EASY ACCESS ENGLISH

RELAX

Introduction- tense and tense

The word ‘tense’ in one sense comes from the latin form ‘tēnsus’ which is the past participle of ‘tendere’ to stretch. We use it both to describe something which is stretched tight, such as a cord, fiber etc, or to talk about something which is characterized by a strain upon the nerves or feelings; a tense moment. We can also talk about a person as being ‘tense’ highly strung or nervous. In another sense the word tense comes from the latin ‘tempus’ and the middle english ‘tens’ meaning time. It is used to talk about the time expressed by a verbal category such as a present, the past or the future. So there is no etymological link between these two words although they are spelt the same. However, the tenses do make some people tense up as they are afraid they are not using the correct tense! We can help you to relax about this!

Activity One: Walk round the room asking these questions to the other people in the class:

1.So how are you feeling today? Are you tense or relaxed?

2.Do you tend to tense up when you meet new people?

3.Do you feel tense when you speak English?

4.What tenses in English do you find confusing?

5.What kind of thing do you like to do in your spare time to relax?

6.What makes you feel tense in general, what kind of situations?



Activity two - so which tenses make you all tense up? Lets find out what you said.

Here's a quick review of the different tenses in English.

After reading through it tell your teacher which tenses make you tense up!
Which do you feel relaxed about?

This way we will get an idea about what we want to work on in future lessons!



A Guide to Tenses in English

By Kenneth Beare

Present Simple - The present simple is used to express regular routines and habits.

★*He doesn't drive to work. He takes the bus.*

★*When do you get up?*

★*They work at the hospital.*

Present Continuous - The present continuous is used to express an action which is happening at the present moment.

★*They are watching TV at the moment.*

★*What are you doing?*

★*She isn't working now.*

Present Perfect - The present perfect is used to express something which has happened up to the present moment.

★*They haven't seen the film yet.*

★*He's lived in London since 1978.*

★*Have you finished your work yet?*

Present Perfect Continuous -The present perfect continuous is used to express the duration of an activity that begins in the past and continues up to the present moment.

★*We've been working for three hours.*

★*How long have you been driving?*

★*They haven't been living here long.*

Past Simple -The past simple is used to express a finished past action which occurs at a specific moment in the past.

★She sold her house last month.

★They didn't want to visit Rome when they were in Italy.

★Where did you go on holiday last summer?

Past Continuous -The past continuous is used to express something that is happening at a precise moment in the past. The past continuous is often used to express an interrupted action.

★*I was cooking dinner when you telephoned.*

★*What was he doing when you arrived?*

★*They weren't doing anything special when you interrupted them.*

Past Perfect -The past perfect is used to talk about an action that is finished before another action in the past. This form is especially useful for giving reasons for a decision that was made in the past.

★*They had researched the market carefully before they decided to open a new branch.*

★*Mr. Smith had already begun the meeting when I arrived.*

Past Perfect Continuous - The past perfect continuous is used to express the duration of an activity up to another point in time in the past. It is also used to stress that a certain activity had been going on before something important happened.

★*We had been waiting for two hours when they finally arrived.*

★*They'd been working on the report when he telephoned.*

Future with 'Will' -The future with 'will' is used to make a future prediction or express a decision about the future made at the moment.

★*It will be sunny tomorrow.*

★*I think the government will help the poor.*

★*I'm hungry. I'll buy something to eat.*

Future with 'Going to' - The future with 'going to' is used to speak about future intentions or plans made before the present moment.

★*We are going to study Russian next semester.*

★*Where are you going to stay in New York?*

★*She isn't going to take a vacation this year.*

Future Continuous - The future continuous is used to discuss an activity that will be in progress at a specific point in time in the future.

I'll be working on the report at four this afternoon.
When you arrive in New York, I'll be attending the meeting in Paris.

Future Perfect -The future perfect is used to talk about what will have been done up to a specific point in the future.

★*She'll have finished by the time you arrive.*

★*Our company'll have sold a million copies by the end of next month.*

Activity three - How to relax when you speak English. (Let's take turns to read the text).

Pay attention to your INTONATION while we read. In English we use PITCH and STRESS to emphasize what we are saying. Listen to your teachers intonation.



Here's some advice to make English speaking a relaxing experience for you and to help you to avoid tensing up and getting 'blocked'.

1/ **Know no fear:** What's the worst thing that can happen? The worst case scenario is that someone might not understand what you say, this is not a disaster, you can always use a dictionary, use your arms hands, facial expression etc.. If you are afraid of making mistakes and never take risks then you will not be very interesting to talk to and you will learn very slowly! We learn from our mistakes 'by trial and error', so take risks and just relax and say what's on your mind.

2/ **Silence the French voice:** Most people only have one brain:-)This means that it is very difficult for them to talk two languages *simultaneously*. This is why translating continuously every thought from French to English and back again does not work! You have to stop thinking in French!

3/ **Relax and have fun**: Sharing a fun moment with your English group means that you will remember everything that happened, including all the new words you learned! Enjoying your lessons means that you will really learn fast.

4/ **Get lost in the moment:** If you get very involved in a game, discussion or role play then you will actually forget that you are speaking English and so you will stop translating and stop worrying about making mistakes.

5/ **Prepare the terrain:** You will find it more fun in the lessons if you look up the key words from the lesson plan (without translating the whole thing!). As repetition is the key to learning new vocabulary and expressions it's a good idea to read through everything before the lesson, then after the lesson consolidate your learning by studying the feedback.

6/ **No one is judging:** We are a team! You will all be learning from each-others' mistakes so remember that everyone in the room is supporting you and helping you to succeed.

9/ **Everyone has their strengths:** Some people have a great accent, some people learn new words easily, some people are great with the tenses... each person in this class has their own strengths and weaknesses. Everyone is here to learn. So don't compare yourself to other people. There's no point!

10/ **English is part of your life:** If English is only part of your life once a week in the lesson then you will not progress as quickly as you would like. Remember that you can learn passively, just by listening to the radio, reading or watching films in English. Our blog is full of ideas to help you and our 'animations' are ideal for practicing your English.

Activity Four Frankie says relax

Frankie Goes to Hollywood and Mika

Watch the videos.



✦What do you think of the style?
✦Do you know the songs?
✦Which do you prefer and why?
✦What kind of music do you find relaxing?

Sing along to the song you prefer!

Activity Five Tense Up

Let's practice - Ask and answer the questions with your partner. Use the Guide from Activity Two to make sure you get the tenses right. Help each-other! At the end of the activity tell your teacher which questions was more difficult.

1.Describe your routine in the mornings.Say what you are doing right now.

2.How long have you been living in Montpellier?Tell the story of your birth.

3.What are you going to do to celebrate your next birthday?

4.What are your plans for the weekend?



Activity Six - ***Stressed out Chilled out***.

Half of the group will walk around the room looking really tense. When someone greets or talks to them they will try to avoid talking or reply really rudely and say they are busy. The other half will walk around in a really relaxed, chilled out way and try to have a relaxed chat with the stressed people that they meet. When the buzzer sounds, change over.

Activity Seven - **Video**.

Watch the videos and then answer the question.
Effects of Stress - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZZIlKXcolo

According to the video what are the dangers of being stressed?

Activity Eight - **Act it out**

With your partner - prepare a 'video' presentation, a little like the one we just watched, showing how it's bad to be tense and good to be relaxed.