

The Past - revision

A Form and use tense

The following four sentences contain examples of the past simple, past continuous, present perfect and past perfect. Name the tenses in each sentence.

- 1 I'd phoned my girlfriend, Georgina, from Copenhagen before the plane took off.
- 2 Now a man was lying across the seats, sleeping.
- 3 We landed in Rio at lunch time on the Saturday.
- 4 I still haven't worked out how I slept through a whole landing and take-off.

Which of the above verb tenses is used to describe a past event or situation that:

- a happened before another past event or situation?
- b happened at an unspecified time and is relevant to the present?
- c happened at a specific time in the past? A time reference is given or understood from the context.
- d continued over a period of time?

Answers:

1 Past perfect 2 Past continuous 3 Past simple 4 Present perfect
a Past perfect b Present perfect c Past simple d Past continuous

B Differences in meaning

Name the verb tenses in the following pairs of sentences. What is the difference in meaning between the sentences in each pair?

- 1 a When Dave arrived, Emma left.
b When Dave arrived, Emma had left.
- 2 a I've decorated the hall.
b I've been decorating the hall.
- 3 a I was crossing the road when I saw Michelle.
b I crossed the road when I saw Michelle.
- 4 a Linda did her homework last night.
b Linda was doing her homework last night.
- 5 a He played for Arsenal for two seasons.
b He's played for Arsenal for two seasons.
- 6 a When they arrived, we had dinner.
b When they arrived, we had had dinner.

Practice

Read the newspaper article. Then fill the gaps with an appropriate verb from the one's below in the correct past tense. There are two extra verbs.

arrive, brake, carry, drive, happen, hold, skid, slip, take

Three hurt in crash

Three people were injured in a crash involving two lorries and a van on the A45 near Bury St Edmunds on Saturday. The accident 1 _____ in heavy rain at approximately 2.45 p.m. when a lorry, which 2 _____ grain, 3 _____ on the wet surface on the dual carriageway, spilling its load across both lanes. According to a police spokesperson, the driver of the lorry 4 _____ suddenly to avoid hitting a dog, which had run out into the road in front of him. The drivers of the two other vehicles involved, Darren Holmes, aged 21, and Brendan Murphy, aged 37, 5 _____ too close behind to be able to stop in time. Ambulances, which 6 _____ on the scene within minutes, 7 _____ the injured to the nearby Royal Infirmary. Holmes, of Stanway near Colchester, has three broken ribs and is still under observation. The drivers of lorries, John Peters, 52, of Ipswich, and Brenda Murphy, of Clacton-on-Sea, were treated for minor injuries and later sent home. The police 8 _____ all three drivers with dangerous driving.

Answers

1 happened, 2 was carrying, 3 skidded, 4 had braked/braked, 5 had been driving, 6 arrived, 7 took, 8 have charged