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PAST SIMPLE

We use the past simple to talk about...

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The Past Simple is the basic form of the past tense. It is used principally to describe events in the past.

- The **simple past** tense shows that an action started and completed in the past and has no relevance to the present time at all.

The Past Simple is the basic form of the past tense. It is used principally to describe events in the past.

- It can also be used to describe how someone felt, what their emotional condition was, at a point in the past.

Rule

- There are no forms of the verb to be’ or to have’ with this tense as there are with others (e.g. walked).

Rule

- The simple past can be used with adverbs to describe a time already in the past

I walked to the market last Saturday.

Rule

- It can be used when discussing a specific point in time.

I studied today.

Past Simple Tense Structure

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I/She/He/It + was

We/You/They + were

Was not = Wasn’t

Were not = Weren’t

Positive Sentence:

S + was/were + ...

They were friends.

Negative Sentence:

S + was not/were not + ...

They weren’t friends.

Question form:

Was/Were + S + ...?

Was/Were + S + ...?

My teacher taught me about the planets, moon, and stars in the third grade.

I felt scared when the power went out during the thunderstorm last night.

My boss called me into the office to help with an outage on Sunday night.

I really appreciate when you gave me half your lunch yesterday.

I was so proud the day my oldest child graduated from college with honors.

How to Use the Simple Past Tense

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To express completed action in the past

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1

I saw a ghost last Friday.

To describe a series of completed actions in the past.

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2

I finished work, walked to the beach, and found a nice place to swim.

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To express habits in the past.

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3

When I was young, I watched lots of television every day after school.

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For stative verbs, which are verbs that do not express an action, but a state of mind or being E.g. have (own), be, think

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4

He had a small cottage in the woods.

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Narrating a Story/Describing Events in the past

Take a look at this example of the tenses being mixed up during the narration of a story.

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“Hey Christina, guess what happened yesterday? I drove my tram and I see Patrick! He went to get a pizza for dinner because he forgets to go to buy groceries on his way home from work earlier.”

This is certainly INCORRECT

"Hey Christina, guess what happened yesterday? I drove my tram and I saw Patrick! He went to get a pizza for dinner because he forgot to go to buy groceries on his way home from work earlier."

This is CORRECT

Narrative Tenses Form

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Subject + past tense

He went to the station.

Subject + be (past) + verb -ing

He was going to the station.

Subject + had + past participle

He had gone to the station.

Subject + had + been + verb -ing

He had been going to the station.

Narrative tenses in a written story

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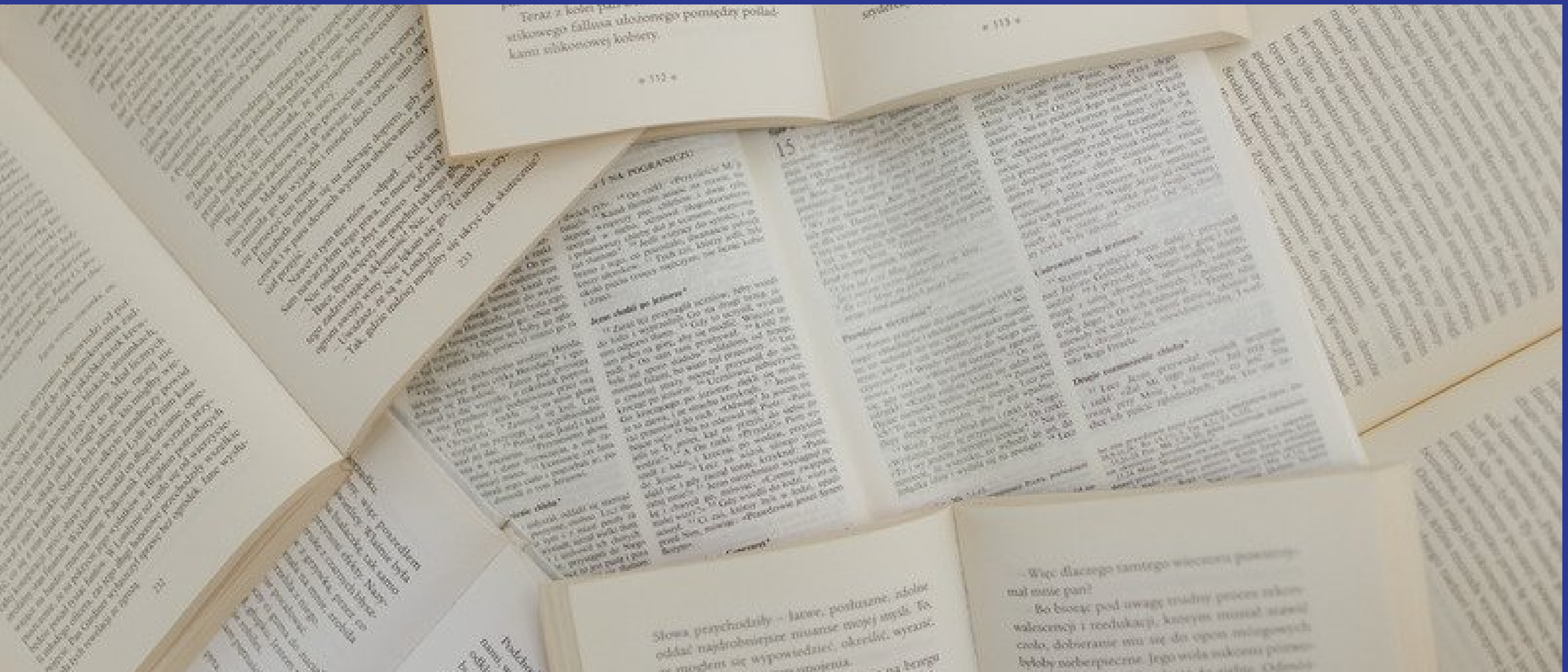
Narrative tenses are common in written stories, especially when they describe action



