understand (or can't relate to) what they are saying in drills, the drills have little value.

This then is the background for this paper. I probably wouldn't have become so interested in the verb if I had initially taught in a country other than Thailand where the language is, for all practical purposes, unmarked for tense, thus creating a very special and severe problem for the Thai student of English as a Second Language.

I've learned to become vague when discussing the subject of my M.A.T. paper with friends. For, even with friends who are ESL teachers, it seems that there is nothing so intrinsically boring as the subject of verb tenses. I, on the other hand, feel there is nothing in the language so fascinating as wandering leisurely through the labyrinth of the verb tense system.

PRESENTS SIMPLE AND CONTINUOUS

Basic Form and Meaning

The Present Continuous or Present Progressive structure is best described in meaning-oriented terms by two words: Now and Temporary. That is, when using this structure the speaker is expressing an action that is occurring in the present time and is considering that the action will end. Either the action lacks permanence or is considered by the speaker to lack permanence.

In contrast, the Present Simple construction is used to express actions (or states) which are also in the present time, but are habitual and have permanence. The action (or state) is a recurrent one that has no relationship to observable behavior at any one point in time. When using this structure to describe an action/state which is habitual, either the speaker believes that the activity will continue to recur and will not cease or, for the speaker, termination of the activity described is a remote eventuality, awareness of which is hidden away in a corner of the speaker's mind.

The Present Continuous is formed by taking the appropriate (person-determined) present form of the auxiliary BE and adding the verb plus -ing.

I am eating
You are eating
He/She/It is eating

We are eating
You are eating
They are eating

Forms can be contracted (and usually are in spoken English unless the Now concept is being stressed for clarification) as such:

I'm /aym/ eating
You're /yuwr/ or /yuwər/ eating
He's /hiyz/ eating
She's /ʃiyz/ eating
It's /its/ eating

We're /wir/ or /wiyə/ eating
You're /yuwr/ or /yuwər/ eating
They're /ðeɪ/ or /ðeɪə/ eating

In addition, in normal conversational English the -ing /in/ is often altered to /en/ or /in/.

Negatives are formed with not being inserted between the BE aux and the lexical (+ing) verb.

She is not studying.

We are not reading.

Contraction of negatives occurs in two ways, except for with the first person singular which in Standard American English is limited to one way. The most common manner of contraction is as follows:

I'm /aym/ not eating
You aren't /arnt/ eating
He/She/It isn't /izint/ or /izent/ eating
We aren't /arnt/ eating
You aren't /arnt/ eating
They aren't /arnt/ eating

The other manner in which contraction can occur simply involves contracting as in the affirmative (and first person singular negative), inserting not between the person-auxiliary contraction and the lexical (+ing) verb.

He's not playing.
They're not sitting.

Questions are formed without adding any additional words (unlike the Present Simple which in its affirmative does not normally require use of an auxiliary). Word order is simply changed by inverting the BE aux and the subject of the verb.

Affirmative:	Subj + aux + V + ing	He is studying.
Question:	Aux + Subj + V + ing	Is he studying?

In the affirmative, the concept of Present habit is expressed through Present Simple tense merely by using the lexical form of the verb alone, except in the third person singular where an -s inflection

is added to the verb. The auxiliary DO is implicit in an affirmative statement, but only surfaces when emphasizing the action of the verb, most normally in contradicting another speaker's negative assertion:

- A. You don't like him.
- B. (But) I do like him.

Thus, we have:

I eat	We eat
You eat	You eat
He/She/It eats	They eat

The sound given the 3PS depends, like the plural -s, on the phonetic environment in which it occurs. Usually, it is dependent upon the sound which immediately precedes it:

- a) If it is a voiceless sound (other than /s/, /^Vs/, /^Vc/), final -s is pronounced /s/, as in wants, breaks, or stops;
- b) If it is a vowel or voiced consonant (other than /z/, /^Vz/, or /^Vj/), -s is pronounced /z/, as in goes, gives, needs, or dares;
- c) And if the sound preceding final -s is /s/, /z/, /^Ns/, /^Vz/, /^Vc/, or /^Vj/, then the final sound is pronounced as /iz/, as in faces, loses, washes, or judges.

In forming the negative, the auxiliary DO and the negative not are inserted before the verb. If the verb is in the third person singular, its inflection is transferred to the auxiliary DO, making it does /dez/. Do not and does not are contracted to don't /dɒnt/ and doesn't /dɒznt/.

I don't eat	We don't eat
You don't eat	You don't eat
He/She/It doesn't eat	They don't eat

Questions are formed by using the aux DO, implicit in the affirmative, and inverting it and the Subject. As in the negative, 3PS inflection transfers from the main verb to the auxiliary.

Do I eat?	Do we eat?
Do you eat?	Do you eat?
Does he/she/it eat?	Do they eat?

Be -ing and Not Be -ing

Certain complicating factors help to make effective and correct usage of these tenses problematic— often more so than need be. If the teacher recognizes the issues involved, he will be in a position to alleviate much confusion. The teacher who well understands the tenses can restore order where on first scrutiny there seems to be only chaos. Seeming exceptions are often themselves rule-oriented and do follow patterns.

Let's consider the following sentences:

- 1a *Tom is being at the store now, but he should be back soon.
- 2a *I'm having your pen; I'll return it to you in a minute.
- 3a *The anxious mother is looking out the window but she's not seeing her children.
- 4a *The kids are being hungry and are wanting some ice cream.
- 5a *They're needing help on their homework, so the teacher will assist them.

Logically there is nothing at all wrong with these sentences. Each sentence above describes an action or state that is occurring now and is temporary. By definition, the correct formula (BE +V+ -ing) for expressing a verb action with the Now/Temp meaning has been used. Still the mode of expression is obviously incorrect. If we must say, as the student is very early taught,

- 1b Tom is at the store... (now)
- 2b I have your pen... (now)
- 3b ...she doesn't see her children. (now)
- 4b The kids are hungry (now) and want some ice cream (now).
- 5b They need help... (now)

then why can't we also say

- *I read this book now.
- *He plays football now.
- *They watch TV now.

or, at a more difficult level

- *I have a good time at this party.
- *Bob isn't home now; he sees a movie.

This surface chaos fills students and teachers with dismay, especially since most ESL textbooks and courses ignore or obscure such issues, making it difficult if not impossible for the logically-minded student to use his edge at all in learning a language. It seems to come down to learning on a case-by-case basis as the student becomes wary of generalization, a natural tool of both first and second language learners.

Let's examine the above sentences more carefully.

Actually, certain of these first five sentences would be perfectly acceptable in certain dialects of English (the English of India, for example) where the local rendition of an adopted English tongue seems to stress usage of the present continuous tense where no British or American would venture such usage. In American or British English, such usage must be considered sub-standard.

In fact, mistakes such as those found in sentences 1a to 5a above seem to occur rarely. It is especially improbable that most students of English as a Second Language would make the mistakes with the verb be in sentences 1a and 4a; this is due, at least partially, to the difficulty students have in relating be to is, am, are, was, were, there being little sound-wise that would indicate commonality.

Over-application of Present Simple is a far more common error of second language learners of English. Still, assuming a cognitive approach, the kind of error illustrated by sentences 1a-5a is vastly preferable to the kind of mistake found in sentences 6-8 and its occurrence would be welcome by comparison. Such mistakes (as in 1a-5a) indicate that the student has at least internalized the basic concept distinguishing Present Simple from Present Continuous. He simply hasn't gone the additional step toward learning that certain verbs can not use a continuous form, even though they are expressing a now/temp idea. This is the issue we wish to examine here and we will attempt to do so in some detail.

Incorrect utterances such as those of 6-8 indicate that, probably, the student still isn't at all comfortable with the distinction between a present habit and a now-occurring form concept which English finds important. Mistakes like those in sentences 9 and 10 might lead the observer to the same verdict; or they might indicate that the student has gone one step further and learned that have and see may not be used in continuous forms. This could only be determined through observing his use of the two tenses with other lexical verbs. What he hasn't learned, in any case, is that have and see each have more than one lexical meaning, and that with these verbs (and others) their ability to take a be -ing form in a "be -ing" situation depends on what their meaning is. Thus, where we can say

I'm having a good time at this party.

where have means "experiencing", we can not say

*I'm having your pen.

where have probably means "possessing", and, hopefully, not either "eating" or "experiencing".

So, with the form restrictions placed on certain verbs, we are left with but one tense to express two contrasting concepts. In the following sentences, notice the duality of time-reference meaning that one verb form is called upon to supply.

John <u>is</u> here (on Tuesdays).	stands John waits here (on Tuesdays). stays sits.
John <u>is</u> here (now).	standing John is waiting here (now). staying sitting

It certainly would be easier for the student trying to understand and reproduce understandable and grammatical English if this situation didn't exist, but it does. It would seem to make the language less precise to have one form responsible for more than one meaning, but as will be pointed out later, the "no be -ing" verbs are hardly the only instance of this in the English language or in the verb tense system. Besides we can usually easily compensate for any possibility of being misunderstood through what may otherwise have been a redundant or partially redundant adverbial and through expansion of the spoken, printed or visual context.

So, qualifications must be added to the description of usage of the two tenses under discussion. Let us restate definitions with these qualifications in mind:

1. a. The present continuous form is used to express an action occurring now that is truly or psychologically temporary.
- b. Now/temporary actions are expressed through the use of

the Present Continuous form, except with a small number of verbs or semantic variants of these verbs which must use the simple form for expression of both habit and now concepts.

2. a. Present Simple form is used to express present habit which possesses true or psychological permanence, except with a small number of verbs with which meaning might be either now/temporary or habit/permanent, said distinction being discernible only from the context.
- b. Habit/Permanence can be expressed only through use of the Present Simple form.

Of course, these definitions can still only serve as starters, each of these tenses having secondary meanings which they can express. But what these definitions represent is what it is imperative for the student to understand, consciously or unconsciously, before he can go on any further with the verb without a shaky foundation that will make a systematic understanding difficult or impossible and will cause him to make many errors in understanding and utterance.

This particular issue of verbs which can't use a be -ing form is not exclusive to these two tenses, for repercussions are felt throughout English 'verb-dom'. It creeps in to interfere with a consistent logical base for understanding the meaning of every continuous tense (Past Continuous, Future Continuous, Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect Continuous and Future Perfect Continuous).

Neither is the issue limited to obscure vocabulary items, verbs that are rarely used or can be omitted from a syllabus until a student has grasped the fundamentals of the language. In fact, two of English's most important, most frequently used verbs (be and have) are in this category.

One listing of those verbs which, with certain of their meanings anyway, may not be expressed in a continuous form, even when carrying the meaning normally borne by a continuous form, is as follows:

be	like	remember	resemble
have	love	forget	feel
believe	hate	belong	smell
think	need	own	taste
know	prefer	owe	hear
seem	want	cost	see
understand	wish	mean	

Certain of the verbs (know, love, hate, mean, for example) carry within their semantic configurations the notion of permanence and thus should seldom lead to tense error; situations calling for temporary meaning expression should be few if the student understands the lexical concepts expressed by these words.

Several of the verbs of perception (feel, smell, and taste) only fall into this category when used intransitively and, for feel, again, only when it means "touch or tactile sensation" or "believe". When feel is used to describe state of health, we may use either tense in a now/temp situation.

This water feels warm.	I'm feeling the water.
That dog smells bad.	She's smelling the dog.
This food tastes good.	They're tasting the food.

How do you feel today? OR How are you feeling today?

How do you feel about what she's doing?

These nuances of language are complex and it's best not to challenge the student with them unnecessarily until basics have been mastered.

Witness also the use of think:

I think we should go now.

I am thinking about my girl friend.

When it means "believe", like believe it does not use be -ing; but when it's describing thought process rather than opinion, it does.

Probably the most important of these verbs and the ones that are going to be encountered almost immediately in any ESL course are be, have, want, need and see. Of these, be and have are the most important because of the added difficulty of their dual function as lexical and auxiliary verbs (which we will discuss shortly) and because of the frequency with which they must be used due to the basic lexical values they represent.

Be is fairly straight-forward. In none of its primary uses can a continuous form be employed. At some advanced point in a student's language acquisition process, he should be introduced to "behavioral" be, which outside of a few individual idioms, is the only instance where lexical be as a verb takes a be -ing form, as in

She's being (acting) cute.
naughty
good
bad

Of course, in the passive construction of present continuous tense, the double be aux is used with the lexical verb, as in

My car is being fixed.

I'm being inundated with work.

where the is or am + -ing gives the tense and the be- indicates the passivity. This again holds true for the passive voice of any continuous tense as, for example, in

He was being hit.

The country has been being affected by inflation.

though, when we get into such sentences as the latter where the tongue gets a heavy workout, we normally contrive to get it said in the active voice whenever possible.

