

ALL NARRATIVE TENSES

test-english.com

PAST SIMPLE

Past completed actions

We **went** to the zoo last week.

Sorry, what **did** you **say**?

We normally say, or both the speaker and the listener know, when these actions happened.

Past habits or states

We often **went** to the pub after work.

He really **liked** sport and **was** very fit.

Situations that started and finished in the past (duration)

I **played** football for 20 years.

How long **did** you **live** in Brussels?

I **loved** her since the day we met.

NARRATIVE USE: events in a story in chronological order

She **opened** the door, **looked** at us and **went** into her room.

PAST CONTINUOUS

Actions in progress at a certain time in the past or certain point in a story

Yesterday at 10 p.m. I **was sleeping**.

When Natasha **opened** the door, we **were talking** about her.

NARRATIVE USE: used to set the scene at the beginning of a story

It **was getting** dark, and I **was walking** to the pub when...

PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

Events that happened earlier in the past

When I met her, I **had never been** in a serious relationship.

He noticed that I **had cleaned** the car.

To say 'how much' or 'how many' we had done of something

We **had driven** 500 miles and were tired.

How many hours **had he slept** when you woke him up?

Duration from earlier in the past (with stative verbs)

When she died, they **had been** married for 48 years.

She told me she **had always hated** her sister.

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

Duration from earlier in the past (with dynamic verbs)

I was furious. I **had been waiting** for him for an hour.

We **had been driving** for less than an hour when the car broke down.

Repeated actions from earlier in the past (with dynamic verbs)

I couldn't believe it. She **had been writing** a letter every day for over a year.