

unit 02 Past Time

The Past Simple is used to describe:

- completed actions that took place at a definite time in the past. The time is either mentioned or implied.

Mary visited the British Museum when she was in London.

Peter won first prize in the art competition.

- permanent situations in the past.

John lived in Ireland for 15 years. (He doesn't live there any more.)

- completed actions that took place one after the other in the past (in storytelling or narratives).

Sue woke up, washed her face and had breakfast.

- past habits or repeated actions in the past; adverbs of frequency (*always, often, seldom, never, etc.*) may also be used.

When Paul was younger, he often went fishing with his father.

Time Expressions

yesterday, then, ago, last month/night/week, when, etc.

The Past Progressive is used to describe:

- an action that was in progress at a definite time in the past.

This time last Friday, I was flying to London.

- actions happening at the same time in the past.

While Helen was cooking, Alex was studying.

- a lengthy action that was in progress when a shorter or sudden one interrupted it. The longer action is in the Past Progressive and the shorter one is in the Past Simple (usually introduced by *when*).

She was having dinner when the lights went out.

- background scenes to a story.

It was early in the evening and it was beginning to get dark. He was having a cup of tea....

- temporary past states or actions.

He was writing a book in those days.

- repeated past actions or annoying past habits (with *always, continually, etc.*).

My brother was always getting into trouble in the past.

Time Expressions

while, as, etc.

note

- **used to + infinitive** expresses permanent states, past habits or repeated actions in the past.

My grandfather used to be a librarian.

He used to run really fast when he was younger.

- **would + infinitive** expresses past habits or describes someone's typical behaviour in the past.

Every evening he would do his homework, watch TV and go to bed quite early.

The Past Perfect Simple is used:

- for an action which was completed before another one in the past. The action which happened first is in the Past Perfect Simple while the action which followed is in the Past Simple (in time clauses introduced by *before, after, when, by the time*). However, when we describe the actions in the order that they happened, we often use the Past Simple.

By the time we arrived, they had left.

They (had) hung up before I answered the phone.

- for a past action that was completed before a definite time in the past.

Angela had finished cooking by 11:30 am.

- with adjectives in the superlative degree and expressions such as: *the first/second..., the only..., etc.*

That was the first time I had been to Paris.

It was the worst time I had ever had.

Time Expressions

by+a certain time, by the time, after, before, when, etc.

The Past Perfect Progressive is used:

- to emphasise the duration of an action that had been in progress up to a moment in the past or before another past event.

By 1987, he had been working in New York for 5 years.

He had been teaching for 35 years when he retired.

- for an action whose duration caused visible results later on in the past.

When they came back from the park, their clothes were dirty. They had been playing in the mud for hours!

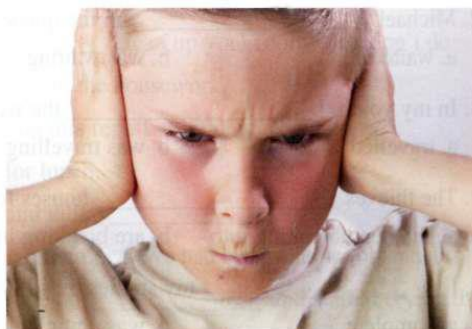
Time Expressions

by, for, since, after, before, how long, etc.

Grammar Practice

A Circle the correct answers.

1. As a teenager, I **used** / **would** to do things that my parents **weren't approving** / **didn't approve** of. They **were always complaining** / **had always been complaining** about my actions. When they **lectured** / **had lectured** me, I **had covered** / **would cover** my ears and ignore them. Now, I'm experiencing the same thing with my own children!



2. Today I **had had** / **had** an awful day. I **arrived** / **was arriving** at the office, **sat** / **was sitting** down at my desk and suddenly **had discovered** / **discovered** that I **had lost** / **lost** a document on my computer because of a virus. I **worked** / **had been working** on it for the past two days. As if that **wasn't** / **wasn't being** enough, a colleague **would get** / **was getting** on my nerves. While I **had been trying** / **was trying** to remain calm, he **had laughed** / **was laughing** at me.



B Rephrase the following sentences using the words in brackets.

