

C Grammar exercises

1 Fill in the gaps with suitable verbs in the past perfect continuous.

- 1 The phone had been ringing for several minutes before I heard it.
- 2 Katya (not) German with Mr Fauser for very long when he retired.
- 3 Liz didn't know about the surprise party which her parents for weeks.
- 4 I was very pleased when the bus finally arrived because I that I would be late for work.
- 5 When the doctor eventually called my name I for 40 minutes.
- 6 My brother lost his job because he jokes to everyone in the office by email.
- 7 The band (not) for long when the lights went out.
- 8 We our money to buy a car but we decided to go to Australia instead.
- 9 How long (they) for their keys when they found them in the boot of the car?

2 All these sentences have a verb in the past perfect simple. Is it possible to replace it with the past perfect continuous?

- 1 I'd worked for the engineering company for three months before I realised my neighbour also worked there. Yes: I'd been working
- 2 As soon as George had finished the race, he drank three glasses of water.
- 3 Everything was white because it had snowed all night.
- 4 My parents were delighted when I qualified because they had always wanted me to be a doctor.
- 5 She was exhausted when she got out of the pool because she'd swum three kilometres.
- 6 We'd only just sat down when the waitress came to take our order.
- 7 I could tell from their faces that they had argued about something.
- 8 Our dinner wasn't cooked because I'd forgotten to switch the oven on.

3 Fill in the gaps with the past simple, the past perfect or the past perfect continuous of the verb in brackets.

- 1 I'd never ridden (never ride) a bike until I went (go) to live in Amsterdam.
- 2 When Martin (come) into the room, his mother nearly (faint) because she (see) him for nearly 20 years.
- 3 We were held up in a traffic jam so the concert (begin) by the time we (arrive).
- 4 How long (you applying) for jobs when you (get) this one?
- 5 (you ever do) any carpentry before you (build) that cupboard?
- 6 I (not see) Lisa when I went round last night because she (go) to stay with her grandmother.
- 7 As soon as I (sit) down on the train, I realised that I (leave) my passport at home.
- 8 I (drive) for about four hours when I (realize) that I was completely lost.
- 9 When I (go) into the room, everyone (stop) talking and (look) at me.
- 10 After he (wash) his clothes, he (hang) them outside to dry.
- 11 The manager was shocked when he (discover) that Jane was a thief. Up until then, he (believe) that she was completely honest.

- 4 Fill in the gaps with the past simple, the past perfect or the past perfect continuous of the verbs in the box.

agree arrange arrive bang come forget go have
move not answer not hear phone play practise

THE BAND PLAYED ON ...

I had a rather embarrassing experience last year. At that time I played in a band with some friends of mine and, rather nervously, we'd agreed (1) to play at a friend's wedding. We (2) together for about three months and it was the first booking we (ever) (3) so we (4) really hard for weeks.

The wedding was on a Saturday. The day before the wedding I had moved to a new flat so I (5) furniture all day and (6) to bed

exhausted. At nine o'clock on the Saturday morning the rest of the band met, as we (7), to practise. They kept phoning me but I (8). So in the end one of them (9) round and (10) on the door for fifteen minutes until I woke up. He told me that they (11) me all morning. I (12) anything and I nearly missed the wedding. When I finally (13) at the wedding, I realised that I (14) my guitar.



D Exam practice

Reading

You are going to read an article about a travel competition. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

OBSERVER NEWSPAPER YOUNG TRAVEL WRITER COMPETITION

As we launch our 13th annual competition, Max Wooldridge, our first winner in 1988, writes about the award's significance and the excitement of being flung into a new world.

THE greatest buzz I've felt during the past five years was one afternoon on the seventh floor of the car park at Hong Kong's old Kai Tak airport. It was a warm Friday a few weeks before the airport closed in 1998. I'd been writing a feature article about the new airport for the last few days and had just sent it off to a newspaper so I had a free afternoon. I couldn't afford to go shopping – when you're freelance you never have any money – and I'd heard about the locals who regularly gathered in the car park to watch the infamous landings as jumbo jets made a 90-degree turn before flying in, almost brushing the tops of the neighbouring flats.

The group of locals welcomed me into their world, warmly applauding some of the landings and being less complimentary about others who got into trouble with crosswinds or came in too fast. The only things missing were scorecards, ice-skating style. While today's increasingly superficial culture may unkindly label these people as dull, they were local heroes to me; animated, cheerful souls passionate about their beloved airport.