Have is the most difficult of these verbs to use correctly. First,

its duality as a grammatical cue to the Perfect and as a lexical item can, and usually does, confuse students (as do *lex* and *aux Be*). But that problem aside for the time being, its multiplicity of meanings as a lexical verb, some of which can and some of which can not take a continuous form, is enough to make a student feel that he's been 'had'.

Basically, only two meanings can not use continuous form: Have₁ (possess) and Have₂ (sickness or physical condition), as in

I have your ticket (now).
He has a stomachache (now).
a broken arm
the flu
a cold

In addition, the quasi-modal have to is best taught as not taking a continuous form, though in idiomatic usage it sometimes can, when it truly refers to now rather than to future or habit. Its oddball equivalent of have got to, however, can never be used in continuous (or any other) form, because it has borrowed its basic form from the Present Perfect already.

Other meanings of have commonly encountered in beginning and remedial ESL courses include:

Have₃ = to eat, drink, smoke

He's having a cigarette.

I'm having a beer.

Have₄ = to experience, etc.

She's having a good time.

They're having trouble.

She's having a bath.

She's having a baby. (normally, future meaning)

We're having class.

Have₅ = the causative

He is having his hair cut.

They're having a house built.

We can see the importance of the distinction and also the role context must play in determining meaning or usage in the following sentences where context has been eliminated:

He has lunch. = It's sitting in front of him/ He possesses it now

OR

He habitually, to some unstated degree, eats lunch

vs.

He is having lunch. which means that he is eating now

Finally, the verb see, in its primary, vision-oriented meaning, may not be used continuously. Nor can it, usually, when it means "understand". But two of its alternate meanings, which an ESL student will inevitably run into, can:

See₃ = to take in or attend a game, movie or play

I'm sorry. John's not home. He's seeing a movie.

See₄ = to date or meet

They are seeing a lot of each other.

I'm seeing a specialist about my problem.

In closing the discussion of these verbs, it's only fair to say that none of the verbs on the list is tied to any absolute restrictions in order to satisfy the requirements of Standard American English.

Who has not heard:

She's wishing that she had come.

I'm doing it, but I'm hating it.

He's liking what he's hearing.

She's wanting to finish up her project.

But such stylistic subtleties should not be allowed to interfere with a student gaining a basic understanding of this phenomenon of form restriction since such an awareness will help to prevent interference in understanding basic concepts of tenses. As in other cases, we are imposing an order which is, to a degree, artificial, in order to help the student to generalize so he can generate new, unrepeated utterances that are correct. In playing percentage English, we really don't want students making sentences such as those four given above. As in learning the basics of anything, two hands for beginners.

The Meeting of the Twain

Present Simple and Present Continuous have been presented together because they are so difficult in terms of form and meaning to separate from one another and because examining the relationship they possess sets the tone for exploration of other tensal relationships.

In this section, the purpose will be to discuss problems encountered at the border between the two tenses, for meanings blend as there is a lack of a clear-cut boundary between the temporary and the permanent.

Part of the explanation for the problem which crops up is due to the elasticity of the "Now" concept. Consider the following examples:

- 1a The pen is falling off the table.
- 2a She is washing her hands.
- 3a He is smoking a cigarette.
- 4a They are eating lunch.
- 5a He is working in the garden.

- 6a You are reading Murder on the Orient Express.
- 7 I am dating Elizabeth.
- 8 I'm seeing the doctor twice a month.
- 9 I am living in Washington.
- 10 People are travelling more than in any previous era.
- 11 Man is dominating the earth, but scientists feel that in the future insects will gain supremacy.

The intention here is to portray a progressive expansion of "now". Just how long is now? With apologies for the final, highly contrived, example sentence, I've tried to show that it can be as short as the snap of one's fingers or as long as thousands of years — from an instant to an eon. The duration of the event is unimportant compared to the notion, real or psychological, that it is temporary. The matter of duration, in fact, is taken care of by other tenses.

The earlier examples (the first six, anyway) seem to be clear-cut. To use another tense (i.e.— Present Simple) would basically alter the idea being expressed:

- 1b The pen falls off the table.
- 2b She washes her hands.
- 3b They eat lunch.
- 4b *He smokes a cigarette.
- 5b He works in the garden.
- 6b *You read Murder on the Orient Express.

All of these sentences express a different concept, that of Habit. They express no relationship to any process or action presently occurring in an observable "now" time frame. For example, he may or may not be working in the garden at the moment; what is important here (5b) is that with some unspecified degree of frequency, he has the habit of gardening.

It should be pointed out that sentences 4 and 6 are starred for their semantic improbability. One can not habitually smoke the same

cigarette (implied by the use of the indefinite article with a singular-
consumable- noun) nor is it likely that one would re-read the same
book enough times to merit it status as a habitual activity. Of
course, we do read (portions) from books, such as the Bible or Koran
habitually or we read different editions of the same magazine or
newspaper. To correct these sentences to express a habitual quality,
we might say:

4b He smokes cigarettes.

6b You read books.

What about sentences 7 to 11? This is where we begin poaching
on the speaker's psychological grounds for stating his case in the
manner he does rather than through use of a Present Simple tense
construction. All previous sentences (i.e.- 1a-6a), if true at the
time of utterance, were actually happening at that specific point in
time. They were easily manageable events, each with a clear beginning
and end. As stated earlier, no other tense could have been used to
express the same notion.

With sentence 7 we reach the edge of the misty boundary of psychol-
ogy separating the two tenses. With no additional information to go
on concerning the relationship between the speaker and Elizabeth, and
with apologies to the speaker for treading on his psyche, we can only
assume that there have been others before Elizabeth and that there may
be others to follow. At the least, the speaker is expressing a lack
of certainty that he has found his one and only. The statement

I date Elizabeth.

would have indicated more stability in their relationship from the

speaker's point of view.

Sentence 8 is problematic because it uses an adverbial commonly considered the property of Present Simple. Twice a month, once a day, five times a week, and the like show repetitive activity not commonly associated with a "now" concept.

Obviously, the activity described in 8 is not a singular event. It's a series of events which, for the speaker, is temporary; he expects to be cured and to be able to put an end to this temporary habit or routine.

In regard to sentence 9, it can not be denied that a person with a history of mobility would be much more likely to make such a statement than a life-long resident would. Again, he may never leave town, but he's less than certain of that.

Sentences 10 and 11 are more difficult to assess, as we move into lifetimes and beyond, since they go beyond most people's personal concerns due to their duration. In each, the speaker is making a comparison with another time in history. He could have used the Present Simple tense with very little real difference in meaning. Use of the Present Continuous only serves to underscore the relative transience of all things. These sentences serve to illustrate the point that "now" can be construed as a most relative phenomena and that use of the Present Continuous is perfectly acceptable in the most durative of situations where even the strongest of our habits pale by comparison.

If my business were psychology rather than ESL, I would be more reluctant to jump into such an analysis as the one just made without

a lot more research having been done. It is clear that stylistic concerns and other subtleties of the language and the psyche enter into such tense usage determination. The average native speaker, for example, is much more likely to respond to a query posed in Present Simple with a Present Simple rather than a Present Continuous response regardless of past history or future intention unless he either is a very strong-willed individual or has firm plans for his future.

But, again, armed with this semi-artificial understanding, the student has had order imposed to some degree on a complex and occasionally unwieldy system. He will never error because he has based his understanding on such an analysis and he will have a basis on which to interpret or produce when in borderline territory.

Secondary Meaning and Usage

While each tense in English has a primary meaning and usage with which it is associated, no tense is exclusively limited to one use. We have already discussed those verbs which can not be expressed in continuous form and so must have their continuous meanings expressed through other tenses. This is but one example of secondary usage of a form though this kind of secondary usage is of primary importance; other kinds of secondary usage may be of far less prominence in the language.

Using Present Simple and Present Continuous, our purpose here will be to illustrate how tenses in general can be used to express time-references more normally associated with other tenses. While this will be briefly dealt with when of any major significance with

the other tenses, here we will attempt to examine secondary meaning of these two tenses in detail.

In addition to the Now/Temp concept which it is most normally used with, Present Continuous tense can be used to express two other concepts, as illustrated in the following sentences:

She's coming tomorrow.

He's always saying things like that.

In the first example, the Present Continuous has been used to express future time. While not nearly as prominent a use of the tense as its Now/Temp usage, it does have frequency and can not be merely shrugged off in the ESL classroom where students should learn to recognize its use, though not necessarily produce it until they have mastered primary usage of Present Continuous and use of the Future (will and be going to) tenses.

The future event is more normally expressed with one of these other tenses with the be going to form probably having more currency in spoken English except when used in main clauses of sentences with subordinate clauses. The relationship between be going to and the Present Continuous, in terms of form, is apparent as be going to utilizes a continuous form within its extended future form.

The meaning illustrated by the second sentence above is used with far less frequency and need not be dealt with at all in the ESL classroom except perhaps in passing. Certainly its use should not be encouraged with any but the most advanced of students since the more prevalent way of expressing the same thing is through the Present Simple tense. The Present Continuous, paradoxically, is used

in this way— invariably with adverbs like always and forever— to stress the strength of present habit. It carries a bit more forcefulness than the Present Simple would, but nothing meaningful is lost by substituting Present Simple in its stead.

Present Simple also has several uses other than the two thus far discussed but, again, production of Present Simple with the less prominent meanings is discouraged before basic tense understanding and use is sound. Students may need, however, to understand such usage at an earlier juncture as they may encounter it rather early on and could become confused.

Consider and compare usage of the Present Simple in the following sentences:

1. She studies every night.
2. He is here now.
3. Her train arrives at 6 tomorrow.
4. When he goes to Paris next week, he'll see the Eiffel Tower.
5. "Did you see the movie on TV last night? What about the part where the murderer comes up the stairs and creeps into the bedroom and stabs the girl..."

In sentence 1 we have vintage Present Simple without any tricks or deception; the tense of present permanent habit is being used to express just that. Sentence 2 gives us a verb (be) that can not be used with a continuous form, though the meaning is Now/Temp. So much have we already discussed.

In sentences 3 and 4, however, the adverbs of time tell us that the future is being discussed and in sentence 5 it seems that Present Simple tense is being used to discuss something in the past time. Let's

examine each of these cases.

Present Simple can be used to express future when a "scheduled" event is involved. Defining a scheduled event is not always easy, because the psyche of the speaker again enters in. The train example above is a pure example of a scheduled event, complete with written timetable, but in another case the speaker may simply have made a mental tick on the calendar of his mind as in

I play poker next Tuesday.

The President speaks tonight at 8.

This use of Present Simple as future differs from its use in sentence 4 where the meaning of goes is also in future time. In sentence 3 we can cheerfully substitute Future tense to express its own meaning at will; it is, in fact, advisable for ESL students to do just that rather than risk misuse and confusion of concept. In sentence 4, however, we have a future dependent clause in which Present Simple form must be used to express future because of form constraints. When we have if, when, before, after, etc., clauses with future meaning, we normally must use simple Present tense rather than Future tense in the subordinate clause, while the main clause will take Future tense, as in

If she passes the test, she will graduate.

I will see her when she arrives.

After he goes to the store, he will go to the Post Office.

She will return home before she comes to the party.

(It is worth noting that with before and after, we do have the alternative of using a gerund in place of the subordinate clause

subject and verb if the subject of the main clause is the same as the subject of the subordinate clause.)

This use of Present Simple is important to basic mastery of tenses and should be stressed for both recognition and production value at the appropriate time.

Finally, we have Present Simple used for past time, as illustrated in example sentence 5. This is called the Narrative or Historical Present and is often used in retelling a story or movie the speaker has read, heard or seen. Teachers often use it in the classroom to set up situations that will elicit vocabulary items or to generate conversation. It should be added that Present Continuous is also used for this purpose, as we try to make our listener visualize what we are saying in his mind, as if it were happening now.

I feel that the teacher should monitor himself for this type of usage and consider that when students hear such usage they may emulate it in inappropriate situations. Using this timeless tense is best left till basic mastery has been achieved. Any story can be told equally effectively with 'real' tenses and doing so reinforces good language habits.

Adverbials of Time and Frequency

Some people have an aversion to spiders and snakes; when teaching verb concepts, I have an aversion to adverbs of time and frequency, those fickle little deceivers of time and tense. They simply are not to be trusted.

This apparent blanket condemnation may be overstated. I do, in

fact, admit to using them myself. But, when teaching verb structures of English I nearly always try to establish tense concepts before bringing adverbs of time and frequency into the picture. I find otherwise that students rely on the adverbs to determine the tense which should be used and tend to use the adverbs as the primary means for identification of the time frame.

Few adverbs are truly reliable enough as indicators to deserve such trust— at least not without an awareness of the dangers involved. Teachers encourage such associations by using them as tense-determining cues in substitution drills or even by defining tense through them and this can exacerbate the problem.

