

UNIT 1D

MAKING A NARRATIVE INTERESTING

- 2 Read the blog post about Donald and his dog, Buster. In what ways was Buster a good purchase and a bad purchase? What do you think happened next?

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What was I thinking?

Posted 3:45pm

1 I still remember my 30th birthday. It seems like only yesterday. I'd been invited to my sister's place for lunch, and I was walking by a pet shop, when I saw the cutest little dog watching me from the window. **In the beginning**, I wasn't sure as I was very busy at work. Then I looked at him and started to wonder if a pet might fit my lifestyle. After all, I often take a walk in the park after work. As soon as he saw me, he gave me a look that seemed to say, "Please take me home!" We should never have made eye contact.

2 After lunch, I walked back to the pet shop, and, **before long**, that little dog, which felt like a tiny black and white teddy bear, was in my arms. "He's affectionate and full of energy," the salesclerk assured me. I'd been thinking of giving myself a birthday gift for weeks, so one hour later, I was on my way home with a smile on my face, a six-month-old puppy, and a hole in my bank account. I had no idea what the next few months would be like.

3 For a while, it felt as if Buster – I named him after a cartoon character that I love – made my life complete. It was nice to come home to a friendly face after a long, stressful day and have some company. I didn't mind the torn sofa or the missing remote controls. ¹My apartment looked like a disaster area, but I kept telling myself, ²"Don't worry! That's what puppies do." I hoped Buster would start to behave, and ³I would soon find out if my hope was realistic.

4 Unfortunately, Buster seemed to get worse with every passing day. He ran around the apartment, jumping on and off the furniture, like a mad frog, and barking for no reason. I'd never seen anything like it! **As time went on**, Buster developed other strange habits, such as moving food from his bowl to the floor before eating it, or pulling off my socks and hiding them – every single day. I failed at every attempt to train him. **Eventually**, I told myself, "Enough is enough!" I knew what I had to do.

5 In despair, I Skyped my brother, Barry. He lives on a small farm with his wife, kids, and two dogs, so I asked him how he'd feel about having a third one. He finally agreed, and **in a matter of hours**, Buster was gone. I still miss him, but it looks as if he's adapted well to his new home. As for me, I swear I'll never buy another pet again. Well, maybe a goldfish.

Donald F. Brattleboro, Vermont

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3 Read the story again. In which paragraph (1–5) does Donald:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| a talk about the "honeymoon" phase? | — | d realize that he'd made a mistake? | — |
| b give the background to the story? | — | e talk about buying the dog? | — |
| c solve the problem? | — | | |

4 Read the blog post again. Find examples of simple past, past continuous, past perfect, and past perfect continuous verbs.

Skill making a narrative interesting

When writing a narrative, make your story more interesting by including:

- predictions or comments about the future: *I had no idea what the next few months would be like.*
- interesting comparisons: *... that little dog, which felt like a tiny black and white teddy bear ...*
- examples of direct speech: *"He's affectionate and full of energy," the salesclerk assured me.*
- a variety of narrative tenses, e.g., simple past, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous.

5 A Read the Skill box. Match strategies 1–3 below with their purpose a–c. Which strategy is each underlined sentence in paragraph 3?

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1 provide a comparison | a to give someone a "voice" |
| 2 make a prediction | b to help the reader visualize your descriptions |
| 3 use direct speech | c to create suspense for the next paragraph |

Text builder time linkers

We use time linkers like *at first*, *in no time*, and *after a while* to say how much time has passed between different past actions:

1 at the start

At first, Donald wasn't sure he should buy a dog.

2 after a short time

He held Buster in his arms and, in no time, changed his mind.

3 some time later

After a while, Donald regretted his decision.

6 Read the Text builder. Which meaning (1, 2, or 3) do the **bold** linkers in the blog post have?

Read Donald's brother's message to a friend a few weeks later. Choose the correct time linkers.

Last month, my brother Donald asked me if I could adopt his dog. I said yes, and ¹*before long / in the beginning*, he brought the dog over. ²*At first / After a while*, we were happy to welcome him, but ³*in the beginning / in no time*, Buster showed his true colors. He spent most of the day bullying the other dogs and destroying our living room, which Donald hadn't warned us about! ⁴*As time went on / At the start*, though, the dogs became best friends. Are we going to keep him? Yes! We've grown fond of him, I guess.