

Grammar Has Entered the Chat

English for the life you actually live.

Tenses are the number-one thing that makes English feel confusing — not because you're bad at languages, but because nobody showed you the pattern clearly. This pack fixes that. You'll walk away knowing exactly when to say **"I work"** vs **"I'm working,"** **"I went"** vs **"I've already gone,"** and a handful of sneaky mistakes that trip up almost every learner. No boring charts. No stress. Just real chat, real fixes, real English. ✨

Level

A2 – B1

Focus

Present simple, present continuous, past simple, present perfect

Pages

Cover · Learn · See It · Try It ·
Make It Yours · Answers

What You'll Learn — and How to Use This Pack

Your 3 goals for today

1 Tell the difference between habit and right now

"I **usually work from home**" (your schedule) vs
 "I **'m working from home today**" (just today).
 Two tenses, two different truths.

2 Choose between past simple and present perfect

"I **went to the store**" (finished, I know when) vs
 "I **'ve already sent it**" (done — and it matters now). One tiny choice, huge difference in feeling.

3 Spot and fix the 6 most common tense mistakes

The ones your phone's autocorrect absolutely will not catch. You'll recognise them, understand *why* they happen, and correct them with confidence.

How to use this pack

Read the **Learn It** page first — slowly, with a coffee ☕. Then jump to **See It in Real Life** and notice how the tenses appear naturally in conversation. On the **Try It** page, write your answers by hand or in a notes app before you check. Then use **Make It Yours** to actually speak and write — that's where the real learning sticks. Check your work on the final page. Simple.

Spanish gloss — En este paquete: simple presente, presente continuo, pasado simple, presente perfecto.

Three chats that started it all 📱

Chat 1 — Schedule or today?

😞 "Do you work today?"

✅ "Are you working today?"

The first asks about your usual job. The second asks about your plan for today. Both can be correct — but they mean different things!

Chat 2 — A verb that changed shape

😞 "Did you sent it?"

✅ "Did you send it?"

After "did," the verb goes back to its base form. Always.

Chat 3 — Yesterday kills the perfect

😞 "I've seen her yesterday."

✅ "I saw her yesterday."

When you name a finished time (yesterday, last week, in 2019), use past simple.

📄 😂 **Meme of the pack:** "I am studying." My phone: "Are we, though?"

The Tense Patterns That Change Everything

Present Simple vs Present Continuous

Think of **present simple** as your regular playlist — the songs you always play. It describes routines, facts, and habits. **Present continuous** is the song that's playing right now, at this exact moment, or for a temporary period around now.

Present Simple — The Routine

- ✓ **I usually work** from nine to five.
 - ✓ **She teaches** at a school in Bogotá.
 - ✓ **They don't eat** meat.
- Español: describe lo que normalmente haces — tu rutina o un hecho general.*

Present Continuous — Right Now / Temporary

- ✓ **I'm working** from home this week.
 - ✓ **She's teaching** online today.
 - ✓ **They're not eating** right now — they're in a meeting.
- Español: describe lo que pasa ahora mismo o una situación temporal.*

🚫 **Watch out — stative verbs:** Some verbs almost never appear in the continuous. *Know, understand, believe, like, want, need.* We say "**I know the answer**" — never "**I am knowing**." (*Español: verbos de estado — no usan el continuo.*)

The "Do you work / Are you working?" question

This is one of the most practical distinctions you'll ever learn. Look at these two messages from a friend:

"Do you work on Saturdays?"

→ Asking about your **regular schedule**. Is Saturday normally a work day for you? This is a question about your life in general.

"Are you working today?"

→ Asking about **this specific Saturday**. Maybe it's a holiday, maybe you have a special project — they want to know about *right now or today's plan*.

Both questions are perfectly correct English. The trick is choosing the right one for the right moment. If someone asks "**Are you working today?**" and you answer "**Yes, I work,**" it sounds a little strange — like you're talking about your job description, not your actual plans. A natural answer: "**Yes, I am**" or "**No, I'm off today.**"

Past Simple vs Present Perfect

Past simple is a closed door. Something happened, it finished, and you're giving the full story — often with a time stamp. **Present perfect** is an open window. Something happened in the past, but its result or importance is alive in the present. You're connecting past to now.

Past Simple — Closed, Finished

- ✓ **I went** to the market yesterday.
 - ✓ **She called** me last night.
 - ✓ **We finished** the project on Friday.
- Español: acción terminada en un tiempo específico y pasado.*

Present Perfect — Past with Present Relevance

- ✓ **I've already sent** the email. (→ so you don't need to wait)
 - ✓ **She's called** three times. (→ and I still haven't answered)
 - ✓ **We've finished** the project. (→ great news — it's done!)
- Español: algo pasado que tiene relevancia o resultado en el presente.*

The "yesterday" rule — and why it matters

Here's a rule that will save you from one of the most common mistakes in English: **when you use a finished-time word, use past simple**. Full stop. Finished-time words include: *yesterday, last week, last year, in 2020, three days ago, when I was a child, at 8 o'clock*.

