english tenses

tense	Affirmative/Negative/Question	Use	Signal Words
Simple Present	A: He speaks. N: He does not speak. Q: Does he speak?	• action in the present taking place once, never or several times • facts • actions taking place one after another • action set by a timetable or schedule	always, every …, never, normally, often, seldom, sometimes, usually if sentences type I (If I talk, …)
Present Progressive	A: He is speaking. N: He is not speaking. Q: Is he speaking?	• action taking place in the moment of speaking • action taking place only for a limited period of time • action arranged for the future	at the moment, just, just now, Listen!, Look!, now, right now
Simple Past	A: He spoke. N: He did not speak. Q: Did he speak?	• action in the past taking place once, never or several times • actions taking place one after another • action taking place in the middle of another action	yesterday, 2 minutes ago, in 1990, the other day, last Friday if sentence type II (If I talked, …)
Past Progressive	A: He was speaking. N: He was not speaking. Q: Was he speaking?	• action going on at a certain time in the past • actions taking place at the same time • action in the past that is interrupted by another action	when, while, as long as
Present Perfect Simple	A: He has spoken. N: He has not spoken. Q: Has he spoken?	• putting emphasis on the result • action that is still	already, ever, just, never, not yet, so far, till

		going on • action that stopped recently • finished action that has an influence on the present • action that has taken place once, never or several times before the moment of speaking	now, up to now
Present Perfect Progressive	A: He has been speaking. N: He has not been speaking. Q: Has he been speaking?	• putting emphasis on the course or duration (not the result) • action that recently stopped or is still going on • finished action that influenced the present	all day, for 4 years, since 1993, how long?, the whole week
Past Perfect Simple	A: He had spoken. N: He had not spoken. Q: Had he spoken?	• action taking place before a certain time in the past • sometimes interchangeable with past perfect progressive • putting emphasis only on the fact (not the duration)	already, just, never, not yet, once, until that day if sentence type III (If I had talked, ...)
Past Perfect Progressive	A: He had been speaking. N: He had not been speaking. Q: Had he been speaking?	• action taking place before a certain time in the past • sometimes interchangeable with past perfect simple • putting emphasis on the duration or course of an action	for, since, the whole day, all day
Future I Simple	A: He will speak. N: He will not speak. Q: Will he speak?	• action in the future that cannot be influenced	in a year, next ..., tomorrow If Satz Typ I

		• spontaneous decision • assumption with regard to the future	(If you ask **her**, she will help you.) assumption: I think, probably, perhaps