

instructions, commentaries, stories

Present tenses are common in instructions, commentaries and stories. The **simple present** is used for things that happen **one after another**, and the **present progressive** for **longer background situations**. (This is exactly like the way the simple past and past progressive are used together – see page 41.)

*'How **do I get** to the police station?' 'You **go** straight on for half a mile, then you **come** to a garage. You **take** the next left, then as you're **coming** up to a railway bridge, look out for a sign on the right.'*
*I **put** some butter in a frying pan. While the butter **is melting**, I **break** three eggs into a bowl and **beat** them ...*
*Chekhov **shoots**, Burns **punches** it away, and it's a corner. Meanwhile Fernandez **is warming up**, ready to replace ...*
*So he's just **having** breakfast when the doorbell **rings**. He **opens** the door and **sees** this beautiful woman outside. She's **wearing** ...*

Note the use of the present progressive for slower-moving commentaries.

*The Oxford boat **is moving** further and further ahead. And what's **happening** now? Cambridge **are getting** very low in the water. **Are they sinking**? ...*

1 Put in simple present or present progressive verbs.

- 1 While the meat, I the potatoes and them in cold water. (roast, peel, put)
- 2 Giacomo Miller deliberately the ball away with his hand. But the referee (shoot, knock, not look)
- 3 So he into the bar. And there's his girlfriend. She to a good-looking guy with a beard. So he to them and 'Hi!' (walk, talk, go up, say)

2 Explain how you boil an egg or start to drive a car. Begin 'First I ...'

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3 Write instructions to tell somebody how to get from one place to another (for example, from the nearest station to your home). Begin 'You ...'

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4 Write the beginning of a short present-tense story.

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more about present tenses

repeated actions Repeated actions just **around the moment of speaking**: present progressive.
Other repeated actions: **simple present**.

Why **is he hitting** the dog? Jake's **seeing** a lot of Felicity these days.
I **go** to the mountains about twice a year. Water **boils** at 100° Celsius.

- 1 Write about two or three things that you're doing a lot just around now; and some other things that you do from time to time.

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changes We use the present progressive for **changing and developing situations**, even if these are **not just around the moment of speaking**.

The political situation **is getting** worse. Children **are growing up** faster.
Scientists say the universe **is expanding**, and has been since the beginning of time.

- 2 Write some sentences about some things that are changing (for example, some of the things in the box).

cities computers education the economic situation transport travel
TV programmes your English

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not around the moment of speaking The simple present and present progressive can be used together even when we are talking about things going on **around other moments**, not the moment of speaking. This is common with *when* (meaning 'whenever').

You **look** lovely *when you're smiling*.
When the post **comes** I'm usually **having** breakfast.

- 3 Put in the correct forms.

- 1 I hate it if people me when I
(interrupt, work)
- 2 I some of my best ideas while I in the
country. (get, walk)
- 3 When Alice about something, she funny
grunting noises. (think, make)
- 4 Our house really cold when the wind
from the east. (get, blow)



more about present tenses (continued)

progressive with always We can use a progressive form with *always* and similar words to talk about repeated but unpredictable or unplanned events.

She's always turning up with little presents for the children.

I'm always running into Joanna in the supermarket.

The structure is often used to make complaints and criticisms.

This computer's continually crashing at the most inconvenient moments.

She's forever taking days off because of one little illness or another.

This government is always thinking of new ways to take your money.

4 Write a sentence about somebody you know who is always doing something annoying.

NOTES

I hear/see; it says We often use *I hear* or *I see* in the sense of 'I have heard/seen' to introduce pieces of information.

I hear Karen's getting married. I see they're closing High Street again.

Note also the similar use of *It says*.

It says in the paper there's a rail strike tomorrow.

Where does it say that I need a visa?

here comes; there goes We use the **simple present** in these two expressions.

Here comes the postman. This wind! There goes my hat!

performatives Sometimes we **do** something by **saying** something.

Verbs used like this are called **performatives**: they are normally **simple present**.

I won't do it again - I promise. I hereby declare you man and wife.

I swear to tell the truth. I name this ship 'Spirit of Adventure'.

informal progressives Progressives can sometimes make statements sound more friendly and informal (see page 291). Compare:

We look forward to further discussions in due course.

I'm really looking forward to our week with you and the kids in July.

duration Remember that we use a **present perfect**, not a present tense, to say **how long** things have continued up to the present.

I've been waiting since six o'clock. (NOT I'm waiting since ...)



'He's swearing in full sentences now.'

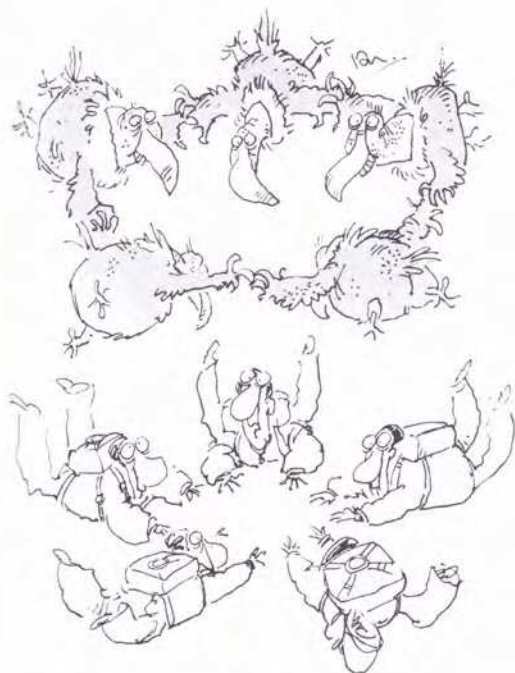
Prison death rates • *rise* / *are rising* alarmingly

A GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE ¹ *calls* / *is calling* for an investigation into the number of people who ² *now die* / *are now dying* from natural causes inside the prison system. It ³ *appears* / *is appearing* that because of poor healthcare and a sedentary lifestyle, more and more prisoners ⁴ *die* / *are dying* prematurely. The increase is not due to a rise in the prison population or an increase in the age of inmates.

