

Dutch tenses

English tenses

The present tense (o.t.t.)

simple present

- where a general truth is expressed (universal or neutral present)
- where a present habit is expressed (habitual present)
- to express what happens now (without the idea of being in progress being relevant) (instantaneous present)
- to express a future event (in timetables/schedules/official programmes) (present with future reference)
- to express a past event (historical present/narrative present/vivid present) (less common than in Dutch)

present progressive (also called continuous present)

- where an action or occurrence is represented as going on at a particular moment or during a certain period: limited duration and, sometimes, it expresses incompleteness
- to express a habit as a source of irritation ('emotional continuous'): *Hij klaagt altijd – He is always complaining!*
- to express planned future (event in the near future anticipated by virtue of present arrangement): *I am seeing my son at 7 p.m.*

present perfect (either simple present perfect or present perfect progressive)

- where something started in the past and continues up to the present, the verb in the corresponding Dutch sentence usually being accompanied by *al* or *reeds* (*Hij woont sinds 1980 in Londen – He has lived/has been living in London since 1980.*)

past tense (either simple past or past progressive)

- where Dutch uses the historical present, but where the historical present would not be common in English

present future tense (simple or continuous present future tense)

- to express a future event (*will + infinitive* or *will + be + ing form*)

The past tense (o.v.t.)

simple past

- past event/past habit/non-reality/'attitudinal past'

past progressive

- where duration of a past event is stressed

past perfect (either simple past perfect or past perfect progressive)

- where something started in the 'pre-past' and continues up to another point of time in the past, the verb usually being accompanied by *al* or *reeds*

The present perfect (v.t.t.)

present perfect (simple or progressive)

- where the Dutch sentence does not contain a past time adverbial or where the context does not dictate the past [both the present perfect and the past tense are often possible without much difference in meaning in this case]

(simple) past tense

- where the Dutch sentence contains a past time adverbial or where the context dictates the past (the 'context past')

The past perfect (v.v.t.)

past perfect (simple or progressive)

past future perfect tense (v.v.t.t.) (*would have + past participle*)

- where the Dutch sentence uses a past perfect structure instead of a v.v.t.t. in the main clause of a conditional structure]