

Grammar 101

Tenses, Articles, and Prepositions

Present Tenses

Simple Present: Use

1. To show actions, events or states that are true or happen habitually.

Ex 1. We use cell phones and Internet to keep in touch with our friends.

Ex 2. After school, Mike **uses** his laptop to do his homework.

2. To narrate events in a sequence

Ex 1. Everyday in the morning Elena **checks** her cell phone, **answers** some emails, and **listens** to music.

Present Progressive: Use

1. To show actions or events in progress at the moment (not finished)

Ex 1. Amy **is playing** on her cell phone right now.

Ex 2. Amy and Elena **are shopping** at the mall today.

Simple Present vs. Present Progressive

We usually DON'T use the present progressive with non-action verbs.

Ex 1. My students **need** to use their cell phones to look up a word.

Ex 1. My students ~~are needing~~ to use their cell phones to look up a word.

Ex 2. I **love** this song on the radio!

Ex 2. I ~~am loving~~ this song on the radio!

Other non-action verbs: seem, love, hear, own, know

Simple Present vs. Present Progressive

Sometimes, we can use the present progressive with non-action verbs, but they take on a different meaning than the simple present.

Ex 1. He **is** a really nice person.

Ex 1. He **is being** really nice today.

Simple Present vs. Present Progressive

- Use simple present to describe ALL of an action
 - I **write** articles for a technology magazine.

- Use present progressive to describe PART of an action in progress at that moment
 - Right now, I **am writing** an article for a technology magazine.

Present Perfect: Use

1. To connect the past to the present

Ex 1. I've **had** my cell phone for six months.

2. To describe completed actions with a connection to the present

Ex 1. I've **bought** three different phone cases in the past year.

Present Perfect Progressive: Use

1. To connect the past with the present

Ex 1. I **have been living** in California since 2013.

2. To describe actions that began in the past but are not complete in the present

Ex 1. I **have been writing** in a journal since last year.

Past Tenses

Simple Past: Use

1. To express an action, event, or state at a general time in the past.

Ex 1. My mother **wanted** a laptop computer.

2. To express an action, event, or state at a specific time in the past.

Ex 2. She **bought** the laptop two months ago from Best Buy.

Past Progressive: Use

1. To express an action that was in progress (not finished) in the past.

Ex 1. I **was playing** on my cell phone in class when my teacher asked me to stop.

Note: Usually we use the past progressive to express the action in progress. Then we use the simple past to express the action that interrupted the first action.

Present Perfect: Use

1. To express an action, event, or state, happening at an indefinite time in the past.

Ex 1. My sister **has met** my boyfriend.

2. Remember that the present perfect also connects past and present.

Ex 1. My students **have attended** many classes since the start of their ESL program.

Simple Past vs. Present Perfect

1. Simple past uses past-time expressions but present perfect does not

Ex 1. My students ~~have bought~~ their books two days ago.

Ex 1. My students **bought** their books two days ago.

2. The simple past is definite and the present perfect is indefinite.

Ex 1. The couple **met** on February 20, 1987.

Ex 1. The couple **has** already **met**.

Past Perfect: Use

1. To show an action, event, or state of being that happened **before** a certain time in the past.

Ex 1. By March, my children **had played** in their first soccer game.

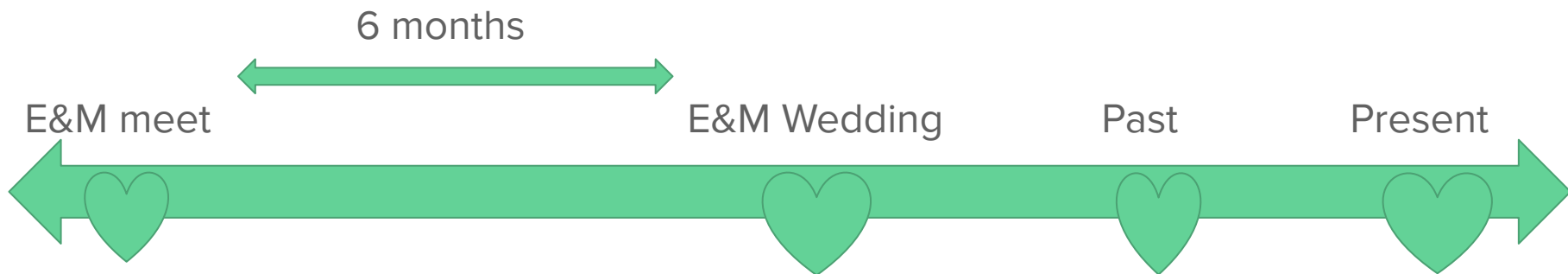
Ex 2. By the summer, Elena and Matt **had gotten** married.



Past Perfect: Use

2. Use the past perfect with the simple past to show which of two past actions, events, or states happened first.

Ex 1. Elena and Matt **had known** each other for six months when they got married.



Past Perfect: Use

3. Past perfect is usually used when we talk about the first event second.

Ex 1. By the time the wedding day arrived, Elena **had prepared** everything.

