

## Background (Tenses and paragraph Writing)

### Past events when writing

- It is used for actions completed in the past at a **definite time**. It is therefore used:
  - for a past action when the time is given: Pasteur died in 1895.
  - when the time is asked about: When did you meet him? (yesterday at 8.00)
  - when the action clearly took place at a definite time even though this time is not mentioned:  
How did you get your present job?
  - Sometimes the time becomes definite as a result of a question and answer in the present perfect: Have you seen my stamps? Yes, I **saw** them on your desk a **minute ago**.
- The simple past tense is used for an action whose time is **not given** but which (a) occupied a **period of time** now terminated, or (b) occurred **at a moment** in a period of time now terminated. These may be expressed **diagrammatically**.  
e.g. (a) She lived in Rome for a long time. (but she is not living there now)  
e.g. My grandmother once saw Queen Victoria.
- The simple past tense is also used for a past habit: He always carried an umbrella. (**used to**)
- The simple past is used in conditional sentences, **type 2**(the unreal past after as if, as though, it is time, if only, wish, would sooner/rather)

### 2. The past continuous tense

#### 4.1. Uses of the present continuous tense:

- The past continuous is chiefly used for past actions which **continued** for **some time** but whose exact limits are not known and are **not important** (I waved to Helen, but she was not looking)
- Used without a time expression it can indicate gradual development: It was getting darker.
- Used with a point in time, it expresses an action which began before that time and probably continued after it e.g. Yesterday Kaven and Jim played tennis. They began at 10 o'clock and finished at 11.30. So, at 10.30, they were playing tennis. (in the middle of doing sth).
- We often use the past simple and the past continuous together to say that something happened in the middle of something else: I was talking on the phone when Tom arrived.

Compare the *past continuous* (I was doing) and *past simple* (I did):

*Past continuous* (in the middle of an action)

- I was walking home when I met Dave.  
(in the middle of an action)

*Past simple* (complete action)

- I walked home after the party last night.  
(= all the way, completely)

**Note:** the past simple is used to indicate successive actions (one thing happened after another)  
e.g. I was walking along the road when I saw Dave. So I stopped, and we had a chat.

Compare:

□ When Karen arrived, we were having dinner. (= we had already started before she arrived)

□ When Karen arrived, we had dinner. (= Karen arrived, and then we had dinner)

- We use the continuous tense in descriptions. Note the combination of description (past continuous) with narrative (simple past):

A wood fire was burning on the hearth, and a cat was sleeping in front of it. A girl was playing with piano and singing softly to herself. Suddenly there was a knock on the door. The girl stopped playing. The cat woke up.

- As the present continuous is used to express a definite future arrangement, the past continuous can also express this sort of future in the past:

He is leaving tonight → he was leaving that night (The decision to leave had been made some time previously).

- The past continuous with always: He was always working (complaining)

**Note:** we use the continuous for apparently parallel actions: Between one and two I was doing the shopping and walking the dog.

- In questions about how a period was spent, the continuous often appears more polite than the simple past: What were you doing before you came here? sounds more polite than What did you do before you came here?
- On the other hand, what were you doing in my room? could indicate a feeling that I think you had no right to be there, while What did you do in my room? Could never give this impression.

Form	Past Simple	Past Progressive
Regular Verbs:	d    ed    ied	Was/Were + V + ing
Irregular Verbs:	Take ----- Took	
Use		
	Past Simple	Past Progressive
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past Habits (adverbs of Frequency)</li> <li>• <u>Used to+ Base Form</u></li> </ul> <p>I used to be overweight when I was young My father used to drive to work, but now he works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Would+ Base Form</u></li> </ul> <p>When my parents were away, my aunt would look after me Every night, Linda would turn on the radio, sit down on the sofa and drink a hot cup of tea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed Actions (Time mentioned)</li> <li>• Successive Actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous Actions in the past (at a certain point of Time)</li> <li>• Temporary Situations</li> <li>• Progressive Actions</li> <li>• Complaining (always, continuously, constantly, continually)</li> <li>• Unaccomplished Future actions</li> <li>• Parallel Actions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One Action Interrupted by Another</b></li> </ul>	

**Sample Three:** In the given paragraph, the author describes an encounter with a woman from an isolated tribe in the Amazon jungle. Analyze the use of past simple and past progressive tenses in the text and consider how they contribute to conveying the narrative effectively.

