



3

What a story!

Narrative tenses • Giving news and responding • Books and films • Showing interest



TEST YOUR GRAMMAR

Read the story. Put the events into chronological order. What happened first? What happened last?

Burglar arrested

▶ A COUPLE came home at midnight to find their house had been burgled. Bob and Janet Gilbreath had left their house at six o'clock to go to the theatre. When they got home, the back door had been smashed, and money and jewellery stolen. A neighbour said that she had heard a loud noise at about eight o'clock. Mr and Mrs Gilbreath, who moved to the house five years ago, told police that they had seen a man who had been acting suspiciously for several days before the robbery, and were able to give a description. A man answering the description was later arrested.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Narrative tenses

- 1 Look at the newspaper headlines. What do you think is the whole story?
- 2 What would you like to know? Write some more questions.
Did he mean to fall over?
Where was she climbing?
How did he manage to hack into their systems?
- 3 **T 3.1** Listen to three conversations about the stories. Which of your questions were answered?
- 4 Here are the answers to some questions. What are the questions?
1 Just ordinary clothes.
2 For a dare.
3 Three hours.
4 In a shelter.
5 His own software program.
6 To download from the Internet.
- 5 Match lines in A and B. Practise saying them with contracted and weak forms.

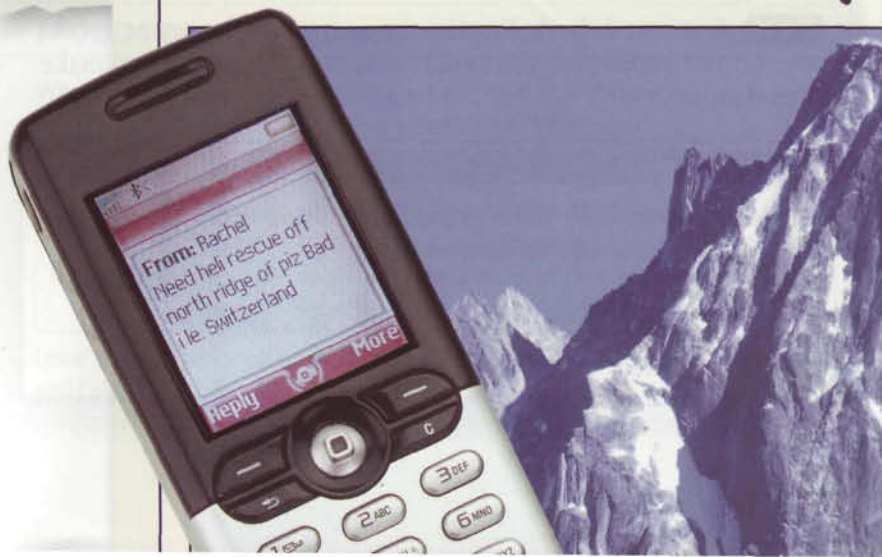
A	B
He was wearing	with a partner.
He'd been talking	he wouldn't do it.
His friends had bet him	the next night.
She was climbing	about doing it for ages.
They were rescued	ordinary clothes.

T 3.2 Listen and check.

Man survives plunge over Niagara Falls



Climber saved by



The nerd who hacked into US Defence systems



text plea to friend



LANGUAGE FOCUS

1 Complete the chart using the verb in brackets.

Past Simple (fall)	Past Continuous (read)
Past Perfect (hear)	Past Perfect Continuous (act)
Past Simple passive (arrest)	Past Perfect passive (burgle)

Look at tapescript T 3.1 on p127. Find an example of each tense. When do we use the Past Perfect? When do we use continuous tenses?

2 Why are different tenses used in these paragraphs?

John cooked a lovely meal. His guests had a good time. They left at midnight.

Just after midnight, John was looking at the mess. His guests had just left. He'd cooked a lovely meal, and everyone had had a good time.

