

The missing concert sign

Learner 1 of 4 | Read for meaning, then choose the viewpoint.

Tell a clear short story: show what was already happening, what changed, and what happened next.

Read the whole story first. Choose the form that best fits the viewpoint and sequence. Be ready to explain two choices. If another form seems possible, explain how it changes the focus.

On Friday, our community centre held an outdoor concert. At 5:30, I was halfway across the courtyard: I **(1) was carrying / carried** a box of programmes to the chairs. Lina **(2) tested / was testing** the microphone at that moment. We still had half an hour before the first song.

Suddenly, a gust of wind **(3) blew / was blowing** the concert sign off the gate. I **(4) was putting / put** the box on a bench and then **(5) ran / was running** towards the gate. The sign was not on the path. At that moment, Omar **(6) stood / was standing** beside a hedge with a watering can in his hand.

Omar **(7) was pointing / pointed** towards the hedge. I looked behind it and **(8) found / was finding** the sign. We tied it back onto the gate. The audience arrived at six, and the concert started on time. The programmes stayed dry on the bench.

Check the story and timeline

1. What were two people doing at 5:30?

2. Why did the narrator run to the gate, and where was the sign found?

3. Put these events in order: find the sign / put down the box / tie up the sign / run to the gate.

All people and events in this story are fictional. Write in the spaces or use a notebook.

Change the viewpoint

Learner 2 of 4 | Explain meaning; do not rely on signal words.

1. Already happening or next action?

A. When the audience arrived, Lina was checking the microphone.

B. When the audience arrived, Lina checked the microphone.

Which version places the start of the check before the arrival? What sequence does the other version normally suggest?

2. Does while force a continuous form?

A. While we were waiting, Omar read the programme.

B. While we were waiting, Omar was reading the programme.

Are both possible? Explain what the speaker highlights about Omar's reading.

3. Does a duration force the simple form?

A. We checked the cables for ten minutes.

B. We were checking the cables for ten minutes.

Which presents a bounded checking activity? Which puts more emphasis on the process? Does either prove that every cable was checked?

Repair the form

Repair the question: Did you saw the sign fall?

Repair the form to show an activity in progress: At 5:30, we waiting beside the gate.

Tell a new story

Learner 3 of 4 | Speaking, writing and an individual exit check.

1. Retell with a partner

Work in pairs. Speaker: retell the concert story in 45-60 seconds without reading it. Keep the order of the main events and include two actions or situations in progress. Listener: note one background detail and three events; then ask What were you doing when the sign fell? Swap roles. You may use the timeline and a verb bank.

Verb bank: carry / test / blow / put / run / stand / point / find. Past forms to check: blew, put, ran, stood, found. Planning frame: At ..., ... was/were Suddenly, ... Then Finally, ...

Listener notes: one background detail and three main events

2. Write the rehearsal story

Write 80-100 words about a fictional rehearsal. Facts to keep: at 4:00, two people are already preparing the room; a delivery arrives; something small goes wrong; the group solves it. Choose the people, problem and solution. Include two background details and a clear sequence of events. Do not add continuous forms only to reach a quota: each one must show a viewpoint you can explain.

Check: clear background / event order / verb forms / one explained tense choice.

3. Exit check: show two different timelines

A friend calls at 7:10. Your homework started at 7:00 and is not finished at 7:10. Write one sentence joining the call and the homework. Then write a different sentence in which you start the homework after the call.

Ten quick tense checks

Learner 4 of 4 | Follow-up practice. More than one viewpoint may fit.

Complete each gap with a past simple or past continuous form. For items 4, 5, 6 and 8, prepare to explain another possible version. A different form can change the meaning without being ungrammatical.

1. While I _____ (cook), the phone _____ (ring).

2. She _____ (read) a book when the lights _____ (go) out.

3. We _____ (walk) home and then we _____ (have) dinner.

4. At eight o'clock last night I _____ (watch) a film.

5. He _____ (not listen) when the teacher _____ (explain) the rule.

6. The sun _____ (shine) and the birds _____ (sing).

7. I _____ (know) the answer immediately.

8. What _____ you _____ (do) at midnight?

9. She _____ (live) in Rome for three years, then she _____ (move).

10. While they _____ (argue), I _____ (leave) quietly.

Original pack: The Kingdom of English. Use the separate teacher pack for model answers, alternatives and follow-up guidance. No account is required.