

02 Past Time

The Past Simple is used to describe:

- completed actions that took place at a definite time in the past. The time is either mentioned or implied.
Mary visited the British Museum when she was in London.
Peter won first prize in the art competition.
- permanent situations in the past.
John lived in Ireland for 15 years. (He doesn't live there any more.)
- completed actions that took place one after the other in the past (in story-telling or narratives).
Sue woke up, washed her face and had breakfast.
- past habits or repeated actions in the past; adverbs of frequency (*always, often, seldom, never, etc.*) may also be used.
When Paul was younger, he often went fishing with his father.

Time Expressions

yesterday, then, ago, last month/night/week, when, etc.

The Past Progressive is used to describe:

- an action that was in progress at a definite time in the past.
This time last Friday, I was flying to London.
- actions happening at the same time in the past.
While Helen was watching TV, Nick was studying.
- a lengthy action that was in progress when a shorter or sudden one interrupted it. The longer action is in the Past Progressive and the shorter one is in the Past Simple (usually introduced by *when*).
She was having dinner when the lights went out.
- background scenes to a story.
It was early in the evening and it was beginning to get dark. She was having a cup of tea....
- temporary past states or actions.
He was writing a play in those days.
- repeated past actions or annoying past habits (with *always, continually, etc.*).
My brother was always getting into trouble in the past.

Time Expressions

while, as, etc.

note

- used to + infinitive** expresses permanent states, past habits or repeated actions in the past.
My grandfather used to be a librarian.
He used to smoke heavily when he was younger.
- would + infinitive** expresses past habits or describes someone's typical behaviour in the past.
Every evening he would do his homework, watch TV and go to bed quite early.

The Past Perfect Simple is used:

- for an action which was completed before another one in the past. The action which happened first is in the Past Perfect Simple while the action which followed is in the Past Simple (in time clauses introduced by *before, after, when, by the time*). However, when we describe the actions in the order that they happened, we often use the Past Simple.
By the time we arrived, the film had started.
They (had) hung up before I answered the phone.
- for a past action that was completed before a definite time in the past.
Angela had finished cooking by 11:30 a.m..
- with adjectives in the superlative degree and expressions such as: *the first/second..., the only..., etc.*
That was the first time I had been to Paris.
It was the worst time I had ever had.

Time Expressions

by + a certain time, by the time, after, before, when, etc.

The Past Perfect Progressive is used:

- to emphasise the duration of an action that had been in progress up to a moment in the past or before another past event.
By 1987, he had been working in New York for 5 years.
He had been teaching for 35 years when he retired.
- for an action whose duration caused visible results later on in the past.
When they came back from the beach, their skin was red. They had been lying in the sun for 5 hours!

Time Expressions

by, for, since, after, before, how long, etc.

Grammar Practice

A Circle the correct answers.

- As a teenager, I used / would to do things that my parents weren't approving / didn't approve of. They were always complaining / had always been complaining about my actions. When they lectured / had lectured me, I had covered / would cover my ears and ignore them. Now, I'm experiencing the same thing with my own children!
- Today I had had / had an awful day. I arrived / was arriving at the office, sat / was sitting down at my desk and suddenly had discovered / discovered that I had lost / lost a document on my computer because of a virus. I worked / had been working on it for the past two days. As if that wasn't / wasn't being enough, a colleague would get / was getting on my nerves. While I had been trying / was trying to remain calm, she had laughed / was laughing at me.



B Rephrase the following sentences using the words in brackets.

- I put on ten kilos and then I decided to go on a diet. (by the time)
By the time I decided to go on a diet, I had put on ten kilos. or I had put on ten kilos by the time I decided to go on a diet.
- First, they washed the car and then they waxed it. (after)
After they (had) washed the car, they waxed it. or They waxed the car after they (had) washed it.
- Lisa made a sandwich and then sat on the sofa to watch TV. (before)
Before Lisa sat on the sofa to watch TV, she (had) made a sandwich. or Lisa (had) made a sandwich before she sat on the sofa to watch TV.
- We packed our suitcases and then left for the airport. (as soon as)
As soon as we (had) packed our suitcases, we left for the airport. or We left for the airport as soon as we (had) packed our suitcases.
- Judy was walking down the street when she saw an accident. (as)
As Judy was walking down the street, she saw an accident. or Judy saw an accident as she was walking down the street.