🙄 Wrong

"I've seen her yesterday."
Present perfect + finished time = conflict.
The tenses fight each other.

✅ Right

"I saw her yesterday."
Past simple + finished time = perfect match.
Clean and natural.

Notice: this is not about whether the event was recent. "**I've just seen her**" is correct because *just* doesn't name a finished clock time — it means "a moment ago, and it's still relevant." But *yesterday* closes the door. Use past simple.

📱 **Relatable moment:** "*I am studying.*" — My phone: "*Are we, though?*" (Present continuous = happening now. Your phone disagrees.) *Español: ¿estás estudiando de verdad, o solo tienes el libro abierto?*

Three Chats, One Story — Tenses in the Wild

Meet **Valentina** and **Marcus**. They're colleagues who work on the same project team — sometimes from the office, sometimes from home. These three chat exchanges are real-life illustrations of everything you learned. Read them slowly and notice the tenses.

Chat 1 — Monday morning, 9:03 AM

Marcus: Hey! **Are you working** today? I thought you had a day off.

Valentina: Ha! I wish. No, I'm in. **I'm working** from the office today — we have that client call at noon.

Marcus: Oh right. **Do you usually work** Mondays, or is this a one-off?

Valentina: **I usually work** Monday to Thursday. Fridays are my remote day. But this week is different.

Marcus: Gotcha. See you in a bit! ☕

What to notice 🔍

"Are you working today?" → present continuous for today's specific plan.

"I'm working from the office today" → temporary arrangement, just for now.

"Do you usually work Mondays?" → present simple for the regular schedule.

"I usually work Monday to Thursday" → a fact about Valentina's normal week.

Chat 2 — Same day, 2:17 PM

Marcus: Hey — **did you send** the summary to the client after the call?

Valentina: Yes! **I've already sent** it. About twenty minutes ago.

Marcus: Oh nice. What **did** they say?

Valentina: They **loved** it. They **said** they'd reply by Friday.

Marcus: Perfect. You're a star ★

What to notice 🔍

"Did you send" → past simple question. After *did*, the verb returns to base form: *send*, not *sent*. Common mistake: "Did you sent?"

✗

"I've already sent it" → present perfect. The email is done, and it's relevant right now — Marcus doesn't need to worry.

"They loved / they said" → past simple. These are completed actions at a specific finished moment (the call).

Chat 3 — Wednesday, 6:44 PM

Marcus: Did you see Ana today? She's been off sick.

Valentina: Yes, actually — **I saw her yesterday**. She was at the pharmacy near my building.

Marcus: Oh, is she okay?

Valentina: I think so. She **looked** tired but she **said** she's feeling better.

Marcus: Good. **Have you told** the manager?

Valentina: Not yet. I'll do it now — **I haven't sent** the update yet.

Marcus: Cool. Thanks for letting me know!

What to notice 🔍

"I saw her yesterday" → past simple. *Yesterday* is a finished time, so past simple is the only correct choice. "I've seen her yesterday" ✗ — that's the clash from page 2.

"She looked / she said" → past simple again. Both happened at a specific, closed moment.

"Have you told the manager?" → present perfect. Marcus is asking about a result relevant now — has the manager been informed yet?

"I haven't sent the update" → present perfect negative. The action hasn't happened yet, and it matters right now.



Pattern recap: Finished time word (yesterday, last week, at 2pm) → always past simple. No time word, but the result matters now → present perfect is your friend.
Español: ¿Hay un tiempo terminado? → *pasado simple*. ¿El resultado importa ahora? → *presente perfecto*.



Find the Fix

Each sentence below has **one mistake**. Read it carefully, then write the corrected sentence in the space provided. Don't look at the answers yet — that's the whole point! *Español: Cada oración tiene un error. Corrígela y escribe la versión correcta.*



Tip: Ask yourself — *is this a habit or right now? Is there a finished time word? Did I use the base verb after "did"?* Those three questions will guide you.

1 She work here.

Something feels off. Think about present simple — what ending is missing?

My correction: _____

2 I am know the answer.

Is "know" the kind of verb that works in the continuous form? Think about stative verbs.

My correction: _____

3 Did you went?

When you use "did" in a question, what form does the main verb take?

My correction: _____

4 We didn't saw it.

Same logic as above — "didn't" is already doing the past work. What about "saw"?

My correction: _____

5 I've finished it yesterday.

There's a time clash here. What word tells you this is a closed, finished moment?

My correction: _____

6 He is type right now.

The tense is right, but something about the verb form isn't quite there yet.

My correction: _____

 Stop here! Finish all six before turning to the answers page. You've got this. 

Now You Talk — and Write

Speaking Task — Tell Me About Your Week

Imagine a friend texts you: "**Hey, what's going on with you this week? Is it a normal week or something different?**" Record yourself (voice memo, WhatsApp, anything) OR write your spoken answer in note form. Aim for **6–8 sentences**. Use at least one of each tense below.

