

Czasy angielskie / English Tenses

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1. Let's start with **Present Simple**.

We use it mainly to express the following meanings or describe contexts and situations:

a) Habits/ Repetitive action (work)

I work as a gardener.

I always wash my car on Sunday

Jack usually spends his vacation in Spain.

b) Laws of nature

It's always sunny in London.

Polish winters are cold.

Wisła river flows into the Baltic Sea.

c) Schedules, timetables including those regarding plane/train/bus departure times.

The plane leaves at 6 o'clock.

The bus is due to arrive at 7 am tomorrow.

There are certain words or phrases called adverbs of frequency that go along well with present simple like: always, never, usually, every weekend, every vacation, all the time.

2. **Present continuous**

We are informing somebody that the activity is taking place and not that it has finished/will finish/finished. We are interested in the activity not the result.

a) We use it to say that something is happening

- now

- around now (around the time of speaking)

I'm driving a car right now.

Look! This man is running very fast.

Both these actions refer to some activities that happen exactly now.

b) Sometimes we can use it to inform about an activity that is not happening exactly now, but around the time of speaking.

"I am reading an interesting book at the moment, I'm on page six. I can't wait to get back home and read some more".

"I am staying with my friends until I find my own flat".

c) Present Continuous helps us describe activities that regard changes that are happening around now like:

The population is rising.

It is getting dark.

Due to global warming winters are getting warmer and warmer.

d) Sometimes we can use present continuous to describe future planned events:

We are playing poker with our friends tonight.

John and Jack are leaving for France tomorrow.

3. **Past Simple**

Past simple is truly a simple tense.

a) We use it to describe past events. Usually these events were completed in the past.

I cleaned my car yesterday.
John died years ago.
We went to Spain two years ago.

Words (adverbs of frequency) that appear frequently with past simple include:
years ago, last year, yesterday, two weeks ago, a month ago. etc.

4. Past Continuous

a) If we want to inform somebody about an activity that was happening at some specified time in the past:

I was repairing my car yesterday at 5 o'clock.
At this time two days ago Jack was spending his time on the beach.

b) When we use two activities that occurred in the past we often use both past simple and past continuous. Remember one activity is shorter than the other.

I was walking down the street (longer activity = past continuous) when suddenly I tripped and fell (shorter action = past simple).
We were sitting on the bench (longer activity) when we saw an accident (past simple short action).

It is important that if we use past continuous we are not interested in the fact that the activity finished or not. We are only informing that the activity was taking place.
If we want to inform that it finished we will use past simple (see point 3).

5. Present Perfect

a) This tense is used to describe activities that are closely connected to now.

I have lost my keys and I can't find them now!
We can't go through the bridge, there has been an accident!

b) When we inform somebody about some sort of news:

The Police have arrested three robbers in connection to the bank robbery.
"Oh no, I've cut my finger with a knife!"

c) Remember "go" in present perfect is "gone" and "be" is "been" Look at the two common examples:
- Jack has gone out, he is not home = it means he has left the house and has not come back yet.
- Jack has been to Spain three times = it means that Jack has visited Spain three times in his life.

d) When we inform somebody how many times we have done something (in our lives/ this summer/ this weekend/ this morning etc.).

I have been to Italy three times this year.
I have eaten three pancakes this morning.
We have never driven a car.

e) Certain words appear frequently in present perfect, including:

- just	"I have just sent the letter, I don't have it with me".
- already	"We have already visited Susan."
- yet	"I haven't finished yet."
- recently	"We haven't seen Jack recently."

f) When we want to say that we have done something/ have not done something until now, and it is possible that we will still do it in the future.

I haven't read "War and Peace".
No, I haven't seen any polar bears.

In both examples it is still possible for me to do these things in the future.

6. Present Perfect Continuous

a) Using this tense we want to inform somebody that an activity has been taking place for some time. Sometimes there is a result of that activity.

Look, the ground is wet (result), It has been raining.

I have been playing my guitar for some time now, my fingers hurt(result).

I'm crying (result) because I have been cutting onions.

b) We use present perfect continuous also for activities that have been happening but we are not interested if they have finished or not. Here the result is not important. Here very frequently we use such words as:

for - I have been cleaning my room for 2 hours.

since - Jack has been learning for the test since 8:00 am.

how long - How long have you been waiting for me?

c) Watch out for "since" and "for". Speakers of Polish frequently make mistakes and confuse these two words.