Following is a selected list of adverbs and the tenses to which ESLers commonly binds them in texts and courses:

now	- Present Continuous
always	- Present Simple
just	- Present Perfect
yet	- Present Perfect
ever	- Present Perfect
for	- Present Perfect/Present Perfect Continuous
in	- Future
next	- Future

Consider the following sentences:

Now, he felt, was the time to strike.
He writes to his mother now and again.
He has arrived just now.
I will leave now.
The war was now over.
Now that you have come, you may as well stay.

I always attended classes when I was in high school.
I will always try to do my best.
He hasn't always been like this.
He is always interrupting.
She had always been a good student until she went to college.

He is just about to leave.
I am just finishing now.
She just closed the door.
He just stood there when she cried for help.

The bell didn't ring yet.
He isn't here yet.
He isn't doing anything about it yet.

Do you ever feel mellow?
Did you ever see John Kennedy?
Will you ever learn?

He lived there for three years.
He will attend college for four years.
She's staying with us for a few days.
He goes for days at a time without talking.

She arrives in 3 days.
I finished it in 2 hours.
He is graduating in 2 months.

He left India in 1963 and lived in Pakistan the next year.

In some of the cases ("He just stood there" and "Now that you have come", for example) these words are not even being used as adverbs of time, but to even the bright students they may seem to be. In other cases ("The bell didn't ring yet", for example) acceptability may be questioned even though most native speakers unblinkingly opt for Past over Present Perfect in like situations every day in the U.S. In the majority of cases, however, these adverbs of time and frequency have simply been falsely associated with certain tenses or their associations have been overly-stressed. This is easy to see for a tense like Present Perfect where clarity of definition seems next to impossible due to the complex implications of that tense; associating them with adverbs of time is an easy out.

With this warning firmly in mind, let us look at those adverbs of time and frequency commonly associated with Present Simple and

Present Continuous. The idea here is to consider them as words that can be used with these tenses rather than as crutches to be used for determining tense. Further, we must realize that, given an appropriate situation, these adverbs may be used with other tenses as well. While it may be necessary for the teacher to use adverbs of time and frequency as cues in oral and written exercises at times, he should be aware of the dangers involved and ready to encourage and accept variant responses that might also be appropriate.

Adverbs of time which most commonly are used with Present Continuous are now and this (hour, morning, week, month, term, year, etc.). We saw in the examples given earlier that now can also mean such things as "at that time", "immediately before 'now'", "immediately after 'now'", and "since/because". But, most normally, it refers to the 'now' of present time. This can also be used with a number of other tenses, especially since it often only serves to establish boundaries on a general present time frame which has a past and a future within its parameters. However, it does occur quite frequently with Present Continuous in giving an indication that an activity is on-going, though impermanent.

Other adverbials of time occurring with Present Continuous, though less prominently, are today ("this day"), at the moment, at present, presently and for the time being.

Now and presently can be placed at either the beginning of a sentence or clause or at the end of a sentence or clause and, less frequently, between the aux BE and the main verb. The others usually

occur only at the beginning or end of a sentence or clause. For all of them, placement at the end of the sentence or clause is most frequent.

Adverbs of frequency, infrequently used with Present Continuous because frequency breeds habit (though not necessarily present habit), are yet commonly found with Present Simple constructions, when Present Simple carries a habit/permanence meaning. When Present Simple is used to indicate a now/temporary meaning or a future meaning, adverbs which agree with those time frames (now or next, for example) will be found.

From most frequent to least, the following adverbs of frequency occur along side of Present Simple with — frequency:

Always
Usually
Often/ Frequently
Sometimes
Occasionally
Rarely/ Seldom
Never

It should be noted that rarely, seldom and never carry negative connotations and, as such, do not normally occur with not to negativize them as it does the other adverbs.

Placement of these adverbs of frequency may be initial (except, usually, with always, rarely/seldom, and never).

Sometimes he tries too hard.

(Rarely and seldom occur initially only in the curiously irregular affirmative structure illustrated by the following: Rarely do I have the opportunity to meet one so fair.)

Placement may also be final (except, again, usually, with always and never)

He goes to movies occasionally.

And, finally, they may also occur medially, without exception

She always does her work.

He often tells lies.

The main exception on medial placement occurs when be is the verb.

With other verbs, an adverb of frequency is placed before the verb.

With be as the verb, the adverb must follow the verb. Thus:

She rarely comes late.

vs.

She is rarely late.

There are many idiomatic equivalents of various verbs of frequency.

Occasionally, in particular, has quite a few synonymous expressions, such as from time to time, once in awhile, now and then, now and again, and at times. Placement of these is, most normally, either initial or final.

Other prominent adverbs used with Present Simple include:

(# of times) a (time unit), meaning "per"

She goes to school five days a week.

He reads 10 books a year.

We eat 3 meals a day.

every (time unit)

He studies every night.

She goes to the beach every year.

-/on/in (time unit)

They play golf on Fridays.

She sleeps late on weekends.

He works nights.

I study (in the) evenings.

It should be noted that the -s can be omitted, but the idea of recurrent Fridays, evenings, weekends, etc., remains.

THE AUXILIARIES: A PROBLEM OF DUALITY

It would seem to be enough of a problem for English that so many vocabulary items have multiple meanings. A student of ESL is forever running into this sort of annoying problem. It's more frustrating to misunderstand when one recognizes each word and thinks he knows what each of them means than when the words are strange to him to begin with. This lack of one word-one value accounts for one of the reasons effective computer translation programs have been difficult to set up. The prime example of this problem occurred during early attempts when the adage "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" was fed to a computer and translated into Russian and then back to English, re-emerging as "The vodka is strong, but the meat is rotten".

Any student who has ever tried to learn any language has had similar problems over this common linguistic phenomenon.

One aspect of this problem, alluded to on previous pages, provides major interference in learning how to properly use the English verb. This is the duality in function of the words which are used to form our verb tenses. It could be argued that those "three little words" — be, do, and have — cause more mistakes by ESL students than anything else in the language. Each is an auxiliary or helping

verb and each is a full verb, a verb carrying semantic rather than just syntactic meaning. Only one basic tense of English (Future will tense) does not use one of these words or their variant forms in its expression.

Do is the easiest of the three to deal with and to understand. It has the lowest usage frequency of the three as a lexical verb and as an auxiliary it seems to yield less incorrect use than the others. As an auxiliary it is used to form fewer tenses than either of the other two and the tenses which it helps to form are of comparatively less complexity conceptually than some of the tenses of which be and have are a part. The tenses do is used with, however, are high frequency tenses.

In terms of form, both auxiliary and lexical do take the same forms: do and 3PS does in Present Simple and did for all persons in the past. In neither of these tenses does the auxiliary normally surface in the affirmative except, as described earlier, in stressing the affirmative quality of a statement or as a stylistic prosodic subtlety. The other auxiliaries— be and have— are always present in affirmative, as well as negative and question, constructions.

Aux do is used with not to form the negative, as in

He does not like it.

He did not go.

and is most usually contracted with not, changing the vowel quality of do (in all but 3PS) from /duw/ to /dow/. in Present Simple.

Do is also used as an auxiliary in question formation, affirmative and negative, except in Who or What questions where the unknown

being requested is the subject of the answer.

Do you live here?
Did he buy a car?

Don't you like him?
Didn't he go?

What does he do?
Where did he go?

Who killed him?
What caused this?

It should be noted that, with be and have, the auxiliary is used in all questions, even Subject questions; however, since the subject is the question word (Who or What), normal inversion of auxiliary and subject does not take place.

As a lexical verb, do has a plethora of uses, but most often means "perform an action".

Problems are minimal for students compared with be and have, but do occur, especially in what, to the student, appears to be meaningless reduplication.

Do you do your job well?
Did he do his homework?
She doesn't do anything.
But I do do it.

One particular experience I once had, which has since been repeated, occurred in a lesson where this reduplication problem cropped up. Students were having few problems with transforming simple present statements into yes/no questions, a process involving placing aux do at the beginning of the question, transferring 3PS from the main verb to the aux, and using yes/no question intonation. Then we ran into the following sentence:

He does his work well.

A slower student offered

*Does he his work well?

neglecting to use a verb at all. Several of the better students, recognizing work as a verb, came up with

Does he work well?

which is a perfectly acceptable formation, but the wrong transformation. Even when modeled for them correctly and explained as graphically as possible, they were reluctant to utter what, for them, still seemed a meaningless redundancy.

Lexical be is the only verb in the language that does not require use of aux do in Present Simple and Past tense questions and negatives in American English.¹ The verb and subject are simply inverted in question formation and a bald not is inserted after the verb to form the negative.

As mentioned earlier, the be verbs are difficult for students to see as one package due to their widely disparate sounds. No other verb creates quite the same problem for the language learner in this respect.

¹ This is not true in British English where lexical have also doesn't require the auxiliary do in questions or negatives.

Have you a cigarette?

I haven't a cigarette.

If the American teacher of ESL is to accept this from his students, he should take care that the exception doesn't become the generalization with other verbs.

Let's look at the various forms be takes as a lexical verb:

Infinitive:	be
Present Participle:	being
Past Participle:	been
Present Simple:	am/are/is
Present Continuous:	(See Present Simple)
Past Simple:	was/were
Past Continuous:	(See Past Simple)
Future Simple:	will be (or am/is/are going to)
Future Continuous:	(See Future Simple)
Present Perfect:	have been/has been
Present Perfect Continuous:	(See Present Perfect)
Past Perfect:	had been
Past Perfect Continuous:	(See Past Perfect)
Future Perfect:	will have been
Future Perfect Continuous:	(See Future Perfect)

This is further complicated when we get into passive voice, for aux be has two primary uses:

- 1) It is used, with -ing, to form any of the continuous tenses:

I am working	I have been working
I was working	I had been working
I will be working	I will have been working

- 2) It is used, with the past participle, to form the passive voice (Tense + be + Past Participle)

It is being done
She has been fired
The books will be burned
It will have been finished

This latter usage can even result in such constructions as

It has been being worked on

though we would probably revert to active voice or to another aspect of the time frame involved when possible in order to avoid such a tongue-twisting construction.

So, even within aux be there is duality of function; and this duality causes problems for the learner. Students can easily get lost

with all the be's that can crop up. We can make it more difficult through use of a modal, causing an even more obvious reduplicating effect, as in

My car isn't here. It must be being fixed.

Distinguishing the worth of be and of its continuous forming partner -ing in other cases also causes headaches for the student. Consider the -ing adjective and the gerund:

He is interesting.

His favorite sport is bowling.

"Where are the verbs hiding here?" the student wants to know. The answer, of course is is is the lexical verb in each case. In the former example interesting is describing him, not showing an action he is performing as it would if interest had an object as in

He is interesting me (in his product).

Virtually any verb that can be changed to an -ing adjective is transitive and will take an object if it is indeed a verb, showing an action.

To distinguish bowling in the second sentence as a verbal noun or gerund we must go to the sense of the sentence. Tom or Dick or Jane aren't bowling — the sport is. And unless we are describing some person who's a "good sport", we shouldn't have much difficulty assessing meaning of the sentence or function of its parts.

Lexical be does one final thing that is both interesting and frustrating, though it only occurs with some of the tenses. It most often occurs in Perfect usage, such as in

I have been to Europe three times.

Here we can see be has assumed the meaning of "go". The to of the

preceding sentence is the giveaway here as we can see when we compare the sentence above with

I have been in Europe three times.

which clearly shows the standard locative meaning of be, not the movement-oriented action of "go".

Thus we lead up to a more difficult distinction to make involving the gerund.

She has been fishing twice this week.

where the be (as "go") is the main verb and fishing is a verbal noun or gerund and Present Perfect (completion prior to now) rather than Present Perfect Continuous (duration up to the present) is the tense. Compare this to:

She has been fishing for three hours.

where the same surface construction has a different purpose and meaning.

Have, as has been discussed, has a variety of meanings as a lexical item. Like be it also serves several grammatical functions: in forming causative constructions, in giving us the quasi-modals have to and have got to and in forming all Perfect structures. Separating out the have's and their meanings and functions is at least as difficult as the similar problem encountered with the be's. Reduplication possibilities again run rampant, as in the following examples:

Before he had it fixed, he had had trouble with his VW.

They have to have had their dinner already.

Of course, we can also mention the fact that these three words can combine in the same verb structure to bring further delight to

the suffering student.

When aux do is used, of course, no other auxiliaries are used in the same structure. However, have is used to form all Perfect tenses and be is used to form all continuous tenses and all passive constructions. Then, too, lexical be, do or have can combine with these auxiliaries (except lexical be with aux do). So, with apologies to all students, let's examine the possibilities:

1 aux do lex do	I don't do much work.
2 aux do lex be	_____
3 aux do lex have	Do you have a pen?
4 aux be lex do	He is doing his work.
5 aux be lex be	She's being naughty.
6 aux be lex have	He is having lunch.
7 aux have lex do	They have done it.
8 aux have lex be	He has been there twice.
9 aux have lex have	He has had a cold.
10 double aux be lex do	Her work is being done.
11 double aux be lex be	_____
12 double aux be lex have	A good time is being had by all.
13 aux & mod have lex do	He has to have done it.
14 aux & mod have lex be	You have to have been there.
15 aux & mod have lex have	She has to have had lunch by now.
16 aux & caus have lex do	She has had it done.

