



## Narrative Tenses

Use the **PAST SIMPLE** for completed actions in the past which tell the main events in a story. Ex. She *picked up* the phone and *asked for* a taxi

Use the **PAST CONTINUOUS** to set the general scene/background of a story or to talk about actions in progress at or around a particular point in a story, often interrupted by another (short) action or event (past simple). Ex. He *was talking* to his girlfriend when the waiter *brought* the bill.

Use the **PAST PERFECT SIMPLE** to talk about actions or situations completed before another action in the story. The actions are often mentioned out of time sequence, and the past perfect makes the order clear.

Use the **PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS** to talk about longer actions or situations which started before and continued up to a point in the story. Ex. She *had been studying* all the afternoon when she found out the exam was cancelled.

**1 - PAST PERFECT** - complete the following sentences, or add a sentence, using a verb in the Past Perfect:

- a. Tom was furious with Alice because she \_\_\_\_\_
- b. James inherited a small fortune from his father, but a year later he didn't have a penny.  
He \_\_\_\_\_
- c. She was fined \$200 because she \_\_\_\_\_
- d. When I saw him, he was pale and shaking like a leaf. He \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e. He was two hours late for the wedding because he \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- f. I didn't know her name, but the face was familiar. I was sure \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- g. When I was home, I was starving. I \_\_\_\_\_

**2. PAST (simple or continuous), PAST PERFECT, and PRESENT PERFECT -**  
put the verbs in brackets in the correct tenses.

'Well, you see, Officer, I \_\_\_\_\_ (drive) down the dual carriageway, when this huge lorry \_\_\_\_\_ (overtake) me. I \_\_\_\_\_ (travel) at 70 miles an hour, so I have no idea what speed the lorry \_\_\_\_\_ (go). I \_\_\_\_\_ (never see)

a lorry traveling so fast. Two miles further down the road I \_\_\_\_\_ (see) flames and smoke rising. The idiot \_\_\_\_\_ (crash) into the roundabout. Obviously he \_\_\_\_\_ (swerve) to avoid this boy on his bicycle. \_\_\_\_\_ (you speak) to the boy yet? I think he's all right. When you \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive), I \_\_\_\_\_ (try) to free the lorry driver. I could smell alcohol on his breath. I think he \_\_\_\_\_ (drink). He \_\_\_\_\_ (break) one of his legs, but apart from that he's not too bad.'

**3. Complete the story putting the verbs in brackets in the correct form :**

It was 10 o'clock at night. Eddie was tired and hungry. He \_\_\_\_\_ (spend) the last five hours talking to the company's senior managers. He \_\_\_\_\_ (realize) that he would have to resign from his job, and also that he \_\_\_\_\_ (face) the possibility of going to prison.

Six months ago, everything \_\_\_\_\_ (be) fine. He \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a wonderful job and he \_\_\_\_\_ (make) a lot of money. Then he \_\_\_\_\_ (meet) some people who \_\_\_\_\_ (advise) him badly. They \_\_\_\_\_ (give) him a list of companies and \_\_\_\_\_ (tell) him to buy their shares. He \_\_\_\_\_ (use) the company's money to do this. At first the shares \_\_\_\_\_ (rise), so he \_\_\_\_\_ (buy) some more. Everything \_\_\_\_\_ (seem) so easy. Then the stock market \_\_\_\_\_ (crash) and he lost everything.

Eddie \_\_\_\_\_ (telephone) his wife before leaving the office. He \_\_\_\_\_ (apologize) for not phoning earlier, explaining that he \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a difficult meeting. 'You sound upset. Anything wrong?' she asked. 'I'll tell you about it when I get back', he \_\_\_\_\_ (reply).