

Past tenses contrast

1/ Drag the tenses to the boxes.

past continuous past perfect past simple

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LEARN THIS! Past tenses



a We use the 1 for a sequence of events that happened one after another.

In 1989, my parents met, fell in love and got married.

b We use the 2 to describe a scene in the past. The events were in progress at the same time.

It was raining and people were rushing home from work.

c We use the 3 for a single event that interrupted a longer event in the past. We use the 4 for the longer event.

My parents got engaged while they were living in Wales.

d We use the 5 for an event that happened before another event in the past.

He had started a business before he left school.

1/ Match the sentences A, B, C with the explanations.

A: When Tom left school, he learned to drive.

Tom left school during the period when he was learning to drive.

B: When Tom left school, he was learning to drive.

When Tom left school, he already knew how to drive

C: When Tom left school, he had learned to drive.

Tom learned to drive after he left school.

2/ Complete the sentences with the past simple or the past continuous forms of the verbs in the brackets.

1. I _____ (have) a car crash while I _____ (learn) to drive.
2. It _____ (rain), so we _____ (decide) to cancel the barbecue.
3. Emma _____ (not hear) the phone ringing because she _____ (have) a shower in the bathroom.
4. Ryan _____ (break) his arm while he _____ (ski) in the Alps.
5. You obviously _____ (not listen) when I _____ (ask) you to turn off the computer.

3/ Complete the sentences with the past simple or past perfect of the verbs in the brackets.

1. My uncle and aunt _____ (already/get engaged) when they _____ (emigrate) to Australia.
2. I _____ (not/can) buy anything because I _____ (forget) my wallet.
3. Robert _____ (be) upset because he _____ (split up) with his girlfriend.
4. Kelly _____ (start) her first business before she _____ (leave) university.
5. After Fred _____ (settle down) in Londn, he _____ (inherit) some money from his grandmother and _____ (buy) a car.
6. We _____ (spend) the weekend moving house, so we _____ (go) to bed very early on Sunday.

4/ Complete the sentences with the past simple, past continuous or past perfect form of the verbs from the list.

be be become die get leave live
meet not stop retire say work write



Japan is the country with the most centenarians: over 50,000. It is also where Jiroemon Kimura, the man with the longest lifespan ever, ¹ _____ born in 1897, the year that Bram Stoker ² _____ *Dracula*. Kimura ³ _____ school at fourteen and ⁴ _____ a job in a post office. While he ⁵ _____ there, he ⁶ _____ his future wife Yae. He ⁷ _____ a postal worker for 45 years when he ⁸ _____ in 1962. But he ⁹ _____ working! He ¹⁰ _____ a farmer! In an interview just before he ¹¹ _____ at the age of 116, he said he wasn't sure why he ¹² _____ so long. 'Maybe it's thanks to the sun,' he ¹³ _____. 'I'm always looking up to the sky!'