17 aux & caus have lex be	_____
18 aux & caus have lex have	_____
19 aux, mod & caus have lex do	He has to have had it done for him.
20 aux, mod & caus have lex be	_____
21 aux, mod & caus have lex have	_____
22 have & be aux lex do	I have been doing it.
23 have & be aux lex be	They have been being good.
24 have & be aux lex have	A good time has been had by all.
25 have & double be aux lex do	The work has been being done.
26 have & double be aux lex be	_____
27 have & double be aux lex have	A good time has been being had.
28 mod have & have & be aux lex do	It has to have been done.
29 mod have & have & be aux lex be	_____
30 mod have & have & be aux lex have	A good time has to have been had.

Obviously the possibilities for confusion are great, even if certain of them are less than prominent in actual usage.

One further aspect helps to make internalization of have and be (though not really do) usage difficult. As mentioned we contract our auxiliaries frequently and we contract them to such an unstressed state that they become lost to the students' ears and become easy to overlook.

He's writing a letter.

I've seen him recently.

They even seem to disappear completely in many instances as they are assimilated by surrounding sounds:

He's seeing a movie.
I've finished.
We're reading our books.
Shé's spelled the word.

Even when heard the student often has trouble picking out what the contraction has been contracted from. The -s, for example, has such a variety of function in English that the student has to separate it from plurals and possessives first and then decide whether it means has or is.

He has finished. He's finished.
He is finished. He's finished.

Former students of mine (primarily Thais whose native language has no final /s/ sound) have complained to me that everything in English sounds like /s/. There is some truth to such a characterization. The s's of English can indeed be confusing.

Reduplication, weakness of stress and the generally otherwise difficult concepts behind usage of these "3 little words" all combine to make mastery of understanding and usage a difficult quest for the ESL students.

Too many students become frustrated after mounting exposure and tend to tune them out and concentrate on understanding and producing only the bare-bones gist of spoken and written language. By so doing, they are permanently retarding their language growth and placing unnecessary limitations on their ability to communicate with the language.

MODALITY: MODIFYING FORM & MEANING

When we wish to qualify the action expressed by a verb in terms of possibility, probability, advisability, necessity, opportunity and the like we employ the modal. The use of modals forces form changes on the rest of the verb form and it is these changes that we wish to discuss here.

Modals are not a part of the expression of tense meaning (except for will which is used in forming future tenses). Unlike auxiliaries, they themselves have no -s or -ing or past participial forms. Also, as we have seen several auxiliaries can be used consecutively in a verb structure, but only one modal can be included (although the quasi-modal have to can be preceded by a full modal such as might, may, or could). Therefore, the future marker will disappears completely when qualifying a future verb construction with (another) modal.

Modals force us to alter the form through which the tense is expressed because of one very important characteristic— they may never be followed by any verb form, auxiliary or lexical, other than an unmarked infinitive form. This has immense repercussions on the whole tense system, creating a collapsing effect throughout, which will become evident in the paradigm below.

The modal may is conveniently used to illustrate this effect because of its synonymy with the non-modal maybe. It should be added that what the language makes convenient for the analyst, it makes problematic for the language learner, as the -be of maybe is

easily confused with be aux, as in may be, can be, might be.

Tense	<u>Without Modal</u>	<u>With Modal</u>
Pres.	Maybe he studies.	He may study.
Pres Con	Maybe he is studying.	He may be studying.
Future	Maybe he will study.	He may study.
Fut Con	Maybe he will be studying.	He may be studying.
Past	Maybe he studied.	He may have studied.
Past Con	Maybe he was studying.	He may have been studying.
Pres Perf	Maybe he has studied	He may have studied.
Pres Perf Con	Maybe he has been studying.	He may have been studying.
Past Perf	Maybe he had studied.	He may have studied.
Past Perf Con	Maybe he had been studying.	He may have been studying.
Fut Perf	Maybe he will have studied.	He may have studied.
Fut Perf Con	Maybe he will have been studying.	He may have been studying.

We can easily see what has happened here. Present Simple and Future Simple have collapsed into one form. Because a modal must be followed by a simple, uninflected verb form— an unmarked infinitive— we must drop the 3PS -s from studies and because two modals can not occur in the same structure, we must replace will with the new modal.

Present Continuous and Future Continuous collapse into one form as the 3PS of is must be changed to the base form be for Present Continuous and the will is again supplanted by the new modal in Future Continuous.

All Perfect forms retain their perfect nature as expressed through the have Perfect marker, but are leveled by the same rules expressed

above. The continuous forms retain their be -ing markers, but are altered in accordance with the restrictions placed on the form of the have aux by the modal.

Past and Past Continuous undergo the most severe modification as they can't employ the very past forms (-ed and was/were) that define them; thus they collapse into the perfect form molds as well.

We saw earlier that for those verbs that could not take a be -ing or continuous form, a collapsing effect also took place. For twelve basic tensal meanings, we had but six tense forms we could use to express them. With modals, the effect is even greater: we must now use but four forms to express the same twelve time frames. If this seems like simplification of the task of learning English, it really isn't because it detracts again from the student's ability to retain a firm concept of basic form-meaning relationships in verb constructions where modals are not used. It can only simplify matters for the student if he has a strong foundation and understands what is happening with the use of modals.

If only four forms exist to express twelve concepts, how do we determine the time reference the speaker is making. Again, this is usually not as difficult as it would seem as we again have context to supply us the necessary cues. Adverbials, for example, which otherwise may only qualify established time reference or even be totally redundant, may be called on to carry a heavier load in supplying meaning when used with modal verb constructions.

Aside from the tense form modifications they bring, the modals

are problematic in other ways. Let us briefly examine several of the other issues involved.

First, just as they cause the forms of tenses to change, so can they be altered (in meaning) by the tenses with which they are used. Thus, while the must of

I must see him soon.

implies necessity, the must of

I must have seen him.

expresses a logical sort of deduction.

The problem of meaning of a modal is great; could, for example, has at least four uses (expressing ability, opportunity, permission, and possibility), which are partially dependent on the tenses could is used with.

Further, although described traditionally as having Present and Past forms, as in can/could, may/might, will/would, shall/should, this is misleading and of far less relevance today than it once was in an earlier period in the history of the language. By such a description the following would seem totally anomalous:

I might go tomorrow.

He may have gone yesterday.

Would you lend me your pen, please?

He can't have meant what he said.

What's more, modals used negatively do not always mean the opposite of their affirmative as in the following comparison of must and have to:

	I must go.	=	I have to go.
but	I must not go.	≠	I don't have to go.

Finally, several of the modals can be contracted, weakening them to the extent where they are easily overlooked and under-heard and doing little to support a learner's solid foundation. Would, for example, with its contracted 'd (/d/ or /id/) form, even when heard, lends itself readily to confusion with the 'd of aux had, just as the /s/ of contracted is is in conflict with the /s/ of contracted has and with plural and possessive -s.

INDIRECT OR REPORTED SPEECH

Still another tense-modifying aspect of English that changes tense usage is the occurrence of indirect speech. Tense change that takes place due to this is somewhat more radical than change due to use of a modal, but it's relatively logical and, in some respects, seems easier to learn.

Indirect or reported speech basically means taking what someone has said (Direct Speech) and re-uttering it with the prefatory 'He said that' or 'She told me that'.

Most texts present this phenomenon in a very logical, almost mathematical manner. The rule of thumb is given as "just go back one tense until you can't go back any further". Thus:

"I study English."

becomes

He said that he studied English.

If he had said:

"I studied English."

it would have been reported as:

He said that he had studied English.

And if he had said:

"I had studied English."

it could have been reported back only as

He said that he had studied English.

since we have no tenses that can "go back" any further than Past Perfect does.

Now, while demonstrating that Past tense can indeed be used to express the present habit normally associated with Present Simple tense (and that Past Continuous, likewise, can be used to express the now/temp concept), this formula does not really hold true one hundred per cent. It's probably the best way in which to teach the concept since the speaker will not err through following the formula. But, the teacher should recognize that more is involved than this, should his students encounter other usage that might confuse them.

Let's take the sentence, "I live here." Through using the formula, we would be inclined to report it as

He said that he lived here.

Now if he said this back in 1960 and he now lives elsewhere, our report of this (given above) would be the only correct one; but if, for example, he has recently said this and it is still true we have the option of going with the formula or of saying:

He said that he lives here.

They are equally correct.

This whole issue brings up one further point that any teacher will recognize if he has ever sought reading material that adequately reinforces tense usage. All stories or novels (of a fictional nature,

anyway) are written in a past time frame.

Now, "now" is the time from which all tense usage stems and "now" is ever-changing, with other tenses moving in relationship to "now" while the events originally expressed through these tenses remain attached to times that have changed their relationship to "now" with the passage of time. There are really three "now's" involved in any story: the reader's "now", the writer's "now", and the "now" of the story itself.

The reader's "now" is the time at which the story is being read, obviously. This is the future to the writer who, as he is writing his story, hopes that he will indeed have readers. He is writing the story in his "now" and because his ability to write the story depends on the knowledge he has (which, by definition, could only have been gained from an earlier point in time), the "now" of the story is expressed in past tenses, except in dialogue and occasional references to general truths or attempts at describing real settings.

Therefore, in written English and especially in fictional English, tenses such as Past Perfect are used to a far greater degree and tenses like Present Continuous or Future, to a far lesser degree than they are in conversational English.

In a novel, Past Continuous (and Past) tenses become the "now" means of expression and Past Perfect the means for expressing what normally would be expressed by Past tense. For this reason, plays, which are based in dialogue and tied to a static "now", may be read to better effect if tense reinforcement for conversational English is a goal.

...AND THE OTHERS

Heretofore we have dealt primarily with the Present Simple and Present Continuous tenses. We have tried to analyze these tenses thoroughly and along the way have also discussed issues such as modality, auxiliary verbs, adverbs of time and frequency and indirect speech which are inextricably bound to these and all other tenses.

Space restrictions preclude such a thorough analysis of each of the other major tenses. Still, in this section we will attempt to characterize the other major tenses and to demonstrate the most important aspects of each. The main thrust will be aimed at comparing and contrasting these tenses, for it is only through the relationships which these tenses have with one another that they can adequately be understood. We shall also try to demonstrate some of the special problems involved in learning each of the tenses.

When we teach a new tense we can (and should) introduce it through what the student has already learned, contrasting it in terms of form and meaning with related tenses. When understanding of the concepts involved has been demonstrated, we can work on production of the new structure in isolation until students feel comfortable with the form and can produce it with some degree of spontaneity. Once this has been accomplished, we again pair it against a related structure (or structures), considering again relationship in both form and meaning. Finally, we integrate the new structure into the total system the student has thus far learned, practicing the new structure along with all other tenses the stu-

dent has previously learned.

With this in mind, let's look at the other tenses. They will be discussed in a sequential order. The particular sequence offered here is by no means definitive and variations may prove equally logical and effective.

PAST SIMPLE

Primary Meaning

Used to express an event which has already occurred and has been completed. Either it occurred at a specific time in the past, stated or understood, or it has no possibility of being repeated in the future.

He went to the beach yesterday.

Did you see Tom at the store? (the speaker is aware of the period of time the addressee was at the store)

My late father visited Germany twice.

Form

The affirmative is formed by attaching -ed to the end of the lexical verb (for regular verbs only; there are many highly individualistic irregular past forms as well).

In questions and negatives the auxiliary did is used in place of -ed to carry the tense meaning. In the negative did not (or didn't) precedes the lexical verb; in questions inversion of did and subject occurs.

Further Past usage is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: was + past participle
 were

Both tense and passive forming be are reflected in

was or were:

The money was stolen.

Thirty people were killed.

With modals: Modal + ^{have} + V + Past Participle

They could have gone yesterday.

She should have been sick last week.

With Indirect Speech: had + V + Past Participle

"I was there."

He said that he had been there.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts

- 1) With Present Continuous: past (already completed) vs. now (still occurring)
- 2) With Present Simple: past habit vs. present habit

(Note: While past habit can be expressed through Past Simple tense, another structure also exists expressly for the purpose of expressing past habit (used to))

He studies English every day.

He studied English every day (when he was in school).

He used to study English every day (when he was in school).

- 3) With other tenses not yet taught:
 - a) Past Continuous: A complete activity in the past vs. a point in time during an activity in the past.
 - b) Present Perfect: For this quite complex relationship, see Present Perfect.
 - c) Future: Past time vs. Future time

This relationship is noteworthy for its balanced symmetrical aspect since Past tense and Future tense do the same things, virtually, in their respective time frames (i.e.— they can express inception, duration and repetition and are used to show a complete action as opposed to the primary meanings of their continuous tenses).

