



## Verb Tenses and Subject Agreement

The Writing Center  
Email: okc.tutoring@okstate.edu  
Phone: 405-945-3278

OKLAHOMA  
CITY

A **verb** is a word used to describe an action. A **verb tense** changes the verb to denote the time in which it took place. There are three main categories of verb tenses: **past**, **present**, and **future**. There are also four subcategories of these tenses: **simple**, **perfect**, **continuous**, and **perfect continuous**.

- **Past tense** expresses an action that has already occurred.
- **Present tense** expresses an action that is occurring right now.
- **Future tense** expresses an action that will occur in the future.

In each subcategory of these main tenses, you may need to use the **past participle** form of a verb, which is a modification of the **base** form. For **regular verbs**, add the suffix “-d” or “-ed” to the end of the base form of the verb. For **irregular verbs**, a vowel or vowels will change in the middle of the word (ex: run – ran), A suffix will be added (ex: drive – driven), or both (freeze – frozen).

### Simple

- In **simple past**, you use the past participle form of the verb.
- In **simple present** you use the base form of the verb.
- In **simple future** you add **will** before the base form of the verb.

|        | Past  | Present  | Future  |
|--------|---|--|---|
| Simple | <i>I <b>loved</b> that book when I was young.</i> | <i>I <b>love</b> to read all kinds of books.</i> | <i>I <b><u>will</u> love</b> my new job at the library.</i> |



## Verb Tenses and Subject Agreement

The Writing Center  
Email: okc.tutoring@okstate.edu  
Phone: 405-945-3278

**OKLAHOMA  
CITY**

### Perfect

- In **past perfect**, you add **had** before the past participle form of a verb.
- In **present perfect**, you add **have** before the past participle form of a verb.
- In **future perfect**, you add **will have** before the past participle form of a verb.

|         | Past   | Present  | Future  |
|---------|--|--|---|
| Perfect | <i>I <b>had</b> accepted a new job before quitting my old one.</i> | <i>I <b>have</b> accepted the Director of Operations position.</i> | <i>I <b>will have</b> accepted many jobs like this by the end of my career.</i> |

### Continuous

- In **past continuous**, you add a “**to be**” verb in agreement with your subject before the present participle (“-ing”) form of a verb. Both regular and irregular verbs will end with “-ing.”
- In **present continuous** you add a “**to be**” verb in agreement with your subject before the present participle form of a verb.
- In **future continuous** you add **will be** before the present participle form of a verb.

|            | Past   | Present  | Future   |
|------------|--|--|--|
| Continuous | <i>I <b>was</b> taking my dog for a walk when it happened.</i> | <i>I <b>am</b> taking out the trash for my wife.</i> | <i>I <b>will be</b> taking that class next semester.</i> |

### Perfect Continuous

- In **past perfect continuous** you add **had been** before the present participle form of a verb.
- In **present perfect continuous** you add a “**have**” verb in agreement with your subject + **been**, + the present participle form of a verb.
- In **future perfect continuous** you add **will have been** before the present participle form of a verb.



## Verb Tenses and Subject Agreement

The Writing Center  
Email: okc.tutoring@okstate.edu  
Phone: 405-945-3278

**OKLAHOMA  
CITY**

|                           | Past  | Present  | Future  |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Perfect Continuous</b> | <i>I <u>had been</u> working on that project all day.</i> | <i>I <u>have been</u> thinking about what to write for this essay.</i> | <i>I <u>will have been</u> using the same toothbrush for over a year now.</i> |

A **subject-verb agreement** is formed by making the subject and its verb both singular or plural. Subjects like “I, He, She, and It” are singular while subjects like “We” are plural. “You and They” are both singular and plural depending on the use. When using “They” to refer to a single person, follow the grammatical rules as if “They” were plural.

| <b>“Do” Verbs</b> |           |            |                  |                    |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Subject           | Present   | Past       | Past Participle  | Present Participle |
| <b>I</b>          | <b>do</b> | <b>did</b> | <b>have done</b> | <b>am</b> doing    |
| <b>You</b>        |           |            |                  | <b>are</b> doing   |
| <b>He/She/It</b>  |           |            |                  | <b>is</b> doing    |
| <b>We/They</b>    |           |            |                  | <b>are</b> doing   |



## Verb Tenses and Subject Agreement

The Writing Center  
Email: okc.tutoring@okstate.edu  
Phone: 405-945-3278

**OKLAHOMA  
CITY**

| <b>“Go” Verbs</b> |                |             |                        |                           |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Subject</b>    | <b>Present</b> | <b>Past</b> | <b>Past Participle</b> | <b>Present Participle</b> |
| <b>I</b>          | <b>go</b>      | <b>went</b> | <b>have gone</b>       | <b>am going</b>           |
| <b>You</b>        |                |             |                        | <b>are going</b>          |
| <b>He/She/It</b>  | <b>goes</b>    |             | <b>has gone</b>        | <b>is going</b>           |
| <b>We/They</b>    | <b>go</b>      |             | <b>have gone</b>       | <b>are going</b>          |

| <b>“Be” Verbs</b> |                |             |                        |                           |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Subject</b>    | <b>Present</b> | <b>Past</b> | <b>Past Participle</b> | <b>Present Participle</b> |
| <b>I</b>          | <b>am</b>      | <b>was</b>  | <b>have been</b>       | <b>am being</b>           |
| <b>You</b>        |                | <b>were</b> |                        | <b>are being</b>          |
| <b>We/They</b>    | <b>are</b>     |             |                        |                           |
| <b>He/She/It</b>  | <b>is</b>      | <b>was</b>  | <b>has been</b>        | <b>is being</b>           |