

Non-Past Time

Non-Past Time is all time which is not Past Time.

Task 1. Which of these verb forms can be used in Non-Past Time?

1. The Simple Present
2. The Present Continuous
3. The Present Perfect Simple
4. The Present Perfect Continuous
5. The Simple Past
6. The Past Continuous
7. Modal verb + The Simple Present
8. Modal Verb + The Present Continuous
9. Modal Verb + The Present Perfect Simple
10. Modal Verb + The Present Perfect Continuous
11. The Past Perfect Simple
12. The Past Perfect Continuous

Task 2. Look at these examples. Which are 'Past Time' and which are 'Non-Past Time'?

1. I live here.
2. I'm staying here for two weeks.
3. I lived in Paris for six months in 1984.
4. I was thinking of going to the cinema tonight.
5. If I had to buy a car, I'd buy a Porsche.
6. London has stood on the banks of the River Thames for over a thousand years.
7. I've been working in the garden and it's thirsty work. Is there any beer in the fridge?
8. Dinosaurs had dominated the earth for millions of years before they were suddenly wiped out.
9. It's time you were going to bed.
10. I was interested in those ear-rings in the window – how much are they?
11. I didn't know you were engaged.
12. I've been living here for far too long – the policemen have started saying 'Good morning'.
13. I'm thinking of getting a new hi-fi - about a thousand pounds worth – a real cool system.
14. I left as soon as I could. It was a terrible party.

Rule: Here is a rule for choosing the right verb form for Non-Past Time, (except for modal verb forms).

When talking about Non-Past Time we always use the First Form (the Simple Present).

Unless the activity is important, when we use **the Present Continuous**.

Unless a relationship to another event in Non-Past Time (often 'now') is important, when we use **Present Perfect Simple**.

(Unless the activity is **also** important, when we use **the Present Perfect Continuous**).

Unless unreality is important, when we use **the Simple Past or Past Continuous**.

Task 4. Which sentences above illustrate parts of this rule?

Key

Task 1. Which of these verb forms can be used in Non-Past Time?

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|---|-----|
| 1. The Simple Present | Yes |
| 2. The Present Continuous | Yes |
| 3. The Present Perfect Simple | Yes |
| 4. The Present Perfect Continuous | Yes |
| 5. The Simple Past | Yes |
| 6. The Past Continuous | Yes |
| 7. Modal verb + The Simple Present | Yes |
| 8. Modal Verb + The Present Continuous | Yes |
| 9. Modal Verb + The Present Perfect Simple | Yes |
| 10. Modal Verb + The Present Perfect Continuous | Yes |
| 11. The Past Perfect Simple | No |
| 12. The Past Perfect Continuous | No |

Task 2. Look at these examples. Which are 'Past Time' and which are 'Non-Past Time'?

1. I live here. **'Non-Past Time'**
2. I'm staying here for two weeks. **'Non-Past Time'**
3. I lived in Paris for six months in 1984. **'Past Time'**
4. I was thinking of going to the cinema tonight. **'Non-Past Time'**
5. If I had to buy a car, I'd buy a Porsche. **'Non-Past Time'**
6. London has stood on the banks of the River Thames for over a thousand years. **'Non-Past Time'**
7. I've been working in the garden and it's thirsty work. Is there any beer in the fridge? **'Non-Past Time'**
8. Dinosaurs had dominated the earth for millions of years before they were suddenly wiped out. **'Past Time'**
9. It's time you were going to bed. **'Non-Past Time'**
10. I was interested in those ear-rings in the window – how much are they? **'Non-Past Time'**
11. I didn't know you were engaged. **'Non-Past Time'**
12. I've been living here for far too long – the policemen have started saying 'Good morning'. **'Non-Past Time'**
13. I'm thinking of getting a new hi-fi - about a thousand pounds worth – a real cool system. **'Non-Past Time'**
14. I left as soon as I could. It was a terrible party. **'Past Time'**