Grammar Past Simple and Past Continuous

> … it **was snowing** all last night

> … at about nine o'clock we **were** just **watching** TV when suddenly all the electricity went out.

> While I **was sitting** in the dark, I **thought** we really must do something about this.

7A Look at the phrases from Mark's post. What is the tense of the verbs in bold? How do we form these tenses?

B Complete the sentences with *Past Simple* or *Past Continuous*.

1 We use the _____ to give some background details to the main story, for example, describing the weather at the time.

2 We use the _____ for an action in the past that was interrupted. It also describes actions or events in progress at a specific moment in the past.

3 We use the _____ for shorter, finished actions or events, which can interrupt a longer situation or action in progress. We also use it with a series of short, completed actions.

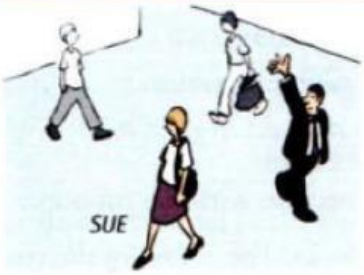
4 We often use *when* before the _____ and *while* before the _____.

8 Choose the correct option in italics to complete the sentences.

1 She *was studying / studied* IT when she *started / was starting* her first business.
2 He *told / was telling* me he wanted to quit his job while we *had / were having* lunch.
3 While I *presented / was presenting* the slides, the electricity *went out / was going out*.
4 We *got / were getting* tired so we *decided / were deciding* to have a break.
5 What *did you do / were you doing* this morning? I *tried / was trying* to phone you twice.
6 I *thought / was thinking* about Carla when she *phoned / was phoning* me.
7 It suddenly *started / was starting* to rain while we *sat / were sitting* in the park.
8 When I *got / was getting* to the office, everyone *already worked / was already working*.

6.3 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

1



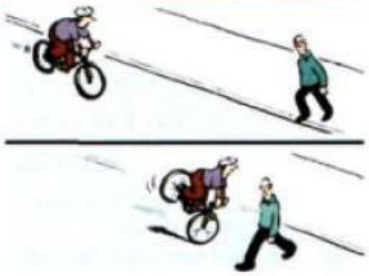
I saw (see) Sue in town yesterday, but she _____ (not / see) me. She _____ (look) the other way.

2



I _____ (meet) Tom and Jane at the airport a few weeks ago. They _____ (go) to Paris and I _____ (go) to Rome. We _____ (have) a chat while we _____ (wait) for our flights.

3



I _____ (cycle) home yesterday when a man _____ (step) out into the road in front of me. I _____ (go) quite fast, but luckily I _____ (manage) to stop in time and _____ (not / hit) him.

Did I ever tell you about the time …?

HW Did you hear about … ?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

6.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

1 Jenny was waiting (wait) for me when I arrived (arrive).
2 'What ..... (you / do) at this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'
3 '..... (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'
4 How fast ..... (you / drive) when the accident ..... (happen)?
5 Sam ..... (take) a photograph of me while I ..... (not / look).
6 We were in a very difficult position. We ..... (not / know) what to do.
7 I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last ..... (see) him, he ..... (try) to find a job.
8 I ..... (walk) along the street when suddenly I ..... (hear) footsteps behind me. Somebody ..... (follow) me. I was scared and I ..... (start) to run.
9 When I was young, I ..... (want) to be a pilot.
10 Last night I ..... (drop) a plate when I ..... (do) the washing up. Fortunately it ..... (not / break).

9.

Student A: Complete the article using the Past Simple or Past Continuous form

How it started

Airbnb's co-founders, Joe Gebbia and Brian Chesky, were friends from design school in New York. In 2007, they [1]_____ (share) an apartment in San Francisco. They [2]_____ (both / look) for work and having a hard time paying their rent. When they [3]_____ (hear) a design conference was coming to San Francisco, and the city's hotels were fully booked, they [4]_____ (decide) to offer their flat as cheap accommodation to participants. They quickly designed a simple website and soon [5]_____ (find) three paying guests who slept on airbeds on their living-room floor. They even cooked their guests breakfast and that's where the Airbnb name came from. They charged $80 each a night. As they [6]_____ (wave) their guests goodbye, they thought they had a new business concept – the idea of a sharing economy.

