**Verb Tenses: Past**

**Past Tense** expresses actions that already happened as opposed to actions that are happening now or will happen in the future. The Past Tense appears in four different forms: 1) **Simple Past Tense**, 2) **Past Progressive Tense**, 3) **Past Perfect Tense**, and 4) **Past Perfect Progressive Tense**. This resource will help you understand when to use each form.

**Simple Past Tense**

Simple Past Tense expresses actions that **happened in the past**.

Example: I *walked* to class yesterday.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I walked</td>
<td>We walked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You walked</td>
<td>You (all) walked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she/it walked</td>
<td>They walked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simple Past Tense = **PAST PARTICIPLE** (usually VERB + -ed).

**Examples:**

1. He *cooked* breakfast this morning.
2. I *drove* to work today.
3. The children *played* soccer yesterday.

**Past Progressive Tense**

Past Progressive Tense expresses **actions that were in the process of happening when another action happened**.

Example: I *was walking* to class when suddenly it started to rain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was walking</td>
<td>We were walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You were walking</td>
<td>You (all) were walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she/it was walking</td>
<td>They were walking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Past Progressive Tense = \textbf{was/were} + VERB + -ing.

\textbf{Examples:}

1. He \textit{was cooking} breakfast when his mother called.
2. I \textit{was talking} when my friend interrupted me.
3. We \textit{were running} along the road when our friend picked us up in his car.

\textbf{Past Perfect Tense}

\textbf{Past Perfect Tense} expresses actions that happened before another past action.

\begin{itemize}
\item Example: I called my friend and offered to drive her to class, but she \textit{had walked} there already.
\end{itemize}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Singular & Plural \\
\hline
I \textit{had walked} & We \textit{had walked} \\
You \textit{had walked} & You (all) \textit{had walked} \\
He/she/it \textit{had walked} & They \textit{had walked} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Past Perfect Tense = \textbf{had} + PAST PARTICIPLE (usually VERB + -ed).

\textbf{Examples:}

1. When she got home, she saw that her husband \textit{had purchased} a gift for her.
2. I checked the mailbox, but my roommate \textit{had grabbed} the mail earlier.
3. When I arrived at the airport, the plane \textit{had left} already.

\textbf{Past Perfect Progressive Tense}

\textbf{Past Perfect Progressive Tense} expresses actions that started in the past and continued until another time in the past.

\begin{itemize}
\item Example: I \textit{had been walking} for hours, so I was already tired long before I arrived.
\end{itemize}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Singular & Plural \\
\hline
I \textit{had been walking} & We \textit{had been walking} \\
You \textit{had been walking} & You (all) \textit{had been walking} \\
He/she/it \textit{had been walking} & They \textit{had been walking} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Past Perfect Progressive Tense = \textbf{had been} + VERB + -ing.
**Examples:**

1. She *had been studying* for so long that she forgot her appointment.
2. The children *had been playing* outside for an hour when their mothers told them to come inside for dinner.
3. I *had been hiking* for two hours, and I still had a long way to go.

* This information comes from the chapter “Key 3: Verb Tenses, Past,” in *Keys to Teaching Grammar to English Language Learners: A Practical Handbook*, by Keith S. Folse.