



2 Read the introduction to a blog post. What can you guess about the writer?

TRAVELLING MAN

LESSONS IN LIFE: HOW NOT TO MISS FLIGHTS

Yesterday, I missed a flight. It was my *fifteenth* missed flight. Though, to be fair, it is several years since I last missed one. Anyway, this week's post is about how I missed all those flights and the lessons I (very slowly) learned.

VOCABULARY Travelling by plane

1 Match these phrases with the pictures (1–9).

- a be late taking off
- b call a taxi
- c check in online
- d check the departures board
- e get stuck in heavy traffic on the way
- f join the queue to board
- g take ages to go through security
- h land on time

3 Look at the lessons (a–f) the writer learned from his experiences. Work in pairs. Discuss how you think he missed his flight in each case.

- a Airports are big places
- b Check the travel news before you go
- c Check your ticket
- d Read, but don't choose a thriller
- e See waiting as fun
- f Set your alarm clock

4 Read the blog post. Match the lessons in Exercise 3 with the paragraphs.

1 I hated waiting. This was my big problem. It was even worse when they introduced online check-in, because you could get to the airport forty minutes before the flight and still catch it *if* nothing went wrong. Unfortunately, *when* I got stuck in heavy traffic, or the train was delayed or it took ages to go through security, I missed flights. But then a friend bought me a tablet and I realised that waiting was actually enjoyable. I could read, watch films, relax!

2 The first time I missed a flight, I actually left really early and planned to arrive almost two hours before my flight. However, when I got to the train station to go to the airport, I found that they were doing repairs on the line and there was a bus to replace the train – a very old, slow one. We eventually arrived at the airport three minutes after the check-in closed!

3 Once, I was catching a very early flight to go back home. I got to the boarding gate in plenty of time, but I was really tired, so I decided to have a little sleep while I was waiting. When I woke up, there were no passengers around me and the woman from the airline was walking away from the gate. There wasn't another flight for ten hours! I hate waiting!

4 One year, we were travelling to see family in Ivory Coast and we changed flights in Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris. We had an hour to get the connection. We landed on time, but from the plane there was a bus; then we walked; we took a train; we walked and walked (more quickly); we queued for security again; we ran. We missed the connection.

5 I was going to see a friend once and I went to London Stansted airport. I checked the departures board, but I couldn't see my flight, which I thought was strange. I looked at my ticket again and it said *Gatwick* Airport – on the opposite side of the city!

6 Which brings me to my last and most recent lesson. I arrived early and sat down to read my book – a crime story by Jo Nesbø. As the story got more and more exciting, I completely forgot the time. I was reading the last few pages when I suddenly heard the last call for my flight. Unfortunately, airports are big places and when I got to the gate, it was closed. I sat down and finished my book.

26 comments

5 Based on what you read and on your own experiences, explain why you think the author:

- 1 started to enjoy waiting.
- 2 didn't take a taxi when the train was cancelled.
- 3 didn't wake when the flight was boarding.
- 4 didn't buy a ticket with more time to connect in Charles de Gaulle.
- 5 went to the wrong airport.
- 6 didn't wait at the boarding gate when he started reading his book.

GRAMMAR

Past simple and past continuous

When we tell stories, we show how actions relate to each other using the past continuous and the past simple.

- 6** Look at these sentences from the blog post. Answer the questions below.
- When I **got** to the train station ..., **they were doing** repairs on the line.
 - When I **woke up**, ... the **woman** from the airline **was walking away** from the gate.
 - I was reading** the last few pages when I **suddenly heard** the last call for my flight.
- Which verbs are in the past simple?
 - Which verbs are in the past continuous? How are they formed?
 - In each sentence, which action started first?
 - In each sentence, which action is completed?

The past continuous shows an action started, but was incomplete when another action (or other actions) happened. We often link sentences with *when* or *while*. We often use the past continuous at the beginning of the story to show the general situation / background.

- 7** Complete the sentences with the past simple or past continuous form of the verbs.
- They stopped him while he _____ through security and _____ all his bags, so he missed the flight. (go, search)
 - This baby _____ screaming when we were taking off and it _____ during the whole flight. It was a nightmare. (start, not stop)
 - A: It was so stupid. I _____ where I was going and I _____ into a lamppost. (not look, walk)
B: Oh no! _____ ? (anyone watch)
 - I was going through the arrivals hall at Madrid airport and these people were taking photos of me, which I thought was strange. Then I _____ round and I realised this famous actress, Penelope Cruz, _____ behind me! (turn, walk)

9 Choose two of these situations. Spend a few minutes thinking about what you will say. Then work in groups and share your stories.

- a time you missed a flight / train / coach
- a time you had a problem or something funny happened on a flight
- a time you were late for something important
- a time you had / saw an accident
- a time you met / saw someone famous