▶▶ Grammar Reference pp142–143

PRACTICE

Discussing grammar

1 Compare the use of tenses in these sentences. Say which tense is used and why.

1 *I read* | a book on the plane.
I was reading

2 When Alice arrived, *I made a cake.*
I was making a cake.
I had made a cake.

3 *The film started* | when we got to the cinema.
The film had started

4 He was sacked because *he had stolen some money.*
he had been stealing money for years.

5 When I got to the garage, my car *was being repaired.*
had been repaired.

Writing narratives

- 2 Rewrite the sentences as one sentence, beginning with the part in **bold**.

She won £2,000 in a competition. **Last night Sally was celebrating.**
Last night Sally was celebrating because she'd won £2,000 in a competition.

- 1 He got up at dawn. He was driving for ten hours. **Peter was tired when he arrived home.**
- 2 I parked my car on a yellow line. It was towed away. **I went to get my car, but it wasn't there.** (*When ...*)
- 3 He wasn't always poor. He had a successful business. Unfortunately, it went bust. **Mick was a homeless beggar.**
- 4 They were shopping all day. They spent all their money on clothes. **Jane and Peter arrived home. They were broke.** (*When ...*)
- 5 He saw a house in Scotland. He first saw it while he was driving on holiday. **Last week John moved to the house.**

The news

- 3 **T 3.3** Listen to the first story. Correct the mistakes in the sentences.

- 1 Ten workers have died.
- 2 They'd been trapped up a mountain.
- 3 They'd been building a new road.
- 4 There was an avalanche.
- 5 Sixteen men managed to escape.
- 6 Ten were fatally injured.
- 7 The men were recovering at home.
- 8 The cause of the accident is known.

- 4 **T 3.4** Listen to the second news item. Here are the answers to some questions. Write the questions.

- 1 For two days.
- 2 After school on Wednesday.
- 3 Their photographs.
- 4 Nearby houses.
- 5 A neighbour.
- 6 In a garden shed.
- 7 No, they hadn't. (... *realized ...?*)

SPOKEN ENGLISH News and responses

When we tell a story, we use certain expressions. When we listen to a story, we respond with different expressions. Put G (giving news), R (reacting to news), or A (asking for more information) after each expression.

- 1 Did you read that story about ... ?
- 2 What happened to him?
- 3 That's amazing!
- 4 What did he do it for?
- 5 Apparently ...
- 6 What a crazy guy!
- 7 You're kidding!
- 8 Then what happened?
- 9 Actually, ...
- 10 I don't get it.

Work with a partner. You are going to read and discuss two news stories.

Student A Read the story on p155.

Student B Read the story on p156.

When you've read your story, tell your partner about it. Try to use some of the phrases for giving and responding to news.

▶▶ WRITING Narrative writing 1 – Using adverbs in narratives p113



- 4 A Mind your head as you come through this door. It's very low.
B Ouch! That really hurt!
A I told you! Well, it isn't bleeding, but you'll have a nice bruise.
- 5 A Do be careful. That bowl's really heavy.
B Whoops! Sorry about that! I dropped it! Don't worry. I'll get you a new one.
- 6 A Did you know that they eat horse-meat in some countries? And snails. And pigs' feet.
B Yuk! That's disgusting! You wouldn't catch me eating that!
- 7 A Look! Isn't that Peter over there, sitting on his own?
B Hey, Peter! Come over here and sit with us. Let's have a chat.
- 8 A Sarah told me that you hated me. She said that you never wanted to see me ever again!
B Uh? That's nonsense! What a stupid thing to say! You know it's not true.
- 9 A I saw Julie yesterday.
B Oh, really? How interesting! I haven't seen her for ages. How is she?
- 10 A Tomorrow's test has been cancelled.
B Phew! What a relief! Thank goodness for that! I hadn't done any revising for it at all.

T 2.13 See p25

T 2.14

- I've just won \$25,000 on the lottery!
- Let's have a long coffee break!
- Maria, you wrote 'at Rome' instead of 'in Rome'.
- We were stuck in a traffic jam for four hours!
- Look at the state of the kitchen! It hasn't been cleaned for weeks!
- Rain, rain, rain.
- The teacher told us to learn the dictionary for homework!
- We hadn't heard from our daughter for a month, then she phoned last night.
- My sister says it's possible to learn French in three months!
- Yesterday I got a tax bill for \$20,000.



