

Past and Present tense

What Is Past and Present Tense?

Past and present tense is all about time. The tense is determined by when an action is happening. If an action has already happened it is past tense, if it is happening now it is present tense and if it is about to happen it is future tense.

Verbs are doing words. They describe an action (what is happening). Your child will start to collect together a variety of different action words that they can use. They will act out different actions (e.g. jumping, running, dancing, skipping) and explore what verbs mean.

The past progressive tense is used to describe an ongoing activity in the past. Often, it is used to set the scene for another action. For example:

He was sleeping peacefully, when the bird crashed into the window.

She was painting the door, when the phone rang.

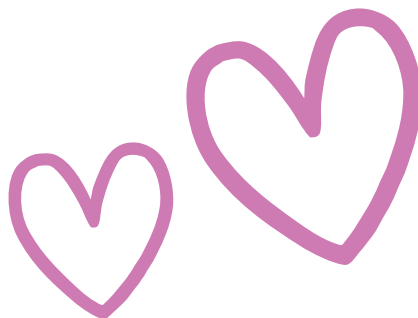
The present progressive tense is used for an ongoing action in the present. For example:

They are fishing in the river.

The train is arriving at the station.

In year 3, your child will begin to explore the present perfect tense too. This refers to actions or states that:

- occur at an indefinite time in the past and have a consequence in the present (e.g. We have talked before. Here, it is clear the talking happened in the past but not clear when or if it happened more than once and over a longer period of time. The talking is also impacting what is happening in the present);
- began in the past but continue into the present (e.g. He has grown impatient over the last few hours. Here, the growing impatience started in the past, but the person is still feeling impatient now).



As well as using the resources found in this category and the suggested keyword searches to help your child with exploring past and present tense, a few ideas for games and activities to help your child learn how to find out about past and present tense, in their spoken language, reading and writing, are outlined below.

Irregular Verbs Bingo

Use these **blank flashcards** to record a number of verbs that have irregular past tense versions (swim - swam, run - ran, think - thought). Once you have a number of them recorded (maybe 20), you and your child can each split a piece of paper into six boxes. In each box, write an irregular past tense version of some of the words you have written on the cards (ran, swam, thought etc.). Shuffle the cards and place them face down on the table. Take it in turns to choose a card from the pile and look at the verb. Do you or your child have the irregular version on your paper? If you do, tick it off. The first person to tick off all the verbs on their sheet, wins.

Changing Tenses

A great way for your child to practise using the correct verb tenses is to change one tense into another. Whether you use your child's favourite story or the reading book they have brought home from school, you could try asking them to change the tense and rewrite a part of the story in the opposite tense. For example, if the story is in past tense, can they rewrite it in present tense?

Present Perfect Tense Activity

To help your child practise using present perfect tense, you could try printing out these **visual timetable cards** which show different actions that can happen during the day. Can your child create different present perfect tense sentences for some of the different actions? For example: He has grown excited about playing outside, all morning.

Explore Text Types

Look at a recipe or set of instructions with your child. Can they spot the features within it that make the text present tense? Compare this to a story. Can they spot the difference between the two text types and recognise what makes one past and the other present tense? Split a piece of paper in half, then ask them to record the features that make it past tense on one side and the features that make it present tense on the other.



Step 1

Irregular Verbs

Some verbs have irregular past tense versions (the verb changes totally, rather than just adding a suffix like -ed or -ing). Your child will learn to identify these irregular past tense verbs and identify when is the correct time to use them in sentences. For example:

run - ran swim - swam creep - crept

You could try using these display posters as a visual reminder of these types of verbs for your child.

Past Tense Sentences

After your child has become familiar with present and past tense verbs (including how to spell them and when to use irregular ones), they will begin using them in their own writing and become more and more accurate with choosing the correct tense. At this stage, your child will be trying to use the correct verb tense in all of their writing, making consistent choices about which types of verbs to use. Doing activities that ask your child to identify and remember different forms of verb tenses is a good way to practise these skills and act as a reminder.

Step 2

Step 3

Present Progressive Tense

Progressive tense is all about spotting actions that happen over time and for a longer period of time. Past progressive is used to describe an activity that is ongoing in the past, whereas present progressive is used to describe an ongoing activity that is happening in the present. Your child will learn to identify and use these different forms of past and present tense. For example:

She is drumming. (The drumming is happening now, but is continuing to happen = present progressive tense.)

He was shouting. (The shouting happened in the past and it lasted for a length of time = past progressive tense.)

This PowerPoint quiz offers your child an opportunity to practise spotting past and present progressive tenses, identifying which tense each phrase or sentence is.

Present Perfect Tense

Your child will learn about present perfect tense. This type of tense focuses on actions (verbs) that occur in the past but continue into the present or have consequences in the present. For example: Over the last few hours, he has grown hungry. In this example, the person started to grow hungry in the past but still feels hungry in the present. Dice games are a great way to generate challenges for your child at home. Roll the dice and use the suggestion to practise using the present perfect tense.

Step 4

Step 5

Instruction Writing

During year 3, your child will begin to explore a range of different text types, including stories, instructions, diaries and explanation texts. Different styles of writing use different tenses. For example, diaries and stories tend to use past tense, whereas instructions and explanation texts usually use present tense. Your child will begin to become more and more familiar with which tense each text type uses and make appropriate word choices to match this. This imperative verb word mat can be a great way for your child to identify present tense verbs to use when writing instructions.