- d) Past Perfect: Before now vs. Before another time in the past

- e) Present Perfect Continuous: Duration past to past vs. duration past to present
- f) Future Perfect Continuous: Duration past to past vs. duration past, present or future up to a point in time in the future
- g) Past Perfect Continuous: Duration past to past (complete activity) vs. duration past to past (incomplete activity or activity completed or interrupted by another activity)

Other Special Problems and Usage:

1) Irregularity: The concept of Past Simple tense is relatively easy (until later comparisons with other tenses crop up). The most difficult thing at the time of introduction of this tense, however, is learning the many basic irregular verbs English has, such as go-went, leave - left, see - saw, swim - swam, etc. Even here, though, there is a degree of order within the apparent disorder as a great many irregular past forms can be learned through analogy with other irregular forms.

2) Duration and Inception: Past Simple tense is used to express events that have duration,

I lived in France for two years.

events that have duration, but the durative aspect is not at issue, and so isn't reported,

We saw a movie last night.

events that have no real duration,

She dropped the pen.

or events that may have no duration of themselves, but merely mark the beginning or inception of other events (or states).

He began to work. (and then he worked)

I got on the bus. (and I was on the bus)

He died. (and then he was dead)

She caught a cold. (and then she had a cold)

When working with Past tense (and again with Future tense) in its initial stages, it's important to work with the concept of duration because it will save a lot of confusion and backtracking later when dealing with the perfect continuous tenses, past, present and future, whose primary functions are to express duration. Also, better ground will have been laid for introducing these later tenses by way of contrasting them with the durative Past Simple (and Future Simple).

Early introduction of the concept of the verbs of inception is equally important. Many languages either do not make the distinction between a verb of inception and its resultative verb or make it only in selected instances. Thus many mistakes (such as the following) are made:

- *He married for 10 years.
- *She met him for 3 years.
- *She caught the flu for 2 weeks
- *He died for 10 years.

where the verb marking the beginning of a state is used to express the duration of the state.

Equally prevalent are the mistakes caused by using the resultative verb to mark the inception of an event, as in:

- *She knew him last night. (meaning, She met him last night.)
- *He was dead 3 weeks ago. (meaning, He died 3 weeks ago.)
- *I worked at 8 o'clock. (meaning, I began to work at 8.)
- *He was an engineer in 1960. (meaning, He became an engineer in 1960.)

English itself is not always faithful to the distinction. For example, we use the normally inceptive verbs of come and go to express duration, as in

I went to the party for a few hours.
(I went to the party and stayed for a few hours.)

He came here for 2 weeks.
(He came here and remained here for 2 weeks.)

But, again, English usually does make such a distinction and many errors can be eliminated if this concept is worked with. A few of the verbs of inception (with their resultatives) include:

<u>get</u> (on, in, married, up, etc.)	<u>be</u> (on, in, married, up, etc.)
<u>become</u> (a doctor, student, etc.)	<u>be</u> (a doctor, student, etc.)
<u>start</u> or <u>begin</u> (any action)	any verb of action which can have duration
<u>die</u>	<u>be</u> dead
<u>finish</u>	<u>be</u> finished
<u>meet</u>	<u>know</u>
<u>catch</u> (a cold)	<u>have</u> (a cold)
<u>fall</u> (in love)	<u>be</u> (in love)
<u>leave, go</u>	<u>be</u> gone

With a great many of the verbs of inception, the resultative verb will be be, often followed by a participial adjective, another quite difficult concept, especially since this construction is identical in form to the passive voice. Nevertheless, the easier and more basic verbs, such as begin, start, become and get should be worked with early and contrasted with their resultatives.

FUTURE SIMPLE

Primary Meaning

Used to express an event that will occur in the future and is a complete event.

Form

There are two primary future forms: be going to and will. Both have currency and need to be learned for production and recognition value. Be going to is probably used more in conversational English

in situations where future events are being discussed except in main clauses of sentences which have subordinate clauses (if, when, after, before) where will is normally used

1) be going to future: the appropriate person-determined present form of be (is, am, are) + going + the verb infinitive

He is going to see me.

I am going to do it.

They are going to be there.

In the negative, not is inserted between the be form and going to; in forming questions, the be form and the subject are inverted.

2) will future: will + unmarked infinitive form for all persons

I will go there.

He will do it.

They will be happy.

In the negative, not is inserted between will and the lexical verb; this is often contracted to won't /wownt/. In forming questions, standard inversion of will and subject occurs.

Further Future usage is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: will + be + V + past participle

With modals: Modal + unmarked infinitive

With Indirect Speech: will changed to would

"I will go."

He said that he would go.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts

- 1) With Present Continuous: a) Future vs. Now
b) Future vs. Future

As a secondary meaning, Present Continuous can also be used to express future time.

I will leave in a few days.

I'm going to leave in a few days.

I'm leaving in a few days.

2) With Present Simple: a) Future vs present habit

He will go to the library tomorrow.

He goes to the library every day.

b) Future habit vs. present habit

I'm going to smoke when I grow up.

I smoke.

c) Future (independent clauses vs. Future
(dependent clauses))

He will go next week. He will see her then.

When he goes, he will see her.

Note also that Present Simple can be used to express future time for scheduled events.

3) With Past Simple: Future time vs. past time

As noted under Past tense, the Future is the symmetrical balance of the Past. What Past tense can express for past time, Future tense can express for future time. Also, while adverbs of time are usually unreliable as indicators of tense, Past and Future do often use the nicely balanced temporal opposites expressed through in vs. ago and next vs. last.

4) With other tenses not yet taught:

a) Future Continuous: a whole activity in the future vs. a point in time during an activity in the future

b) Present Perfect: future vs. before now

When Present Perfect is used negatively or in situations involving repetition or possible repetition of an event, the implication is that the event may or will occur (again) in the future. (See Present Perfect for further discussion)

c) Future Perfect: after now vs. before another time or event in the future

d) Future Perfect Continuous: duration of a completed activity,

future to future vs. duration of an uncompleted activity or of an activity interrupted or completed by another activity, past, present or future to future

Other Special Problems and Usage

Future tense presents few problems compared to other tenses. It doesn't have the irregularity of individual verbs that Past tense does, for example. In fact, once a student gets past the most basic of problems— using Present Simple tense for all time frames— the main problem a student will have with Future tense will be in overusing it in situations where Future Continuous, Future Perfect or Future Perfect Continuous would be more appropriate.

Even here the problem isn't as great as it is in the Past for three main reasons. First, there are more tenses used for past time than for future. In addition to the analogous Past, Past Continuous, Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous, there are the Present Perfect and Present Perfect Continuous tenses that link past activity to the present time. Further, since we tend to discuss with greater frequency that which we know to be true (i.e.—what has already happened) rather than to speculate on what will happen (i.e.— the only partially predictable future) we can expect that past time-oriented tenses will be used more. Finally, we can contrive usage of Future Simple in many instances in a normally Future Perfect or Future Perfect Continuous situation whereas substitution of Past for Past Perfect or Past Perfect Continuous is often more difficult.

Several other issues of Future tense usage should be mentioned. First, students will naturally tend to use the will form with greater frequency than be going to, simply because it is easier for them to

form. Second, the going to or be going to is often altered by the native speaker to /gene / and this should be practiced for at least recognition value if not for production as well. Third, when practicing with will or be going to, it's a good idea to include lexical be in exercises to help students to relate the is's, am's, are's, was's, and were's to their be root. Further, one might expect the contraction 'll to present some problems from the standpoint both of hearing it and producing it. This of course will depend to some extent on whether the learner's native language has either a similar sound or a similar construction; Thai, for example, does not have a final /l/ sound. Finally, for the same reasons given for Past tense, concepts of repetition, inception and duration should be practiced with Future tense.

PAST CONTINUOUS

Primary Meaning

Used to isolate a point in time during an event in the past.

I was watching TV when the phone rang.

What were you doing at 10:00 last night?

Note: This tense can also be used to emphasize duration of an event that is complete, as in

He was waiting all morning.

but this is a secondary use of the tense and Past Simple is more commonly used for the purpose of expressing the same thing. Compare this type of emphasis with the use of Present Continuous to express the habit concept of Present Simple:

He's forever coming late.

Form

The affirmative is formed by using the past form of be (was or were, according to person) + V + -ing

The negative is formed by inserting not or contracted n't after the auxiliary; questions are formed by inverting the aux and subject.

Just as lexical verbs like be, see, want, etc., can not be used in Present Continuous, the same is true for these verbs in Past Continuous (and in all continuous tenses). Such verbs must take Past Simple form when meaning is that normally associated with Past Continuous.

He was waiting on the corner when we arrived.
vs.
He was on the corner when we arrived.

Further Past Continuous usage is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: was + be + -ing + V + past participle
were

With Modals: Modal + have + been + V + -ing

With Indirect Speech: was/were -ing, according to the formula given, changes to had been -ing

"I was reading."

He said that he had been reading.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

- 1) With Past: Past point in time during vs. Past complete activity

She slept from 8 to 11. She was sleeping when he arrived at 9.

Notice the contrast in the following sentences:

What were you doing when he shot you?
I was just sitting there.

What did you do when he shot you?
I fell on the floor.

Such contrasts are well-employed when teaching the distinction between

these two tenses.

2) With other tenses not yet taught:

a) Future Continuous: Point in time during in the past vs. Point in time during in the future

b) Past Perfect Continuous: Point in time during an event in the past vs. duration up to a point of time in the past

Other Special Problems and Usage:

The contrast with Past tense meaning needs to be especially stressed (and, later, the contrast with the Past Perfect Continuous). In addition, its balance in meaning with Future Continuous and the common formation formula it shares with both Present Continuous and Future Continuous should be pointed out and contrasted in drill practice, especially if the form is causing problems for students. Finally, those verbs which can't take continuous forms need to be worked on along side of those verbs which do.

FUTURE CONTINUOUS

Primary Meaning

Used to isolate a point in time during an event in the future.

When she arrives, we'll be sitting here.

Don't call me at 11. I'll be working then.

Note: Future Continuous is secondarily used as yet another means of expressing the concept more normally expressed by Future Simple tense. This usage need be taught for recognition only as it can sometimes sound awkward, where Future will or be going to will always be correct.

Form

The affirmative is formed with will + be + V + -ing for all

persons.

The negative is formed by inserting not after will or by contracting will not to won't; questions are formed by inverting will and the subject.

It should be noted that as with Past Continuous and Present Continuous, some verbs (like be, like, own) cannot normally be used in this tense, but must use Future Simple (will or be going to).

Compare the following:

We'll be waiting here when you come.

vs.

We'll be here when you come.

It should also be noted that the alternative form for forming Future Continuous is be (am/is/are) + going to + be + V + -ing, but it is probably less prominent than the will continuous construction.

Further Future Continuous usage is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: will + be + being + V + past participle

Dinner will be being cooked when you get here.

With Modals: Modal + be + V + -ing

With Indirect Speech: will most normally changes to would

"I will be working then."

He said that he would be working then.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

- 1) With Future: Point in time during an event in the future vs. Complete activity in the future

She will study from 8 to 12.

At 8:30 she'll be studying.

We are going to live there from 1980 to 1983.

In 1981, we'll be living there.

Notice, as in the example contrasting Past and Past Continuous:

What will you be doing when she comes?
I'll be reading the paper.

What will you do when she comes?
I'll get up and open the door.

- 2) With Past Continuous: Point in time during (future) vs. Point in time during (past)

There is one main difference in the usage of Future Continuous and Past Continuous, other than that of future time vs. past time. When used in when, while, as, etc., clauses, the when/while/as can be used in either the main clause or the dependent clause with the Past Continuous:

When he arrived home, she was cooking dinner.
When she was cooking dinner, he arrived home.

But Future Continuous can only occur in the main clause of such a sentence, as we can see in the following:

When he arrives home, she will be cooking.
* When she will be cooking dinner, he arrives home.

To correct the second sentence, two things must be done to give the sentence the same analogous meaning expressed above with Past Continuous: We must change Future Continuous to Present Continuous and Present back to Future. Thus, our correction will read:

When she is cooking dinner, he will arrive home.

- 3) With other tenses not yet taught:

- a) Future Perfect Continuous: Point in time during (future) vs. duration of an event up to a point in the future

Other Special Problems and Usage:

Contrast with Future tense needs to be especially emphasized for the sake of primary Future Continuous meaning. Whereas we can often use Future Continuous to express Future tense meaning, we

may not use Future tense to express Future Continuous meaning except with those verbs which can't take continuous forms. Further, Future Continuous needs to be compared in meaning with Past Continuous as this is one way concepts can reinforce one another. Future Continuous form should also be compared to both Past Continuous and Present Continuous. With knowledge previously gained through studying these other two tenses, the teacher should be able to elicit both form and meaning of Future Continuous from students with relative ease. Finally, again those special verbs that can't take continuous forms should be worked on together with other verbs with this tense concept.