UNIT 3

T 3.1

- 1 A Did you read that story about the guy who went over the Niagara Falls?
B No. What happened to him? Did he die?
A No, he survived, amazingly enough.
B Really? But I suppose he was wearing some kind of protection.
A That's the incredible thing. He was just wearing ordinary clothes. He just jumped in, fell down 180 feet, and somehow managed to avoid hitting the rocks.
B That's amazing! What did he do it for?
A Apparently he just did it for a dare. He'd been talking about doing it for ages. His friends had bet him he wouldn't do it.
B What a crazy guy!
A You're not kidding. The strange thing is, before he jumped, people around him said he'd been smiling.
B Wow! How weird!
- 2 A There was this story the other day about ... this woman mountain climber ...
B Uh huh. What about her?
A Well, she was stuck on top of a mountain, and she only managed to escape by sending text messages.
B Gosh! Where did this happen?
A In the Swiss Alps, I think. She was climbing with a partner. They'd been climbing for three hours when they got trapped in a terrible storm.

- B You're kidding!
A No. But they built a shelter or something, and they hid in that.
B Then what happened?
A She started sending text messages to friends in London, and one of them sent a text back saying that the mountain rescue teams in Switzerland had been contacted.
B Uh huh.
A They tried to find them, but the weather was too bad - storms and everything.
B Oh, no!
A Anyway, they were rescued the next night, and now they're safe and sound.
B Thank goodness for that!
- 3 A I was reading in the paper the other day about a schoolboy who hacked into the United States military computers.
B No! Really? How old was he? 17? 18?
A Actually he was only 14.
B How did he do it?
A Well, he'd developed his own software program, and he'd been using this to download films and music from the Internet.
B I don't get it. What's that got to do with the US military?
A Well, he'd figured that if he broke into these powerful military computers, he could use them to download stuff even faster, so he wasn't really trying to get to their secrets.
B Oh, I see. I bet they were worried, though.
A They were. They got in touch with Scotland Yard, and this boy was tracked down to his house in North London.
B And he's only 14! They should give him a job!

T 3.2

He was wearing ordinary clothes. He'd been talking about doing it for ages. His friends had bet him he wouldn't do it. She was climbing with a partner. They were rescued the next night.

T 3.3

This is the six o'clock news. Ten workers have been rescued from an accident 400 feet beneath the streets of London. They had spent the past 36 hours trapped underground. They had been digging a tunnel for a new Underground line when the roof collapsed. Sixty men managed to escape immediately, but two were fatally injured. Last night the ten men were recovering in hospital. An investigation into the cause of the accident is due to start tomorrow.

T 3.4

Three children who had been missing for two days have been found safe and well. The three ten-year-olds, two boys and a girl, disappeared after school on Wednesday. Police had issued photographs of the three, and had been searching nearby houses. They were eventually spotted by a neighbour, who alerted the police. They said they had slept out in a garden shed for a dare, and hadn't realized the concern they had caused.

T 3.5 Books and films

Paul
Certainly one of my favourite films is *Witness*. It's the one starring Harrison Ford, where he plays a detective who's investigating a murder that an Amish child has witnessed, and he has to protect the child and to do that at one point he has to go and spend some time living with the Amish community. Now the Amish community are that religious group ... erm ... in America who live a very old-fashioned lifestyle. They have no modern gadgets and no modern technology because their religion doesn't allow it. Now, Harrison Ford plays this very tough, hard-nosed city cop and there are some wonderful scenes where his values and culture really clash with

this very peaceful Amish community. It's also, it has a love story in it because he falls in love with the boy's mother, who's Amish. It's a very, very intense and passionate love story, and it's a thriller because it deals with police corruption, and it's unbearably tense and the build up towards the end is incredible. It really, really does have you on the edge of your seat.

