Units 5–6

Past simple and past continuous

14 **Choose the correct alternative.**

Lucky accidents

Is it true that Sir Isaac Newton understood gravity because an apple (1) fell / was falling on his head when he (2) lay / was lying under a tree in his garden? Probably not. However, many great and small discoveries are the result of lucky accidents …

One day in 1879 chemist Constantin Fahlberg (3) didn't wash / wasn't washing his hands before dinner. While he (4) ate / was eating he (5) noticed / was noticing that the bread (6) tasted / was tasting sweet. The sweetness was saccharin.

Alexander Fleming (7) became / was becoming interested in the control of bacteria while he (8) worked / was working as a doctor during the First World War. In 1928 he (9) tidied / was tidying his laboratory when he (10) saw / was seeing that one of the dirty dishes (11) didn't have / wasn't having any bacteria on it, but that something else (12) grew / was growing there. It was penicillin.

In 1930 dietician Ruth Wakefield (13) prepared / was preparing some cookies for guests when she (14) realised / was realising that she had no chocolate powder. She (15) decided / was deciding to use small pieces of ordinary chocolate instead. The chocolate pieces (16) didn't melt / wasn't melting, and the first chocolate chip cookies were a great success.

Dr Percy Spencer was a physicist in the 1940s who probably enjoyed chocolate chip cookies. He (17) walked / was walking past some equipment in the laboratory when he (18) felt / was feeling something strange in his pocket. It was his chocolate bar and it (19) melted / was melting. This accident (20) led / was leading to the invention of a new piece of cooking equipment – the microwave oven.

15 **Put the verbs into the correct form: past simple or past continuous.**

From: Ada
To: Becky
Subject: Naomi

Hi Becky,

Guess what, my sister Naomi is married! She (1) got (get) home from her round the world trip last week with a husband!! She (2) _____ (meet) him when she (3) _____ (travel) round New Zealand. One afternoon, while her friends (4) _____ (shop), she (5) _____ (go) to look round an art gallery. She (6) _____ (look) at a small sculpture when a young man (7) _____ (come) into the room and he (8) _____ (start) to put it into his rucksack. She (9) _____ (call) the security guard because she (10) _____ (think) the man (11) _____ (try) to steal it. She (12) _____ (be) really embarrassed to discover that he (13) _____ (not steal) it – it (14) _____ (belong) to him! Anyway, he (15) _____ (not mind) and he (16) _____ (ask) her to go for a coffee. They (17) _____ (get married) a month later in Bali. We (18) _____ (not know) anything about it! Can you believe it? He's really nice and they are very happy together!

Love, Ada

LIVEWORKSHEETS