In the summer of 2008 they had 800 listings but the site [7]_____ (not make) any money. So they [8]_____ (fly) to New York, the city where they had the most customers, to find out what problems people [9]_____ (have) with the service. They found that many of their listing photos were poor quality, so they rented a professional camera and [10]_____ (take) photos of people's apartments. Today, Airbnb has hosted over 35 million guests in 34,000 towns and cities around the world.

B Make brief notes about the story in your article and tell your partner the story using your notes.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Student B

Complete the article using the Past Simple or Past Continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

How it started

Jan Koum and Brian Acton are the founders of WhatsApp. Koum, born in Ukraine, first [1]_____ (meet) Acton in 1997 while he [2]_____ (study) in a state university in Silicon Valley and working for a computer security firm, inspecting Yahoo!'s advertising system. Acton was an engineer at Yahoo!

Within a year, Koum [3]_____ (also / work) as an engineer at Yahoo! During their time at the company their friendship [4]_____ (grow). They both left their jobs on the same day in 2007 and spent a year travelling around South America together.

In early 2009, Koum [5]_____ (watch) movies at a friend's place when he had the idea for WhatsApp. It started as an idea to send notifications to friends, but soon [6]_____ (become) an instant-messaging app that allowed any smartphone user to text without paying SMS fees.

But by June 2009, nobody, not even Jan's friends, [7]_____ (use) the app. Both men [8]_____ (live) off their savings and still unemployed. Koum told Acton that he [9]_____ (think) about looking for a job. Acton encouraged him to give it a few more months.

When Koum released the second version of the app, he asked Acton to become a co-founder and Acton got his friends from Yahoo! to invest $250,000 in the business. In February 2014 Facebook [10]_____ (buy) WhatsApp for $19 billion.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

What happened next?

Worksheet A



Two ugly sisters lived in a flat in London.

Suzerella was a university student who worked part-time as a cleaner for the two ugly sisters. The two ugly sisters were very cruel and made her work very hard.

A new nightclub opened, and a very handsome celebrity was going to open it. The ugly sisters and Suzerella really wanted to go and meet him.

The ugly sisters bought their tickets, but wouldn't let Suzerella go. They made her stay at home and clean the floors.

On the opening night, Suzerella was at home, cleaning and feeling very sad. Suddenly, an angel appeared …

Worksheet B



Joe and his mother were very poor. They lived together in a very small house, and didn't have enough food to eat.

One day, they went to a market, so they could sell their TV to buy some food.

While they were there, Joe's mother went to see the other things for sale and asked Joe to stay and try and sell the TV.

A man came up and asked Joe to sell him the TV for some 'magic' beans. Joe thought this was an excellent idea, and sold it to him.

When Joe's mother returned, she was very angry, and couldn't believe Joe had done that. When they got home, she threw the beans into the garden.

The next morning, when Joe woke up, a huge, tree had grown in the garden. Joe decided to climb it …

LIVEWORKSHEETS

10. Choose a title from the box and write your story. Use the example story and the notes below.

A memorable day at work/university	What a stressful day at work
That was a nightmare journey/meeting	The holiday of a lifetime

This happened one day in March a few years ago. I was working late at the office so there weren't many people in the building.

Suddenly I looked out of the window and saw it was snowing. I was amazed because it never snows here at that time of year. I decided to get in my car and go home immediately. But when I got outside I saw it was impossible to drive. So I went to the train station but the service was cancelled because of the weather. Then a woman in the street told me that the metro station three kilometres away was open. I had to walk all the way there. It was very difficult and I felt very cold, especially my toes.

Fortunately, the metro was operating when I got there. Eventually, I got home that evening. I was very lucky; some of my colleagues spent the night in their cars because roads and motorways were blocked.

1 Background
Give some background details to introduce the story, such as the weather, location and date.

2 Details
Explain the main sequence of events. Use linkers to help you, e.g. *then, after that, at the same time, eventually.*

3 Conclusion
Say what finally happened. Was there a funny, sad, surprising, memorable ending to the story? How do you feel about it now?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Past Perfect

Study this example situation:



Sarah went to a party last week. Paul went to the party too, but they didn't see each other. Paul left the party at 10.30 and Sarah arrived at 11 o'clock. So:

When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul wasn't there.

He **had gone** home.

Had gone is the *past perfect (simple)*:

I/we/they/you he/she/it	**had**	(= I'd etc.) (= he'd etc.)	**gone** **seen** **finished** etc.

The past perfect simple is **had** + *past participle* (**gone/seen/finished** etc).