Bond opened the door very slowly, looked carefully around the room and walked in. The window was open and the curtains were blowing in the wind. Clearly someone had left in a hurry.

Past Simple:

opened, looked, walked, was

Past Simple:

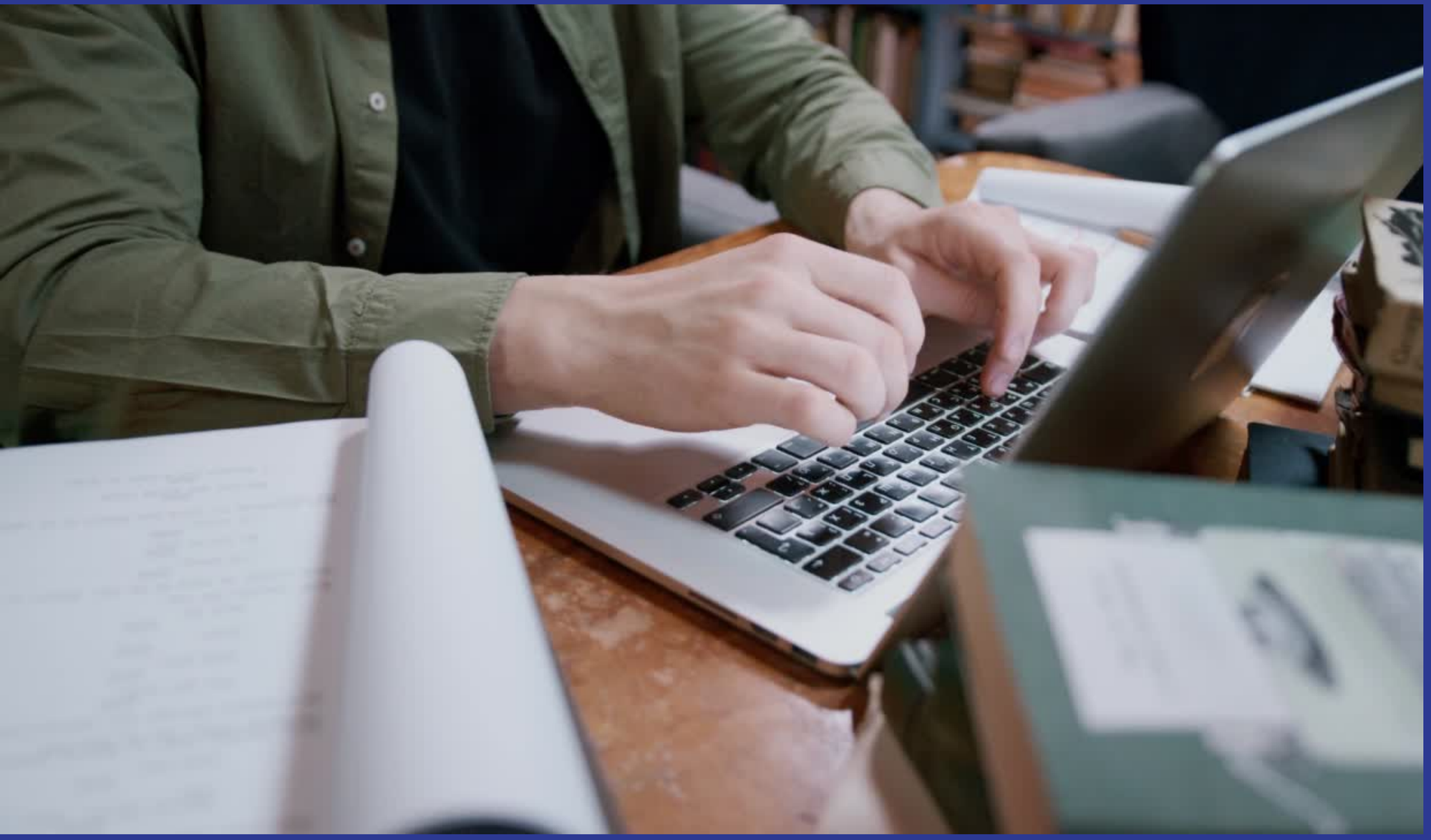
opened, looked, walked, was

Past tense is the most common tense used in genre fiction.

Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense describes something that was started and completed entirely in the past.

John wanted to be a writer.



What is narration?

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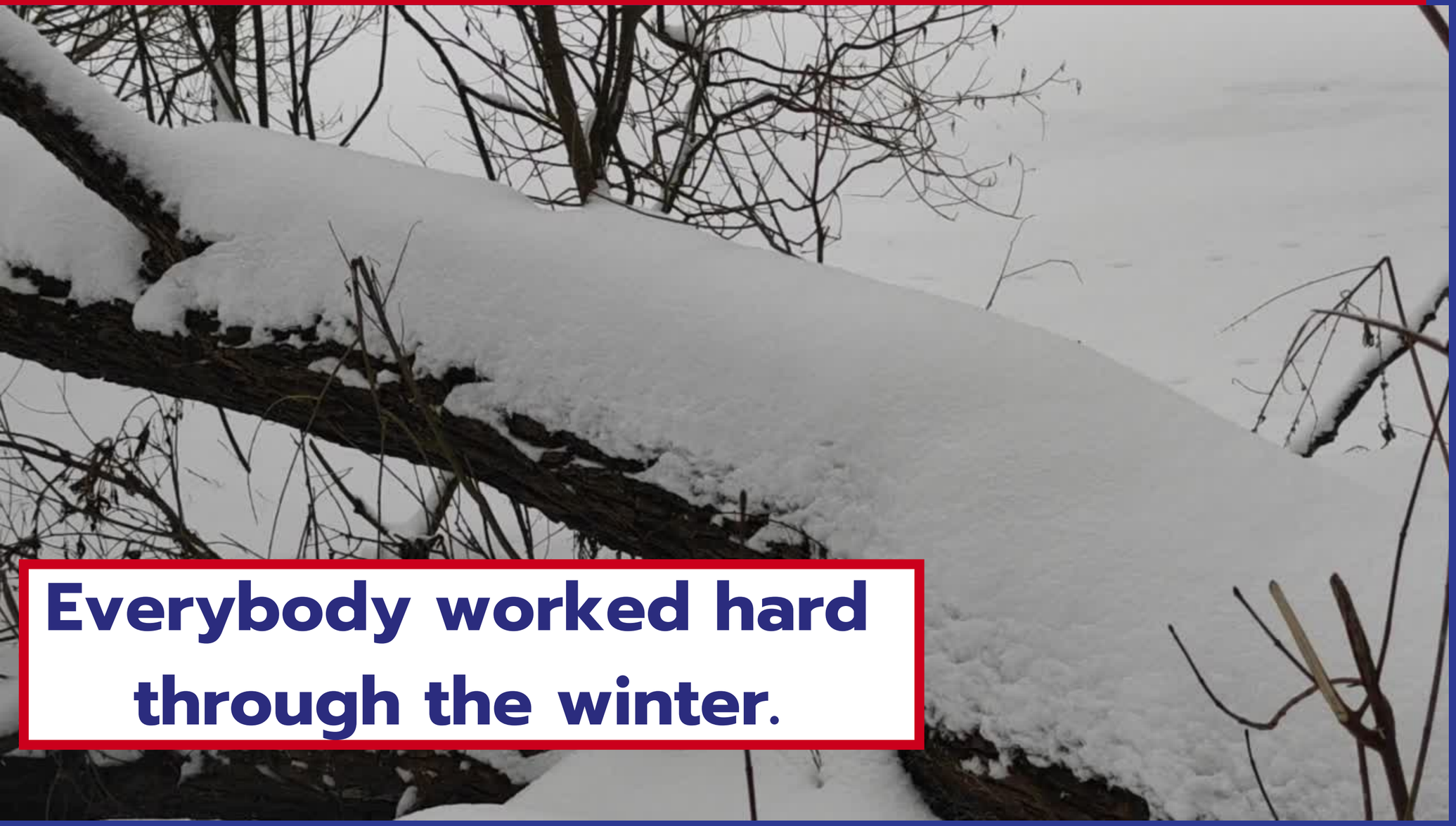
The act of telling a story, usually in some kind of *chronological* order. Making up a scary ghost story and relating it around a camp fire is an act of narration.