<i>Since: (here we have some point in the past e.g. since last year, since 2 am. since yesterday).</i>	<i>For: (here we are informing about the length / time period / how long etc.)</i>
<i>I have been working here since last Monday. = Pracuję tu od poniedziałku.</i>	<i>I have been working here for a week = Pracuję tu od tygodnia.</i>
<i>We have been driving since morning = jedziemy już od rana.</i>	<i>We have been driving for one hour = jedziemy już godzinę, (od godziny).</i>

d) Uwaga na strukturę z since, która często korzysta z present simple oraz past simple!

*To już miesiąc, od kiedy widziałem Zosię. = It is a month (present simple) since I last saw (past simple) Zosia.
Od dawna nie rozmialiśmy = It's ages (present simple) since we last spoke (past simple).*

You make questions in the following way:

How long is it since you last saw Zosia?

How long is it since we last spoke?

7. Comparison of Present Perfect and Present Perfect Continuous

a) Let's look at two examples. Two people are sitting at home. They are performing an activity. It's Saturday morning, let's say 9:30 and both people are reading newspapers.

Present Perfect: Person 1: Jack has managed to read 3 articles already and because it's still morning he will probably read more articles. <i>Jack has read 3 articles so far.</i> He hasn't finished reading in general but he has finished reading 3 articles and will read more. We focus on completion of part of the activity.	Present Perfect Continuous: Person 2: Sue has been reading an article since 8 am, it's already 9:30 but she hasn't finished reading the article. The article is very difficult and long. <i>Sue has been reading her article since 8am.</i> She hasn't finished reading her article and she will probably read it in the near future. We do not focus on the completion of the activity or its part .
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b) We will use present perfect with such verbs as:

- *know* = I have known John for a long time.
- *like* = We have never liked Spain
- *believe* = We have always believed in ourselves.
- *be* = They have been married for 20 years.

c) We can use both present perfect and present perfect continuous with:

- live* - I have been living in Poznań for a while or I have lived in Poznań for a while
- work* - I have been working in Poznań for a while or I have worked in Poznań for a while

d) We use present perfect frequently to inform about "how many times" something has happened and present perfect continuous to inform about "how long" something has been happening.

Present Perfect Continuous = It has been raining for an hour.	Present Perfect = It has rained three times this week.
Present Perfect Continuous = I have been reading this book since 8 am.	Present Perfect = I have read 4 books since 8 am.

8. Present Perfect and Past Simple

a) We do not use present perfect in sentences which have words or phrases such as: last week, yesterday, two days ago, last summer

These expressions are associated with past simple.

Yesterday I bought a tie. = OK

~~Yesterday I have bought a tie.~~ = NOT OK

Two weeks ago I lost my key. = OK

~~Two weeks ago I have lost my key.~~ = NOT OK

b) We use present perfect if there is a connection with "now". So if I say:

I have lost my key = I have lost it recently and I do not have it now.

but if I say

I lost my key = I probably lost it some time ago and we do not know if I have it or not.

c) Compare:

Present Perfect I have never been to Spain (see chapter about Present Perfect)	Past Simple I didn't swim in the sea when I was in Spain last year. (See chapter about Past Simple)
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9. Past Perfect

We often use past perfect with past simple. For example, we have two actions that happened in the past. One happened earlier than the other. So we say:

1 - later - The train had departed

2 - earlier - I arrived at the train station

I arrived (Past Simple) at the train station but the train had already left (Past Perfect). - Przybyłem na stację (Past Simple), ale pociąg już wcześniej odjechał (Past Perfect).

By the time I came to the party (Past Simple) Sue had already left (Past Perfect). - Kiedy przyszedłem na przyjęcie Sue już wyszła (wcześniej).

10. Past Perfect Continuous

a) We use it when an activity had been going on for some time and finished in the past. Additionally, there are some results of that activity.

John came back (past simple) home yesterday and was dirty (result of an activity that finished in the past) because he had been (past perfect) riding a bike.

I was out of breath (past simple) because I had been running (past perfect continuous).

11. I am going to ... and I am doing (present continuous)

Going to	I am doing (present continuous)
<p>a) We use I am going to do something when we want to inform somebody about our intention to perform some activity.</p> <p><i>I think I'm going to go to bed early tonight (Not a clear plan or arrangement made some time ago)</i></p>	<p>a) We use present continuous for the future to tell others about our plans or arrangements.</p> <p><i>I'm leaving tomorrow, I made the reservation two days ago. (A clear arrangement made some time ago)</i></p>
<p>b) We often use it when one person is about to do something</p> <p><i>I have nothing to do tomorrow, maybe I'm going to visit my grandparents. (Not a clear plan or arrangement made some time ago)</i></p>	<p>b) We often use present continuous for the future when we inform about plans or arrangements that were made by more than one person</p> <p><i>We are visiting our grandparents tomorrow. (A clear arrangement made some time ago)</i></p>

c) We often use "going to" to describe our predictions about the future made on the basis of our observations.

