

ASPECT IN THE VERB PHRASE

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WHAT DOES ASPECT MEAN?

- **Aspect** refers to the meaning of the verbs (actions or events) in relation to time. aspect describes these actions or events as simple, progressive, or complete.
- **Tense on the other hand, describes the fixed position of the verb in time as either present or past.**
- **both tense and aspect are properties of verbs**
- simple tenses(present or past) refer to simple aspect
- continuous tenses refer to progressive aspect
- perfect tenses refer to complete aspect

THE FOUR ASPECTS IN THE ENGLISH VERB PHRASES

- **1- the indefinite (simple) aspect: the form of this aspect is the verb alone without auxiliaries. the event is thought as a single event in time.**
- My mother likes seafood.
- He left the room quickly.
- I washed my car yesterday.

Note: Sometimes the verb alone may refer to progressive aspect as well if an adverb of duration is used in the context.

- he wrote **for thirty minutes.** (progressive aspect)

adv. of duration

- he wrote **all morning** to finish his report. (progressive aspect)

adv. of duration

- he wrote a letter yesterday. (indefinite aspect)

adv. of definite time

- She writes to her grandmother **every Month.** (progressive aspect)

- **2- Progressive or durative aspect: the form of this aspect is (be + verb + (-ing))**
- He **is teaching** sociology in Oxford University.
- I **was washing** the car when I heard the noise.
- I **will be playing** in the national team for the next two years.

• **3- completive aspect: the form of this aspect is (has/have/had + pp. form)**

• she **has** just **arrived**.


• Sam **had been** sick for three days.

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• **Note: with perfect sentences, only adverbs of duration can be used(for, since, all). The adverbs of definite time (yesterday, tomorrow, last week, ago,...) cannot be used with perfect tenses and consequently with completive aspect.**

• She has played tennis for six years.

• She has played tennis six years ago*.



- **4- the completive- progressive aspect: this aspect has the form (has/have/had + been + verb +(-ing))**

- Tom **has been working** hard since yesterday.

- We **had been travelling** around the world for six months.

