

NARRATIVES 2A



INCLUDE ON NOTEBOOK

2A Narrative tenses

We use narrative tenses to tell stories about what happened in the past. The most important narrative tenses are: past simple, past continuous, past perfect simple and past perfect continuous.

1.30

We use the past simple for completed past actions and states which happened at a specific time in the past:

We spotted them on the mountain so we rescued them and took them to hospital.

We use the past continuous for actions (not states) that were in progress at the time of the main events in the story:

When we spotted them, they were standing next to some stones. They were waving their arms but we couldn't hear what they were shouting.

We use the past perfect simple / continuous for events and activities that happened before the main events in the story and to give explanations or reasons. It often occurs after *because*.

We spotted them because they had built the word 'help' out of stones.

We finally spotted them after we had been searching for over a week.

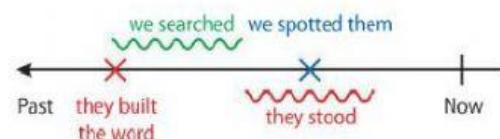
Past perfect simple or continuous?

We use the past perfect simple:

- To focus on the results of an earlier completed action:
We spotted them (result) because they'd built a big sign (earlier action).
- To talk about 'time up to then' with a state verb (e.g. know, have, be):
When we found them, they'd been on the mountain for a week.



After we'd been searching for them for over a week, we finally spotted them on the mountain. They were standing next to the word 'Help', which they'd built out of stones.



We use the past perfect continuous:

- before a result in the past to show the effect of an earlier activity:
They were tired (result) because they'd been building a big sign (earlier activity).
- To emphasize the duration of time with an action verb (e.g. wait, search, drive):
We found them after we'd been searching for a week.