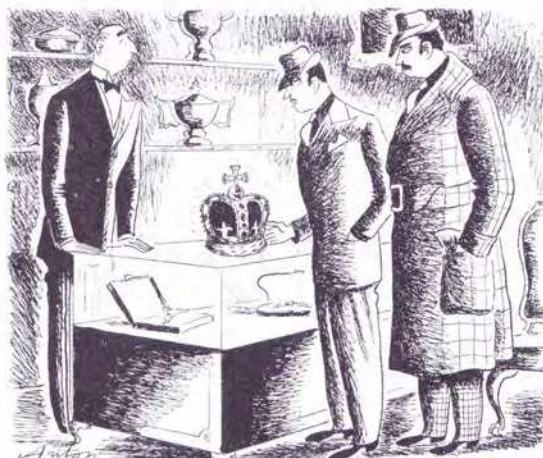
A recent report ⁵ *finds* / *is finding* that the average age of male prisoners who ⁶ *die* / *are dying* from natural causes is 56; the average for women is 47. In the general British population, the average age of death

for men is 78 and for women 81. Death rates are thought to be higher in prison because prisoners ⁷ *take* / *are taking* less exercise and ⁸ *eat* / *are eating* less well than most of the population. They ⁹ *also suffer* / *are also suffering* higher levels of stress, and some ¹⁰ *receive* / *are receiving* substandard healthcare. Although the government ¹¹ *currently invests* / *is currently investing* substantial funds in order to improve prisoner welfare, the focus is on reducing levels of suicide and self-harm, and the expenditure ¹² *has* / *is having* little or no effect on the more general problem of rising death rates. ■

6 Circle the correct verb forms for the cartoon captions.



'Things look / are looking bad.'



'I sell / I'm selling this for a friend.'

non-progressive verbs

Some verbs are rarely or never used in progressive forms, even if we are talking about what is happening at a particular moment.

I don't like her hairstyle. (NOT *I'm not liking her hairstyle.*)

I called because I need to talk. (NOT ... *because I'm needing to talk.*)

Many of these verbs refer to states rather than actions. Here is a list of the most common ones.

mental and emotional states; use of the senses

assume, believe, doubt, feel (= 'have an opinion'), *hate, hear, imagine* (= 'suppose'), *know, (dis)like, love, prefer, realise, recognise, regret, remember, see, smell, suppose, taste, think* (= 'have an opinion'), *understand, want, wish.*

'I love you.' *'I don't believe you.'* (NOT *'I'm loving you.'* *'I'm not believing you.'*)

I doubt if the train will be on time. *Who do you think will win?*

I feel it's time for a break.

communicating, causing reactions

(dis)agree, appear, astonish, deny, impress, mean, please, promise, satisfy, seem, surprise.

What do you mean? *We seem to have a problem.* *Your attitude surprises me.*

other state verbs

be, belong, concern, consist, cost, depend, deserve, fit, have (= 'possess'), *include, involve, lack, matter, measure* (= 'have length etc'), *need, owe, own, possess, resemble, weigh* (= 'have weight').

Who does this car belong to? *I need help.* *'I'm late.'* *'It doesn't matter.'*

1 Choose the best verbs from the boxes to complete the sentences.

consist contain depend imagine include lack not deserve own

- 1 'Can you do me a favour?' 'It
- 2 This jam of 50% sugar, 10% fruit, and a lot of other stuff.
- 3 If that cake nuts, I can't eat it.
- 4 I'm too good to you. You me.
- 5 The soup's nice, but it salt.
- 6 I wonder who that dog.
- 7 No need to tip – the bill 15% service.
- 8 I you'd like a rest soon.

appear concern deny impress matter mean owe recognise

- 9 'Don't we know that man?' 'Maybe. I don't him.
- 10 Do you know what 'incomprehensible'?
- 11 We're going to be late, but I don't think it much.
- 12 I'll pay you what I you tomorrow, if that's OK.
- 13 'How much money is the company making?' 'That doesn't you.'
- 14 There to be a problem with the train.
- 15 The police are questioning three men about the attack, but they everything.
- 16 'I've got my own helicopter.' 'You don't me.'

progressive and non-progressive uses Some of these verbs may occasionally be used in progressive forms, especially to emphasise the idea of **change, development** or **novelty**.

As I get older, I'm remembering less and less. I didn't expect to like this place, but I'm really loving it.

Some others are used in progressive forms with particular meanings. Compare:

What do you think of her singing? What are you thinking about?

I weigh too much these days. I got a shock when I was weighing myself this morning.

Look (meaning 'seem') can often be progressive or not, with little difference.

You look / You're looking a bit tired today.

Smell and **taste** can be progressive when we are talking about the deliberate use of the senses to find something out. Compare:

• *This meat smells funny. I (can) smell smoke*
'What are you doing?' 'I'm smelling the fish to see if it's OK.'

• *The soup tastes wonderful. I think I (can) taste garlic in it.*
'Leave that cake alone!' 'I'm just tasting it to see if it's OK.'

Feel (referring to physical sensations) can be progressive or not, with little difference.

I feel / I'm feeling fine.

See can be progressive when it means 'meet'. Compare

I (can) see John over there. I'm seeing the doctor tomorrow.

2 Correct (✓) or not (X)?

- 1 Of course I'm believing you! ...
- 2 We're seeing your point. ...
- 3 Why is everybody looking at the sky? ...
- 4 I'm feeling you're both wrong. ...
- 5 What do you think about at this moment? ...
- 6 She may win, but I doubt it. ...
- 7 Does this milk taste sour to you? ...
- 8 I'm feeling quite depressed these days. ...
- 9 I'm remembering your face, but not your name. ...
- 10 We see the bank manager soon. ...
- 11 I'm supposing you'd like coffee. ...
- 12 I think it's time to go. ...
- 13 John's aftershave is smelling strange. ...
- 14 How much are you weighing? ...



'Do these shoes taste funny to you?'

NOTES

use of can *Can* is often used with *see, hear, feel, taste, smell, understand* and *remember* to give a progressive meaning, especially in British English. (See page 61.)

I can see Sue coming down the road. Can you smell burning?

I can remember when there were no houses here.

perfect tenses *Want, need* and *mean* can have present perfect progressive uses; *need* and *want* can have future progressive uses.

I've been wanting to meet you for years. Will you be needing the car today?

There's something I've been meaning to tell you.

-ing forms Even verbs which are never progressive have *-ing* forms which can be used in other kinds of structure.

Knowing her tastes, I bought her chocolate.