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:

- Sarah **arrived** at the party.

This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened *before* this time, we use the past perfect (**had** ...):

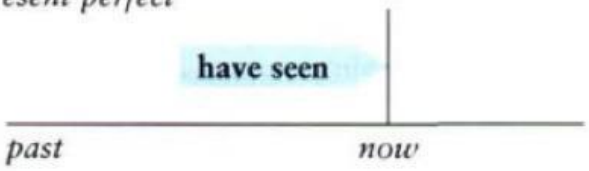
- When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul **had** already **gone** home.

Some more examples:

- When we got home last night, we found that somebody **had broken** into the flat.
- Karen didn't want to go to the cinema with us because she**'d** already **seen** the film.
- At first I thought I**'d done** the right thing, but I soon realised that I**'d made** a big mistake.
- The man sitting next to me on the plane was very nervous. He **hadn't flown** before.
  or ... He **had** never **flown** before.

Compare the *present perfect* (**have seen** etc.) and the *past perfect* (**had seen** etc.):

Present perfect



- Who is that woman? I've never **seen** her before.
- We aren't hungry. We've just **had** lunch.
- The house is dirty. They **haven't cleaned** it for weeks.

Past perfect



- I didn't know who she was. I'd never **seen** her before. (= before that time)
- We weren't hungry. We'd just **had** lunch.
- The house was dirty. They **hadn't cleaned** it for weeks.

Compare the *past simple* (**left, was** etc.) and the *past perfect* (**had left, had been** etc.):

- A: Was Tom there when you arrived?
  B: Yes, but he **left** soon afterwards.
- Kate **wasn't** at home when I phoned. She **was** at her mother's house.

- A: Was Tom there when you arrived?
  B: No, he **had** already **left**.
- Kate **had** just **got** home when I phoned. She **had been** at her mother's house.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

15.1 Read the situations and write sentences from the words in brackets.

1 You went to Sue's house, but she wasn't there.
(she / go / out) She had gone out.

2 You went back to your home town after many years. It wasn't the same as before.
(it / change / a lot) .....

3 I invited Rachel to the party, but she couldn't come.
(she / arrange / to do something else) .....

4 You went to the cinema last night. You got to the cinema late.
(the film / already / begin) .....

5 It was nice to see Dan again after such a long time.
(I / not / see / him for five years) .....

6 I offered Sue something to eat, but she wasn't hungry.
(she / just / have / breakfast) .....

15.2 For each situation, write a sentence ending with **never ... before**. Use the verb in brackets.

1 The man sitting next to you on the plane was very nervous. It was his first flight.
(fly) He'd never flown before.

2 A woman walked into the room. She was a complete stranger to me.
(see) I ..... before.

3 Sam played tennis yesterday. He wasn't very good at it because it was his first game.
(play) He .....

4 Last year we went to Denmark. It was our first time there.
(be there) We .....

15.3 Use the sentences on the left to complete the paragraphs on the right. These sentences are in the order in which they happened – so (1) happened before (2), (2) before (3) etc. But your paragraph begins with the underlined sentence, so sometimes you need the past perfect.

1 (1) Somebody broke into the office during the night.
(2) We arrived at work in the morning.
(3) We called the police.

We arrived at work in the morning and found that somebody had broken into the office during the night. So we ..... .

2 (1) Laura went out this morning.
(2) I tried to phone her.
(3) There was no answer.

I tried to phone Laura this morning, but ..... no answer. She ..... out.

3 (1) Jim came back from holiday a few days ago.
(2) I met him the same day.
(3) He looked very well.

I met Jim a few days ago. ..... just ..... holiday. ..... very well.

4 (1) Kevin sent Sally lots of emails.
(2) She never replied to them.
(3) Yesterday he got a phone call from her.
(4) He was very surprised.

Yesterday Kevin ..... from Sally. He ..... very surprised. He ..... lots of emails, but she ..... .

15.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past perfect (**I had done**) or past simple (**I did**).

1 'Was Paul at the party when you arrived?' 'No, he had gone (go) home.'
2 I felt very tired when I got home, so I ..... (go) straight to bed.
3 The house was very quiet when I got home. Everybody ..... (go) to bed.
4 Sorry I'm late. The car ..... (break) down on my way here.
5 We were driving along the road when we ..... (see) a car which ..... (break) down, so we ..... (stop) to help.

LIVEWORKSHEETS