4. When we use *before* and *after* in a sentence with two events, we usually use simple past only.

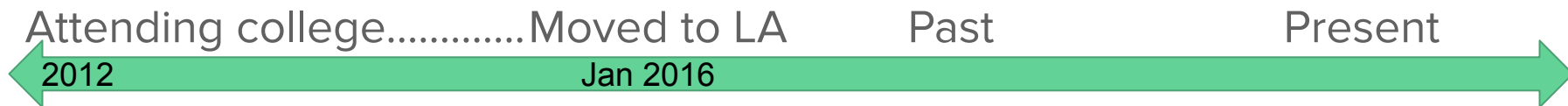
Ex 2. Matt **started** to invite guests after he **proposed** to Elena.

Past Perfect Progressive: Use

1. To express an action that was in progress before another past event.

Ex 1. Mike **had been attending** college when he moved to Los Angeles.

Ex 2. Amy **had been working** when she got married.



Articles

Articles

	General (any one / I don't know which one)	Specific (a certain one / I know which one)
Singular (1)	A or AN (singular count noun) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I gave a flower to my mom.	THE (singular count noun) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pass me the pen that you're holding.
Plural (2 or more)	Ø (plural count noun <i>or</i> non-count noun) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I gave flowers to my mom.• I have money in my pocket.	THE (plural count noun <i>or</i> non-count noun) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pass me the pens that you're holding.• I brought the money that I owe you.

Prepositions

Prepositions of Time

I was born....

8:30 PM

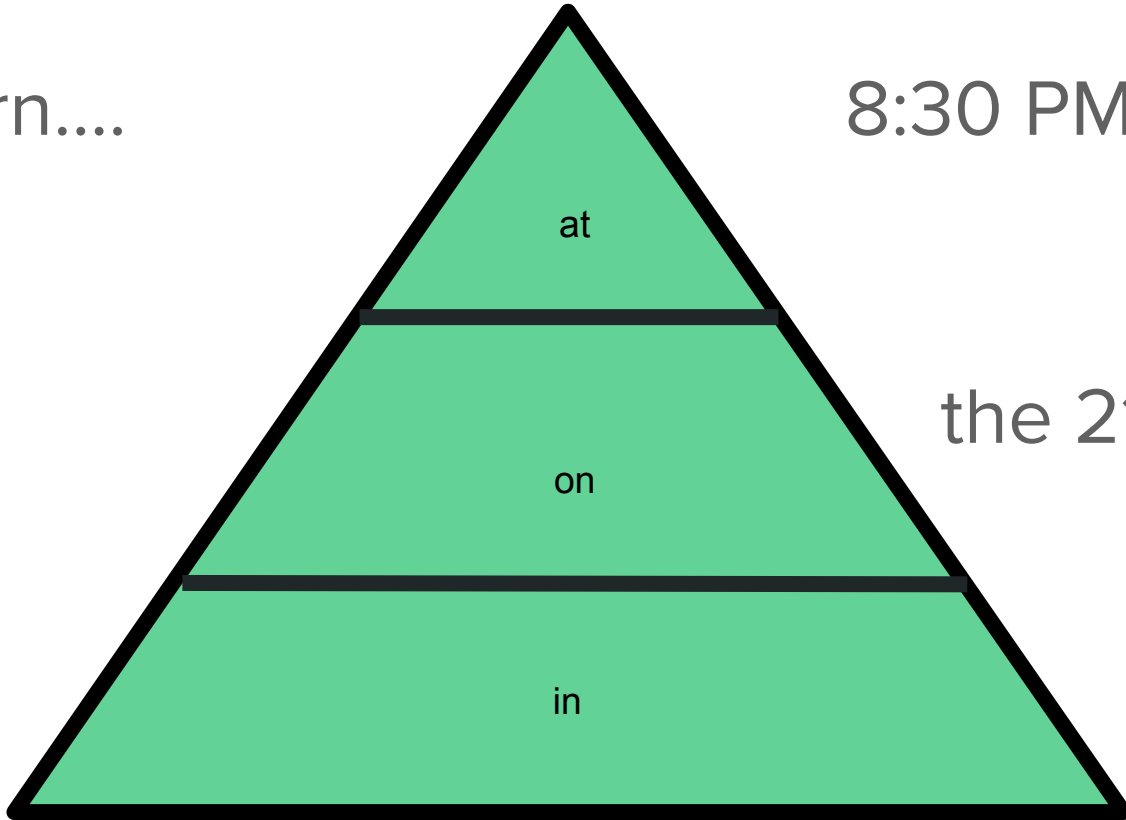
at

the 21st

on

June

in



PREPOSITIONS of TIME

in

- the morning
- the afternoon
- the evening
- February
- (the) spring
- (the) summer
- (the) fall / autumn
- (the) winter
- 2013
- the 1990s



on

- Sunday
- Monday morning
- Tuesday afternoon
- Wednesday evening
- my birthday
- a holiday
- May 5
- a weekday
- the weekend (U.S.)



at

- night
- 10:30
- noon / midday
- midnight
- bedtime
- sunrise / sunset
- the weekend (U.K.)



Time IN - ON - AT Location