I got all the way to the station without realising I was wearing my slippers.

more about the present progressive, *going to* and *will*

spoken and written English *Be going to* and the **present progressive** are particularly common in **spoken** English, as ways of talking about the future. This is because conversation is often about future events that we can **see coming**, so present forms are natural. In written English, these forms are less often used. **Will** is extremely common in **writing**, because written language tends to deal with less immediate future events, when we do not see the future in the present. **Will** is also preferred when giving information about **impersonal**, fixed arrangements – for example official itineraries. Compare:

We're meeting Sandra at 6.00.

The President will arrive at the airport at 14.00. He will meet ...

pronunciation of *going to*. In informal speech, *going to* is often pronounced as /gəʊnə/. This is often shown in writing as *gonna*.

1 GRAMMAR IN A TEXT. Put the letters of the boxed expressions into the text.

A it will be B there will be C will be introduced D will be presented
E will be welcomed F will cast off G will cover H will play I you will be

On a **wildlife cruise** with Wildlife Worldwide, ¹... on a small vessel (the vessels we work with generally accommodate between 20 and 128 passengers), just enough to be able to meet new people and get to know them over the course of the trip, and to be able to recognise and greet all of the other passengers onboard. Not so many that every time you see a face ²... be a new one!

On a wildlife cruise the vessels have been specially adapted and refitted to accommodate guests, since many of them were actually research vessels in a former life. On a wildlife cruise, ³... illustrated talks

and presentations throughout the journey. These ⁴... a whole range of topics from birds and mammals, to geography, history and astronomy, and they ⁵... by the onboard guides and experts who ⁶... such an important role in making your trip a special one.

To begin with you ⁷... aboard with a glass of champagne and a bite to eat. The crew ⁸... the boat, and once you are under way you ⁹... to the captain and his crew. Departures are generally late afternoon/early evening. Passengers are free to visit the ship's bridge any time of the day or night.

It is fascinating seeing how the ship's course is plotted, and to observe the monitors of depth, wind speed and wave height! (Adapted from *Oceans Worldwide website*.)



2 GRAMMAR IN A TEXT. Put the letters of the boxed expressions into the text.

A going to be happy B going to be there C going to see D It's going to be
E there are going to be F we're catching G we're leaving

Well, ¹... tomorrow, Sandra. ²... amazing! It's quite a small boat – about 50 passengers, so we'll soon get to know everybody. And ³... half a dozen experts on this and that giving lectures in the evenings, and going ashore with us and answering our stupid questions when we land. Tony Soper's ⁴..., believe it or not, so the bird-watchers are ⁵... ! And there's a terrific woman called Ingrid Visser who's red-hot on killer whales. I can't remember the others, but I know there's a marine mammal expert, and an astronomer. And we're definitely ⁶... whales – lots and lots of whales, they've promised! Can't wait!

Well, must go and pack – ⁷... a very early flight. Looking forward to seeing you in July. Prepare yourselves for a long photo evening!

Love from both to both

Jane

shall and will In modern English *I/we will* and *I/we shall* can generally be used with no difference of meaning. *Will* is more common, and *shall* is dying out. (In any case, the commonest forms in speech are the contractions *I'll* and *we'll*.)

shall in questions In older English, *shall* was used to talk about **obligation** (rather like *should*). This meaning still survives in **first-person questions**, where *shall* is used to **ask for instructions or suggestions, or offer services**.

What time **shall we** come round? **Shall I** take your coat?

Compare the use of *will* to ask for information:

What time **will we** get into London?

legal language Legal documents, such as contracts, often use *shall* to express obligation.

The hirer **shall be** responsible for maintenance of the vehicle. (from a car-hire contract)

3 Put in *shall* or *will*.

- 1 Where we go on holiday this year?
- 2 Where I be this time next year?
- 3 Sending out the invitations be Jim's responsibility.
- 4 The tenant be wholly responsible for all decoration and repairs.
- 5 I put the kettle on?
- 6 What time I need to be at the airport?
- 7 What I cook for supper?
- 8 How soon we hear about the application?

The Hirer shall, during the period of the hiring, be responsible for: supervision of the premises, the fabric and the contents; their care, safety from damage however slight or change of any sort; and the behaviour of all persons using the premises whatever their capacity, including proper supervision of car parking arrangements. The Hirer shall make good or pay for all damage (including accidental damage) to the premises or to the fixtures, fittings or contents and for loss of contents. The Hirer shall not use the premises for any purpose other than that described in the Hiring Agreement and shall not allow the premises to be used for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful way nor

For other (non-future) uses of *will*, see pages 65 and 72.

NOTES

different forms possible The differences between the three main structures used to talk about the future are not always very clear-cut. *Will* and present forms (especially *going to*) are often both possible in the same situation, when 'present' ideas like intention or fixed arrangement are a part of the meaning but not very important. The choice of structure will depend on which part of the meaning we want to emphasise. In the following examples all of the different forms would be correct, with no important difference of meaning.

- What will you do next year?
What are you doing next year?
What are you going to do next year?
- All the family will be there.
All the family are going to be there.
- If your mother comes, you'll have to help with the cooking.
If your mother comes, you're going to have to help with the cooking.
- You won't believe this.
You're not going to believe this.

be + infinitive: I am to ... etc

official plans etc We often say that something **is to happen** when we talk about **official plans** and fixed arrangements.

*The Prime Minister **is to visit** British soldiers in Antarctica.*

*Our firm **is to merge** with Universal Export.*

pre-conditions The structure is common in **if-clauses**, where the main clause expresses a **pre-condition** – something that must happen first if something else **is to happen**.

*We'd better hurry if we're **to get** there by lunchtime.*

*You'll need to start working if you're **to pass** your exam.*

orders The structure can also be used (for example by parents) to give orders.

*You're **to do** your homework before you go to bed.*

*Tell Jenny she's **not to be** back late.*

- 1 Here are some (mostly) real spoken or written sentences. Use the **be + infinitive** structure to complete them with verbs from the box. Use a dictionary if necessary.

assemble	bloom	continue	deliver	follow	get through	inspect	plan	report	tidy up
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- 1 Professor Loach eight lectures on classical mythology next term.
- 2 On his arrival at the airport, the general a guard of honour.
- 3 If we providing care for homeless children, we need your support today.
- 4 Young soldiers quickly learn that a good breakfast is vital if they another demanding day.
- 5 Any new diet has to be simple if you it for any length of time.
- 6 You have to know where you're going if you the best way of getting there!
- 7 The chrysanthemums must be planted right away if they for Christmas.
- 8 The children their room before they watch TV.
- 9 In case of fire, all staff in the front courtyard.
- 10 All visitors to the reception desk.

