

12. Grammar: Mixed past tenses review

1. Read the following story about a tennis game between a multi-active Portuguese and a Linear-active Swedish. Underline the sentences that describe the main events.



Sven Svensson is a Swedish businessman living in Lisbon. A few weeks ago he was invited by a Portuguese acquaintance, Antonio, to play tennis at 10:00 A.M. Sven turned up at the tennis court on time in tennis gear and ready to play.

Antonio arrived half an hour late, in the company of a friend, Carlos, from whom he was buying some land. They had been discussing the purchase that morning and had prolonged the discussion, so Antonio had brought Carlos along in order to finalize the details during the journey. They continued the business. While Antonio was changing into his tennis clothes, Sven was listening to all they said. At 10:45 they got on the court, and Antonio continued the discussion with Carlos while he was hitting practice balls with Sven.

At this point another acquaintance of Antonio's, Pedro, arrived to confirm a sailing date with Antonio for the weekend. Antonio asked Sven to excuse him for a moment and walked off the court to talk to Pedro. After chatting with Pedro for five minutes, Antonio resumed his conversation with Carlos, who was waiting, and eventually turned back to Sven, who was also waiting, to begin playing tennis at 11:00. When Sven remarked that the court had only been booked from 10:00 to 11:00, Antonio reassured him that he had phoned in advance to rebook it until noon. No problem.

It will probably come as no surprise to you to hear that Sven was very unhappy about the course of events. Why? He and Antonio live in two different worlds or, to put it more exactly, use two different time systems. Sven, as a good Swede, belongs to a culture which uses linear-active time—that is, he does one thing at a time in the sequence he has written in his date book. His schedule that day said 8:00 A.M. get up, 9:00 breakfast, 9:15 change into tennis clothes, 9:30 drive to the tennis court, 10:00-11:00 play tennis, 11:00-11:30 beer and shower, 12:15 lunch, 2:00P.M. go to the office, and so on.

Antonio, who had seemed to synchronize with him for tennis from 10:00 to 11:00, had disorganized Sven's day. Portuguese like Antonio follow a multi-active time system, that is, they do many things at once, often in an unplanned order.

2. From the sentences above, identify an example of each of the following:

A. Past perfect continuous/progressive	i. To talk about completed actions, events and states in the past.
B. Past simple	ii. To talk about an extended or repeated activity which started or took place before a particular point in the past (and which may or may not have finished).
C. Past continuous/progressive	iii. To make it clear that something that took place and finished before another action in the past.
D. Past perfect	iv. To describe something which began before a particular point in the past and is still in progress at that point.

3. How would you make the negative and question forms of each of the sentences below?

A. Antonio arrived half an hour late.

B. Antonio was buying land from Carlos

C. Antonio and Carlos had been discussing the purchase that morning.

D. Antonio had brought Carlos in order to finalize the details.

4. Complete the gaps in the sentences below using the word given. Pay attention to the tense. Sometimes more than option is possible with a change in meaning.

- A. By the time Sven arrived at the tennis court, Antonio..... (leave).
- B. While Antonio..... (play) tennis, his phone rang.
- C. The tennis court was still wet when Carlos arrived. It.....(rain) heavily.
- D. Antonio and Sven.....(talk) for hours before Carlos arrived.
- E. After they.....(finish) playing tennis, they went for a beer.
- F. Pedro.....(discuss) a new business deal with Antonio before Sven and Antonio started playing tennis.

5. Tell your story!

When was the last time a meeting with an acquaintance/friend made you unhappy?

- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- What made you feel unhappy about the situation?
- How did you react?
- What lesson did you learn?