

Past tenses revision

Past simple

→ an action that happened at a definite time in the past
Last year we bought a dog.

→ actions that happened immediately one after the other in the past

Lou took a shower, brushed his teeth and went to bed.



Past continuous

→ an action that was in progress at a stated time in the past
Yesterday at 4 I was talking to Meg on the phone.

→ two actions that were happening at the same time
Liz was vacuuming while her sons were tidying their room.

→ an action that was in progress (longer action) when another action interrupted it
When I came in, Sue was reading.



Past perfect

an action that happened before another action in the past
Before we left, we had booked a hotel room.

complete past action that had visible results in the past
We felt relieved after they had arrived safely.



Past perfect continuous

an action continuing over a period up to a specific time in the past
Pete had been working as a doctor for 25 years before he retired last year.

action of certain duration that had visible results in the past
Mark had been studying Spanish for five years before he moved to Toledo.



Complete the sentences with the correct past form.

- By the time we _____ (get) to the theatre, the play _____ (already, start).
- Last night I _____ (dream) about going to the Moon.
- When Ginny _____ (see) me yesterday, I _____ (cross) the street.
- My dad _____ (paint) the living room for two hours before my brother _____ (come) to help him.
- Nora _____ (lie) in a hammock while Phil _____ (weed) the garden.
- Before the Smiths _____ (buy) their new house, they _____ (look) for a suitable one for a year.
- Laura _____ (send) us a postcard from her holiday in Italy.
- As Claire _____ (dust) the furniture, she _____ (break) her mum's vase.
- My sister _____ (never, be) to the circus before last week.
- Pam and I _____ (study) for the history exam when the lights _____ (go) off.
- The alarm clock _____ (not, ring) yesterday morning and I _____ (be) late for work.
- Mr. Roberts _____ (work) in the company for six years before it _____ (go) bankrupt.
- You _____ (not, sleep) when I _____ (return) last night.
- When _____ (they, visit) you last time?
- Yesterday at this time, Karen _____ (write) a letter of application to the manager of L'Oréal.
- I _____ (not, pay) attention to the teacher and my friends _____ (not, pay) attention, either.
- When we _____ (go) out for a walk last Sunday morning, the sun _____ (shine) and it _____ (be) quite warm.
- We _____ (never, see) the Pyramids before our trip to Egypt in 2005.
- _____ (Simon and Alice, get) married last summer?
- They _____ (wait) for more than an hour before Lady Gaga _____ (appear) on the stage.
- Michael and Robert _____ (rollerblade) in the backyard when Sally _____ (phone).
- I _____ (meet) Harry at Brenda's birthday party last month.
- Where _____ (you, spend) your last winter holidays?
- My cousin and I _____ (sit) at a park bench when we _____ (hear) a thunder.
- By six o'clock Ted _____ (pack) all his stuff in his backpack.
- I _____ (sunbathe) for two hours before it _____ (start) to rain.