For the past form of this structure (*I was to ...* etc), see page 37.

For passive uses (e.g. *to be taken three times a day*), see page 103.

- 2 Imagine you are a parent who is going out for the evening, leaving two teenagers alone in the house. Write three instructions beginning 'You're to' and three beginning 'You're not to'.

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future progressive

We use the **future progressive** (*will be ...ing*) to say that something will be **in progress** at a **certain time in the future**.

This time next Tuesday I'll be lying on the beach.

You won't be able to park here tomorrow; they'll be mending the road.

- 1 What will you be doing at ten o'clock tomorrow morning (or some other time, if you prefer)?

- 2 Write three things that you will certainly not be doing at ten o'clock tomorrow morning (or some other time, if you prefer).

polite enquiries A common use of the **future progressive** is to **ask politely** 'What have you already decided?' Compare:

Will you write to Oliver? (request or order)

Are you going to write to Oliver? (perhaps pressing for a decision)

Will you be writing to Oliver? (just asking about plans)

- 3 Make future progressive questions to ask somebody politely:

▶ when they are planning to go shopping. *When will you be going shopping?*

1 when they intend to pay the rent.

2 who they plan to invite.

3 how soon they intend to come back.

4 when they plan to go home.

5 where they are planning to stay.

6 what time they are planning to have breakfast.

7 what they plan to study at university.

8 whether they expect to use the car.

Will you be watching the leaders' TV debate?

The first ever prime ministerial TV debate in a UK general election campaign will take place on Thursday.

Will you be watching?

"I'll be watching. I want to see how professional liars work."

"Yes, I shall be watching and it will be an interesting test of the party leaders."

"I will be watching until the end of the first question. When none of them have answered simply, openly and honestly, along with millions of other viewers I will switch off and then go to the pub."

(postings from a website discussion before a British general election)

future perfect

The future perfect (*I will have driven/worked* etc) can be used to say that something will have been completed by a certain time in the future.

We'll have finished planting the new trees by Wednesday.

This government will have ruined the country before the next election.

- 1 Here are some sentences taken from newspaper articles and reports. Complete them with verbs from the box, using the future progressive. Use a dictionary if necessary.

drive drop host pass put on quadruple rise

- 1 When this year's competition in Nottingham is completed, Great Britain, like Japan, it on 3 occasions.
- 2 In a few weeks' time, the fallen leaves from ankle to knee deep.
- 3 Frank, Mr Andrews' chauffeur, his boss more than 12,000 miles by the end of the campaign.
- 4 If a traveller goes eastwards round the Earth, when he gets halfway he through 12 time zones and gained 12 hours.
- 5 The decision means that annual government support for the railways from well over £1 billion to around £300 million in 10 years.
- 6 Within 100 years the human population
- 7 If you do not weigh yourself for a year and you eat just an extra 500 calories each day during that time, you a full 21.8 kg; rather a nasty shock!

The future perfect progressive (*I will have been driving/working* etc) is not very common. We can use it to say **how long** something will have continued by a certain time.

By next summer I'll have been working here for eight years.

- 2 Write three sentences about yourself with the future perfect progressive. For example, say how long you will have been learning English / working / living in your house.

- 1 By the end of this year,
- 2 By
- 3 By

Note: other uses These tenses, and other structures with **will**, can be used not only to talk about the future, but also to express **certainty** about the past and present (see page 65).

As you will have heard by now, we are planning to open a new branch in Liverpool.

The world's top skiers will have been studying the course all morning, in preparation for the first big event this afternoon.

'When you have lost your Inns, drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England.'
(Hilaire Belloc)

future in the past

structures When we are talking about the past, we often want to say that something was still **in the future at that time**. To express this idea, we can use the past forms of all the structures that are used to talk about the future:

present progressive → **past progressive** am/is/are going to → **was/were going to**
will → **would** am/is/are to → **was/were to**

*I was in a state of panic, because I **was sitting** my final exams in two days.*

*We **were going to** start a business if we could raise enough capital.*

*I had a feeling that things **would** soon turn difficult.*

*So this was the town where I **was to spend** the winter. I didn't like the look of it.*

'hidden in the future' *Would and was/were to are often used to express the idea that things were 'hidden in the future'.*

*She treated me like dirt. But she **would live** to regret it.*

*I thought we were saying goodbye for ever. But we **were to meet** again under very strange circumstances.*

- 1 Write some things that were in the future when you were ten years old, and that you could not have expected.

▶ *I would become a teacher. I was to spend eight years in France.*

- 2 About 30,000 years ago, someone painted this picture on a cave wall. Write some of the things that were in the future, and that he/she could never have imagined. Use **would**.

▶ *People would learn how to make metal tools. Empires would come and go. There would be ...*



news and details We often announce a piece of **news** with the **present perfect**, and then use the **simple past** for the **details** of time and place.

I've found your glasses. They were in the car.

The President has arrived in London. He was met by the Prime Minister ...

3 GRAMMAR IN TEXTS. Read the reports and put in verbs from the box in the correct tenses.

be clash dig fire have identify reach take

- 1 Police in France with protesters striking over wage cuts. Riot police tear gas at a group of part
- 2 An oil spill the Welsh coast. The spill place early on Tuesday morn
- 3 Police eight suspects in last month's Birmingham car bomb attack. Six of the suspects non-British passports as
- 4 The fossilised remains of a giant shark found in Nebraska, US. Scientists up a gigantic jawbone, teeth and scales

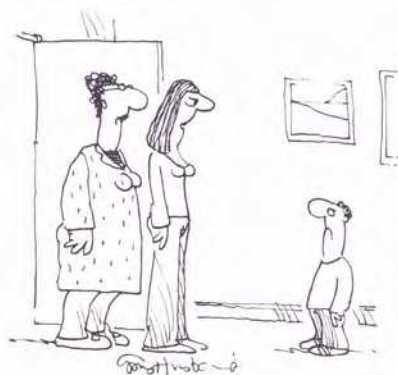
4 Find a news report with similar tense use to the examples in Exercise 3 (for example on an internet news page). Write the first two or three sentences here.