chronological: (of a record of events) following the order in which they occurred.

something that happened once in the past:

The film started at seven thirty.

something that was true for some time in the past:



Everybody worked hard through the winter.

When we talk about something that happened several times in the past, we use the past simple:

Sometimes they went out for a meal.

Or used to:

We used to go for a swim every morning.

Or would:

They would often visit friends in Europe.

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Present Perfect

The present perfect is a tense that links the past to the present in some way. That can mean talking about your life experience until now, or describing an action that started in the past and continues in the present, or talking about a recent event that is relevant to now.

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The key thing is that we <u>never use</u> a <u>finished time</u> with the present perfect (unlike the simple past) such as yesterday, last week, in 1995.

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We use an <u>unfinished time</u> expression, like today, this week, this year, in your life.

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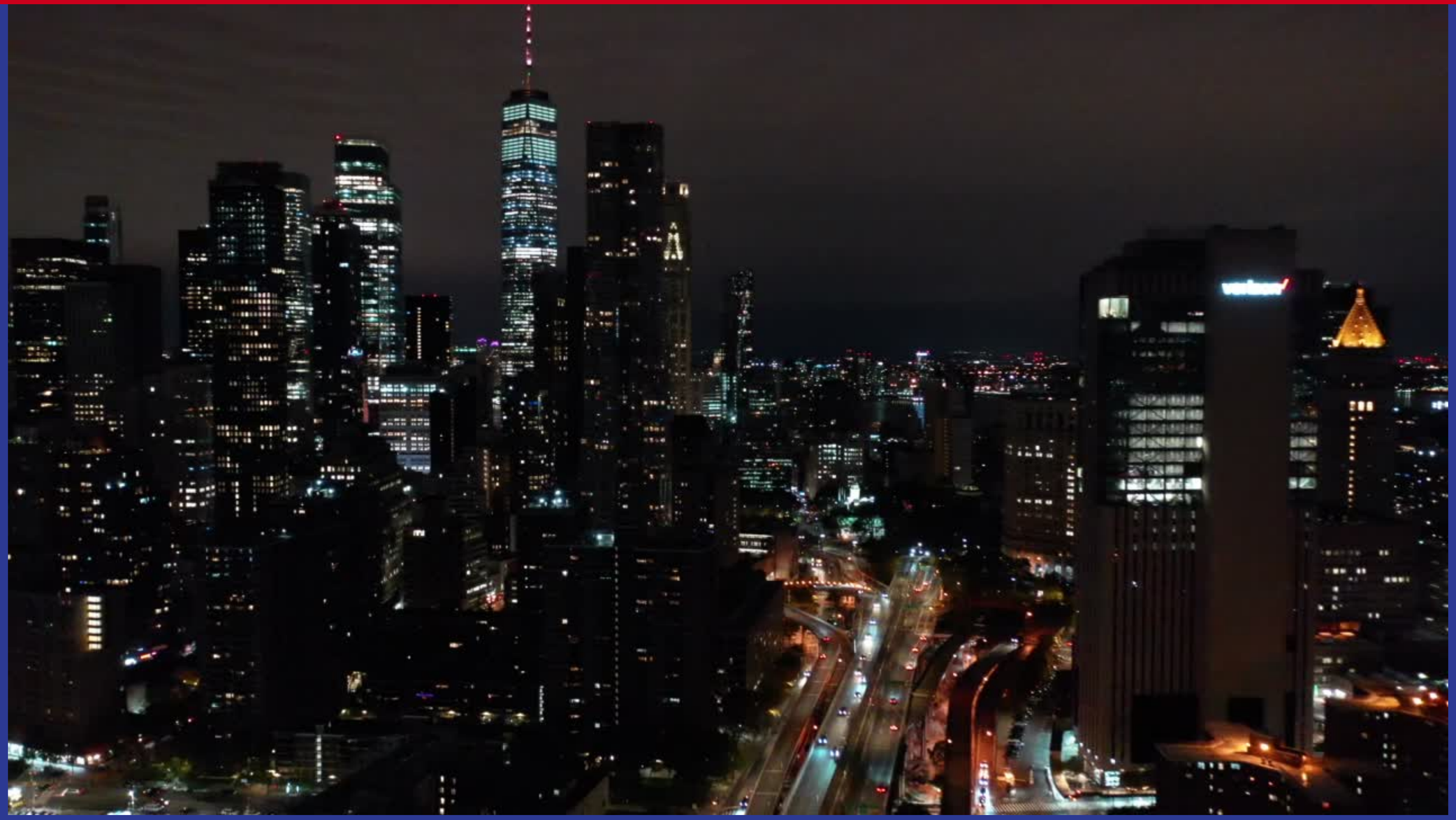
You have been to New York.