Kate

I don't know if I'd say this is my favourite book, but this is certainly a book that made ... erm ... quite an impression on me. The book is called ... erm ... *The Secret History* and it's by Donna Tartt, and ... erm ... without actually giving away entirely what happens in the story, ... erm ... *The Secret History* is about a group of students and it's all about somebody's desire to belong to a group. And in fact the group of students ... erm ... do something really, really terrible. Erm ... they are involved in a murder and you know right from the beginning of the novel that this is going to happen and so you would think that there isn't any element of suspense because you know that somebody's going to die and you have some idea about how they're actually going to die, but in fact ... erm ... the whole story's very, very claustrophobic. You feel sort of trapped inside the group and trapped inside their situation. It's completely compelling to read. It's not a comfortable read but it was about 600 pages long and I read it in about a week ... erm ... and I lived and breathed this book over that week. Erm ... I would recommend it to anybody who wants to read something that psychologically is really dramatic.

T 3.6 The money jigsaw

I = Interviewer, R = Rachel

- I Well and one of those girls, Rachel Aumann, is on the line now as we speak. Good morning to you, Rachel.
R Good morning.
I Erm ... extraordinary, this. You saw these bits of bank notes just blowing in the wind?
R Yeah, it was ... erm ... like really out of the ordinary. We were just walking to school and there's ripped up notes flying all over the floor. And then we traced it to like a bin, so that's where the ... the big bag was full of them.
I How big a bag?
R Erm ...
I Like a bin bag or something?
R No, actually, not that big ... erm ... it's about, I think it was like a Sainsbury's bag, like one of those.
I And it was just jammed full of torn-up banknotes, what fivers and tenners and that sort of thing?
R Yeah, just fives, tens, twenties.
I And how little were the pieces?
R Erm ... some were bigger than stamp sizes.
I That small though?
R Yeah, some were smaller.
I And so what did you do? You took them to the police or something?
R Erm we, we had to go to school so we went to school and then ... erm ... after school we were playing outside around ... erm ... like on the same road and ... erm ... when the police arrived we were, we went over then and started talking to them and telling them when we found it.
I And they took them away at that stage, did they?
R Yeah.
I And then what happened?
R Erm ... they kept them for like a long time 'cos there's a certain amount of months that they have to keep them before you, they can give them back.
I Right.
R And I think they went to the Royal Bank of England and to Scotland Yard and ... erm ... when ... erm ... they said yeah, it's real money ... erm ... they gave it back and we put it together.



UNIT 4

- I You say you put it together, but tiny bits of bank notes it must have taken you forever to do ... I mean, what a jigsaw puzzle!
- R Yeah it's taken ages 'cos it's been about a year and we still haven't finished.
- I So how many have you got left now then?
- R Erm ... we have all the fives to do and just a few twenties but the tens are all finished.
- I Extraordinary! Is it ... how much time do you spend doing this?
- R Erm ... well when we first got it we did like half an hour, an hour a day but then as like time passed we just slowly like died down and didn't do as much.
- I But I'm trying to picture you doing this. What do you do, do you stick bits of sellotape or something, or do you stick them onto a piece of paper or what?
- R Well you have to get, you get the two serial numbers and ... erm ... then you have to get like a little bit from the middle of the note and so once you've got that, you just put sticky tape on the back of them so that they all stay together and put it in a bag.
- I Good heavens! And you're going to carry on doing it, eh?
- R Yeah, hopefully.
- I £1200 so far?
- R Erm ... yeah.
- I And how much do you reckon you will be worth at the end of it all?
- R Erm ... I think we if stick to it we could probably get about £2,000.
- I Well, I think that you've earned every penny of it, Rachel. Thank you very much.
- R Thank you.

T 3.7

- A Jade's got a new boyfriend.
- B A new boyfriend? Good for her!
- A Apparently, he lives in a castle.
- B Does he? How amazing!
- A Yes. She met him in Slovenia.
- B In Slovenia? That's interesting.
- A Unfortunately, he can't speak much English.
- B Can't he? I thought everyone could these days!

