

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.



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 **had 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 **had been** on the mountain for a week.

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 **had 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 **had been searching** 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 **had built** out of stones.