"Oh look, this man is going to hit the lamp, he isn't looking where he's going." - Patrz on uderzy w lampę, nie patrzy gdzie idzie.

Look at the clouds, It's going to rain.

12. Future Simple = Will

a) We use future simple when we decide to do something now, at the moment of speaking. Those decisions are rather spontaneous.

*The phone is ringing, I will answer it.
It's very stuffy here, I think I will go out.*

Remember do not use will for actions that have already been planned! = See chapter 11.

b) Will can be often used when we:

agree to do something - "Remember to bring back the computer." "Don't worry, I'll bring it back."

make a promise - "I promise I will buy you that house."

ask politely somebody to do something - "Will you please close the window when I leave."

c) When we talk about something that we believe will happen or is true.

*I believe John will pass his driving exam, he is a good driver.
I think you will live long and have a happy life.*

We also use such words as:
I expect, I wonder, I think

In other words we use will when we are predicting the future.

The fortuneteller said you will meet a tall dark stranger. (Wrożka powiedziała, że...)

13. Will vs. going to.

<p>a) Going to</p> <p>I thought about something earlier...</p> <p><i><u>I'm going to</u> redecorate my room.</i></p> <p><i>Our cat is sick, so <u>I'm going</u> to the vet tomorrow.</i></p>	<p>a) Will</p> <p>Spontaneous decision</p> <p><i>Give me that pen right now, I <u>will write</u> the number down.</i></p> <p><i>"Oh no I think our cat is sick", "You are right, <u>I will</u> take it to the vet".</i></p>
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b) When we predict the future we can sometimes use both going to and "will":

*John thinks we will have a nice sunny day.
John thinks we are going to have a nice sunny day.*

however, when we can be a bit more certain about the future then we should use "going to":

*Look at the dark clouds it's going to rain.
Jack is eating at Mcdonald's again, he's going to get sick because of all those hamburgers.
"My throat hurts, I think I'm going to have flue."*

We should not say: *Look at the dark sky ~~it will~~ rain.*

14. Future Continuous

a) When we want to inform about the activity that will be happening in the future at a given time/ on a given day etc. This tense is similar to Past Continuous but refers to the future (see chapter 4 and compare both tenses, this will help you to get a better picture. Make the connection).

*Tomorrow at 3 pm I will be repairing a bike.
In two days I will be flying to Moscow.*

b) When we want to ask somebody about what he/she will be doing in the future. Here, we have the intention to ask for a favor:

Will you be doing shopping today evening? I need a bottle of water, could you please get me one?

15. Future Perfect

a) We use future perfect to inform about an activity that we know will end some time in the future. We usually give the time period when that activity will have finished:

*By next week we will have finished the project.
By this time tomorrow Jack will have graduated from college.
In two weeks we will have completed our preparations.
Next year we will have been together for 15 years.*

16. Future Perfect Continuous

a) The situation is quite similar to Future Perfect. We are also informing about the status of an activity in the future. The difference is that we are not interested if it finishes or not! We are only interested that the activity will have been happening for some time. This difference is similar to the one described in chapter 8 (Present Perfect and Present Perfect Continuous - Comparison).

By next week we will have been repairing this house for one year. = We do not know if that will be the end of our reparation. (Compare with the example in chapter 15)

By this time tomorrow I will have been studying Spanish for 3 years = Again, we do not know and are not interested if it's the end of our studies or not. (Compare with the example in chapter 15) \

In two years from now I will have been planting corn for a decade. = Somebody will probably still plant corn in the future. This action is not completed. We are just interested in the action, not its completion.

17. Time clauses.

a) There are some expressions after which you will not use "will". Instead you have to use present tenses, frequently present simple or present perfect. These expressions include:

when	<i>Let me know when you get back (Present Simple) from Spain.</i>
after	<i>After you have completed (Present Perfect) your task you are free to go.</i>
as soon as	<i>I will leave the room as soon as you stop shouting (Present Simple).</i>
until / till	<i>He has not intentions of coming until you apologise (Present Simple).</i>
before	<i>Be ready before he arrives (Present Simple).</i>