01

Plan first (2 minutes)

Jot a few bullet notes. What's your usual week like? What's different this week? Has anything already happened that's relevant?

02

Use these scaffolds to get started

- ♦ "I usually..." → your habit
- ♦ "This week I'm..." → what's different now
- ♦ "Yesterday I..." → something finished
- ♦ "I've already..." → something done, relevant now
- ♦ "I haven't... yet" → something not done yet

03

Record or speak

Don't aim for perfect — aim for brave. Say it out loud. Then check the model response on the answers page for ideas.

My planning space

My usual routine: _____

What's different this week: _____

Something finished recently: _____

Something already done / not yet done: _____

Speaking Success Checklist

- ☐ I used present simple for a habit or routine
- ☐ I used present continuous for something temporary or happening now
- ☐ I used past simple with a finished time word
- ☐ I used present perfect to connect past to now
- ☐ I spoke for at least 30 seconds without stopping

Writing Task — A Short Message to a Friend

Write a **short voice note transcript or text message** (60–80 words) to a friend you haven't spoken to in a week. Update them on what's been happening. Include:

- One thing you **usually do** (present simple)
- One thing you're **doing differently right now** (present continuous)
- One thing that **happened** (past simple + time word)
- One thing you **have or haven't done yet** (present perfect)

My writing space

Hey [name]! _____

Talk soon! 😊

Original Meme — Caption This!

Image idea: A 3D cartoon phone character standing in front of a whiteboard covered in tense charts, looking very serious — while another tiny phone character in the corner is napping on a textbook.

Default caption: "Grammar teacher: 'Any questions?' Me after 45 minutes of present perfect: [napping phone emoji]"

Write your own caption below:

Language note: This meme plays with the *present perfect* — "I've been studying for 45 minutes." Result? Exhaustion. That's the tense doing its job. 💖 *Español: El presente perfecto describe cuánto tiempo llevas haciendo algo — con resultado visible ahora.*

Let's Check Your Work

Fix It — Answer Key

1 → She works here.

Why: Third-person singular (he/she/it) in present simple always adds -s or -es to the verb. "She work" misses that essential ending. *Español: tercera persona singular → siempre lleva -s.*

2 → I know the answer.

Why: Know is a stative verb — it describes a mental state, not an action in progress. Stative verbs don't use the continuous form. We never say "I am knowing." *Español: verbos de estado (know, understand, want, like) → no usan el continuo.*

3 → Did you go?

Why: After the auxiliary *did*, the main verb always returns to its base (infinitive) form. *Did* is already carrying the past tense. Adding *went* is doubling up on the past — and English doesn't do that. *Español: después de "did", el verbo vuelve a su forma base.*

4 → We didn't see it.

Why: Same rule as above — *didn't* (*did* + *not*) carries the past meaning. The main verb must be the base form: *see*, not *saw*. *Español: "didn't" ya lleva el pasado — el verbo principal queda en forma base.*

5 → I finished it yesterday.

Why: *Yesterday* is a finished, specific time reference. Present perfect cannot co-exist with finished time words. Use past simple. "I've finished it yesterday" creates a tense conflict. *Español: palabra de tiempo terminado (yesterday, last week) → siempre pasado simple.*

6 → He is typing right now.

Why: Present continuous = subject + *is/am/are* + verb-**ing**. The -ing ending was missing. "He is type" uses the base verb where the gerund is needed. *Español: presente continuo → verbo con -ing (typing, working, writing).*

Model Speaking Response

"Hey! So, yeah — it's a pretty different week for me. I **usually work** from home on Tuesdays, but this week I'm **going into the office** every day because we have a big presentation. Yesterday I **stayed late** to finish the slides — so exhausted! But the good news is I've **already sent** them to my manager, so that's done. I **haven't had** lunch yet today, though. That's next on my list! 😊"

Notice: habit (usually work) → temporary change (I'm going) → finished past event (stayed, sent) → present perfect for "not yet." All four tenses, natural flow.

Model Writing Response

"Hey! So much to tell you 😊 I **usually finish** work by 5, but this week I'm **working late** every night — big deadline! Yesterday I **had** the most stressful meeting ever, but it **went** well in the end. I've **already submitted** the report, which feels amazing, but I **haven't replied** to your last message yet — sorry! Catching up this weekend, I promise. Talk soon! 💜"

This is a model, not the only correct answer. Your version can look completely different — as long as the tenses are used accurately and the message makes sense.

Mini Recap — The Four Patterns

Habit / Fact	Now / Temporary
Present Simple <i>I usually work...</i>	Present Continuous <i>I'm working today...</i>
Finished + When	Past → Relevant Now
Past Simple <i>I went yesterday...</i>	Present Perfect <i>I've already sent it...</i>

You did the work. That already puts you ahead. Keep the pack, revisit it next week, and notice how much more natural these tenses feel the second time through. Grammar isn't a wall — it's a door. And you just opened it. 💜

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