

### THE SIMPLE PAST

- ✓ If a verb is regular, we form the simple past by putting *-ed* or *-d* on the end (*work, worked / type, typed*). If the verb is irregular, there are usually internal changes (*get, got*) or almost complete changes (*bring, brought*).
- ✓ We use the simple past for two main reasons:
  - ⇒ to show that an action happened in the past and is completely finished;  
*Columbus arrived in the New World in 1492.*
  - ⇒ to show which of two actions in the past lasted for a shorter time.  
*They were having dinner when I called.*

### THE PAST CONTINUOUS

- ✓ We form the past continuous by using the auxiliary *was* or *were* before the verb and adding *-ing* to the end of the verb.
- ✓ We use the past continuous for two main reasons:
  - ⇒ to show that an action was in progress at a certain point in the past;  
*I was hoping to get a call from them before now.*
  - ⇒ to show which of two actions in the past was longer.  
*They were having dinner when I called.*

### THE PAST PERFECT

- ✓ We form the past perfect by using the auxiliary *had* plus the past participle of the verb.
- ✓ We use the past perfect to show which of two actions in the past happened first. The past perfect represents what happened first; the simple past or past continuous represents what happened next.  
*He missed his appointment because his car had broken down.*

## Practice: Past Tenses

**DIRECTIONS:** Mark the choice that best completes the sentence.

1. We \_\_\_\_\_ three new staff members last week. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ happy with them so far. (A) (B) (C) (D)  
(A) hired (C) had hired  
(B) were hiring (D) had been hiring
2. The old tenants \_\_\_\_\_ the property by the time we \_\_\_\_\_ looked at it. There was no furniture left inside. (A) (B) (C) (D)  
(A) vacated (C) had vacated  
(B) were vacating (D) had been vacating
3. Sorry for not taking your call this afternoon. I \_\_\_\_\_ up some work for tonight's meeting. (A) (B) (C) (D)  
(A) finished (C) had finished  
(B) was finishing (D) had been finishing