It was a ground-breaking trip from which I sold many stories. And it was about this time that my life finally started to come together, too. Once again, Hong Kong had worked its magic. My life always changes there,

turns a corner as steep as the turn made by the pilots approaching Kai Tak. Ten years earlier, as a result of my first visit, I'd won the *Observer's* first Young Travel Writer award. There are few better places to send budding travel writers. If you have nothing to say about Hong Kong, you should consider a career in soft furnishings instead.

I would probably have gone into writing anyway, sneaking in through the back door, but much, much later. Winning the *Observer* award threw me through the reception window. It was an official recommendation saying, 'you've got a talent, use it'. I was 21 when I won, a cheeky young man falling in and out of love and jobs every five minutes. Suddenly I'd won this great award, but was too young to know what to do with it. I realised I could write but knew nothing about the travel business or writing markets. Instead I retreated into a lonely existence, working through the night on bad novels that couldn't possibly sell. I had a lot of growing up to do.

For many years that followed I was a piece of driftwood, floating on an ocean of uncertainty, writing occasional travel pieces here and there, but still playing at writing, not really focused. It didn't help having a father who is a well-known sports writer, and the BBC's South Asia correspondent as a cousin. With such



giants lurking in the background, it's hard to ignore the pressure to succeed.

It wasn't an easy decade. I had a brief but enjoyable spell on a local newspaper and then too many years on company newspapers. My low-flying career ended just as my dad embarked on a round-the-world assignment for the *Daily Mail*. Each article he wrote was headlined: 'Where's Wooldridge Now?' I mention this only because a similar question was asked most mornings concerning my whereabouts in the office. The money was good, the people were nice, the chair just got too comfortable.

It was ten years after the award before I felt like a proper writer, eventually cashing in on my success. Regular commissions arrived and editors phoned me. Writing is a pain, but there's nothing as enjoyable. The desire to write is a bug you can't shake. It's scary, precarious, and a nervous existence. You may get two commissions the same day, then never work again. And while it's never easy, it's hugely rewarding. You never know what's around the next corner, but that's life.

- 1 Max spent the afternoon at the old Kai Tak airport because he
A wanted to write a report about it for a newspaper.
B wanted to visit it before it finally closed.
C was looking for a way of passing the time.
D had always wanted to watch the jumbo jets landing there.
- 2 What did Max think of the people he met at the airport?
A He admired their enthusiasm.
B He found them boring.
C He thought they were brave.
D He thought they were wasting their time.
- 3 What does Max say about Hong Kong in the third paragraph?
A He enjoys reading the many things written about it.
B He always finds it an inspiring place to visit.
C He found it hard to get used to being there at first.
D It is difficult for him to find anything new to write about it.
- 4 How did Max react when he realised he had won an award?
A He didn't know how to take advantage of the opportunity.
B He was unsure whether he really deserved it.
C He became more determined to succeed as a travel writer.
D He found out as much as he could about the travel business.
- 5 What does 'this' refer to in paragraph 6?
A his low-flying career
B his father's trip
C the office where he worked
D the headline of his father's articles
- 6 What does Max say about journalism as a career?
A It gets easier the longer you do it.
B It can make you unwell if you accept too many commissions.
C It is advisable to think carefully before agreeing to a job.
D It is difficult to earn a regular income.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Grammar focus task

This is an extract from the text. Without looking back at the text, fill in the gaps with the correct form of the verbs in the box.

be be gather have hear send write

The greatest buzz I've felt during the past five years was (1) one afternoon on the seventh floor of the car park at Hong Kong's old Kai Tak airport. It (2) a warm Friday a few weeks before the airport closed in 1998. I (3) a feature article about the new airport for the last few days and (4) *(just)* it off to a newspaper so I (5) a free afternoon. I couldn't afford to go shopping – when you're freelance you never have any money – and I (6) about the locals who regularly (7) in the car park to watch the infamous landings as jumbo jets made a 90-degree turn before flying in, almost brushing the tops of the neighbouring flats.

Writing

You have decided to enter a short story competition. The competition rules say that the story must begin with the following words:

I pushed open the door. The house was empty but I could see that someone had been there and had only just left.

Write your **story** for the competition in **120–180** words.

Writing hints

This task gives you a chance to practise:
using the past perfect (simple and continuous) when writing stories.

Study the opening sentence of the story carefully before you begin.

Useful words and expressions

to hold one's breath, to look round, to tiptoe, nervously, suddenly, to my surprise