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'Mrs Dunne is here for your lesson, Ralph. Where have you hidden the piano?'

'I've never won an argument with her, and the only times I thought I had, I found out the argument wasn't over yet.'
(US President Jimmy Carter, talking about his wife Rosalyn)



'I've wired his electric wheelchair to this control Want a go?'

'Do I like vegetables? I don't know. I have never eaten them. No, that is not quite true. I once ate a pea.'
(Beau Brummel, 1778-1840)

present perfect progressive: revise the basics

duration We can use the **present perfect progressive** to talk about actions and situations **continuing up to now**. This is common when we talk about **duration**: how long things have been going on. Compare:

'Are you **waiting** for a table?' 'Yes, I've **been waiting** since eight o'clock.'

(NOT *I'm waiting since eight o'clock.*)

Mark's **studying** engineering. He's **been doing** practical work for the last six months.

Remember that some verbs are not normally used in progressive forms; for example *have* and *be*.

We've **had** this car for ten years. (NOT *We've been having this car ...*)

How long have you **been** in England? (NOT *How long have you been being ...?*)

Don't confuse *How long have you been here for?* (meaning 'up to now') and *How long are you here for?* (meaning 'until when').

filling time We often use the **present perfect progressive** to say how we have been filling our time **up to now**.

Sorry I haven't been to see you. I've **been working** very hard.

'You're all wet!' 'Yes, I've **been swimming**.'

'What **have** you **been doing** with yourself since I last saw you?' 'Travelling.'

- 1 Here are some sentences from real and fictional conversations. Complete them with the verbs from the box, using the present perfect progressive.

behave	chase	cry	escape	farm	make	sell	tell	talk
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- 1 For some time it seems that I to myself.
- 2 I you for eight miles.
- 3 I for the last 70 years and never seen anything like it.
- 4 I from myself all my life.
- 5 I badly for two years, and you know it, and you don't even mind.
- 6 I some inquiries about nightclubs.
- 7 I cars for some time now.
- 8 I'll rub my face quickly so she doesn't see I
- 9 I Veronica about that week we had in Scotland.

- 2 Complete this sentence with information about yourself (true or false). Use the present perfect progressive.

I for

Note: permanent states We don't often use the present perfect progressive to talk about **permanent unchanging states** (see page 50). Compare:

'Where have you been?' 'We've **been looking** at the castle.'

Chedlow Castle **has looked** down on this peaceful valley for 800 years.

simple past and present perfect: summary

SIMPLE PAST: *I worked/wrote/drove etc*

finished actions

- finished actions, no connection with present
*My grandfather **worked** for a newspaper. I **hated** school.*
- with words for a finished time, like *yesterday, in 2002, ago, then, when*
*I **saw** Ann yesterday. (NOT ~~I have seen~~ Ann yesterday.) Bill **phoned** three days ago. When **did** you **stop** smoking? (NOT ~~When have you stopped~~ smoking?)*
- stories
*A man **walked** into a café and **sat** down at a table. The waiter **asked** ...*
- details (time, place etc) of news
*The cat has eaten your supper. She **took** it off the table.
Bill has had an accident. He **fell** off his bicycle when he was going to work.*

(SIMPLE) PRESENT PERFECT: *I have worked/written/driven etc*

A finished actions

- thinking about past and present together
*I've **written** to John, so he knows what's happening now. Jane **has found** my glasses, so I can see again.*
- news
*A plane **has crashed** at Heathrow airport. The Prime Minister **has left** for Paris.*
- up to now: how much/many; how often
*I've **drunk** six cups of coffee today. My father **has often tried** to stop smoking.*
- up to now: things that haven't happened; questions; *ever* and *never*
*John **hasn't phoned**. **Has** Peter **said** anything to you? **Have** you ever **seen** a ghost?
I've never **seen** one.*
- *already, yet* and *just*
*'Where's Peter?' 'He's already **gone** home.' **Has** the postman **come** yet? 'Coffee?' 'I've just **had** some.'*
- NOT with words for a finished time
*I **saw** Penny yesterday. She's getting married. (NOT ~~I have seen~~ Penny yesterday.)*

B unfinished actions continuing up to now

(especially with *be, have, know* and other non-progressive verbs)

- to say how long (often with *since* and *for*)
*How long **have** you **been** in this country? We've **had** our car for seven years.
I've **known** Jake since 2005. (NOT ~~I know~~ Jake since 2005.)*

PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE: *I have been working/writing/driving etc*

unfinished actions continuing up to now (most verbs)

- to say how long (often with *since* and *for*)
***Have** you **been waiting** long? I've **been learning** English since last summer.
We've **been driving** for three hours – it's time for a rest.
DON'T use a present tense to say how long.
I've **been living** here since January. (NOT ~~I'm living~~ here since January.)*
- to say how we have been filling our time up to now
*Sorry I haven't written. I've **been travelling**. 'You look tired.' 'Yes, I've **been working** in the garden.'*
- NOT USUALLY to talk about long, unchanging states
*The castle **has stood** on this hill for 900 years.*

more about the simple past and past progressive

past situations that have not changed If we are talking about the past, we tend to use past tenses even for situations that have not changed.

*Those people we met in Paris **were** very nice.*
*I got that job because I **spoke** French.*

past progressive for repetition We generally use the **simple past** for repeated past actions.

*My father **travelled** a lot when I was young. I **ran** away from school regularly.*

But we can use the **past progressive** for repeated actions **around a particular time**.

*I **was playing** a lot of tennis when I got to know Peter.*
*It was hard to get a free half-hour in July, because we **were rehearsing** non-stop.*

- 1 Complete the sentences with verbs from the box. Use a past progressive (three times) or a simple past (six times).

be	demonstrate	drink	give	go	interpret	play	speak	work
----	-------------	-------	------	----	-----------	------	-------	------

- 1 I got really tired last week. There was a big conference, and I for eight or ten hours a day most days.
- 2 I've just finished 'Death in the Sand'. That a really good book.
- 3 At the time of the election, people daily against the government's policies.
- 4 In Shakespeare's time, only a few children to school.
- 5 Jo and Carl had some Japanese friends staying at the weekend, and they invited me because I Japanese.
- 6 Things were difficult at home at that time. Her brother was in trouble with the police, and her father very heavily.
- 7 When I was at school they us Latin lessons five times a week. They never explained why.
- 8 What was the name of that man we were talking to who in a garage?
- 9 Have you heard anything from your cousin who came to see us? The one who the guitar professionally?

