

Philosophy of Time – Study Guide

In Philosophy, there are two ways to talk about time. Usually, these two ways of describing time are broken into the **A-Model** and the **B-Model**.

A Models

- Events and their associated objects can gain or lose temporal properties.
 - Temporal properties can be reduced to past, present and future. People and objects can have these statuses.
 - **For example:** The event known as *World War II* has the property of pastness.
- Events change over time—they start in the future, then become present, and finally move into the past. This idea is explained by Endurantism, which as a model of change allows things change as they move through time.
- Because of this, the tenses we use in language carry more meaning. Saying something is over or gone implies that we are no longer able to experience that thing in the same way ever again. These tenses are considered 'A-facts'.
- A models are based on sensations and feelings of the passage of time.
- There are **TWO** A-Models (Growing Block and Presentism).

B Models

- Events exist in an unchanging order.
- Time has no flow. Events can't gain temporal properties; titles of past, present and future.
- Events are locked in place on a timeline.
- When we say past, present, and future, we're really talking about how one event happens before or after another event on a big timeline. For example, Susan's birthday might be after Tommy's but before Jimmy's. So Susan's birthday is always earlier or later than something else—it just depends on what other event we're comparing it to. Time is relative (a matter of comparison).
- B-theory is most compatible with modern Physics.
- Uses Perdurance as an explanation for non-changing temporal properties.

(temporal stage)	<u>Eternalism/Block Theory</u>	Presentism	Growing Block
Past	Real/Exist	Non-Exist	Real/Exist
Present	Real/Exist	Real/Exist	Real/Exist
Future	Real/Exist	Non-Exist	Non-Exist

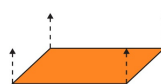
• A Model

- Presentism
- Growing Block

• B Model

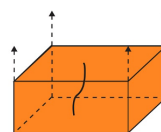
- Eternalism (4D-Block)

Presentism



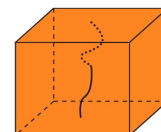
The Present

Growing Past

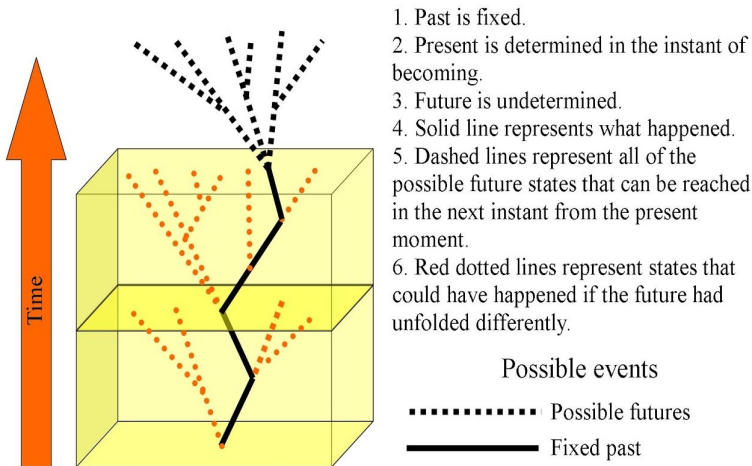


Past & Present

Eternalism



Past, Present, & Future



Growing Block Theory

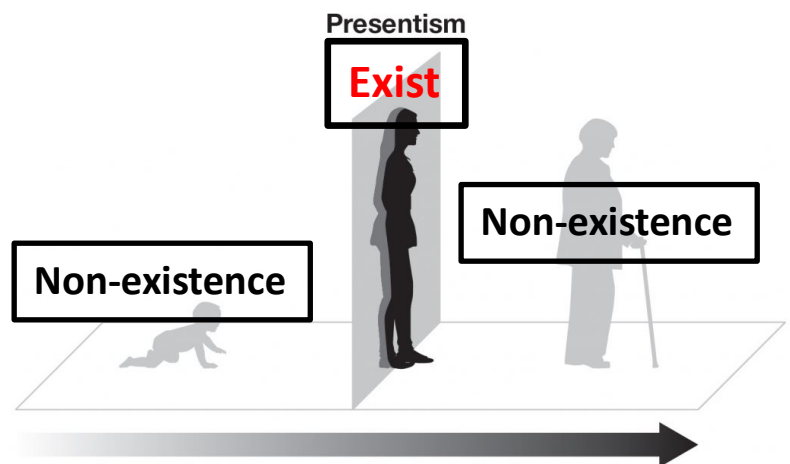
Growing block theory means that time is like a container; it's constantly being filled with elements going to the past from the apparent present directed towards a non-existent future. In growing block there is no future. The future does not exist and is therefore inaccessible.

The passage of time creates new things which come into existence. As the present marches forward, and as the past goes behind it, the block of reality grows based on possible futures.

Presentism

The only time that exists is the present; past and future are not real. There is only always a "now". The past only exists in human memory and the future only exist in our ability to make predictions and eventually have the experience of what we will call the present. In this view, it is only the case that present objects exist. Stated another way: for something to be real, then it must exist **now**. This also means that tensed language like saying something "happened" or "existed" have a special value as they describe something that once was but can no longer be accessed. The meaningfulness of tense is taken seriously. A sentence like "thank goodness that's over" has the weight of how you feel; we hear it or say it and we feel a temporal relief.

For this reason, we must be able to consider how we directly access our thoughts as they relate to the present. Presentism's main argument is the idea that we have the most control of ourselves and our world in the 'now'. We can define our understanding and make the best evidence with what we have in the present.



However, Presentism has some big problems. The biggest one is that there's no clear way to define what the "present" is by itself or measure it like we do with other parts of time. Because of this, Presentism can't really be tested with science—and if something can't be tested, it also can't be proven wrong. That's a problem.

Also, if only the present exists, then any evidence we have (like fossils, letters, or videos) would be from the past—but Presentism says the past doesn't exist. That means anything we say about the past has no real connection to the evidence we're using. This makes Presentism self-defeating, which means it destroys its own argument by depending on something it says doesn't exist.