

Past tenses

a Read the article about Alistair Brownlee. What did he do?

b Paragraph 2 tells the story of what happened. Most of the verbs are past simple, but there are two examples of the past continuous, and four of the past perfect. Can you find them? Why are they used?

Alistair sacrifices gold... to help his brother

Nobody will remember who won the world triathlon in Cozumel, Mexico, in 2016. Instead, they will remember the sacrifice of Alistair Brownlee, who stopped to help his brother, Jonny, instead of winning the gold medal himself.

As Jonny, 26, entered the last kilometre of the 10 km run, he was winning by a long way – he'd gone very fast in the swimming and cycling stages. But then he began to feel ill, because he hadn't drunk enough in the hot conditions, and he stopped at the side of the road. His brother, Alistair, was running behind him, but when he saw that Jonny had stopped, he didn't run past him to win the race. Instead, in a wonderful act of brotherly love, he took his brother's arm and helped him to run the final few hundred metres. Seconds before they reached the finishing line, South African Henri Schoeman, who had been behind them until then, ran past them both and won the gold medal.

Alistair said, 'It was a natural human reaction to my brother, but for anyone, I would have done the same thing.'



c Circle the correct form.

When the teacher collected the exam papers he saw that Robbie cheated / had cheated

- 1 They didn't play well in the match although they were training / had trained every evening.
- 2 Mike had an accident as he cycled / was cycling to work.
- 3 I left work early because I wanted / was wanting to watch the match.
- 4 There was a lot of traffic, and when we arrived, the match already started / had already started.
- 5 The captain didn't score / hadn't scored any goals when the referee sent him off.
- 6 My son got injured while he played / was playing basketball last Saturday.
- 7 When the snowstorm started, we stopped / had stopped skiing and went back to the hotel.
- 8 England didn't lose / hadn't lost any of their previous games when they played in the quarter-finals.
- 9 The referee suspended the match because it was raining / rained so hard.

d Complete with the past simple, past continuous, or past perfect.

The marathon runner was sweating when she crossed the finish line. (sweat, cross)

- 1 The accident _____ when they _____ home. (happen, drive)
- 2 The crowd _____ when the referee _____ the final whistle. (cheer, blow)
- 3 I _____ Jane at first because she _____ so much. (not recognize, change)
- 4 The police _____ my sister on the motorway because she _____ a seat belt. (stop, not wear)
- 5 Some of the players _____ while the coach _____ to them. (not listen, talk)
- 6 We _____ use the ski slope because it _____ enough. (not can, not snow)
- 7 They _____ play tennis because they _____ a court. (not able to, not book)
- 8 The player _____ a yellow card because he _____ his shirt after scoring a goal. (get, take off)

e Read the article about Anton Gafarov. Complete it with the verbs in the correct tense.

Canada to the rescue

Russian cross-country skier Anton Gafarov

¹ was competing (compete) at the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014. He ² do well in the race when he ³ fall (fall) and ⁴ damage (damage) his left ski. Soon after that, he ⁵ fall (fall) again. He realized that his ski ⁶ break (break) into two pieces. He ⁷ try (try) to continue on one ski when suddenly the Canadian ski coach, Justin Wadsworth, ⁸ run (run) out of the crowd and ⁹ replace (replace) Gafarov's broken ski with a spare one that he ¹⁰ bring (bring) for his own team. Gafarov ¹¹ finish (finish) the race in front of his home crowd.



f Read and answer the questions. Please pay attention to the tense correspondence.

A Kenyan runner called Abel Mutai was competing in a cross-country race in Spain in 2012. He was winning the race easily, but he stopped running about 30 metres before the finishing line. He thought he'd won the race. The crowd were shouting at him – they were telling him to carry on, but he didn't understand them because he didn't speak any Spanish. A Spanish runner, Iván Fernández, was second in the race behind Mutai and he slowed down and told Mutai to keep running. Mutai started running again and crossed the line first. 'I did what I had to do,' said Fernández. 'He was the rightful winner.'



1 What was Abel doing in Spain?

2 What happened when he was winning the race?

3 Did he understand what the crowd was shouting?

4 Who was Iván Fernández, and what did he do?

5 What would you do in Iván's place?

A Canadian sailor called Lawrence Lemieux was competing in the Seoul Olympics in 1988. During his race the weather was terrible – the wind was blowing hard and the waves were high. Lemieux was in second place in the race when he saw that two sailors from Singapore had fallen out of their boat and couldn't get back in. He went to help them, pulled them from the water, and waited for another boat to come and help them. Then he continued the race. He didn't win a silver medal – in the end he came 22nd. But as Lemieux said, 'The first rule of sailing is, if you see someone in trouble, you help him.'



1 What was Lawrence doing in Seoul Olympics?

2 What had happened with the two sailors he saw?

3 What did Lawrence do with them?

4 Did he drop out the competition?

5 What would you do in Lemieux's place?