- 2 **GRAMMAR IN A TEXT.** Read the text. There are twenty expressions *in italics* with past verbs. Circle the ones that are used for situations that have certainly or probably not changed.

I first *got to know* my friend Alex, nearly 40 years ago, when I *was living* in Geneva. I *was working* in a translation agency, and he *had a job* in an insurance company. We *met* at a party, *started* chatting, and found that we *had a remarkable amount* in common. To start with, we *were the same age* – in fact, we *had the same birthday*. We *were both very tall*, we both *had long fair hair*, and we both *played* hockey. We *had pretty similar tastes*: we both *had vintage sports cars* that we *spent* too much money on, and we also both *had expensive girlfriends*. We both *liked* classical music, we both *sang* in local choirs, and we both *liked* parties that *went on* all night. It was the beginning of a long and important friendship.

backgrounding We can make a fact seem less central, not the main 'news', by using the past progressive.

*I **was having** lunch with the President yesterday. She said ...* (This makes it sound as if the lunch with the President was an everyday occurrence – not 'news'. A good way of making oneself sound important.)

*John **was saying** that there are going to be some important changes.* (This takes the focus away from John, and puts the emphasis on what he said – the changes.)

progressive with always We can use a progressive form with *always* and similar words to talk about repeated but unpredictable or unplanned events. Compare

*My grandmother **always came** to see us on Tuesdays.*

*Andy **was always coming round** at the most inconvenient moments.*

The structure is often used to make complaints and criticisms.

*That car **was continually breaking down** miles from home.*

*John **was forever buying** one useless new gadget or another.*

This is also possible with present progressives (see page 26).

distancing We can make requests, personal questions and so on less direct by using a past tense instead of a present (see page 290).

*I **thought** you might like to pay now.*

*We **were wondering** if you needed any help.*

3 Complete the sentences with verbs from the box. One sentence must have a simple past; use a past progressive in the others.

always bring	always complain	always forget	always have	ask
hope	say	sing	think	wonder

- 1 The Prime Minister me only the other day what I thought of his economic policies.
- 2 My grandmother about the neighbours – they couldn't do a thing right.
- 3 We if you could give us some advice.
- 4 I you might have some free time at the weekend.
- 5 In my last job, we meetings first thing on Friday mornings.
- 6 My maths teacher my name. It used to drive me crazy.
- 7 I perhaps you and I ought to have a serious talk.
- 8 John that he thinks Anna's in love again.
- 9 When my sister was at home she us little presents.
- 10 I at the Royal Opera House the other evening, and there was this gorgeous woman in the front row ...

4 Correct (✓) or not (X)? One sentence is not correct.

- 1 I used to have trouble buying football boots because I had very wide feet. ...
- 2 We didn't see much of Dad last month, because he was going backwards and forwards to America most of the time. ...
- 3 Pete wasn't studying very hard when he was at university. ...
- 4 I was talking to the Governor of the Bank of England the other day, and he thinks we're in deep trouble. ...
- 5 When my sister was in her teens, she was always falling in love with really nasty boys. ...
- 6 You know, I was thinking that it might be time to get a new car. ...

more about the present perfect

origins We generally use the **simple past**, not the present perfect, to talk about the **origin** of something **present**.

Who **wrote** that? (NOT ~~Who has written that?~~)

Bill **gave** me this necklace. Did you **put** this here?

Whose idea **was** it to come here on holiday?

today, this week etc

With definite expressions of 'time up to now' (e.g. *today, this week*), perfect and past tenses are often both possible. We prefer the **present perfect** if we are thinking of the **whole period** up to now (this often happens in questions and negatives). We prefer the **simple past** if we are thinking of a **finished part of that period**. Compare:

Has Barbara **phoned** today? Barbara **phoned** today. She needed some advice.

I **haven't seen** John this week. I **saw** John this week, and he said ...

1 Choose the best way(s) to complete each sentence: A, B or both.

- 1 That's a nice picture. Who ... it? A *has painted* B *painted* C both
- 2 ... on holiday this year? A *Have you been* B *Did you go* C both
- 3 ...Emma's first email today? A *Have you seen* B *Did you see* C both
- 4 Stop fighting, kids. Now: who ... it? A *has started* B *started* C both
- 5 It was a shock when the police ... today. A *have turned up* B *turned up* C both
- 6 I ... my appointment with the physiotherapist this week. A *have missed* B *missed* C both
- 7 ...those flowers? A *Has Susie brought* B *Did Susie bring* C both
- 8 Mark ... earlier this evening – he needs to talk to you. A *has turned up* B *turned up* C both
- 9 ...that glass? A *Have you broken* B *Did you break* C both
- 10 I ... a really terrible time today. A *have had* B *had* C both

2 Write about where some of your possessions came from.

► *My brother gave me my silver bracelet. I bought my new jeans in Paris.*



'That's an excellent idea, Miss Jones. Who gave it to you?'

tenses with *since* Different tenses are possible in sentences with *since*.

In the **main part** of the sentence, a present perfect (simple or progressive) is normal:

We've lived here since our marriage.

I've been studying French since last May.

But there may be a **past** tense in the **time expression** after *since*.

*We've lived here since we **got** married.*

*We've visited my parents every week since we **bought** the car.*

A **present perfect** is also possible in the time expression, to talk about **continuation** up to now.

*We've lived here since we've **been** married.*

*We've visited my parents every week since **we've had** the car.*

And a **present** tense is sometimes used in the main part of the sentence, especially to emphasise changes.

