

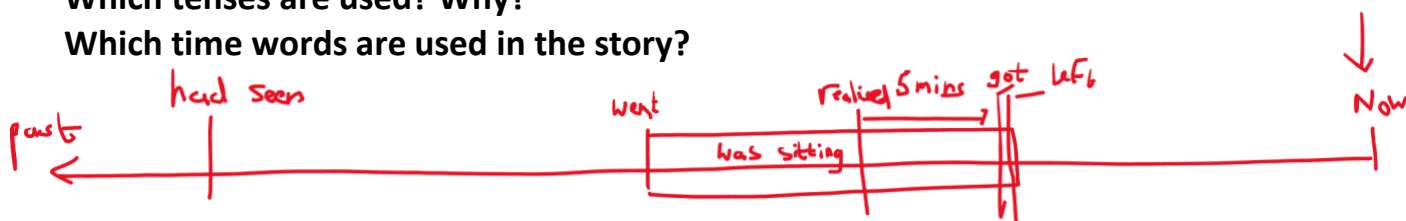
6th January
OET Writing – Narrative Tenses

Look at this anecdote:

Last week, I **went** to the cinema to see a film. I **was sitting** in the cinema when I **realised** that I **had seen** the film before. After five minutes, I **got up** and **left**.

Which tenses are used? Why?

Which time words are used in the story?



Narrative Tenses

Past Simple = verb 2 (e.g. realised/ate/got/left/walked)

We use it for past actions which have finished, and we often use with time stamps such as ‘last...’, ‘yesterday’, ‘...ago’, ‘when’ – often used for consecutive actions in a story

Past Continuous = was/were + verb + ing

We use it for longer actions in the past which have now finished. We often use this tense to ‘set the scene’ in stories (to give the context of the story)

Past Perfect Simple = had + 3rd form/past participle (e.g. seen/eaten/realised/got/left/walked)

We use it to talk about past actions that happened before another past action – ‘the past of the past’

Look at the three sentences below:

- I **ate** my dinner at 6pm – I **started at 6pm and finished later**
- I **was eating** my dinner at 6pm – I **started before 6pm and finished later**
- I **had eaten** my dinner by 6pm – I **started before 6pm and finished before 6pm**

When did I start and finish?

Practice:

Complete the spaces with the verbs in brackets in the past simple, past continuous or past perfect simple tense

1. The accident happened when they were driving home. (happen, drive)
2. The crowd cheered when the referee blew the final whistle. (cheer, blow)
3. I didn't recognise her at first because she had changed so much. (not recognize, change)
4. The police stopped her on the motorway because she hadn't worn/wasn't wearing a seat belt. (stop, not wear)
5. Some of the players didn't listen/weren't listening while the coach was talking to them. (not listen, talk)
6. We couldn't use the ski slope because it hadn't snowed enough. (not can, not snow)
7. They were unable to play tennis because they hadn't booked a court. (not able to, not book)
8. The player got a yellow card because he had taken off his shirt. (get, take off)

Extension:

We can imagine that each appointment in a patient's medical history is like a little story or anecdote

How could we tell the story of this appointment in Mr Bolsa's medical history?

27th May 2022

Visit to clinic with dizziness and nausea
Asks to change medication
Vomited twice previous week

We could write...

Mr Bolsa **presented to/visited** the clinic on 27th May 2022. He **was experiencing** dizziness and nausea and **requested/wanted/asked** to change his medication. He **had vomited** twice the previous week.