

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: WRITING CENTRE  
TENSES**

**PRESENT TENSES**

Present Simple	I do	Habits, Repetitive Actions
Present Continuous	I am doing	1. Temporary events 2. Actions of the moment 3. This week, this year
Present perfect	I have done	1. Life experience 2. Action in past, result in present. 3. Action just finished a moment before.
Present Perfect Continuous	I have been doing	Same rules as present perfect, but the emphasis falls on the time period.

**PAST TENSES**

Past Simple	I did	Completely finished action
Past Continuous	I was doing	1. The event happened in a specific time in past. 2. To show that an action is in the middle of a moment.
Past Perfect	I had done	To show that one action happened before another in the past.
Past Perfect Continuous	I had been doing	Same rules as past perfect, but the emphasis falls on the time period.

**FUTURE TENSES**

Future Simple	I will do	1. Unsure future events (maybe, etc) 2. Predictions
Present Continuous with future Meaning	(a) I am doing (b) I am going to do	Plans, Arrangements, Decisions.
Present Simple with Future Meaning	The play starts at 7pm	Programmes, Timetables
Future Perfect	I will have done	(BY) Actions that happen before a certain time in future e.g. By six pm I will have had supper.
Future Perfect Continuous	I will have been doing	Same rules as future perfect, but emphasis falls on time period.