*You're **looking** much better since your operation.*

3 Choose the right tense.

- The company has doubled its profits since James ... as manager.
A *has taken over* B *took over* C both
- The company has doubled its profits since James ... manager. A *has been* B *is* C both
- Sue ... much happier since she split up with Carl. A *has been* B *is* C both
- Since the new baby ..., nobody has had much sleep. A *has arrived* B *arrived* C both
- I've been saving a lot of money since I ... the new job. A *have started* B *started* C both
- We've all been eating much better since the new chef ... doing the cooking.
A *has been* B *was* C both
- Everybody ... going around singing since the weather turned nice. A *has been* B *is* C both
- The house has been much quieter since Helen ... out. A *has moved* B *moved* C both

4 Complete one or more of these sentences in any way you like.

- My life has been very different since I (past tense)
- My life has been very different since I've
- 'What's that?' 'I don't know. And I don't know who

NOTES

present perfect + past time expression The present perfect is unusual with expressions of finished time (see page 42). This is because the present perfect is used when we are focusing more on the present than on the past details – for example when we give somebody a piece of news. But the structure is not impossible. Some real examples:

*Police **have arrested** more than 900 suspected drugs traffickers in raids throughout the country **on Friday and Saturday**.*

*A 24-year-old soldier **has been killed** in a road accident **last night**.*

British and American English In **American English**, the **simple past** is often used to give news. This is less common in **British English**.

*Honey, I **crashed** the car. (BrE: ... I've **crashed** ...)*

And some indefinite time-adverbs are used more often with a simple past in American English than in British English: for example *yet, already, before, ever, just*.

***Did you eat yet?** / **Have you eaten yet?** (BrE: **Have you eaten yet?**)*

***His plane just landed** / **has just landed**. (BrE: **His plane has just landed**.)*

more about the present perfect progressive

progressive or simple? The **present perfect progressive** is normal when we are talking about **temporary** actions and situations continuing **up to now**.

*It's **been raining** all week. Granny's **been staying** with us since Easter.*

The **present perfect progressive** can also be used for **longer, more permanent** situations, especially when the emphasis is on activity or change.

*The Dutch **have been reclaiming** land from the sea for centuries.*

*The universe **has been expanding** steadily since its origin.*

However, we often prefer a **simple present perfect** in these cases, especially when we are talking about unchanging states rather than actions. Compare:

*I've **been living** here since August.*

*I've **lived** in this village all my life.*

*Lucy's **been covering** cushions all afternoon.*

*An ice-cap **has covered** Greenland for something like 5 million years.*

Want and mean are not normally used in the present progressive (see page 28), but they can be used in the **present perfect progressive**.

*I've **been wanting** to meet you for ages.*

*I've **been meaning** to tell you – there's a problem with the central heating.*

1 Complete the sentences with verbs from the box.

analyse	assume	create	debate	design	ensure	predict	run	substitute	want
---------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	---------	-----	------------	------

- 1 Our statistics department has recently the last year's marketing performance. (*progressive*)
- 2 Right through human history, people works of art based on the natural world. (*progressive*)
- 3 As far back as our records reach, people the end of the world. (*progressive*)
- 4 My friend Alistair always that he is right and everybody else is wrong. (*simple*)
- 5 For the last ten years, I advanced computer systems. (*progressive*)
- 6 It seems that for a long time some wine producers cheap wines for more expensive ones – it's a very profitable business. (*progressive*)
- 7 The same family always this business. (*simple*)
- 8 Parliament the question for three days now without reaching a conclusion. (*progressive*)
- 9 For nearly 1,000 years, Britain's island situation its freedom from invasion. (*simple*)
- 10 Since I first met her, I to ask her out, but I'm too shy. (*progressive*)

2 Write a sentence (true or false) about yourself, using the present perfect progressive.

.....

3 INTERNET EXERCISE Use a search engine to find some sentences beginning "All through history, people ...". Which tense is most often used?

.....

past perfect: revise the basics

use We use the **past perfect** when we are already talking about the **past**, and want to talk about an **earlier past** time.

*I **tiptoed** into the room and **sat** down. But the meeting **had** already **finished**.*

*He **found** a seat on the train, **opened** his newspaper and **started** to read. Then a terrible thought **struck** him.*

***Had** he **turned** off the gas?*

*We **couldn't understand** why Ellie **hadn't phoned**.*

1 Complete the sentences with the verbs in the box (past or past perfect).

Use a dictionary if necessary.

affect apply check enclose obtain participate publish select

- 1 I for the job, although I wasn't sure I wanted it.
- 2 David & Davis rejected Martin's new book, although they three of his novels before.
- 3 Jones in two earlier expeditions, and was clearly the best person to lead the group.
- 4 I sent off the form, and then realised I the wrong photograph.
- 5 We did not think we would have an opportunity to see the match, but Penny told us she some free tickets and invited us to go with her.
- 6 The committee interviewed six of us for the job, but I was sure they the person they wanted already.
- 7 The fire started because nobody the electrical wiring for years.
- 8 The doctor told my father that working with chemicals all his life his eyesight.

2 Complete these sentences in any way you like, using a past perfect.

- 1 I couldn't get a job, although
- 2 He went to prison for five years, because
- 3 We were two hours late, because

3 GRAMMAR IN TEXTS. Put the letters of the expressions from the box into the news reports.

Use a dictionary if necessary.

A had been asked B had been given C had been overcharged D had moved
E had replied F had requested

A caller to Surrey council complained that the phone number he ¹... for their library was out of order – only to be told that '0900 1800' were in fact its opening hours.

A woman rang the emergency number 999 to say that she ³... in the local supermarket.

A Lancaster man phoned the town hall to say that the city-centre car park was haunted, because his car ²... to a different parking space while he was shopping.

A TOURIST RETURNING home, who wanted to get from London to Heathrow Airport, arrived at Torquay in south-west England at two o'clock in the morning. It seems that she ⁴... information at Paddington Station, ⁵... where she wanted to go, and ⁶... 'Turkey'.

more about the past perfect: time conjunctions

not always necessary With time conjunctions like *after*, *as soon as*, *once*, a past perfect is not always necessary, because we are not going back to an earlier past, but simply moving forward from one event to the next.

After the new government came in, things were very different.

As soon as Mary arrived we all sat down to dinner.

Once it stopped raining we started playing again.

However, we can use the past perfect with these conjunctions if we want to emphasise that the first action was separate, finished before the second started.

After the plane had landed they discovered bullet holes in the wings.

As soon as I had finished my exams I took a long holiday.

Once they had checked all my bags I was allowed into the building.

use with when This 'separating' use of the past perfect is common with *when*. Compare:

- When I **opened** the window, the cat jumped out.
When I **had opened** the windows, I sat down and had a cup of tea.
- When I **phoned** her, she came at once.
When I **had made** all my phone calls, I did some gardening.