C Choose the correct answers.

- When the children _____ home, it was obvious that they had been playing in mud.
a. were arriving **b. arrived** c. arrive
- Michael _____ in the queue to buy a ticket for the train when he heard a strange voice.
a. waited **b. was waiting** c. had waited
- In my youth, I _____ the world and often slept under the stars.
a. travelled b. was travelling c. travel
- The thieves _____ houses for two years before they were finally caught.
a. had been breaking into b. are breaking into c. break into
- I _____ my studies by 1990.
a. complete b. was completing **c. had completed**

D Using the words given and other words, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Do not change the word given. (Use 2-5 words in total.)

- When he was younger, he went to the cinema every week.
used When he was younger, he _____ **used to go to** _____ the cinema every week.
- I hadn't tasted Chinese food before.
first It was the _____ **first time I had tasted** _____ Chinese food.
- While we were in London, it never stopped raining.
continuously It **was raining continuously/rained continuously** while we were in London.
- I worked at a restaurant in those days.
was In those days, I _____ **was working** _____ at a restaurant.
- After walking for a mile, they realised that someone was missing.
had They _____ **had walked/had been walking** _____ for a mile when they realised that someone was missing.
- That was the only science-fiction book he had read.
never He _____ **had never read** _____ a science-fiction book before.
- When Mark was a student, he was in the habit of forgetting his books.
always Mark _____ **was always forgetting** _____ his books when he was a student.
- Jake made a speech and then we left the ceremony.
until We didn't leave the ceremony _____ **until Jake (had) made** _____ a speech.



Vocabulary Practice

A Complete using the prepositional phrases given.

at last:	finally
at least:	no less than; the minimum that could be done
at night:	late in the evening
at noon:	in the middle of the day
at peace/war:	in a state of harmony/conflict
at present:	now
at the same time:	simultaneously

1. The unemployment rate is high at present.
2. You could at least clean up your room. You don't do anything to help me with the housework.
3. He started working on this report at 8:00 a.m. and stopped at noon for lunch.
4. You shouldn't eat and talk at the same time.
5. At last, the bus arrived. We had been waiting for an hour.
6. The baby woke up at night and started crying. It was afraid of the dark.
7. In order to be happy, you should always be at peace with yourself.

B Complete using the correct form of the words in bold type.

A GARLIC A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY

You may know that Asian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cultures have

traditionally used garlic in their dishes. What you may not know is that garlic was also thought of as a valuable medicine by many ancient civilisations.

Today, professionals in the field of nutrition have come up with new information which is indeed quite surprising. Apparently, not only is garlic good for you but it also helps you overcome various illnesses.

The main disadvantage of eating garlic is of course bad breath. Cooking it, reduces the strong smell and eating parsley, which is a natural deodoriser, also helps minimise the smell. So, it's time we took the benefits of garlic seriously.

Why not add it to some of your favourite dishes!

TRADITION

VALUE

PROFESSION

INFORM, SURPRISE

ILL

ADVANTAGE, BREATHE

NATURE

SERIOUS

FAVOUR

C Complete using the correct form of the words given.

job (n):	the work sb does in order to earn money; employment
work (n):	(1) particular tasks sb has to do in their job (2) the place where sb does their job
duty (n):	the work that sb is responsible for getting done
task (n):	activity sb has to do, usually as part of a larger project

see (v):	notice, observe, take a look at sb/sth
watch (v):	look at sb/sth for a period of time and observe what is happening
look (at) (v):	turn your eyes to a particular direction, see what is there or what sb/sth is like

1. Don't interrupt me now. I've got a lot of work to do.
2. Julie found a good job close to where she lives.
3. One of my duties as a nurse is to be on time because lives depend on it.
4. Our teacher gave us a few tasks to do during the summer holidays.
5. I happened to look out of my window when my cousin was walking past.
6. Did you see Mary's costume at the carnival? It was wonderful!
7. I watched the football match before I went to bed.