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Primary Meaning

Used to express duration from past to now; it might be described as the Bridge tense, as it links the two time frames.

He has been living here for two years.

They have been studying English since 1973.

Form

The affirmative is formed with have (or 3PS has) + been + V + -ing. Have is contracted to 've and has to 's.

The negative is formed by inserting not (or contracted n't) after have or has; questions are formed by inversion of have/has and the subject.

As with all continuous tenses, the same verbs discussed previously can not be used in Present Perfect Continuous, but must take Present Perfect.

Further Present Perfect Continuous usage is reflected in the

following forms:

Passive: Have/Has + been + being + V + past participle

(Because of the complex and lengthy construction, passive voice is usually avoided with this tense.)

With Modals: Modal + have + been + V + -ing

With Indirect Speech: According to the formulas, have or has changes to had; however, if the information given in the original utterance is still valid, no tense change is likely to be made.

"I have been working for three hours."

He said (a few minutes ago) that he has been working for three hours.

He said (a few hours ago) that he had been working for three hours.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

1) With Present Continuous: Duration past to now vs. now (non-durative)

When we use Present Continuous we are interested only in the fact that something is happening. Use of Present Perfect Continuous tells us how long something that is happening has been happening when used with for or since time phrases. When teaching this tense, the teacher would be well advised to exploit the student's understanding of Present Continuous, both in demonstrating its concept and in practicing usage.

2) With Present Simple: Duration up to now vs. Present Habit

All that was said above for the Present Perfect Continuous relationship with Present Continuous holds true for its relationship with Present Simple. Just as we can tell with this tense how long a now/temp event has been occurring,

He's reading. He's been reading for 20 minutes.

we can tell how long a present permanent habit has been going on:

She smokes. She's been smoking for 20 years.

3) With Past tense: 1) Duration past to now vs. Duration past to past

2) Duration of resultative up to now vs. inception in the past

Just as Present Perfect Continuous may not be effectively taught or learned without relating it to the present tenses (continuous and simple), neither can Past tense be avoided in teaching it. It is, after all, the bridge between past and present.

Consider the following sequences:

She began to work at 8.
She is working now.
She has been working since 8.

He moved here in 1966.
It's now 1979 and he's still living here.
He's been living here for 13 years.

In each case, Past tense is used to mark inception, Present Continuous is used to relate the present status of the result of the verb of inception, and Present Perfect Continuous is used to give the length of duration of that resultative.

Even in such sentences as

He's been beginning to do his homework all night.
or
You've been finishing your IPP for two years.

the speaker's remarks are obviously facetious as they are injecting the quality of duration in verbs of inception which normally have none. (For the record, finish can be viewed as meaning "to begin to be finished", and as such qualifies as an inceptive verb.) In any case, such sentences imply their own past inception:

He began to begin earlier tonight.
and
You began to finish it 2 years ago.

and the present time resultative of:

He is still "beginning" to do his homework.
and
You are still "finishing" your IPP.

The other major contrast to be made is between the Present Perfect Continuous and another function of the Past. The Past, too, can be used to express duration of an event.

He lived there for three years.

I studied English from 1970 to 1975.

She worked 8 hours yesterday.

The difference between Past and Present Perfect Continuous here is that the event is finished. It began in the past and ended in the past, while events expressed with Present Perfect Continuous are still occurring (or, as we shall soon see, have only just ended).

While we can use for time phrases with all three tenses thus far discussed which can be used to express duration, since can not be used with Past or Future tenses, but only with Present Perfect Continuous, since since, when used with time phrases, helps to carry the notion of "from (a time in the past) to now". With the other two tenses we use from...to phrases.

He lived in Paris from 1960 to 1970.

He will live in Rome from 1985 to 1990.

He has been living here since 1970.

4) With Future Tense: Duration past to now vs. duration future to future

In addition to the contrasts already made above, we should mention the fact that Present Perfect Continuous only covers the time from past to now, but implies (usually) that the event will continue in the future. Thus:

He has been working for 6 hours...

expresses duration up to now of an event that will continue, as:

and will work for two more hours.

5) With other tenses not yet taught:

a) Present Perfect: 1) Duration past to now vs. (non-durative) completed action prior to now

2) Duration past to now vs. duration past to now

(Note: For a full discussion of the very complex relationship between these two tenses, see Present Perfect)

b) Past Perfect Continuous: Duration past to now vs. duration past to point in time in the past

c) Future Perfect Continuous: Duration past to now vs. duration past, present or future to point in time in the future

Other Special Problems and Usage:

1) In negative statements, the Present Perfect with for or since

is normally used in favor of Present Perfect Continuous. As such,

I haven't lived there for 10 years.
He hasn't smoked since 1972.

imply that he once did each of these prior to the stated times and that:

He left there 10 years ago.
and He last smoked a cigarette in 1972.

2) Present Perfect Continuous has a secondary, only slightly altered, usage. It can indicate duration up until a point just prior to now.

Look at the wet streets. It's been raining.

Bobby, why are you so dirty? What have you been doing?

In these cases, we can see where the border between use of Past (durative) and Present Perfect Continuous, and, further, between Present Perfect Continuous and Present Perfect, is a bit indistinct.

Versus Present Perfect, the difference is that we're stressing duration of a completed event rather than just its completion; against Past we're

stressing its relationship to a present result rather than merely its past to past duration.

While complex, this use of Present Perfect Continuous should not create too many problems for students if the more basic concepts of these tenses have already been mastered.

3) Three major problems already mentioned are worth reiterating briefly in order to focus the teacher's attention on them:

a) Appropriate use of resultatives rather than inceptive verbs should be practiced with this tense.

b) Separating past to past complete event duration (Past tense), past to past incomplete or interrupted event duration (Past Perfect Continuous and Past Perfect), and past to now duration (Present Perfect Continuous or Present Perfect) can be a problem and the tenses used to express all of these concepts should be contrasted with one another through demonstration and practice.

c) Use of Present Perfect tense for past to now is necessary for those verbs which can't be used in continuous tenses.

4) Possibly the greatest problem posed by this tense lies in its relationship with Present Perfect, a relationship which will be dealt with in more detail in our discussion of Present Perfect.

PRESENT PERFECT

Primary Meaning

1) Used to express an event that has occurred and been completed at some unspecified point or points in time prior to now.

a) When Present Perfect is used, the specific "when" of the event is beside the point; rather we are interested in the fact

that something has or hasn't occurred (the "yes" or "no" aspect) before now.

b) Present Perfect denotes past time that is relevant to present time, either effecting a present result or happening before now in a "this" period of time.

c) If the event expressed is one where possible repetition of the event is at issue, use of Present Perfect implies that the event can be repeated in the future; by the same token, when used negatively, the implication is "not yet, but possibly, probably or certainly, it will occur in the future".

Have you seen that movie?

Yes, I have (seen it). I saw it last week.

She hasn't arrived. (We are still expecting her.)

He's been to Europe twice. (And he may go again.)

They've opened the window. (And, so, it is open.)

He has had breakfast this morning. (It's still this morning)

2) As a secondary meaning (but one of importance) Present Perfect is used, like Present Perfect Continuous, to express duration of an event from past until now. Its use is especially important here:

a) when negative formations are employed; and

b) for those verbs which can not take continuous forms.

He hasn't lived here since 1960.

They have been here for several hours.

Form

The affirmative is formed with person-determined have or has + V + past participle. Have is contracted to 've and has to 's.

The negative is formed by inserting not (or contracted n't) after aux have/has; questions are formed by inverting subject and aux have/has.

Further Present Perfect meaning is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: ^{have}
has + been + V + past participle

Three people have been killed.

With Modals: Modal + have + V + past participle

With Indirect Speech: According to the formula, have/has changes to had; if, however, the original utterance is reported shortly after having been made and present time frame makes Present Perfect form still viable, the utterance will probably be reported unchanged.

"She has left."

He told me (a few minutes ago) that she has left.
He told me (at 3:00 yesterday) that she had left.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

- 1) With Present Simple: Completed action leading to a present effect or result vs. the present effect or result (temporary or permanent)

She has learned how to do it.
She knows how to do it.

He has had lunch.
He isn't hungry.

- 2) With Present Continuous: Completed before now vs. still occurring now

He has finished doing it. He isn't still doing it.
He hasn't finished doing it. He is still doing it.

He has studied Economics this year.
He is studying Economics this year.

- 3) With Past Simple:

a) Unspecific past time vs. Specific past time (stated or understood)

b) Past action-Present result vs. Past action-No present result

c) The past that is present vs. The past that is past

d) Past repetition with real or psychological future possibility vs. Past repetition or non-repetition with no real or psychological future possibility

e) Not in the past, but perhaps in the future vs. Not in the past or in the future

f) Duration past to now vs. Duration past to past

The intricacies of the contrast between the Present Perfect and Past tenses are among the more complex in the language, but they can, for the most part, be dealt with in the classroom. One thing, however, that the teacher must do is to accept the realities of a changing language and to ignore or compensate for the prescriptions made by many ESL texts. For, in real English, as spoken by educated American—and, to a somewhat lesser extent, British—native speakers, Past tense is gaining primacy in certain situations where text book English tells us we must use Present Perfect. The student should be aware of this, for if he is taught that you must use Present Perfect under condition X, but then repeatedly hears Past tense used in that exact situation, we can only expect him to be thoroughly confused.

Let's examine and discuss the contrasts between the two tenses which we have made above, paying particular attention to how Present Perfect "territory" has been invaded by the Past pretender.

While Present Perfect can never be used where specific time is indicated (except when surface environment imposes restrictions on form, such as in the case of modals being used with Past tense concepts), Past tense is often used in sentences where specific time is not stated.

One instance of this occurs, as previously mentioned, when the addressee is already aware of the specific time the event took place and reiteration might be unnecessarily redundant.

Further, often cited as the primary distinction between Present Perfect and Past is the presence or absence of a present result or effect. In real English (as opposed to book English) this is where

usage of the two tenses is most blurred. In situations where there is no present result, only Past, of course, can be used as in:

He opened the door. (But now it's closed again)
They came to see me. (But have since left)

But, in situations where the result is presently apparent, we can, it seems, and do, use them interchangeably:

He has opened the door. (It's still open.)
or
He opened the door.
They have come to see me. (And are still here.)
or
They came to see me.

The greatest amount of confusion between these two tenses probably occurs because of this unrecognized reality. We keep teaching Present Perfect and using Past.

A further dimming of the Present Perfect light can be seen in the traditional negative contrast of Present Perfect and Past. If an event has not occurred up to now, but may yet occur in the future, we most normally use Present Perfect, as in the contrast:

He hasn't come.
vs.
He didn't come.

where use of the Past would indicate "...and he won't". However, the adverb yet can carry the burden of Present Perfect meaning alone, and so we have such statements as the following gaining currency:

He didn't come yet. (But he will)
The bell didn't ring yet. (But it will)
She didn't see him yet. (But she will)

With Present Perfect, the yet is a largely redundant feature. Without yet, use of the Past tense carries a different meaning.

Other contrasts of Present Perfect and Past, however, attest to the fact that Present Perfect retains identity separate from Past tense in the language. One distinction between the two is related to the concepts of specific and unspecific time. This is the use of Present Perfect in the past of a present time frame. As such we normally compare Past and Present Perfect with sentences such as the following:

- a) He has been sick this year.
He was sick last month.
- b) He has seen 4 movies this year. He saw one in January and two in February. He has seen one this month (May). He saw it last week.
- c) i. It is still morning. I have smoked 3 cigarettes this morning.
ii. Now, it is 2 in the afternoon. I smoked 3 cigarettes this morning. (past) and have smoked 2 more this afternoon. I have smoked 5 cigarettes today.
iii. It is now 8 o'clock at night. I smoked 3 cigarettes this morning and I smoked 6 cigarettes this afternoon. I have smoked one cigarette tonight. I have smoked ten cigarettes today.

The distinction made here holds pretty solid. The two tenses have virtually no interchangeability at all here. When we are considering a frame of time as present, any part of that time frame that is past is the province of Present Perfect.

Related to the distinction just made is the contrast of past repetition with future possibility (Present Perfect) vs. past repetition with no future possibility (Past).

Thus, we say:

I have been to Europe twice. (I could go again)

but:

My late father went to Europe twice.

Here, again, Present Perfect and Past are distinct; the only blurring that exists is a result of the psychology of the speaker. To illustrate this, let's use our cigarette smoker again:

(It's now 11 o'clock and I'm on my way to bed. I probably won't smoke any more today):

I smoked 12 cigarettes today.

Here the speaker has relegated that part of today that had to do with smoking to past time. He feels that future possibility (in this time frame of today) doesn't exist.