1 Rewrite the sentences using *when* and the past perfect.

- ▶ I cleaned up the kitchen, and then I sat down and had a cup of coffee.
When I had cleaned up the kitchen, I sat down and had a cup of coffee.
- 1 I considered all the alternatives and then decided to sell my car.
- 2 We looked at eight houses and then we were completely exhausted.
- 3 She explained the problem, and then there was a long silence.
- 4 I paid for the meal, and then I didn't have enough money for the bus.
- 5 Everybody said what they thought, and then we voted.

2 Choose the best way of completing each sentence.

- 1 After I *tried / had tried* to phone her six times, I gave up and went out.
- 2 As soon as he *saw / had seen* me he gave me a big smile.
- 3 Once the dogs *went / had been* for their walk, they settled down quietly.
- 4 When I *called / had called* Annie, she pretended not to hear.
- 5 After I *painted / had painted* the kitchen ceiling I decided to stop for a rest.
- 6 When everybody *voted / had voted*, the results were announced almost immediately.
- 7 When Lucy *came in / had come in*, everybody stopped talking.
- 8 When I *sent / had sent* the email, I realised I had made a terrible mistake.
- 9 Once I *telephoned / had telephoned* everybody, I wondered what to do next.
- 10 When I *got / had got* home, I went straight to bed.
- 11 When I *opened / had opened* the door, the children ran in.
- 12 When they *mapped / had mapped* the whole territory, they returned to their headquarters.

Note: We don't use the past perfect when we simply mean 'some time before now'.

Hello. I left a suit to be cleaned. Is it ready yet? (NOT ... I had left a suit ...)

past perfect progressive

use When we are talking about a **past time**, we can use the **past perfect progressive** to talk about **earlier situations** which had continued **up to that time**.

*All the roads were flooded: it **had been raining** solidly for three days.*

*She got ill because she **hadn't been sleeping** enough.*

*When I looked at the books, I saw that the firm **had been losing** money for years.*

- 1** Here are some sentences taken from books and newspapers. Complete them with verbs from the boxes, using the past perfect progressive. Use a dictionary if necessary.

cry expect hold see sit think wait

- 1 She fetched herself a packet of sandwiches from the counter and then came back to where she
- 2 My next call was to the company that some of my things in storage, just to warn them that I was coming round.
- 3 And since her birthday, she more of Dionne than she had for years.
- 4 Olive so many horrors that hearing the question she almost laughed with relief.
- 5 It was the music that brought me in from the hall where I
- 6 For a long, long time I of getting out of that awful place.
- 7 Everybody was looking at me. And I simply couldn't explain why I

carry carry go on knit look photograph play watch

- 8 Police said that the two men arrested in Ireland several addresses of safe houses in France.
- 9 I tennis for about five minutes when there was a very loud explosion very close at hand.
- 10 At the big house I met the Officer who for me earlier on.
- 11 She couldn't really remember anything, only that she a sweater and then she had woken up in this bed with her nosy, bossy sister sitting beside her.
- 12 The rucksack and the rifle I since yesterday evening seemed like a ton weight.
- 13 Their affair for years before she decided to tell her husband.
- 14 Believe it or not, he was arrested because he the Houses of Parliament.
- 15 When her escape was discovered, it turned out that everybody thought somebody else her.

- 2** **GRAMMAR IN TEXTS** Put the letters of four of the expressions from the box into the news reports. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A had been arriving B had been forgetting C had been hoping D had been navigating
E had been trying F had been watching G had been working

An illegal immigrant has been arrested inside the Houses of Parliament. He '... illegally for months as a cleaner in one of the country's most secure buildings. He was only discovered when a police officer based at the House carried out a random check on the Police National Computer.

A man who thought he was sailing along the coast of southern England had to be rescued by emergency services after his motor boat ran out of fuel while repeatedly circling a small island in the Thames estuary. The man, who had only a roadmap to navigate by, '... to sail from Gillingham to Southampton. He told his rescuers he '... by keeping the coastline to his right.

A DRUG RUNNER who '... to pay off his own drug debt with one last trip was stopped by police officers at Newton Abbot station. When searched, he was found to be carrying £16,000 worth of heroin.

this is the first time etc

first time etc We use **perfect tenses** in sentences with **this/it/that is/was the first/second/third/only/best/worst** etc.

*This is the first time that I've **been** here. (NOT This is the first time that I'm here.)*

*This is the second time you've **been** late this week.*

*That was the fifth job he **had had** that year.*

*It was one of the worst meals I **have/had** ever **eaten**.*

1 Complete the sentences, using verbs from the box.

ask be drink feel ✓ have have meet play see see

- ▶ This is the first time I have felt well for months.
- 1 This is the best film we for ages.
- 2 It was the first time I champagne, and I really didn't like it.
- 3 It's the third time she in love this year.
- 4 I played terribly. I think it was the worst game I ever
- 5 That week in Spain was the best holiday I in my life.
- 6 This is the first warm day we this year.
- 7 It was the first time she her boyfriend's family.
- 8 In the bath was the biggest spider I ever
- 9 That's the third time you me the same question.

2 Write three sentences about experiences you have had, using **It was the first/best/worst** etc.

When I went to Germany, it was the first time I had ever travelled by air.
I saw 'Hercules Unchained' years ago. It was the worst film I had ever seen.

3 GRAMMAR IN TEXTS. Put the letters of three of the expressions from the box into the texts. Use a dictionary if necessary.

A had been away from home B had been sent C had been used
 D had danced E had held a gun F had seen those people G had sung

I was called up for war work on 31st December 1943 and sent to Stirling in Scotland. Well, they said they needed, me so I went. I didn't have much choice, really. It was awful at first, and it was the first time I¹.... What a mess we looked in our uniforms! Blue skirt, khaki tunic, brown shoes, woollen stockings and a hat that came over my ears.

"It was the first time I²... by myself in front of an audience. I was five years old. It was the school Christmas play and I had to sing 'Silent Night'. They pushed me to the front of the stage and shone a bright light on me, and when I had finished all the people stood up and clapped."

One of the reasons for the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 was the Poll Tax. There had been a long war with France. Wars cost money and that money usually came from the peasants through the taxes that they paid. In 1380, Richard II introduced a new tax called the Poll Tax. This made everyone who was on the tax register pay 5p. It was the third time in four years that such a tax³.... By 1381, the peasants had had enough.