

**Grammar 2:** narrative tenses (past simple/continuous, past perfect simple/continuous) ► CB page 42

## About the language

### Narrative tenses

- We use the **past simple** to talk about events in the past which are now finished.

We **saw** 'Friends' on TV last night.

- We use the **past continuous** to talk about actions in progress in the past.

We **were watching** 'Friends' on TV when the electricity suddenly went off.

- We use the **past perfect** to talk about events at a time earlier than another past time.

When I woke up, I realised I **hadn't set** the alarm clock properly.

- We use the **past perfect continuous** to talk about actions in progress earlier than another past time.

I **had been thinking** of sending Rolf an email message when he emailed me.

### Typical mistakes

~~sitting~~  
He was ~~sitting~~ in the sunshine reading a book.

~~had~~  
When I opened the oven I realised I ~~have~~ forgotten to turn it on.

~~always enjoyed~~  
I ~~was always enjoying~~ going away for the weekend when I was living in London.

~~Had you known~~  
~~Were you knowing~~ each other for long when you decided to get married?

~~We had been waiting~~  
~~We were waiting~~ for about half an hour when the bus finally arrived.

**1.1** Cross out the alternative that is NOT possible for each of the gaps in this extract from a letter.

We (0) were having/~~had had~~ a fantastic time at the carnival. Eva (1) was dancing/~~had danced~~ and I (2) was talking/~~had talked~~ to Flavia. Suddenly Eva (3) was starting/~~started~~ to shout something above the noise of the music. Apparently someone (4) was stealing/~~had stolen~~ her wallet while she (5) was dancing/~~danced~~. She (6) was having/~~had~~ such fun at the time that she (7) ~~wasn't even noticing/didn't even notice!~~ Luckily it (8) ~~wasn't having/didn't have~~ very much money in it and she (9) was also leaving/~~had also left~~ her identity card at home. Still, she was so upset that we (10) ~~decided/were deciding~~ to go back to her house immediately.

**1.2** Now use the verbs in brackets to complete the second part of the letter.

We (0) ~~..went..~~ (go) back to her house but when we (1) ..... (get) there, Eva (2) ..... (realise) that the thief (3) ..... (also steal) her keys. Her parents and her younger brother (4) ..... (all go out) to the carnival so we (5) ..... (not know) what to do. Luckily Eva (6) ..... (remember) that her parents (7) ..... (make) a spare set of keys for her older brother and his wife. They (8) ..... (just get ready) for bed when we (9) ..... (phone) them but her brother said he (10) ..... (not mind) getting dressed and bringing Eva the key.