

CONJUGATION OF THE VERB "TO BE"

The most irregular verb in the English language is **be**. It has eight different forms: **am, is, are, was, were, be, been, and being**. The collection of all of these forms may be illustrated in a precise table called a *conjugation*, which categorizes the different forms in proper order by *person* (*I, you, we, he, they*), and *number* (*singular or plural*).

Examples of various forms:

*That may **be** true.*

*I **am** a good student.*

*He **is** my best friend.*

*We **are** going to camp in the park.*

*We **were** planning to meet last weekend.*

*Atlanta has **been** my home for years.*

*I **was being** quiet in class when I dropped my pen.*

*She **was** a colleague of mine at one time.*

PRESENT TENSE: Action takes place now or in the present time.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I am	We are
Second	You are	You are
Third	He/She/It is	They are

I am a student at Georgia Perimeter College.

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE TENSE: Actions or situations in progress at the moment of speaking.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I am being	We are being
Second	You are being	You are being
Third	He/She/It is being	They are being

They are being very good today.

PAST TENSE: Actions or activities that began and ended in the past.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I was	We were
Second	You were	You were
Third	He/She/It was	They were

He was a teacher at DeKalb College in 1986.

PAST PROGRESSIVE TENSE: Actions or activities that happened at the same time in the past. The past progressive is *rarely* used in simple sentences.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I was being	We were being
Second	You were being	You were being
Third	He/She/It was being	They were being

While we were working full-time, we still took classes in the evenings.

FUTURE TENSE: Actions that will take place in the future.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I will (or shall)	We will (or shall)
Second	You will	You will
Third	He/She/It will	They will

He will go to orientation for school.

PERFECT TENSE: Actions that began in the past and continue in the present.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I have been	We have been
Second	You have been	You have been
Third	He/She/It has been	They have been

He has been in pain ever since the accident.

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE: Refers to indefinite past time.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I have been	We have been
Second	You have been	You have been
Third	He/She/It has been	They have been

Up to now, we have been here almost three years.

PAST PERFECT TENSE: Actions or activities that were completed before another action or activity in the past.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I had been	We had been
Second	You had been	You had been
Third	He/She/It had been	They had been

Before I was released from the hospital, I had been told to complete the insurance paperwork.

FUTURE PERFECT TENSE: Actions that will take place in the future and end at a definite point in time.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	I will (or shall) have been	We will (or shall) have been
Second	You will have been	You will have been
Third	He/She/It will have been	They will have been

Next week, we will have been married for ten years.

NOTE: The perfect tenses all use a form of **have**.