- Identify instances of past simple tense in the paragraph. How does the author use this tense to describe specific, completed actions or states in the past?
- Identify instances of past progressive tense in the paragraph. How does the author use this tense to portray ongoing or simultaneous actions in the past?
- Discuss how the author maintains harmony between past simple and past progressive tenses to create a coherent and vivid description of the past event. How does the choice of tense contribute to the overall narrative and the reader's understanding of the encounter with the woman from the isolated tribe?
- Consider the descriptive language used to characterize the woman. How does the author's use of past simple and past progressive tenses enhance the portrayal of her appearance and actions?
- In your analysis, draw upon your prior knowledge of past simple and past progressive tenses in academic writing to evaluate how these tenses are effectively employed to depict the past event and its significance.

*I spent four years in the Amazon jungle, from 1999 to 2003. When I first went there, the locals told me about tribes that had no contact with the outside world. But I did not pay much attention to them. One day I was exploring a part of the rainforest in Brazil with some fellow travelers when something amazing happened. It was around midday and the others were having lunch. I decided to go a bit deeper into the jungle to take pictures of some birds. It was hot and humid, but at least it was not raining. Anyway, as I was taking photos, I heard a noise. I turned around and saw a woman who belonged to a tribe I had never seen before. It seemed like we were standing there looking at each other for ages. I did not want her to be scared of me so I thought it would be a good idea to offer her something. I began searching through my bag. But when I looked up again, she was gone. I rushed back to the others and told them about my encounter, but most of them did not believe me. Then I realize it something. I could have taken a picture of her*

## Past Perfect Vs Past Perfect Progressive

### Past Perfect: Form : had + P.P.V

Use	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For an action which was completed before a specific point of time in the past</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The girls had already made dinner by five o'clock</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For an action which was completed before another action in the past (the second action is in the past simple)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By the time we arrived at the park, the bike race had begun</li></ul>

### Past Perfect Progressive : Form : had + been + V + ing

Use	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To emphasize the duration of an action which had been going on up to a point of time in the past</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sandra had been teaching for twenty years when she retired</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For an action whose duration caused a visible results at a later time</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We were exhausted because we had been helping out at the charity event all morning</li></ul>

**Sample Four:** In the given paragraphs, the author describes a past accident using different forms of tenses and sentences.

When a stressed **commuter** bumps into you on the underground, or a tired waitress is rude to you, you may end up feeling disappointed with people. **1**  I made it my mission to search for and bring some of these stories to my readers' attention and remind them of the goodness that exists in human nature. Kindness comes in all shapes and sizes. You can find kind-hearted people lending others a hand just about anywhere. **2**  It is even more so when they do not want their identity ever to be revealed.

No one can appreciate this more than Mike Lewis, who was **diagnosed** with serious kidney failure. He had been waiting on the list for a kidney transplant for six months when doctors announced they had finally found him a kidney. All Mike was told was that the donation had come from a completely healthy person who had chosen to give one of his kidneys to anyone in need. 'I owe my life to someone I will never meet,' Mike said. 'I only wish I could express my appreciation in person.' **3**  The kidney donor **opted** to remain anonymous. The idea that someone would face the risks of surgery in order to help a complete stranger is **bewildering**, but at the same time inspiring for us all.

**4**  Ian Marshman, witness to a four-car pile-up in his home town of Leicester, UK, last year, is the perfect example. Most of the drivers involved in the accident got away with only a few cuts and bruises, but one had been knocked unconscious.

Ian, along with other bystanders, not knowing how to help the man, just stood and watched. In the end, it was a teenage boy who dragged the driver out of the car and performed CPR. When the ambulance arrived, the boy had disappeared; no one, including the driver he had saved, ever found out his identity. **5**  'After that incident, I didn't ever want to feel that helpless again,' Ian reveals. Seeing how one person's quick-thinking could mean another's survival was the encouragement Ian needed. He is currently enrolled in a paramedic training programme.

While both these heroic **deeds** directly saved a life, sometimes a seemingly small act of kindness can play an important role. London-born Dave Chapman had just lost his job, and was at a low point in his life when something unexpected helped him out of it. He was eating lunch at a sandwich shop a few months ago when he asked for the bill and found that someone had already paid for his food. **6**  Feeling that someone cared gave Dave the courage he needed to look at life more optimistically – and he soon found a new job. 'People being **compassionate** towards strangers is something I never expected in this day and age,' Dave said. Surprisingly though, when asked if he wanted to know his benefactor, he replied, 'If they wish to remain anonymous, then I, and everyone else, must respect that.'

So, next time you feel disappointed because of someone's negative behaviour, look on the bright side; not everyone is self-centred. After all, there are more mystery heroes out there than you can imagine. And who knows, you might be the next one!