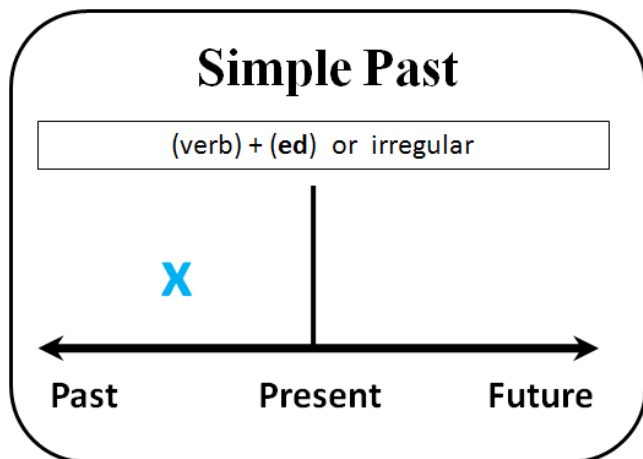


Narrative Tenses

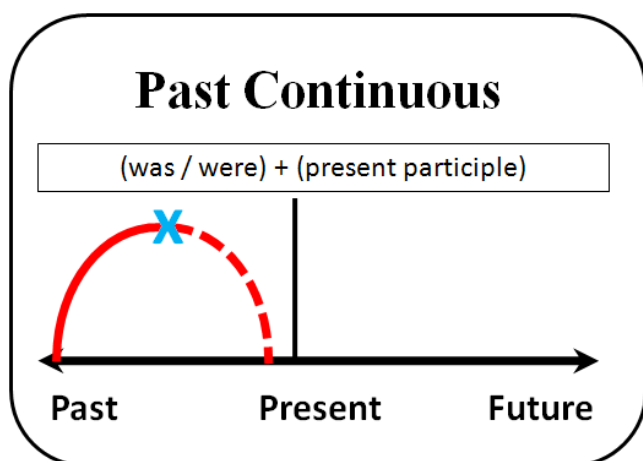


Use the past simple for completed actions in the past which tell the main event in a story.

I **picked up** the phone and **ordered** a pizza.

When I **saw** the boy coming towards me, I **said** hello.

She **took** a deep breath, **tried** to calm down and then **spoke**.



Use the past continuous

a) to set the general scene of a story

The music **was playing** softly, and the guests **were arriving** one by one.

The wind **was blowing** gently and the birds **were singing** the best songs ever.

He **was moving** very fast, **looking** around and **giving** orders to the other police officers around.

b) to talk about actions in progress at or around a particular point in a story, often interrupted by another (shorter) action or event (usually in the past simple).

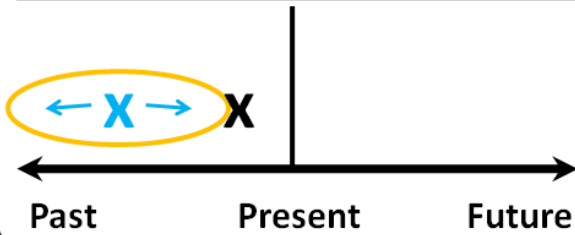
He **was talking** loudly when the waiter brought his food.

Everybody **was working** in the office when the electricity went off.

She **was making** jokes and **telling** anecdotes when the teacher asked her a difficult question.

Past Perfect

(had) + (past participle)



Use the past perfect to talk about actions or situations that were completed before another action in the story. The actions are often mentioned out of time sequence, and the past perfect makes the order clear.

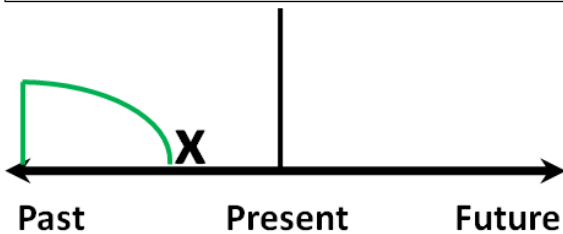
When I **got** to the restaurant, all my friends **had eaten** and some of them **had left**.

Before I called him, I **had prepared** a farewell speech.

She went to bed and took a good night sleep after she **had finished** all the housework.

Past Perfect Continuous

(had) + (been) + (present participle)



Use the past perfect continuous to talk about longer actions or situations which started before and continued up to a point in the story.

She **had been studying** for hours when she found out the exam was cancelled.

They **had been talking** about the details of the party for a couple of hours , so when I asked them whether they wanted a break, they all agreed.