

# EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH TENSES (TIME REFERENCES)

## When Possible, Use Simple Verbs in ACTIVE VOICE

I write. (Singular)	We write. (Plural)	Present Indicative Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
You write. (Singular)	You write. (Plural)	Present Indicative Tense, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person
He/She/It/One writes. (Singular)	They write. (Plural)	Present Indicative Tense, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
Today I write one essay.		Present Indicative Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Yesterday I wrote one essay.		Past Indicative Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Tomorrow I shall/will write one essay.		Future Indicative Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person

## With Various Modal Helping/Auxiliary Verbs

I expect that I will write a book someday.	<i>("Will" points to the future from the present)</i>
I expected that I would write a book someday.	<i>("Would" points to the future from the past)</i>
Yesterday I did write one essay.	Past (shows emphasis) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Do I write one essay today?	Present (shows emphasis) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Today I can write one essay.	Present (shows ability) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Yesterday I could write one essay.	Past (shows ability) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Tomorrow I should write one essay.	Future (shows obligation) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
May I write one essay tomorrow?	Future (shows permission) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Tomorrow I might write one essay.	Future (shows possibility) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Tomorrow I must write one essay.	Future (shows necessity) Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person

## Avoid Excessive Use of PASSIVE VOICE Verbs

One essay is (being) written by me today.	Present Indicative Tense, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
One essay was (being) written by me yesterday.	Past Indicative Tense, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
One essay shall/will be (being) written by me tomorrow.	Future Indicative Tense, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
One essay has been written by me today.	Present Perfect Tense, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
One essay had been written by me yesterday.	Past Perfect Tense, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
One essay shall/will have been written by me tomorrow.	Future Perfect Tense, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person

## Use Helping Verbs (Have/Has/Had) with "Non-ing" Participles

By today, I have written ten essays.	Present Perfect Tense
By yesterday, I had written ten essays.	Past Perfect Tense
By tomorrow, I shall/will have written ten essays.	Future Perfect Tense

## Use Helping Verbs (Forms of "Be") with "-ing" Participles

Today I am writing ten essays.	Present Progressive Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Yesterday I was writing ten essays.	Past Progressive Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Tomorrow I shall/will be writing ten essays.	Future Progressive Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person

## Use Helping Verbs (Forms of "Be" plus Have/Has/Had) with "-ing" Participles

Today I have been writing ten essays.	Present Perfect-Progressive Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Yesterday I had been writing ten essays.	Past Perfect-Progressive Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person
Tomorrow I shall/will have been writing ten essays.	Future Perfect-Progressive Tense, 1 <sup>st</sup> Person

## Use Imperative Mood for Commands or Requests

(You) Sit down and be quiet!	Present Imperative Tense, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person
(You) Write one essay today!	Present Imperative Tense, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person

## Use Subjunctive Mood for Requests or Hypothetical Situations

So <b>be</b> it, so may it <b>be</b> , <b>be</b> that as it may. ← <b>Be</b> it known that those examples are Present Subjunctive, Active Voice	Present Subjunctive, Active Voice
If I <b>be</b> here, I cannot be at home!	Present Subjunctive, Active Voice
I recommended that he <b>write</b> another essay. (Not "writes")	Present Subjunctive, Active Voice
Mr. Smith requested that I <b>be</b> here Monday night. (Not "am")	Present Subjunctive, Active Voice
She insisted that she <b>be</b> reimbursed. (Not "is")	Present Subjunctive, Passive Voice
I wish I <b>were</b> in Hawaii, where it is comfortable year-round. (Not "was")	Past Subjunctive, Active Voice
If he <b>were</b> the king of the world, I know what he would do. (Not "was")	Past Subjunctive, Active Voice
Even if she <b>were</b> caught, she would not stop speeding. (Not "was")	Past Subjunctive, Passive Voice
I wish I <b>had known</b> beforehand which update would cause my computer to slow down. (Not "knew")	Perfect Subjunctive, Active Voice
If Pat <b>had been</b> awarded the Megabucks Lottery prize, she would have quit her job. (Not "was")	Perfect Subjunctive, Passive Voice