

narrative tenses: past simple, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous

narrative tenses

- 1 We **arrived** at the airport and **checked in**. ▶ 3.10
- 2 We **were having** dinner when the plane hit some turbulence. At nine o'clock most people on the plane **were reading** or **were trying** to sleep.
- 3 When we arrived at the airport, we suddenly realized that we'd **left** one of the suitcases in the taxi.
- 4 We'd **been flying** for about two hours when suddenly the captain told us to fasten our seat belts because we were flying into some very bad weather.

- 1 We use the **past simple** to talk about consecutive actions or situations in the past, i.e. for the main events in a story.
- 2 We use the **past continuous** (*was / were + verb + -ing*) to describe a longer continuous past action or situation which was in progress when another action happened, or to describe an action or situation that was not complete at a past time.
- 3 We use the **past perfect** (*had + past participle*) to talk about the 'earlier past', i.e. things which happened before the main event(s).

- 4 We use the **past perfect continuous** (*had been + verb + -ing*) with action verbs (*go, play, watch, etc.*) to talk about longer continuous actions or situations that started before the main events happened and continued up to that point. Non-action verbs (e.g. *be, have, know, like, etc.*) are not normally used in the past continuous or past perfect continuous.

past perfect simple or continuous?

Lina was crying because she'd **been reading** a very sad book. ▶ 3.11

Lina didn't want to see the film, because she'd already **read** the book.

- The past perfect continuous emphasizes the continuation of an activity. The past perfect simple emphasizes the completion of an activity.

a Circle the correct verb form.



Meg and Liam McGowan **got** / *were getting* a nasty surprise when they ¹*had checked in / were checking in* at Heathrow airport yesterday with their baby, Shaun. They ²*had won / won* three free plane tickets to Rome in a competition, and they ³*were looking forward to / had been looking forward to* their trip for months. But, unfortunately, they ⁴*had been forgetting / had forgotten* to get a passport for their son, so Shaun couldn't fly. Luckily, they ⁵*had arrived / were arriving* very early for their flight, so they still had time to do something about it. They ⁶*had run / ran* to the police station in the airport to apply for an emergency passport. Meg ⁷*was going / went* with Shaun to the photo booth, while Liam ⁸*had filled in / was filling in* the forms. The passport was ready in an hour, so they ⁹*hurried / were hurrying* to the gate and ¹⁰*got / had got* on the plane just in time.

b Put the verb in brackets in the past perfect simple (*had done*) or continuous (*had been doing*). If you think both are possible, use the continuous form.

His English was very good. He'd *been learning* it for five years. (learn)

- 1 I was really fed up because we _____ for hours. (queue)
- 2 She went to the police to report that someone _____ her bag. (steal)
- 3 It _____ all morning. The streets were wet, and there were puddles everywhere. (rain)
- 4 She got to work late because she _____ her phone at home and _____ go back and get it. (leave, have to)
- 5 I almost didn't recognize Tony at the party. He _____ a lot since I last saw him. (change)
- 6 The tourists' faces were very red. They _____ in the sun all morning and they _____ any sun cream. (sit, not put on)
- 7 I could see from their expressions that my parents _____. (argue)
- 8 Jess had a bandage on her arm because she _____ off her bike that morning. (fall)
- 9 I was amazed because I _____ such an enormous plane before. (never see)
- 10 How long _____ you _____ before you realized that you were lost? (walk)

the position of adverbs and adverbial phrases

- 1 He walks very **slowly**.
I speak five languages **fluently**.
The driver was **seriously** injured in the accident.
- 2 I **hardly ever** have time for breakfast.
Liam's **always** late for work.
I would **never** have thought you were 40.
- 3 It rained **all day yesterday**.
My parents'll be **here in half an hour**.

3.14



- 4 I've **nearly** finished.
We're **incredibly** tired.
My husband works **a lot**, but he doesn't earn **much**.
- 5 **Unfortunately**, the parcel never arrived.
Ideally, we should leave here at 10.00.

- Adverbs can describe an action (e.g. *he walks **slowly***) or modify adjectives or other adverbs (e.g. *it's **incredibly** expensive, he works **very** hard*). They can either be one word (e.g. *often*) or a phrase (e.g. *once a week*).
- 1 **Adverbs of manner** describe how somebody does something. They usually go after the verb or verb phrase, however, with passive verbs they usually go in mid-position (before the main verb but after an auxiliary verb).

- 2 **Adverbs of frequency** go before the main verb but after the verb *to be*.
- sometimes, usually, and normally* can also be put at the beginning of the phrase or sentence for emphasis, e.g. *Sometimes the weather can be very wet, but not today.*
 - If there are two auxiliary verbs, the adverb goes after the first one.
- 3 **Adverbs of time and place** normally go at the end of a sentence or clause. Place adverbs normally go before time adverbs. **NOT** *My parents will be in half an hour here.*
- Adverbs of time can also go at the beginning for emphasis, e.g. **Soon** *it will be Christmas!* **OR** *It will be Christmas **soon!***
- 4 **Adverbs of degree** describe how much something is done, or modify an adjective.
- nearly and almost* are used before a verb or verb phrase.
 - extremely, incredibly, very, etc.* are used with adjectives and adverbs, and go before them.
 - a lot and much* are often used with verbs and go after the verb or verb phrase.
 - a little / a bit (of)* can be used with adjectives or verbs, e.g. *I'm a bit / a little tired. We rested a bit / a little after the flight.*
- 5 **Comment adverbs** (which give the speaker's opinion) usually go at the beginning of a sentence or clause. Other common comment adverbs are: *luckily, basically, clearly, obviously, apparently, eventually, etc.*

Other adverbs

Most other adverbs go in mid-position, e.g. *I **just** need ten more minutes. I didn't speak to Jo at the party – I didn't **even** see her. She'll **probably** come in the end.*

- a **Underline** the adverbs or adverbial phrases in each sentence. Correct the word order if it's wrong.

We're going to be unfortunately late. ✗
Unfortunately, we're going to be late.

He can speak German fluently. ✓

- She liked a lot the present.
- Mark came last night very late home.
- The ambulance arrived at the scene of the accident after a few minutes.
- A young man was hurt badly and was taken to hospital.
- I was incredibly tired last night.
- She's lazy a bit about doing her homework.
- I forgot your birthday almost, but my sister fortunately reminded me.
- We luckily had taken an umbrella, because it started to rain straight away.
- Mary doesn't always eat healthily – she often has snacks between meals.
- John has been apparently sacked.

- b Put the adverbs in brackets in the normal position in these sentences.

seriously
I'm χ considering resigning from my job. (seriously)

- Their house was damaged in the fire. (badly, last week)
- Ben is at his friend's house. (often, in the evening)
- My father has a nap. (usually, in the afternoon)
- Julia left and she didn't say goodbye. (early, even)
- Martin eats quickly. (always, incredibly)
- His brother died in a skiing accident. (apparently, nearly)
- We're going to the cinema. (probably, tonight)
- I send emails. (rarely, nowadays)
- I've bought a beautiful new coat. (just, really)
- Karen realized that she was going to learn to drive. (eventually, never)