

# TENSE CONSOLIDATION: PAST TIME

Simple Past  
Past Continuous  
Present Perfect

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# Simple Past: use

## Simple Past generally refers to:

- Completed actions:

*I got up, switched off the radio, and sat down again.  
He played for our football team.*

- Habits:

Every day I **went** to the park. He never **ate** meat.

- States:

In those days I **didn't like** reading.

- Actions which occupied a period or a moment of time now finished:

He **played** for our team for two years. ( He doesn't play now)

**Did** you ever **see** Bono? – Yes, I **saw** him once.

# Past Continuous - use

## Past Continuous generally refers to:

- ⦿ Actions in progress:
  - I **was drinking** my coffee at that time.
  - While I **was opening** the letter the phone **rang**.
- ⦿ Action which began before a point of time and probably continued after it :
  - At 8 o'clock he **was having** breakfast.
- ⦿ Background description in narrative:
  - Tom **was reading**, Ann **was knitting**. Suddenly the doorbell **rang**. They both **looked up**.
  - I **entered** the office and **looked** around. Most people **were working** at their desks but Jane **was pretending** to write something at the same time.

# Present Perfect - use

## Present Perfect Simple refers to:

- Recent actions which occurred some time ago provided that there is still a connection with the present time:
  - Bill **has won** several races on this horse.
  - I **have missed** my connection.
- Indefinite results which have an obvious result in the present:
  - I **have twisted** my ankle ( it really hurts).
  - I **have lost** my watch. **Have you seen** it anywhere?
- A state which lasts up to the time of speaking: For +a period of time; SINCE + a point of time:
  - I **have taught** here **for** five years.
  - We **have lived** here **for** the past 10 years.
  - He **hasn't ridden** a horse **since** he broke his arm.
  - I **have been** a vegetarian **since** the beginning of my school.

# Present Perfect contrasted with Simple Past Tense

- ⦿ **Past Simple** is used with time expressions which refer to definite times. The time may be stated or understood:
  - I **have bought** a new car. (indefinite) I **bought** a car last week. (definite)
- ⦿ **Past Simple** is used for a finished time in the past:
  - It **didn't rain** last week.
  - **Was** Ann at the party on **Sunday**?
  - Ian **lived** in Scotland for 5 years – now he lives in London.
- ⦿ **Present Perfect** is used for the period of time which continues from the past until now:
  - It **hasn't rained** this week.
  - **Have you seen** Ann recently?
  - Ian lives in London. He **has lived** here for 10 years.

# Activities: Simple Past vs Past Continuous

## Choose the most suitable words underlined:

1. It took a while for me to notice, but then I did. Everyone stared/was staring at me. What had I done wrong?
2. Everyone was having a good time although not many people danced /were dancing.
3. I was trying/tried to get in touch with you all day yesterday. Where were you?
4. He was sitting/sat on the bank fishing when he saw/was seeing a man floating down the river.
5. It snowed/was snowing heavily when he was waking up/ woke up.
6. Everyone was reading/read quietly when suddenly the door opened/was opening and a complete stranger was rushing / rushed in.

# Activities: Present Perfect vs Simple Past

**Choose the most appropriate tense underlined:**

1. I bought/have bought a new house last year, but I didn't sell/ haven't sold my old house yet, so at the moment I have two houses.
2. Ann went/ has gone to Canada six months ago. She has worked/ worked in Canada for a while and then went/has gone to the United States.
3. I can't believe that you have eaten/ ate three pizzas already! I only brought/have brought them fifteen minutes ago.
4. What did you think/ have you thought of London? Did you stay/ Have you stayed there long?
5. Harry left/has left home suddenly and we didn't hear/ haven't heard from him since.
6. Recent research showed/ has shown that Columbus didn't discover/ hasn't discovered America, but that Vikings landed/ have landed there five hundred years ago.

# Activities: Simple Past, Past Continuous, Present Perfect

- Put each verb in brackets into an appropriate form:

Ask hundreds of people what they will be doing on a certain day in August next year, or the year after, and there will be only one reply. Provided of course that the people you you ask belong to the Elvis Presley Fan Club. Although the King of Rock and Roll (1) .....(die) nearly two decades ago, his fans (2) .....(meet) every year since then outside his home in Memphis, to show the respect for the singer they love so much. One of the fans Jean (3).....(visit) the Gracelands, the house where Elvis (4).....(suffer) his fatal heart attack, twice in the past five years. 'The first time I (5).....(borrow) the money from my Mum, as I (6) .....(not/work) then. But two years ago I (7).....(get) married and since then (8).....(work) in my husband Chris's garage. Chris and I (9).....(go) together last year, and we are thinking of spending two or three months in the USA next year. I (10) .....(always/want) to visit some of the places where Elvis (11).....(perform) like Las Vegas for example'. Jean says that Elvis (12).....(be) her obsessions ever since she (13) .....(be) ten years old.



## Bibliografia:

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3. R. Murphy, *English Grammar in Use*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994

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