Finally, we have the distinction between durative Present Perfect and durative Past where each tense's usage is almost totally clear-cut.

He has lived here for 10 years.

tells us that he (probably) still does, while

He lived here for 10 years.

indicates that he's packed up and moved on. The main contrast here is between an event that began in the past and has continued to the present vs. an event that began and ended in the past.

4) With Present Perfect Continuous: Duration past to now vs. duration past to now

On the surface it would seem that these tenses can be used interchangeably and so, much of the time can they be. However, there are enough problems within this seeming synonymy for us to briefly examine them.

a) As reiterated over and again, those verbs which can't be used in continuous tenses must take their non-continuous counterparts, in this case, Present Perfect.

b) With negative usage, indicating that something has not

occurred since a time in the past, Present Perfect form is more normally employed since the continuous form can sound awkward:

I haven't smoked for seven years.

I haven't been smoking for seven years.

c) But, while

I have lived there for 10 years.

and

I have been living there for 10 years.

are virtually synonymous,

I have lived there.

and

I have been living there.

are not. In other words, to express the concept of past to present duration, either for or since time phrases must usually be used with Present Perfect; otherwise, Present Perfect's other meaning, implying completion of an event prior to now, will reign. This is not true of Present Perfect Continuous which carries the past to now durative concept without for or since phrases.

d) And, further, while

He has been staying here since Monday.

and

He has stayed here since Monday.

are equivalent in meaning,

He has been reading that book since last week.

and

He has read that book since last week.

are not. With another class of verbs, usage of Present Perfect as a durative is precluded. With read (and also, write

finish, go, come and others), Present Perfect reverts to its "completed before now" meaning. Used with since, it means completed before now, but after a time marked by since. With for, either the construction is awkward

He has read that book for two days.

or meaning changes subtly:

He has gone to New York for 3 weeks.

which really means

He has gone to New York (already) and he will stay there for 3 weeks.

Thus, because Present Perfect has enough of a load to carry already and a heavy enough battle already joined on its border with Past tense, I recommend teaching Present Perfect duration past to now for recognition only in beginning and intermediate classes, except for when it must be used with those non-continuous tense verbs which have no place else to go and with negative constructions.

- 5) With Future Tense:
- a) Past event(s) with possibility of future repetition vs. future repetition
 - b) Not yet, but will happen vs. will happen
 - c) Duration past to now vs. duration future to future
- 6) With other tenses not yet taught:
- a) Past Perfect: Completed before now vs. completed before another event or point in time in the past
 - b) Past Perfect Continuous: Duration past to now vs. duration past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event
 - c) Future Perfect: a) Completed before now vs. Completed before a point in time in the future

b) Duration past to now vs. duration past, present or future to a point in time in the future

d) Future Perfect Continuous: Duration past to now vs. duration past, present or future to a point in time in the future.

Other Special Problems and Usage:

From my experiences as an ESL instructor and as an observer/evaluator of other ESL instructors, I have little doubt that this tense is the most problematic of all for students to deal with. Whenever I'm talking to a speaker of English as a Second Language, the first thing I always listen for, to see how well he has really learned his grammar, is his ability to use the Present Perfect appropriately.

In scratching the surface of problems created by this tense we can briefly enumerate the following:

- 1) Confusion over contrast with Past tense.
- 2) Necessity of use as the mode of expression for durative past to now with non-continuous verbs and with negative constructions, synonymy with Present Perfect Continuous with many verbs, and inability to be used for past to now durative value with still other verbs.
- 3) Duality in function of its tense forming auxiliary which is also, a quasi-modal (with to), and a lexical verb with many meanings, some of which impose restrictions on form.
- 4) Its expanded prominence as a form when modals are employed.
- 5) The weakness of its contractions and confusion between the 's of has and the 's of is (and of plurals and possessives).
- 6) The many verbs with irregular past participles (used to form Present Perfect and other Perfect tenses).

- 7) Confusion over the concept distinction between Present Perfect action and present result of that action when a participial adjective is used. And, further, confusion in meaning between active and passive voice in situations where lexical be and a participial adjective are used in a Present Perfect construction describing a state rather than an action.

He has gone.

(and so) He is gone.

He has been gone for 20 minutes.

He has finished.

(and so) He is finished.

He has been finished for 2 days.

For all of these reasons, and perhaps more, one can only expect to experience less than smooth sailing in the classroom when meeting up with the Present Perfect, even when armed with total awareness of its intricacies and a well-ordered plan of attack.

PAST PERFECT

Primary Meaning

1) Used to express an event or events which occurred prior to another time or event in the past, especially when chronological sequence of events might otherwise be unclear.

He had already left when we arrived.

I saw that movie last night. I had seen it twice before.

2) Just as Present Perfect can be used with for or since to carry durative meaning primarily associated with the continuous form, so can Past Perfect (with for and, more rarely, since) be used to express duration (past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event) primarily associated with

Past Perfect Continuous.

Form

The affirmative is formed with had + V + past participle for all persons. In the affirmative, had can be contracted to 'd.

The negative is formed by inserting not or contracted n't after the auxiliary. Questions are formed by inverting the auxiliary and subject.

Further Past Perfect usage is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: had + been + V + past participle

With Modals: Modal + have + V + past participle

With Indirect Speech: No change in form because, as the formula implies, "You can't go back any further."

"I had been there twice before."

He said that he had been there twice before.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

1) With Past: a) Before the past vs. Before now

b) Duration past to past of an event that is incomplete or of an event interrupted or completed by another event vs. duration past to past of a complete activity

(For a discussion of the durative contrast, see Past Perfect Continuous)

Past Perfect is most usually presented in texts in highly stilted form that bears little relationship to real usage or to usage students are likely to employ. Thus, students are often called upon to practice such sentences as:

After I had seen her, I saw him.

We had gone to the post office before we went to the bank.

While this usage is certainly correct, the student is more likely to hear the native speaker using the far more natural

After I saw her, I saw him.

and

We went to the post office before we went to the bank.
in any setting other than the ESL classroom.

Such usage of Past Perfect sounds unnatural because it is unnecessary. The before and after of the sentences given have already clarified the chronological order of events that have occurred and so we would more normally use Past tense to express each of the events.

However, when, in such clausal use of Past Perfect, we use the more ambiguous when, which, paradoxically, can mean before or after (as well as during/while or at), we are forced into using Past Perfect to provide the clarification of chronology that the more specific after or before might otherwise give us. Thus:

When I had seen her, I saw him.

or

When we had gone to the post office we went to the bank.

Had we used Past Simple with when, the meaning would have been somewhat ambiguous, but probably would have indicated a meaning of "at the same (general) time".

When I saw her, I saw him.

When we went to the post office, we went to the bank.

Since, however, a student will undoubtedly opt for usage of the more specific (and more easily translatable) after or before, it would seem that study of the Past Perfect becomes an exercise in passive recognition.

However, use of the Past Perfect is not limited to this clausal use of which ESL textbooks seem so fond. There are several other kinds of situations in which Past Perfect figures prominently. One of these we will discuss here, while leaving the others to be handled under "Other Special Problems and Usage".

Unfortunately, but conveniently, when we deal in teaching a language, we must often break the language into basic units. When studying the sound system, for example, we deal at the word-level to illustrate sounds and distinctions between sounds (as in minimal pair drills). Here, such phonological aspects of the language as juncture, assimilation and the like may be sacrificed in our attempt to focus in on the more manageable word-level.

Likewise, when we study grammar, we focus on the sentence, since it is the smallest unit in which grammatical forms and relationships can be conveniently isolated in a meaningful manner.

All of this is by way of introducing the idea that Past Perfect may be one tense that is better introduced through the wider context of the speech act, or, at least, through paired sentences in the manner of mini-dialogues, rather than in the limiting context of the single sentence. When considered within this broader context, Past Perfect is more difficult to dismiss as a secondary tense with only passive recognition value.

Notice the use of Past Perfect in the following dialogue-type situations:

- 1) A. Did you watch the movie on TV last night?
B. No, I had seen it before.
- 2) A. Why didn't you go to Spain instead of Greece on your vacation?
B. Because I had been to Spain, but I had never been to Greece before.
- 3) A. You went to the bank and then the grocery store and the shoe store. What did you do next... Did you stop at the post office?
B. No, I didn't. I'd already been there.

In such rather commonplace situations, it seems clear that there

is a place for Past Perfect in our production repertoires and that Past tense usage in such situations would be inadequate.

2) With Past Continuous:

- a) Completion of an event prior to a point in time in the past vs. Point in time during an event in the past
- b) Past to past duration of an event that is incomplete or of an event interrupted or completed by another event vs. Point in time during an event in the past

(For discussion of Past Perfect duration and Past Continuous, see Past Perfect Continuous.)

vs. She had washed the dishes when he arrived.
She was washing the dishes when he arrived.

In the Past Perfect sentence, the structure indicates completion of an event before a point in time (marked by the second event); in the Past Continuous sentence, we are indicating that the event was still ongoing (and had not been completed) at the point in time marked by the same second event.

3) With Present Perfect:

- a) Before a time in the past vs. Before now
- b) Duration past to past (of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event) vs. Duration past to now

(For discussion of duration contrast, see Past Perfect Continuous)

Present Perfect can be used well in illustrating meaning of Past Perfect, especially where repetition of an event is expressed, as evidenced by the following examples.

He saw that movie for the third time last night.

He had seen it twice before.

He has seen it three times.

One other contrast is worth mentioning here. While we can't

use specific time with Present Perfect, its use with Past Perfect is possible, though it is more normally avoided.

I went to Paris last week and had a great time. I had been there once before in 1968 and so I knew where to go.

- 4) With Present Perfect Continuous: Duration, past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event vs. duration past to now

(For discussion of duration contrast, see Past Perfect Continuous)

- 5) With other tenses not yet taught:

- a) Past Perfect Continuous:

i. Completed event before another event or time in the past vs. duration past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event

ii. Duration past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event vs. duration past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event.

(For a discussion of this relationship, see Past Perfect Continuous)

- b) Future Perfect:

i. Completed before a point in time or another event in the past vs. Completed before a point in time or another event in the future

ii. Duration of an event (past to past) that is incomplete or has been interrupted or completed by another event in the past vs. Duration of an event (past, present or future to future) of an event that is incomplete or has been interrupted or completed by another event in the future

- c) Future Perfect Continuous:

i. Completed before a point in time or another event in the past vs. Duration (past, present or future to future) of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future

ii. Duration of an event (past to past) that is incomplete or has been interrupted or completed by another event in the past vs. Duration of an event (past, present or future to future) of an event that is incomplete or has been interrupted or completed by another event in the future

Other Special Problems and Usage:

We mentioned earlier that Past Perfect had several uses other than in when/before/after clausal situations. We then discussed use of the Past Perfect when dependent upon a context broader than that which a single sentence can supply. Let's briefly enumerate here other ways in which Past Perfect is used:

1) To express wishes or suppositions about the past contrary to what actually occurred, as in the following:

I wish that I had studied for the test. (I didn't study.)

If I had studied, I would have passed.

OR

Had I studied, I would have passed.

As we can see, Past Perfect carries a meaning more normally associated with Past tense. However, Past tense in "if"-type situations is called on to carry different meanings.

a) Past Possibility

If he was here yesterday, I didn't see him.

(Maybe he was here; I don't really know.)

b) Present contrary to reality or future improbability

I wish I were rich.

If I were rich, I would buy an airplane.

If I went to the party tomorrow, I would have fun.

(But either I am hypothesizing or my feeling is that I won't go to the party.)

2) To express what is normally the province of Past tense in novels, short stories and other literature where the "now" of the action of the story is carried in the Past and Past Continuous tenses, as has been discussed earlier.

3) In indirect speech, to report statements (or questions) made in the Past or Present Perfect, as well as in the Past Perfect.

"Did you see her?"

He asked if I had seen her.

"I haven't finished yet."

He said that he hadn't finished yet.

"We had been there twice before."

He said that they had been there twice before.

It is an interesting trade-off that Past Perfect and Present Perfect make. While Past Perfect takes responsibility for reporting many Present Perfect statements or questions in indirect speech, Present Perfect pays its debt, in one respect, by substituting for Past Perfect whenever modality enters the picture.

Maybe he had seen it before.

He may have seen it before.

4) Finally, the contraction problem is worth mentioning again. The 'd contraction is easily lost to lack of stress or even total assimilation and, when heard is open to confusion with the identical sounding 'd of would. Such confusion can only be alleviated once the student has internalized the concept of form restrictions, as would, as a modal, must be followed by a simple form, whereas had, the auxiliary, must be followed by a past participle.

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Primary Meaning

Used to express duration of an event from its inception in the past up to another point in time in the past when that event is incomplete or is interrupted or completed by a second event.

I had been living there for 3 years when I met her.

By 1968 I had been smoking for 2 years.

