

Grammar in contextPast simple, past continuous and past perfect

NARRATIVE TENSES

Past tenses

- Past simple
- Past continuous
- Past perfect



I was sitting my sandwich, I took out my timetable and saw that I had twenty-three minutes to eat my sandwich, drink my coffee, and walk back to the railway station to catch a train to Exeter, where I could start again. That was exactly what I did.

Adapted extract from 'Water from a Great Stone' by Gill Bryan

1. Complete the rules. Then match sentences a-c with each rule (write: rule1, 2 or 3)

past simple

past continuous

past perfect

1. We use the  to talk about actions that happened before another action in the past.
  2. We use the  to describe finished actions or situations in the past, or to say that one thing happened after another.
  3. We use the  to talk about activities in progress at a moment in the past, to describe scenes in a story or description, or to talk about an activity in progress in the past that is interrupted by another action.
- a. When I **had eaten** my sandwich, I **returned** to the hotel.
- b. I **went** to the correct platform and I **sat** down.
- c. While I **was eating** my sandwich, I **took** out my timetable.

2. Rewrite the sentences, first in negative form and then in question form

1. He sat down.

Negative:

Question:

2. He had eaten his sandwich.

Negative:

Question:

3. He was eating his sandwich.

Negative:

Question:

3. Complete the sentences with the past simple or past continuous form of these verbs

buy • catch • hear • look • ride • shine • snow • wait

1. When I left home this morning, the sun .

2. I  the bus at 8.45.

3. While I  my bike to school this morning, I saw an accident.

4. When we arrived at the station, a lot of people  to buy tickets.

5. She  her ticket and got on the train.

6. Somebody stole his passport while he  for something in his luggage.

7. There was a delay with the plane because it  very hard.

8. As she was leaving the shop, she  somebody call her name.

4. Choose the best alternative.

1. I fell asleep while I  the film.
2. The teacher called me back as I  the classroom.
3. The head teacher  in while we were doing the exam.
4. As we  to the airport, I realised I didn't have my passport.
5. While you , three people called for you.
6. She  one of her friends while she was taking the dog for a walk.
7. As we , I realised that I'd met her before.
8. They didn't speak while they  their homework.

5. Look at the examples, Write explanations in the past perfect for each situation.

1. Why was she crying? **miss the plane**

*Because she had missed the plane.*

2. Why couldn't he find his bike? **somebody steal it**

3. Why did they buy a new car? **have the old one for 15 years**

4. Why were you scared of flying? **never fly before**

5. Why was everything white in the morning? **snow the night before**

6. Why didn't she pass her exam? **not study much**

7. Why didn't he board the plane? **lose passport**

8. Why didn't Alex have any money? **spend it**

9. Why did she miss the bus? **not leave on time**