T 3.8 See p33

T 3.9

- 1 A Sam wants to apologize.
B Does he?
A Yes. He's broken your mother's Chinese vase.
B My mother's Chinese vase? Oh, no!
- 2 A We had a terrible holiday.
B Did you?
A Yes. It rained all the time.
B Did it?
A Yes. And the food was disgusting!
B Was it? What a drag!
- 3 A I'm broke.
B Are you? How come?
A Because I just had a phone bill for £500.
B £500? Why so much?
A Because I have a girlfriend in Korea.
B Do you? How interesting!
- 4 A It took me three hours to get here.
B Did it?
A Yes. There was a traffic jam ten miles long.
B Ten miles long? That's awful!
A Now I've got a headache!
B Have you? Poor darling. I'll get you something for it.
- 5 A I'm on a mountain, watching the sun set.
B Are you?
A Yes. And I've got something very important to ask you.
B Have you? What is it? I can't wait!
A You'd better sit down. I'd like to marry you.
B Marry me? Wow!

T 4.1

- 1 Oh dear! It's not that I *dislike* him, I just don't *love* him. How can I tell him I don't want to marry him without hurting his feelings? Trouble is, I actually fancy his best friend!
- 2 There's this group of lads you see – they're always chasing me and I don't think it's for fun. But I can't tell my mum and dad – if they find out, they'll go to the head teacher and complain and that would make everything much worse.
- 3 How do you tell someone when they look awful? That dress doesn't suit her at all. But I don't know how to tell her. She obviously thinks she looks great in it.
- 4 Me and Emma are going clubbing, but I daren't tell my Dad – he'd kill me. I've got an important exam next week and I haven't done a thing for it. I haven't a clue when I'll be back.
- 5 I know I'm not really ill. But it's a beautiful day and I don't want to sit in a stuffy office all day. I'm off to play golf. I never have days off usually.
- 6 I don't care who it is. I had a late night and I feel really rough this morning. Tell them I'm in an important meeting and I don't want to be disturbed at the moment.

T 4.2

- 1 Who did she give it to?
2 What do you want to have a word about?
3 Who did you dance with?
4 What do you need it for?
5 Who did you get it from?
6 Who did you buy it for?
7 What are you thinking about?
8 Where do you want a lift to?

T 4.3 See p36

T 4.4

- 1 A Don't you like ice-cream?
B No. I know it's weird, but I never have done. Not even vanilla.
- 2 A Don't you like learning English?
B No, actually, I don't. I think it's really difficult.
- 3 A Don't you like your neighbours?
B Well, they're all right, but they make a lot of noise.
- 4 A Haven't you ever been abroad?
B Not really. I went to Scotland once, but that's not really abroad, is it?
- 5 A Haven't you got a TV at home?
B No. We must be the only people in the whole world without a telly.
- 6 A Isn't it Tuesday today?
B Yeap. It follows on from Monday.
- 7 A Isn't this your pen?
B No, it isn't, actually. Mine's blue. That's black.
- 8 A Didn't you go to the States last year?
B You bet. All down the east coast from Boston to Florida.
- 9 A Aren't you going to the races next weekend?
B Uh huh. And I bet I'll lose a fortune. Hey ho!

T 4.5 My mate Norman

Part one

My mate Norman's a funny guy. He's an insomniac, he's dyslexic, and he's an atheist. He's single, unemployed, and lives all alone in a tiny one-roomed flat without even a pet for company. Also he's vegetarian and teetotal. He's -er pretty anti-social, actually.

Part two

I went round to see him last Sunday. As I walked up the drive, his dog started barking. His wife answered the door, and she called for Norman to come downstairs and join us in the living room. He was in a bad mood because he'd overslept that morning

and he'd been late for church. He also had a bit of an hangover, which he told me was the result of a wild party that they'd had at his house the night before. All his friends from his office were there. They'd had a barbecue in the garden with steaks and burgers. One of his favourite pastimes is doing crosswords, and while he was talking to me, he was doing one of those big puzzles from the newspaper. 'So how are you, Norman?' I asked him. 'KO, mate, KO. How about you?' Anyway, as I said, Norman's an insomniac, dyslexic, atheist. So the joke is that he lies awake all night wondering about the existence of dog. Get it?

