# Narrative tenses

## Past simple



We use the past simple to talk about consecutive actions in the past.
**Example**: When he **arrived,** she **made** a cake.
(He arrived, then she started the action)
Also use it for the main events in a story.
**Example**: It all **happened** two years ago.

## Past continous

Longer, continuous past action. It is often an action which was in progress when another action happened.
Example:
When he **arrived,** she **was making** a cake.
(He arrived, the action was in progress, she was in the middle of the action)

## Past perfect simple



Use it to talk about an action which happened and was finished before the main event.

Example:
When he **arrived,** she **had made** a cake.
(He arrived, the action was already finished)

## Past perfect continuous

Use it for a longer continuous action that was going on before the main event.
Example:
When he **arrived,** she **had been making** a cake.
(She probably still had her apron on or something which showed what she had just been doing, a visual evidence or a smell)

| BE CAREFUL | Some verbs are rarely used in the continuous form. |
|---|---|
| Verbs of the mind: | know / understand / believe / think / want / mean / |
| Verbs of emotions: | love / hate / like / prefer / care |
| Verbs of possession: | have / own / belong |
| Other verbs: | cost / need / contain / depend |



EXERCISE ONE Underline the correct option

**1**-When I arrived at the party I saw Tim ***had drunk/had been drinking*** too much.
**2**-I ***had been having/was having*** a shower when suddenly the phone rang.
**3**-As soon as Peter arrived in the office, his boss ***started/had started*** to shout at him.
**4**-Mary was sweating. She ***had run/had been running*** for about two hours.
**5**-While she ***had/was having*** dinner the doorbell ***was ringing/rang***. It was her best friend.
**6**- She had a headache last night. She ***was watching/had been watching*** too much television.
**7**-I was ***breaking/broke up*** with my boyfriend after the party. He ***was/was being*** very upset.
**8**-While I ***was making/made*** a cup of tea Michael arrived so I offered him one.
**9**-When I phoned Tony his mother told me he ***had been/had gone*** out and asked me to call back later.
**10**-My sister was very upset when she ***came/was coming*** back from school. She ***had been failing/had failed*** the history exam.

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# EXERCISE TWO

Fill the gaps of the following story using the correct for of the verbs: past simple, past continuous, past perfect simple or past perfect continuous.

Last Monday a very funny thing _____ (happen) to me. Well, it _____ (not be) so funny when it happened, but now I can't help smiling when I think about it.

I _____ (get up) at 7 o'clock in the morning, as usual. I was very tired that Monday because I _____ (be) to a party on Sunday night and it _____ (finish) very late. After getting up, I _____ (have) a shower and I _____ (make) myself a cup of coffee. I _____ (not have) anything to eat because I _____ (not be) hungry.



Afterwards I _____ (brush) my teeth, combed my hair, _____ (take) my coat and my purse and _____ (leave) the house.

As I _____ (walk) to the bus stop, it surprised me to see the streets _____ (be) very quiet. No traffic jams and no crowds rushing to work or school. When I _____ (arrive) at the bus stop only one person _____ (wait) for the bus. I waited for longer than usual. In fact, when the bus _____(come) I _____(wait) for more than twenty minutes.



When I _____ (get) off the bus, I crossed the road and _____ (go) into the building. Again I _____ (be) shocked to see there was nobody there.

I _____ (take) the lift and finally arrived in the office. I _____ (try) to get in but I _____ (not can. I _____ (not know) what to do so I _____ (take) the lift and went down again. In the hall I _____ (see) Bill, the porter.



-Good morning, Bill. What's the matter today? I _____ (just be) upstairs and there's nobody at the office. The building is very quiet and the office is closed. What's going on?

-Good morning, miss Parker –said Bill smiling- _____ (not notice) it's Easter Monday today?

-Oh my God! Now I understand why the streets _____ (be) so empty, why there_____ (be) no traffic and why the office was locked!

I _____ (go) back home. I _____ (get up) so early for nothing. As soon as I _____ (arrive) I _____ (go) back to bed.

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