They still haven’t delivered the goods!

We’ve never missed a flight fortunately.

She’s visited Australia three times!

They've been married for 25 years.

It hasn’t rained for weeks.

You’ve had that car for ages.

How to know when to use the present perfect

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Is the action finished?

NO? Use the present perfect.

Is there a finished time expression?

NO? Use the present perfect.

Present perfect with time adverbials

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We often use the present perfect with adverbials which refer to the recent past:

- Recently
- Just
- Only just

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Scientists have recently discovered a new breed of monkey.

We have just got back from our holiday.

After a clause with the present perfect we often use a clause with since to show when something started in the past.

+	-	?
I've worked	I haven't worked	Have I worked?
You've worked	You haven't worked	Have you worked?
He/she/it's worked	He/she/it hasn't worked	Has he/she/it worked?
We've worked	We haven't worked	Have we worked?
You've worked	You haven't worked	Have you worked?
They've worked	They haven't worked	Have they worked?

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Unusual Requests

Please could I borrow your mobile phone?

Please could I use your comb?

Could I borrow your shoes for a party?

Could you please move your car?

Please could you do my laundry?

Please could you not cook at night because the smell bothers me.

Please could you do my homework?

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Indirect Requests

What is an indirect request?

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An indirect request is an expression of some desire or inclination.

The doctor told me to stop smoking.

The policeman ordered him to get out of the car.

She asked me to be quiet.

He asked for a glass of water.

Suggestions using indirect speech

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She suggested that I should get a mechanic to look at the car.

He suggested that I go to the doctor.

My manager proposed that we examine the budget carefully at the meeting.

She suggested that I sleep overnight at her house.

You suggested postponing my visit to the dentist.

Polite Requests	Accepting	Refusing
• **Can** I have a copy of this letter? • **Can** I borrow your pen?	Sure. Here you are. Yes, no problem.	I'm afraid that's not possible. Sorry. I'm afraid I need it.
• **Could** you help me with this please? • **Could** I have some more tea please?	Yes,of course. Yes, I'll get some.	I'm afraid I can't. Sorry. Sorry - there is no tea left.
'May' is more polite than 'can' or 'could' when requesting permission. • **May** I sit here? • **May** I use your phone?	Sure, please do. Yes, of course.	Sorry, that's Carla's seat. Sorry, the line is out of order.
• **Will** you join us for dinner?	Yes, with pleasure.	I'm afraid I can't – sorry.
• **Would** you translate this for me please? • **Would you care** to join us for lunch?	No problem. With pleasure.	I'm sorry. I don't speak ..... Sorry. I've got an appointment.
• **Do you mind** if I open the window? • **Do you mind** if read your newspaper?	No not at all. Please do.	I'd rather you didn't. I feel cold. I'm afraid it's not mine!
• **Would you mind** if opened the window? • **Would you mind** closing the door?	No, of course not. No problem.	I'd prefer if you didn't. I'm afraid I can't. It's blocked.
• **Is it ok** if I use your dictionary?	Yes,that's ok.	Sorry, I need it for the moment.
• **Do you think** I could borrow this book? • **Do you think** you could give this to Alex?	Sure, go ahead. Yes, sure.	Sorry, it must be left here. I'm afraid I don't know Alex.
• **Is it all right** if I park here?	That's fine.	No. That's the boss's space!

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