Narrative tenses

Past simple

We use the past simple to talk about consecutive actions in the past.
Example: When he **arrived,** she **made** a cake.
(He arrived, then she started the action)
Also use it for the main events in a story.
Example: It all **happened** two years ago.

Past continous

Longer, continuous past action. It is often an action which was in progress when another action happened.
Example:
When he **arrived,** she **was making** a cake.
(He arrived, the action was in progress, she was in the middle of the action)

Past perfect simple

Use it to talk about an action which happened and was finished before the main event.

Example:
When he **arrived,** she **had made** a cake.
(He arrived, the action was already finished)

Past perfect continuous

Use it for a longer continuous action that was going on before the main event.
Example:
When he **arrived,** she **had been making** a cake.
(She probably still had her apron on or something which showed what she had just been doing, a visual evidence or a smell)

BE CAREFUL	Some verbs are rarely used in the continuous form.
Verbs of the mind:	know / understand / believe / think / want / mean /
Verbs of emotions:	love / hate / like / prefer / care
Verbs of possession:	have / own / belong
Other verbs:	cost / need / contain / depend

EXERCISE ONE Underline the correct option

1-When I arrived at the party I saw Tim ***had drunk/had been drinking*** too much.
2-I ***had been having/was having*** a shower when suddenly the phone rang.
3-As soon as Peter arrived in the office, his boss ***started/had started*** to shout at him.
4-Mary was sweating. She ***had run/had been running*** for about two hours.
5-While she ***had/was having*** dinner the doorbell ***was ringing/rang***. It was her best friend.
6- She had a headache last night. She ***was watching/had been watching*** too much television.
7-I was ***breaking/broke up*** with my boyfriend after the party. He ***was/was being*** very upset.
8-While I ***was making/made*** a cup of tea Michael arrived so I offered him one.
9-When I phoned Tony his mother told me he ***had been/had gone*** out and asked me to call back later.
10-My sister was very upset when she ***came/was coming*** back from school. She ***had been failing/had failed*** the history exam.

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EXERCISE TWO

Fill the gaps of the following story using the correct for of the verbs: past simple, past continuous, past perfect simple or past perfect continuous.

Last Monday a very funny thing _____ (happen) to me. Well, it _____ (not be) so funny when it happened, but now I can't help smiling when I think about it.

I _____ (get up) at 7 o'clock in the morning, as usual. I was very tired that Monday because I _____ (be) to a party on Sunday night and it _____ (finish) very late. After getting up, I _____ (have) a shower and I _____ (make) myself a cup of coffee. I _____ (not have) anything to eat because I _____ (not be) hungry.

Afterwards I _____ (brush) my teeth, combed my hair, _____ (take) my coat and my purse and _____ (leave) the house.

As I _____ (walk) to the bus stop, it surprised me to see the streets _____ (be) very quiet. No traffic jams and no crowds rushing to work or school. When I _____ (arrive) at the bus stop only one person _____ (wait) for the bus. I waited for longer than usual. In fact, when the bus _____(come) I _____(wait) for more than twenty minutes.

When I _____ (get) off the bus, I crossed the road and _____ (go) into the building. Again I _____ (be) shocked to see there was nobody there.

I _____ (take) the lift and finally arrived in the office. I _____ (try) to get in but I _____ (not can. I _____ (not know) what to do so I _____ (take) the lift and went down again. In the hall I _____ (see) Bill, the porter.

-Good morning, Bill. What's the matter today? I _____ (just be) upstairs and there's nobody at the office. The building is very quiet and the office is closed. What's going on?

-Good morning, miss Parker –said Bill smiling- _____ (not notice) it's Easter Monday today?

-Oh my God! Now I understand why the streets _____ (be) so empty, why there_____ (be) no traffic and why the office was locked!

I _____ (go) back home. I _____ (get up) so early for nothing. As soon as I _____ (arrive) I _____ (go) back to bed.

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