Past tenses revision

Past simple

- an action that happened at a definite time in the past

Last year we **bought** a dog.

- actions that happened immediately one after the other in the past

Lou **took** a shower, **brushed** his teeth and **went** to bed.

Past continuous

- an action that was in progress at a stated time in the past

Yesterday at 4 I **was talking** to Meg on the phone.

- two actions that were happening at the same time

Liz **was vacuuming** while her sons **were tidying** their room.

- an action that was in progress (longer action) when another action interrupted it

When I came in, Sue **was reading**.

Past perfect

an action that happened before another action in the past

Before we left, we **had booked** a hotel room.

complete past action that had visible results in the past

We felt relieved after they **had arrived** safely.

Past perfect continuous

an action continuing over a period up to a specific time in the past

Pete **had been working** as a doctor for 25 years before he retired last year.

action of certain duration that had visible results in the past

Mark **had been studying** Spanish for five years before he moved to Toledo.

Complete the sentences with the correct past form.

1. By the time we _____ (get) to the theatre, the play _____ (already, start).
2. Last night I _____ (dream) about going to the Moon.
3. When Ginny _____ (see) me yesterday, I _____ (cross) the street.
4. My dad _____ (paint) the living room for two hours before my brother _____ (come) to help him.
5. Nora _____ (lie) in a hammock while Phil _____ (weed) the garden.
6. Before the Smiths _____ (buy) their new house, they _____ (look) for a suitable one for a year.
7. Laura _____ (send) us a postcard from her holiday in Italy.
8. As Claire _____ (dust) the furniture, she _____ (break) her mum's vase.
9. My sister _____ (never, be) to the circus before last week.
10. Pam and I _____ (study) for the history exam when the lights _____ (go) off.
11. The alarm clock _____ (not, ring) yesterday morning and I _____ (be) late for work.
12. Mr. Roberts _____ (work) in the company for six years before it _____ (go) bankrupt.
13. You _____ (not, sleep) when I _____ (return) last night.
14. When _____ (they, visit) you last time?
15. Yesterday at this time, Karen _____ (write) a letter of application to the manager of L'Oréal.
16. I _____ (not, pay) attention to the teacher and my friends _____ (not, pay) attention, either.
17. When we _____ (go) out for a walk last Sunday morning, the sun _____ (shine) and it _____ (be) quite warm.
18. We _____ (never, see) the Pyramids before our trip to Egypt in 2005.
19. _____ (Simon and Alice, get) married last summer?
20. They _____ (wait) for more than an hour before Lady Gaga _____ (appear) on the stage.
21. Michael and Robert _____ (rollerblade) in the backyard when Sally _____ (phone).
22. I _____ (meet) Harry at Brenda's birthday party last month.
23. Where _____ (you, spend) your last winter holidays?
24. My cousin and I _____ (sit) at a park bench when we _____ (hear) a thunder.
25. By six o'clock Ted _____ (pack) all his staff in his backpack.
26. I _____ (sunbathe) for two hours before it _____ (start) to rain.

LIVEWORKSHEETS