1. I put on ten kilos and then I decided to go on a diet. (**by the time**)

2. First they washed the car and then they waxed it. (**after**)

3. Lisa made a sandwich and then sat on the sofa to relax. (**before**)

4. We packed our suitcases and then left for the airport. (**as soon as**)

5. Judy was walking down the street when she saw an accident. (**as**)

C Choose the correct answers.

- When the children _____ home, it was obvious that they had been playing in mud.
a. were arriving b. arrived c. arrive
- Michael _____ in the queue to buy a ticket for the train when he heard a strange noise.
a. waited b. was waiting c. had waited
- In my youth, I _____ the world and often slept under the stars.
a. travelled b. was travelling c. travel
- The thieves _____ houses for two years before they were finally caught.
a. had been breaking into b. are breaking into c. break into
- I _____ my studies by 1990.
a. complete b. was completing c. had completed

D Using the words given and other words, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Do not change the word given. (Use 2-5 words in total.)

- When he was younger, he went to the gym four times a week.
used When he was younger, he _____ the gym four times a week.
- I hadn't tasted Chinese food before.
first It was the _____ Chinese food.
- While we were in London, it never stopped raining.
continuously It _____ while we were in London.
- I worked at a restaurant in those days.
was In those days, I _____ at a restaurant.
- After walking a mile, they realised that someone was missing.
had They _____ a mile when they realised that someone was missing.
- That was the only science-fiction book he had read.
never He _____ a science-fiction book before.
- When Mark was a student, he was in the habit of forgetting his books.
always Mark _____ his books when he was a student.
- Jake made a speech and then we left the ceremony.
until We didn't leave the ceremony _____ a speech.



Vocabulary Practice

A Complete using the prepositional phrases given.

at last:	finally
at least:	no less than; the minimum that could be done
at night:	late in the evening
at noon:	in the middle of the day
at peace/war:	in a state of harmony/conflict
at present:	now
at the same time:	simultaneously

- The unemployment rate is high _____.
- You could _____ clean up your room. You don't do anything to help me with the housework.
- He started working on this report at 8:00 am and stopped _____ for lunch.
- You shouldn't eat and talk _____.
- _____ the bus arrived. We had been waiting for an hour.
- The baby always woke up _____ and started crying. It was afraid of the dark.
- In order to be happy, you should always be _____ with yourself.

B Complete using the correct form of the words in bold type.

GARLIC EVERY DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY

week.

You may know that Asian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cultures have (1) _____ used garlic in their dishes. What you may not know is that garlic was also thought of as a (2) _____ medicine by many ancient civilisations. Today, (3) _____ in the field of nutrition have come up with new (4) _____ which they did not expect to find and have said the results are quite (5) _____. Apparently, not only is garlic good for you but it also helps you overcome various (6) _____. The main (7) _____ of eating this potent vegetable is, of course, bad (8) _____. Cooking it reduces the strong smell, and eating parsley helps minimise the smell because it is a (9) _____ deodoriser. So, it's time we took the benefits of garlic (10) _____. Why not add it to some of your (11) _____ dishes?

TRADITION
VALUE
PROFESSION ✓
INFORM
SURPRISE
ILL
ADVANTAGE
BREATHE
NATURE
SERIOUS
FAVOUR

C Complete using the correct form of the words given.

job (n):	the work sb does in order to earn money; employment
work (n):	(1) particular tasks sb has to do in their job (2) the place where sb does their job
duty (n):	the work that sb is responsible for getting done
task (n):	activity sb has to do, usually as part of a larger project

see (v):	notice, observe, take a look at sb/sth
watch (v):	look at sb/sth for a period of time and observe what is happening
look (at) (v):	turn your eyes to a particular direction, see what is there or what sb/sth is like

- Don't interrupt me now. I've got a lot of _____ to do.
- Jim found a good _____ close to where he lives.
- One of my _____ as a nurse is to be on time because lives depend on it.
- Our teacher gave us a few _____ to do during the summer holidays.
- I happened to _____ out of my window when my cousin was walking past.
- Did you _____ Mike's new pair of jeans? They were really nice.
- I _____ the football match before I went to bed.