T 4.6 My most memorable lie

1 Andrew

Well, one lie I can remember from when I was younger was when, with a friend in the basement of my house, we were playing pool, 'cos we had a pool table down there, and decided to smoke our first cigarettes, these fantastic gold-filtered cigarettes, I remember – quite expensive – and halfway through the second or third cigarette, my dad came home, who was very anti-smoking, and we stubbed out our cigarettes and pushed them through a kind of grate underneath the window and he found them about a day later and he asked me if these, you know, if I knew what these cigarette stubs were all about, if I'd been smoking, and I completely denied all knowledge of these cigarettes and in fact pool, and the basement, and everything else.

2 Paul

I have one memory of regularly lying as a child and ironically it was to a priest, which sounds a bit alarming, but ... erm ... I was brought up Catholic and from the age of seven you had to go to confession every week and confess your sins and when you're that age, ... erm ... first of all you're not quite sure what a proper sin is, and also you just can't remember, and every week you had to go in and, and tell the priest some sins that you'd committed, so of course it's, it's quite common that what you end up doing is just making things up ... erm ... you say, 'I swore and I stole some biscuits from the pantry in the kitchen ...' and bizarrely what you end up doing is lying to the priest so that you've got something to say in your confession.

3 Carolyn

I can think of a, a time recently when I had to tell a white lie which was ... erm ... basically when a friend of mine got married. Erm ... it, they actually got married in America because his wife's American, so I didn't go to the wedding but they, they were showing me the photos and ... erm ... basically she looked absolutely awful she had a really horrible dress on that really did nothing for her figure and didn't suit her at all and just looked much older than she really is and quite frumpy, but ... erm ... yes obviously you can't say that when you see someone's wedding pictures, so I said 'that's really pretty, you look really lovely'. I felt really horrible as a result.

4 Kiki

One lie I can remember telling was when I lost a necklace that my grandmother had made for me especially – it had a 'K' on it. And I know where I lost it, I lost it at a party because ... erm ... I was having a very good time and wasn't taking care of it and I lied and told her it had been stolen in a robbery we had at our house. And to this day I've never told her what happened to it. But sometimes when she mentions things like 'Ooh I should get you another one', ... er ... it comes back to me.

5 Sean

The first lie I can really remember ... erm ... was – when I was at school. I must have been about five or six years old and I was in the playground and I was just about to get into a fight and ... erm ... the only way I could think of defending myself was to say ... erm ... 'You can't hit me, I go to judo lessons'. Erm ... and I don't know where it came from, I'd never done

She's been married three times. (She's still alive.)
She was married three times. (She's dead.)
Did you see the Renoir exhibition? (It's finished now.)
Have you seen the Renoir exhibition? (It's still on.)
Did you see that programme on TV? (I'm thinking of the one that was on last night.)
Did you enjoy the film? (Said as we're leaving the cinema.)
Have you enjoyed the holiday? (Said near the end of the holiday.)
Where have I put my glasses? (I want them now.)
Where did I put my glasses? (I had them a minute ago.)
It rained yesterday. (= past time)
It's been snowing. (There's snow still on the ground.)

Present Perfect Simple and Continuous

See the introduction to the perfect aspect and the continuous aspect in Unit 1. These tenses have three main uses.

1 Unfinished past

The verb action began in the past and continues to the present. It possibly goes on into the future, as well.

We've lived in this house for twenty years.
Sorry I'm late. Have you been waiting long?
I've been a teacher for five years.
I've been working at the same school all that time.

