

UNIT 1 – PRESENT AND PAST TENSES

1. The **present simple** is used
 - to give factual information
*Unilever **makes** a wide variety of consumer goods.*

 - to talk about routine activities
*I always **buy** the supermarket's own brand of detergent.*

 - for actions and situations which are generally true
*Many consumers **prefer** well-known brands.*

 - for timetables and scheduled events
*We **launch** the new range on 15 January.*

2. The **present continuous** is used to refer
 - to events in progress
*We **are installing** a new switchboard.*

 - to temporary or changing situations (trends)
***Are you offering** a good discount during the launch period.
The number of people shopping online **is growing**.*

3. The **present perfect** is used
 - to say that a finished past action is relevant now. There cannot be any specific reference to past time.
*They **have changed** the address of their website. (it's new)*

 - to cover a period of time starting in the past and continuing to the present. An appropriate time expression takes us up to now
*Over the last few years e-commerce **has become** fashionable.*

 - to talk about our life experience
*She **has had** a number of interesting jobs.*

4. The **present perfect continuous** is used
 - to describe an action or situation in progress from the past up to the present
*Trade between Slovenia and the Ukraine **has been increasing** steadily since 1992.*

 - to emphasize an activity rather than a result
*We' **we been exporting** to the USA for years.*

 - to refer to repeated actions
*I've **been phoning** her all morning, but she's always in a meeting.*

5. The **past simple** is used
- to refer to events completed in the past. We frequently use a time expression.
*In the late 1940s Ford **decided** it needed a medium price model to compete with GM.*
6. The **past continuous** is used
- to set the scene at the start of a narrative
*Commuters **were pouring off** the trains, a lot of people were impatiently waiting for taxis and two stall-holders were busily selling souvenirs.*
 - to show an action was in progress when another action occurred
*They **were preparing** the accounts when the computer crashed.*
 - to show two or more actions were in progress at the same time.
*While we **were packing** the boxes the children were writing out the labels.*
7. The **past perfect** is used
- to show that an action happened earlier than an action which followed
When we arrived, the meeting had already started.
8. The **past perfect continuous** is used
- to show that an action had begun and was still in progress before another action or event took place
*He **had been waiting** patiently for promotion for seven years before an opportunity finally came.*
 - to describe repeated actions up to a point in the past
*Colleagues **had been taking** her biscuits and borrowing her stationery for years before she finally lost her temper.*
9. **Would** or **used to** + infinitive is used
- to describe past habits or routines
 - to describe past state, it's necessary to use **used to**
 - you can't use state verbs with would
- After work he **would / used to** sit down and read the newspaper; then he **would / used to** have a nap.*
BUT
*He **used to** be (Not: would be) much more enthusiastic in the old days. (past state)*
10. Verbs relating to beliefs, being, knowledge, liking, perception and appearance are normally only used in the simple form.
*Examples of the state verbs:
BELONG, CONSIST OF, CONTAIN, MATTER, OWN, BELIEVE, MEAN, REALIZE, REGRET, UNDERSTAND etc.*