

Narrative Tenses Practice

A. Read the short story and choose the correct forms of the verbs.

An Unexpected Visit

Last weekend, my friend Daniel (1) called / had called me to say he was in town. I (2) had already been working / was already working on a presentation when he contacted me, so I wasn't sure I could meet him. Still, I (3) decided / was deciding to take a break and see him for a couple of hours.

When I opened the door, I (4) saw / had seen that he looked extremely tired. He (5) was travelling / had been travelling for almost twelve hours before he arrived, and he clearly needed rest.

While we (6) were walking / had walked to a café near my apartment, he (7) told / was telling me about his new job abroad. I (8) had never heard / wasn't hearing him so excited before.

At the café, something strange happened. As we (9) were ordering / had ordered coffee, Daniel suddenly (10) recognized / had recognized someone sitting by the window. It was an old colleague he (11) had worked / worked with years ago. They (12) talked / were talking for a few minutes until the colleague had to leave. After that, we (13) continued / had continued chatting, and by the time Daniel left, I (14) had been feeling / was feeling much more relaxed than before. I (15) had been needing / had needed a break more than I realized.



B. Match the narrative tenses to their descriptions.

Narrative Tenses:

past simple – past continuous – past perfect – past perfect continuous

1. _____ describes an action completed before another past action.
2. _____ describes an action in progress when another action happened.
3. _____ describes a finished event/action in the past.
4. _____ describes a continuous action happening over a period before another past event.

C. Use the prompts to create sentences using the four narrative tenses.

1. I / study English for months / before / I take the exam

→ _____

2. While / we / walk to the station / it start raining

→ _____

3. She / never try sushi / before / she go to Japan

→ _____

4. They / repair the roof / when / the storm hit

→ _____

5. By the time / the concert finish / we already leave

→ _____

6. He / look for his keys for an hour / before / he find them

→ _____

D. Complete the first part of the story using the verbs below in their correct form. Then, continue the story using the four narrative tenses and your own ideas.

verbs:

feel – rain – meet – wait – plan – walk – be (x2)

A Chance Encounter

Last spring, I (1) _____ to take a long walk by the river. I (2) _____
the route for weeks, hoping the weather would be nice. On the morning of the walk, I (3) _____
_____ a little tired, but I decided to go anyway. When I arrived, the clouds (4) _____
_____ darker than usual, but there were still a few people around. I (5) _____
_____ near the water when it suddenly started to drizzle. At that moment, I (6) _____
_____ someone I hadn't seen in years. We (7) _____ toward each
other and (8) _____ so surprised to meet again.

Continue the story (8 - 10 lines):

Use all four narrative tenses.

Explanation of Narrative Tenses

Narrative tenses are the **past tenses** we use to **tell stories** and **describe events** that **happened in the past**.

1. Past Simple – describes completed actions or main events in a story.

"She arrived. He opened the door."

2. Past Continuous – describes actions in progress in the background.

"She was waiting outside when he called."

3. Past Perfect – describes an action that happened before another past action.

"They had left before the meeting started."

4. Past Perfect Continuous – describes a continuous action that was happening for some time before another past event.

"He had been working for hours before he took a break."

Together, these tenses **help show the sequence, timing, and context of past events** **clearly** when telling a story.