Notes

- There is sometimes little or no difference between the simple and the continuous.
I've played tennis since I was a kid.
I've been playing tennis since I was a kid.
- The continuous can sometimes suggest a more temporary situation. The simple can sound more permanent.
I've been living with a host family for six weeks.
The castle has stood on the hill overlooking the sea for centuries.
- Certain verbs, by definition, suggest duration, for example, *wait, rain, snow, learn, sit, lie, play, stay*. They are often found in the continuous.
It's been raining all day.
She's been sitting reading for hours.
- Remember that state verbs rarely take the continuous.
*I've known Joan for years. *I've been knowing*
*How long have you had that car? *have you been having*
*I've never understood why she likes him. *I've never been understanding*

2 Present result

The verb action happened in the past, usually the recent past, and the results of the action are felt now.

You've changed. What have you done to yourself?
I've lost some weight.
I've been doing some exercise.
I'm covered in mud because I've been gardening.

In this use, the simple emphasizes the completed action. The continuous emphasizes the repeated activities over a period of time.

Notes

- Certain verbs, by definition, suggest a short action, for example, *start, find, lose, begin, stop, break, die, decide, cut*. They are more often found in the simple.
We've decided to get married.
I've broken a tooth.
I've cut my finger.
 In the continuous, these verbs suggest a repeated activity.
I've been stopping smoking for years.
You've been losing everything lately. What's the matter with you?
I've been cutting wood.
- The use of the simple suggests a completed action.
I've painted the bathroom.

The use of the continuous suggests a possibly incomplete action.

I'm tired because I've been working. (Finished? Not finished?)
Someone's been drinking my beer. (There's some left.)

- The continuous can be found unqualified by any further information.

I'm wet because I've been swimming.

We're tired because we've been working.

'Why are you red?' 'I've been running.'

The simple sounds quite wrong in this use.

**I've swam. *We've worked. *I've run.*

- Sometimes there is little difference between the Past Simple and the Present Perfect.

Where

<i>did you put</i>		<i>my keys?</i>
<i>have you put</i>		<i>my keys?</i>

- American English is different from British English. In American English, these sentences are correct.

Did you hear the news? The President resigned!

Did you do your homework yet?

Your father just called you.

I had breakfast already.

3 Indefinite past

The verb action happened at an unspecified time in the past. The actual time isn't important. We are focusing on the experience at some time in our life.

Have you ever taken any illegal drugs?

She's never been abroad.

Have you ever been flying in a plane when it's hit an air pocket?

Note

- Notice these two sentences.
She's been to Spain. (At some time in her life.)
She's gone to Spain. (And she's there now.)
 The first is an example of indefinite past.
 The second is an example of present result.

UNIT 3

Narrative tenses

Past Simple and Present Perfect

See the introduction to the perfect aspect and the simple aspect on p141. The Past Simple differs from all three uses of the Present Perfect.

- 1 The Past Simple refers to **finished past**.

Shakespeare wrote plays. (He's dead.)

I've written short stories. (I'm alive.)

- 2 There is **no present result**.

I hurt my back. (But it's better now.)

I've hurt my back. (And it hurts now.)

- 3 It refers to **definite past**.

I saw him

<i>last night.</i>		<i>two weeks ago.</i>
<i>on Monday.</i>		<i>at 8.00.</i>

Compare this with the indefinite adverbials found with the Present Perfect.

I've seen him

<i>recently.</i>		<i>before.</i>
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I haven't seen him

<i>since January.</i>		<i>yet.</i>
<i>for months.</i>		<i>for months.</i>

I've

<i>never</i>		<i>just</i>		<i>seen him.</i>
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Note

Even when there is no past time adverbial, we can 'build' a past time in our head.

Did you have a good journey? (The journey's over. You're here now.)

Thank you for supper. It was lovely. (The meal is finished.)

Where did you buy that shirt? (when you were out shopping the other day.)

Past Simple

The Past Simple is used:

- 1 to express a finished action in the past.
Columbus discovered America in 1492.
- 2 to express actions which follow each other in a story.
I heard voices coming from downstairs, so I put on my dressing-gown and went to investigate.
- 3 to express a past state or habit.
When I was a child, we lived in a small house by the sea. Every day I walked for miles on the beach with my dog.

This use is often expressed with *used to*.

We used to live ...

I used to walk ...

See Unit 9 for more information on *used to*.