I had been working there for 6 years when I changed jobs.

Form

The affirmative is formed with had + been + V + -ing. In the affirmative, had can be contracted to 'd.

Negatives are formed by inserting not or n't after had; questions are formed by inverting had aux and the subject.

Further Past Perfect meaning is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: had + been + being + V + past participle

Note: Passage usage is normally avoided with this tense

With Modals: Modal + have + been + V + -ing

With Indirect Speech: No change

"I had been working in Boston."

He said that he had been working in Boston.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

- 1) With Past Simple: Duration past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event vs. duration past to past of a complete event which is not being contrasted with another event

Note the following situation and sentences:

He lived there from 1970 to 1976. He met her in 1973.

- a) He lived there for 6 years.
- b) He had been living there for 3 years when he met her.
- c) By 1973 he had been living there for 3 years.
- d) He lived there for 3 years when he met her.
- e) He lived there for 3 years before he met her.

In the first three sentences we can see the normal province of Past Perfect Continuous in relationship to Past tense where duration of an incomplete event is being expressed. With Past tense, by contrast, we describe the complete event, beginning to end. Sentence (d) gives us a different meaning—the normally ambiguous when most likely yields

an "after" meaning. Legitimacy of the sentence would be enhanced, within the context given, if we were to amend it to read "3 more years". Sentence (e), while heard, may be open to question as a grammatically correct usage. It is possibly a result of the weak stress of the contraction 'd being dropped from Past Perfect durative.

Blurring of Past and Past Perfect Continuous usage comes primarily when the event whose duration is being described is really complete and is being related to another event. If a single sentence is used to express the duration of the earlier event and the relationship of that event to a later event and when is used to mark the end of the earlier event, Past Perfect Continuous will be used. However, if the relationship is not being highlighted, but rather only the completed event itself, Past tense is more likely. And when the ambiguity of when is relieved by substituting before or after, either is possible with Past tense probably having the edge in frequency of use.

Compare:

He had been working for 8 hours when he went home.
He worked for 8 hours. Then, he went home.
He worked for 8 hours before he went home.
He had been working for 8 hours before he went home.

- 2) With Past Continuous: Duration of an event up to a point of time in the past vs. Point in time during a past event

This relationship is fairly self-explanatory and is best seen through the use of examples:

Situation: He lived in Germany from 1960 to 1968. He bought a car in 1965.

When he was living in Germany he bought a car.
When he had been living in Germany for 5 years, he bought a car.

Situation: He swam in the pool from 2 to 4.

At 2:10, he was swimming.

By 2:10, he had been swimming for 10 minutes.

- 3) With Present Perfect Continuous: Duration past to past vs. Duration past to now

Situation: She went to sleep at 9. He came home at 11. It is now midnight and she's still sleeping.

She has been sleeping for 3 hours.

When he got home, she had been sleeping for 2 hours.

Note: While since (expressing duration with a time phrase) is most normally used with past to now Present Perfect Continuous/Present Perfect, it is used with Past Perfect Continuous/Past Perfect as well, though to a far lesser degree as for carries most of the load.

He came at 6. She had been waiting since 4:30.

- 4) With Past Perfect: a) Duration past to past of an event that is incomplete or of an event that has been interrupted or concluded by another event vs. Completion of an event before another event or time in the past
- b) Duration past to past of an event that is incomplete or of an event that has been interrupted or completed by another event vs. the same

Briefly and in general terms it can be stated that Past Perfect : Past Perfect Continuous :: Present Perfect : Present Perfect Continuous. That is:

a) Certain verbs which can not be used in continuous tenses must take Past Perfect (with for or since) to express this kind of duration.

b) When Past Perfect is used, for (or since) must be used to carry durative meaning that Past Perfect Continuous can express without these words.

c) Many verbs can take the two tenses interchangeably to express the durative concept; others (like read, go, etc.) can not take the non-continuous form to express duration.

d) The student is safest if he uses the continuous form to express duration in all cases except with those verbs which don't take continuous forms, and with negative constructions.

5) With other tenses not yet taught:

a) With Future Perfect Continuous/ Future Perfect:

Duration past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another past event vs. Duration past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future.

Other Special Problems and Usage:

Aside from the uses already discussed, Past Perfect Continuous has several other uses:

1) To express Past Continuous meaning in wishes and contrary to reality suppositions.

I wish I had been working when the boss came in.
I wasn't working when he came in.

If I had been working, he wouldn't have fired me.

2) To express Past Continuous meaning often in stories where the "now" of the story is told in terms of the past.

3) In indirect speech, as a substitute for Past Continuous and Present Perfect Continuous, as well as for its own meaning.

"I was doing my homework."
He said that he had been doing his homework.

"We've been trying to find him."
He said that they'd been trying to find him.

FUTURE PERFECT

Primary Meaning

1) Used to express completion of an event(s) at an unspecified time(s) before another event or specified time in the future

2) Just as Present Perfect and Past Perfect can be used to express duration, so can Future Perfect be used to express duration, this time of past, present or future to future of an uncompleted event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event.

By next May he will have finished school.

When I arrive, she will have left.

Form

The affirmative is formed with will + have + V + past participle (or alternately with be going to + have + V + past participle). Will can be contracted to 'll.

In the negative, not is inserted after will or contracted with will to won't; questions are formed by standard inversion of subject and will.

Further Future Perfect meaning is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: will + have + been + V + past participle

With Modals: Modal + have + V + Past Participle

With indirect speech: will, according to the formula, would change to would; usually, however, it does not change at all.

"I will have finished by 1982."

He said that he will have finished by 1982.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

1) With Future tense: a) Completion of an event(s) before a time in the future vs. Complete event(s) in the future (after now)

I will have finished when he comes.
I will have finished before he comes.
I will finish before he comes.
I will finish when he comes.

b) Duration from past, present or future to future of an event not completed or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future vs. Duration future to future of a complete event

(For discussion of durative contrast, see Future Perfect Continuous)

As with Past Perfect usage, we can see here how the ambiguity of when can restrict us to the perfect as opposed to the simple form. With the Simple Future, when is likely to be interpreted as meaning after. But, as before with Past Perfect, students are unlikely to use when when they can use before and so, in production will probably use Future Simple whenever possible. This is no great loss since Future Perfect is not a very important tense from a frequency of usage standpoint. Unlike Past Perfect, it has no real value as a form that other tenses must rely on. Indirect speech, literary usage, and If clauses and wishes do not depend on Future Perfect form for anything. Neither is it used nearly as frequently in the context of a dialogue situation.

The main distinction between Future and Future Perfect is one of perspective. With the simple tense, we are viewing the future from now, peering ahead at it; with the perfect, we are projecting ourselves into the future to a point where we can look back— through the intervening future towards now, and, in many cases, even back past now into the past. This leads us to the main instance— certain cases involving repetition— where Future Simple can not be used to get across ideas that Future Perfect can. Let us illustrate this:

Situation: He went to Europe in 1966, 1970 and 1972. He will go to Europe again in 1982 and in 1984.

After he goes to Europe in 1984, he will have been there 5 times.

Because Future Perfect can tie past and present events together with future events, it has a use here that Future Simple, which is bound to future time exclusively, can not do. If we opt for Future usage, then we must employ another tense to help us tell the whole story:

He has been to Europe 3 times and he will go there 2 more times in the next few years.

It should be added that Future Perfect used to express duration has the same quality and can be contrasted with Future Simple in this respect as well.

- 2) With Future Continuous: Completion of an event before a time in the future vs. Point in time during a future event

Situation: He will study from 3 to 4.

He will be studying at 3:30.

By (4:01, 4:30, 5:00, etc.) he will have studied.
(or finished studying)

By (3:01, 3:30,) he will have begun to study.

- 3) With Present Perfect and Past Perfect:

Before a time in the future vs. Before now & Before a time in the past

Situation: She saw that movie in March, in April, and again on June 5. It is now July 10. She is watching the movie now. She will see it again tomorrow and on Friday.

Prior to June 5, she had seen it twice.

She has seen it 3 times.

After tonight she will have seen it 4 times.

By Friday she will have seen it 6 times.

- 4) With Present Perfect Continuous (and Present Perfect durative):

Duration past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event

in the future vs. Duration from past to now

(Note: Since is not normally used with Future Perfect durative or with Future Perfect Continuous)

5) With Past Perfect Continuous (and Past Perfect durative):

Duration from past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future vs. Duration past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another past event

6) With other tenses not yet taught:

- a) Future Perfect Continuous: Duration from past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future vs. the same

Other Special Problems and Usage:

There are no additional problems or usage other than that already noted. One can expect that this tense will not get a lot of use by students. But it is still worth dealing with, if for no other reason than the symmetrical balance it lends the tense system.

FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Primary Meaning

Used to express duration from the past, present or future up to a point in time in the future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event.

By next year I will have been living in Washington for 17 years.

When he arrives, I will have been working for seven and a half hours.

Form

The affirmative is formed with will + have + been + V + ing.

Will is contracted to 'll as in all future tenses.

Negative formation is accomplished by inserting not after will or contracting will not to won't; questions are formed by inverting the modal will and the subject.

Further Future Perfect Continuous meaning is reflected in the following forms:

Passive: will + have + been + being + V + past participle
(This is very rarely used, however)

With Modals: Another modal is simply substituted for will

With indirect speech: Again, the formula would have us change will to would, however, much of the time there is no change.

"By next year I will have been living here for 10 years."

He said that by next year he will have been living here for 10 years.

Meaning Relationships and Contrasts:

- 1) With Past: Duration from past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another future event vs. Duration of a complete event, past to past.

He studied Tagalog for 2 years.

By next year he will have been studying English for 8 years.

- 2) With Future: Duration from past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another future event vs. Duration of a complete event, future to future

The main contrast here has already been established in discussing Future Perfect repetition vs. Future repetition. When inception of the event(s) occurs in the future, the difference between the two tenses is one of perspective and Future tense can be used to describe the same general idea, unless the event is incomplete:

I will live in Tokyo from 1990 to 1996.

By 1992 I will have been living there for 2 years.

It is, however, again, the events that begin in the past or present and extend to the future, where Future Perfect is most useful and most distinct from Future Simple.

She came here in 1960 and will leave in 1990.

When she leaves she will have been living here for 30 years.

vs.

She has been living here for 19 years and she will live here for 21 more years.

- 3) With Future Continuous: Duration of an event from past, present or future to future, etc. vs. Point in time during an event in the future

He will begin his talk at 2 and wind it up at 4.

At 3:30 he will be lecturing.

By 3:30 he will have been talking for one and a half hours.

- 4 With Present Perfect Continuous (and Present Perfect durative):

Duration past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future vs. Duration past to now

Consider the following situation:

He started working at 3 and is still working. He expects to quit at 6. It's now 4.

He's been working for one hour.

He's been working since 3.

By the time he quits, he will have been working for 3 hours.

It should be noted that since generally can not be used with Future Perfect Continuous; for constructions carry the load.

- 5). With Past Perfect Continuous (and Past Perfect durative):

Duration past, present or future to future of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future vs. duration from past to past of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the past.

While these two tenses balance well in creating symmetry in the tense system having (roughly) analogous meanings and forms for their respective time frames, usage frequency of Past Perfect Continuous is far greater.

- 6) With Future Perfect: a) Completion of an event(s) before a time in the future vs. Duration of an incomplete event or of an event interrupted or completed by another event in the future, past, present or future to future
- b) The same durative quality stated above vs. the same

Again, in discussing their apparent synonymy when used to express a durative concept, we must keep in mind:

- a) certain verbs can not take the continuous form and must take the Future Perfect
- b) when Future Perfect is used, for or other time phrases of duration must be used for durative interpretation to be assured
- c) some verbs can not take the non-continuous form without sounding awkward or changing in meaning
- d) the student is safest if he uses the continuous form to express duration for all except for verbs not accepting continuous forms

Other Special Problems and Usage:

All has been said. By way of reiteration, Future Perfect and Future Perfect Continuous are of comparatively less importance than the other tenses discussed here, but are of interest for the logical way in which they round out the basic tense system. One can expect minimal production with the tense by students.

Formation of English Verb Tenses:
Relationship of Tense Forms at a Glance

	Pres		Past		Fut		Pres		Past		Fut	
	Simp	Cont	Simp	Cont	Simp	Cont	Simp	Perf	Cont	Perf	Simp	Perf
do/does aux												
Ø / -s												
did aux												
past -ed (or other irreg)												
<u>DO</u>												
<u>WILL</u>												
will modal												
<u>HAVE</u>												
have aux												
has aux												
had aux												
is/am/are aux												
was/were aux												
be aux												
been aux												
past part												
<u>-ING</u>												

DO
do/does aux
Ø / -s
did aux
past -ed (or other irreg)

WILL
will modal

HAVE
have aux
has aux
had aux

BE
is/am/are aux
was/were aux
be aux
been aux
past part

-ING
-ing