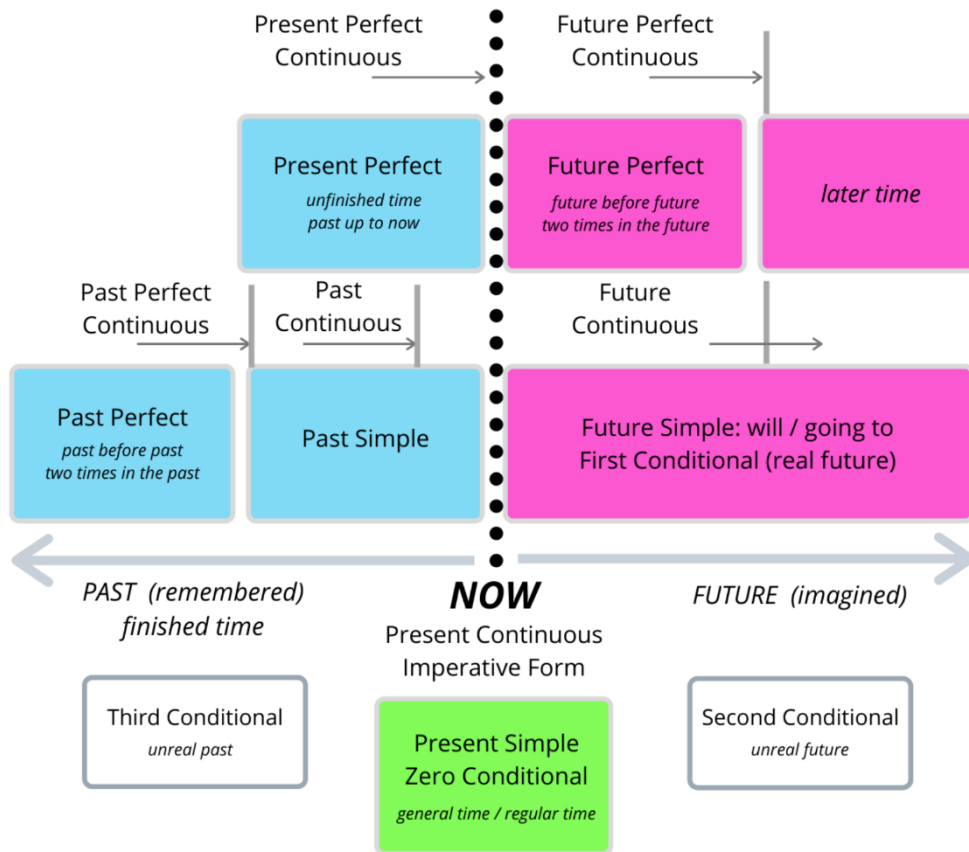


Revise the 12 Tenses of English



There are **six pairs of tenses** in English:

Examples:

Present Simple	Not connected to the timeline. An action in general time.	I eat dinner.
Present Continuous	An unfinished continuous action in the present moment.	I am eating dinner now.
Past Simple	A finished action in finished time.	I ate dinner last night.
Past Continuous	An unfinished continuous action in finished time.	I was eating dinner last night when the phone rang.
Present Perfect	A finished action in unfinished time.	I have eaten dinner today.
Past Perfect Continuous	An unfinished continuous action in unfinished time.	I have been eating dinner for ten minutes.
Future Simple	A predicted action in the future.	I will eat dinner tomorrow.
Future Continuous	An unfinished continuous action at a specific time in the future.	I will be eating dinner tomorrow at 6pm.
Past Perfect	A finished action in the past before a later action / time.	I had eaten dinner before leaving.
Past Perfect Continuous	An unfinished continuous action in the past before a later action / time.	I had been eating dinner when the phone rang.
Future Perfect	A finished action in the future before a later action / time.	I will have eaten dinner by 6pm.
Future Perfect Continuous	An unfinished continuous action in the future before a later action / time.	I will have been eating dinner for ten minutes by 6pm.

Let's add **four conditionals**:

First Conditional	An action that is conditional in the real future.	If I eat dinner at 6pm, I will be ready to go out at 7pm.
Second Conditional	An action that is conditional in the unreal – i.e. hypothetical – future.	If I ate dinner on a boat, I would feel ill.
Third Conditional	An action that is conditional in the unreal – i.e. hypothetical – past.	If I had eaten dinner, I wouldn't have felt hungry.
Zero Conditional	An action that is conditional in general time.	If I don't eat dinner, I feel hungry.

It's not a tense, but let's include this useful verb form:

Imperative Form	An order or instruction that demands action immediately.	Eat dinner! (now)
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Disclaimer:

- This diagram is intended to give a general overview of the 12 English tenses and 4 conditional forms (plus Imperative Form) for the average ESL student. For reasons of clarity and space it does not and cannot cover every use of every tense. You can read more about each tense and conditional at: <https://purlandtraining.com/>

Notes:

- Present Simple also represents regular time – I **eat** dinner at 6pm every day – and future schedules: We **eat** dinner at 6pm tomorrow.
- Present Continuous also represents future actions: I'm **eating** dinner at Tania's house tomorrow.
- We can use 'BE + going to' instead of 'will' in Future Simple to give the sense of a future plan: I'm **going to eat** dinner with Bill next week.
- We can use 'will', 'BE + going to', 'can', 'may', 'might', or 'should' in the main clause of First Conditional, e.g. If I **eat** dinner at 6pm, I **can** wash up before I go out.
- The clauses in conditional sentences can be reversed (without the comma): I will be ready to go out at 7pm if I **eat** dinner at 6pm.
- Second Conditional also represents an action in the unreal – i.e. hypothetical – present: If I **ate** dinner in the garden (now), it would be fun.
- Mixed Conditionals are not covered in this diagram, e.g. past to present: If I **had eaten** dinner earlier, I wouldn't be running late (now).