See Unit 11 for information on the Past Simple used for hypothesis.

Past Continuous

See the introduction to the continuous aspect on p141.

The Past Continuous is used:

- 1 to express an activity in progress before and probably after a time in the past.
I phoned at 4.00, but there was no reply. What were you doing?
- 2 to describe a past situation or activity.
The cottage was looking so cosy. A fire was burning in the grate, music was playing, and from the kitchen were coming the most delicious smells.
- 3 to express an interrupted past activity.
I was having a bath when the phone rang.
- 4 to express an incomplete activity in the past.
I was reading a book during the flight. (But I didn't finish it.)
I watched a film during the flight. (the whole film)
- 5 to express an activity that was in progress at every moment during a period of time.
I was working all day yesterday.
They were fighting for the whole of the holiday.

Notes

- The Past Simple expresses past actions as simple, complete facts. The Past Continuous gives past activities time and duration.
'What did you do last night?'
'I stayed at home and watched the football.'
'I phoned you last night, but there was no reply.'
'Oh, I was watching the football and I didn't hear the phone. Sorry.'
- Notice how the questions in the Past Continuous and Past Simple refer to different times.
When we arrived, Jan was ironing. She stopped ironing and made some coffee.
What was she doing when we arrived? She was ironing.
What did she do when we arrived? She made some coffee.

Past Perfect

See the introduction to the perfect aspect and the continuous aspect on p141.

The Past Perfect is used to look back to a time in the past and refer to an action that happened before then.

She was crying because her dog had died.

I arrived to pick up Dave, but he had already left.

Keith was fed up. He'd been looking for a job for months, but he'd found nothing.

Notes

- The continuous refers to longer actions or repeated activities. The simple refers to shorter, complete facts.
He'd lost his job and his wife had left him. Since then he'd been sleeping rough, and he hadn't been eating properly.
- The Past Perfect can refer to definite as well as indefinite time.
I knew his face immediately. I'd first met him in October 1993. (= definite)
I recognized her face. I'd seen her somewhere before. (= indefinite)

Past Perfect and Past Simple

- 1 Verbs in the Past Simple tell a story in chronological order.
John worked hard all day to prepare for the party. Everyone had a good time. Even the food was all right. Unfortunately, Andy upset Peter, so Peter left early. Pat came looking for Peter, but he wasn't there.
It was a great party. John sat and looked at all the mess. He felt tired. It was time for bed.
- 2 By using the Past Perfect, the speaker or writer can tell a story in a different order.
John sat and looked at all the mess. It had been a great party, and everyone had had a good time. Even the food had been all right. Unfortunately, Andy upset Peter, so Peter left early. Pat came looking for Peter, but he'd already gone.
John felt tired. He'd been working all day to prepare for the party. It was time for bed.

Note

For reasons of style, it is not necessary to have every verb in the Past Perfect.

... Andy upset Peter ... Peter left ...

Once the time of 'past in the past' has been established, the Past Simple can be used as long as there is no ambiguity.

Time clauses

- 1 We can use time conjunctions to talk about two actions that happen one after the other. Usually the Past Perfect is not necessary in these cases, although it can be used.
After I'd had/had a bath, I went to bed.
As soon as the guests left/had left, I started tidying up.
I sat outside until the sun had gone/went down.
 - 2 The Past Perfect can help to make the first action seem separate, independent of the second, or completed before the second action started.
When I had read the paper, I threw it away.
We stayed up until all the beer had gone.
 - 3 Two verbs in the Past Simple can suggest that the first action led into the other, or that one caused the other to happen.
When I heard the news, I burst out crying.
As soon as the alarm went off, I got up.
 - 4 The Past Perfect is more common with *when* because it is ambiguous. The other conjunctions are more specific, so the Past Perfect is not so essential.
As soon as all the guests left, I tidied the house.
Before I met you, I didn't know the meaning of happiness.
When I opened the door, the cat jumped out.
When I'd opened the mail, I made another cup of tea.
- See Unit 11 for information on the Past Perfect used for hypothesis.