

five items, drilled till the right form arrives on its own



Tenses, the working map

- **simple** : a fact or a habit, I write, I wrote, I will write
- **continuous** : in progress at that moment, I am writing, I was writing, I will be writing
- **perfect** : finished before another point, I have written, I had written
- **perfect continuous** : began earlier and is still running, I have been writing since morning



the bare line: past behind, now in the middle, future ahead, with no span drawn across it

present perfect: a dashed span arcing from the past dot up to now

Choosing the right tense

- a finished action with a past time word (yesterday, in 2019, last week) takes **simple past**
- an action still true now, with no exact time word attached, takes **present perfect**
- of two past actions, the earlier one takes **past perfect**: the train had left before we reached
- since and for pull the perfect forms: she has lived here **since** 2015, he has been waiting **for** an hour
- a timetable takes present simple: the bus leaves at six, the film starts at eight

Subject verb concord

- the verb agrees with the **subject**, not with a noun standing nearer: the box of pens **is** on the table
- each, every, either, neither, everyone, nobody all take a **singular** verb: each of the boys **has** a bag
- with either or and neither nor, the verb follows the **nearer** subject: neither the teacher nor the students **were** late
- a subject joined by with, along with or as well as keeps its own number: the principal, along with the teachers, **was** present
- news, mathematics, physics and politics look plural but take a singular verb

asked rarely, scores big

Concord cases that look wrong but are right

*

- two nouns naming one thing take a singular verb: bread and butter **is** a simple breakfast
- a collective noun acting as one body takes singular, acting as individuals takes plural: the jury **was** unanimous, the jury **were** divided
- a number of takes plural, the number of takes singular: a number of pupils **are** absent, the number of absentees **is** rising
- a distance, a sum or a period taken as one quantity takes singular: ten kilometres **is** a long walk

One verb through all twelve forms

- **present** : I go, I am going, I have gone, I have been going
- **past** : I went, I was going, I had gone, I had been going
- **future** : I will go, I will be going, I will have gone, I will have been going
- learn the grid on one verb, then swap the verb in, every other verb follows the same four shapes