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C1 TENSES ≈ 27 MIN

Narrative Tenses — *practice on paper*

You can control narrative layers; now reinforce storyline, background, and back-reference with fresh examples.

Past simple	moves the storyline, past continuous frames the scene;	**past perfect (continuous)**	looks back to completion or duration.

NAME _____ DATE _____

YOUR BUILD 1 · SORTING ○ 2 · FILL-IN ○ 3 · CORRECT ○ 4 · WRITE ○

BRICK 1 · SORT BY NARRATIVE FUNCTION · APPROX. 4 MIN ●○○

Sort each sentence. Put the **storyline** in the past-simple column; put **background or back-reference** in the other column.

The alarm sounded and staff evacuated.
Rina opened the log and called support.
We restarted the service and informed users.
The courier arrived and unloaded the samples.
Sales approved the draft and sent it.
The depot was closing when the lights failed.
We had archived the records before inspection.
They had been negotiating before talks ended.
While Omar was presenting, the screen froze.
Before kickoff, they had mapped dependencies.

STORYLINE: PAST SIMPLE	BACKGROUND OR BACK-REFERENCE

BRICK 2 · COMPLETE WITH THE RIGHT NARRATIVE TENSE · APPROX. 6 MIN ●●○

Complete each verb. First choose between **storyline**, background, and back-reference.

01 When backup failed, we _____ traffic. (monitor)
02 Mina _____ support and requested a trace. (call)
03 We learned the courier _____ earlier. (leave)
04 Before launch, engineers _____ throughout May. (test)
05 While buyers _____, the price changed. (wait)
06 Legal _____ the wording, then sales published it. (approve)
07 At noon, we discovered someone _____ the folder. (delete)
08 The printer _____ while Elena was scanning. (jam)

YOUR BUILD · 1 · SORTING · 2 · FILL-IN · 3 · CORRECT · 4 · WRITE

BRICK 3 · FIND AND CORRECT THE MISTAKE · APPROX. 7 MIN

Each sentence contains one error in form or narrative function. Correct the whole sentence.

01 While we checked inventory, the auditor phoned twice.

02 When Maya requested proof, we realised we deleted it.

03 By the time Raj answered, the buyer signed elsewhere.

04 We had been negotiate for months before the agreement.

05 Yesterday, the server has stopped during maintenance.

06 Tara had called support and opened a ticket.

BRICK 4 · BUILD A SHORT NARRATIVE · APPROX. 8 MIN

Write one English sentence for each prompt. Use each tense only for its **narrative function**.

01 Incident: open with an ongoing scene.

02 Event chain: connect three completed steps.

03 Back-reference: explain an earlier mistake.

04 Post-mortem: give an earlier duration.

MINI-CHECK — CAN I DO THIS YET?

- [ ] I keep the event chain in past simple.
- [ ] I frame ongoing scenes with past continuous.
- [ ] I mark earlier completions with past perfect.
- [ ] I use past perfect continuous for earlier duration.

Unsure? Mark each sentence as storyline, background, or back-reference and try again.

Answer key

Check only when you have finished. Every answer comes with the **why** — the rule matters more than the result.

BRICK 1 · SORTING

01 The alarm sounded and staff evacuated.
***Storyline: past simple**: carries the event chain.*

02 Rina opened the log and called support.
***Storyline: past simple**: links successive steps.*

03 We restarted the service and informed users.
***Storyline: past simple**: moves the account.*

04 The courier arrived and unloaded the samples.
***Storyline: past simple**: orders two events.*

05 Sales approved the draft and sent it.
***Storyline: past simple**: groups the event chain.*

06 The depot was closing when the lights failed.
***Background or back-reference**: Past continuous frames the event.*

07 We had archived the records before inspection.
***Background or back-reference**: Past perfect marks the earlier completion.*

08 They had been negotiating before talks ended.
***Background or back-reference**: Past perfect continuous foregrounds the activity.*

09 While Omar was presenting, the screen froze.
***Background or back-reference**: Past continuous opens the ongoing scene.*

10 Before kickoff, they had mapped dependencies.
***Background or back-reference**: Past perfect moves the completion back.*

BRICK 2 · FILL-IN

01 When backup failed, we **were monitoring** traffic.
Background: Past continuous frames the failure.

02 Mina **called** support and requested a trace.
Storyline: Past simple links the steps.

03 We learned the courier **had left** earlier.
Back-reference: Past perfect marks the earlier departure.

04 Before launch, engineers **had been testing** throughout May.
Earlier duration: Past perfect continuous foregrounds the activity.

05 While buyers **were waiting**, the price changed.
Background: Past continuous frames the change.

06 Legal **approved** the wording, then sales published it.
Storyline: Past simple advances the chain.

07 At noon, we discovered someone **had deleted** the folder.
Back-reference: Past perfect marks the earlier deletion.

08 The printer **jammed** while Elena was scanning.
Storyline: Past simple supplies the central event.

BRICK 3 · CORRECT

01 While we **were checking** inventory, the auditor phoned twice.
Background: Past continuous frames the two calls.

02 When Maya requested proof, we realised we **had deleted** it.
Back-reference: Past perfect marks the earlier deletion.

03 By the time Raj answered, the buyer **had signed** elsewhere.
Back-reference: Past perfect moves the signing back.

04 We had been **negotiating** for months before the agreement.
Form rule: Been takes the -ing form.

05 Yesterday, the server **stopped** during maintenance.
Storyline: Yesterday calls for past simple here.

06 Tara **called** support and opened a ticket.
Storyline: Without a look-back, the chain stays past simple.

BRICK 4 · WRITE

Answers vary; check only the function of each tense.

01 Operators **were watching** traffic when the alert appeared.
Background: Past continuous frames the event.

02 We **isolated** the service, **changed** credentials and **notified** partners.
Storyline: Past simple carries three steps.

03 We found that a script **had removed** the permissions.
Back-reference: Past perfect marks the earlier mistake.

04 The vendor **had been investigating** for days before responding.
Earlier duration: Past perfect continuous foregrounds the activity.

NEXT BRICKS — KEEP BUILDING FREE ONLINE

PREREQUISITE
Past Continuous
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PREREQUISITE
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