

Verb forms

Match a form in the left-hand column with a meaning in the middle column and a grammar word in the right-hand column.

1 Sales <i>increase</i> every year.	a) Completed actions in a completed period of time.	past simple
2 Sales <i>are increasing</i> at the moment.	b) Actions or situations repeated regularly over a long period of time.	past continuous
3 Sales <i>have increased</i> by 5% this year.	c) Actions or situations in progress from the past up to the present.	present simple
4 Sales <i>have been increasing</i> rapidly this year.	d) Temporary actions or situations in progress now.	present continuous
5 Sales <i>increased</i> significantly last year.	e) Actions or situations in progress in the past.	present perfect
6 Sales <i>were increasing</i> all through last year.	f) A past event or situation that has a result in the present.	present perfect continuous

Note: remember that some verbs are not normally used in a continuous form. These include verbs of thinking (*doubt, know, understand*), the senses (*see, appear*), feelings (*want, hope*), possession (*belong to, contain, have*) and other verbs like *cost, depend on, mean, need*.

Write each time phrase in the column where it is used most often. (2) means the phrase can be written in two columns. (BrE) means British English and (AmE) means American English*.

already (BrE)	already (AmE)	at the moment (2)	every Friday	in the old days
just (BrE)	just (AmE)	last week	not ... yet (BrE)	not ... yet (AmE)
nowadays (2)	once a year	one month ago	over the last few months	right now (2)
since	so far this year	when I was young		

Present simple (I do)	Present continuous (I am doing)	Present perfect (I have done)	Past simple (I did)
<i>at the moment</i>	<i>at the moment</i>		

* A few time phrases like *just* and *already* are used with present perfect in BrE but past simple in AmE. This is not a strong rule and you can find both forms in both countries.

Complete the email by putting the verb in brackets into the most likely tense. Choose from present simple (*I do*), present continuous (*I'm doing*) or present perfect (*I've done*). Use contractions where appropriate.

Every year around this time we ⁽¹⁾ (recruit) candidates for positions across the company. This week I ⁽²⁾ (plan) that process, so I ⁽³⁾ (need) an estimate of staffing requirements from every department. In recent years we ⁽⁴⁾ (always/be able to) recruit the numbers asked for, but this year will be different. At the moment we ⁽⁵⁾ (operate) in a difficult market, and sales ⁽⁶⁾ (fall) considerably over the last 12 months. This ⁽⁷⁾ (mean) that we have been forced to reduce our staffing costs. Of course I ⁽⁸⁾ (hope) this situation will only be temporary.

D Continue as before, and use either British or American English. Choose from present simple (*I do*), present perfect (*I've done*) or past simple (*I did*).

I ⁽¹⁾ (just/receive) an email from our subsidiary in Russia. They ⁽²⁾ (need) more brochures as they ⁽³⁾ (give out) their entire stock over the last few months. They ⁽⁴⁾ (have) a stand at the Moscow Trade Fair last week and ⁽⁵⁾ (distribute) hundreds of brochures. Now they ⁽⁶⁾ (want) us to send another 5,000 copies. I ⁽⁷⁾ (already/contact) Sales to see if they have any spare, but I ⁽⁸⁾ (think) we'll need some more. Can you get a quotation from the printers?

E Continue as before. Choose from present perfect (*I've done*), past simple (*I did*) or past continuous (*I was doing*).

Hi Isabel! Sorry I ⁽¹⁾ (not/be) in touch recently. Hope you're well. Guess what! The other day I ⁽²⁾ (meet) Katia while I ⁽³⁾ (wait) at the bus stop. Remember her? That girl from Russia who ⁽⁴⁾ (be) in our English class last year. I almost ⁽⁵⁾ (not/recognize) her because she ⁽⁶⁾ (wear) a punk rock outfit and had green spiky hair!

F Continue as before. Choose from present perfect (*I've done*) or present perfect continuous (*I've been doing*).

Kim! Are you there? I ⁽¹⁾ (try) to call you all week and there's no answer! I couldn't email you because I ⁽²⁾ (wait) to get my computer fixed. What's your news? ⁽³⁾ (you/find) a job yet? As for me, I ⁽⁴⁾ (decide) to get fit. Yes, really! I ⁽⁵⁾ (eat) healthy food, and I ⁽⁶⁾ (start) yoga classes as well. I ⁽⁷⁾ (go) to yoga for a couple of weeks now and I'm really enjoying it.