

COMMUNICATION

Chance encounters

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_2103X

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

- I can explain what a chance encounter is and give an example from my life.
- I can describe the most important people in my life and the story of how I met them.



Warm-up

Complete the **activity** below to prepare for the texts you will read in this lesson.

Which of the three explanations opposite best describes a **chance encounter**?

Discuss with your teacher and classmates.



You arrange to meet someone at a certain place and time

You meet somebody when you're not expecting to

You are supposed to meet someone at a certain place and time, but they cancel beforehand

Reading (1)

Read the text below, where James describes how he met Aaron. **Answer the questions** in the boxes.

James, 38, Brooklyn

I was working in a record shop when I met Aaron. He always came in on Saturday mornings. He would come to the counter and ask about really old records that we never had in stock.

One day, I bumped into him in the park. We got talking, I invited him for coffee... and the rest is history. Turns out, Aaron had been more interested in chatting to me than finding the records, but he's quite shy, so he was afraid to ask me out!



What is the relationship between James and Aaron now?

What was James doing when he met Aaron?

What kind of records was Aaron asking about?

Find an adjective that James uses to describe Aaron.



Match the phrases from the text

Match these real-life phrases that James used to the correct definition or synonym.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | One day, I bumped into him in the park... | a | started talking |
| 2 | We got talking ... | b | in fact |
| 3 | I invited him for coffee... and the rest is history . | c | to ask him on a date |
| 4 | Turns out , he'd been more interested in chatting to me than finding the records... | d | met him unexpectedly, without planning it |
| 5 | ...but he was afraid to ask me out . | e | you are at the part of the story that people already know |





Discuss in breakout rooms or as a class

If using breakout rooms, share **one thing** you found out about your partner with the class.

Can you think of a time when you bumped into someone you knew? Where did it happen?



Have you ever got talking to a person you didn't know very well? What did you talk about?

Reading (2)

Read the text below, where Elsa describes how she met Anja. **Answer the questions** in the boxes.

Elsa, 40, Vienna

I was cycling by the river near my apartment on a stormy day a few years ago, when I heard someone shout - a woman had fallen in. I threw her a lifebuoy that was nearby and helped her to the riverbank.

She was in shock, so I took her to my place and gave her a change of clothes and a hot drink. She told me that I had saved her life because she couldn't swim! I guess I was just in the right place at the right time. We exchanged details and stayed in contact afterwards, and now she's one of my best friends!



What is the relationship between Elsa and Anja now?

What was Elsa doing on the day she met Anja?

How did Elsa help Anja?

Why did Anja say that Elsa had saved her life?



I guess I was just **in the right place at the right time**.



In what sort of situations do we use this phrase?
Have you ever been **in the right place at the right time**?





Discuss



Can you think of a time when you were in shock? What had happened?



When was the last time you exchanged details with someone?

Combining tenses

Read the **examples** below from the first text and **complete the blue boxes**.

I **was working** in a record shop when I met Aaron.

One day, I **bumped into** him in the park. I **invited** him for coffee.

Turns out, he **had been** more **interested** in chatting to me than finding the records

- In the sentences above, **identify**:

the **past simple**
the **past continuous**
the **past perfect**

- We often refer to these tenses as the **narrative tenses**, as they are very useful when telling stories.

- **Fill in the gaps** with the three tenses:

We use the _____ tense to give background information.

We use the _____ tense to talk about a single or series of completed past actions.

We use the _____ tense for an action that happened before another action in the past.



A series of events in the past

Put the events of Elsa's story in order.

1

2

3

4

A

I threw her a life-buoy that was nearby and **helped** her to the riverbank.

B

I brought her to my place and **gave** her a change of clothes and a hot drink.

C

We exchanged details and **stayed in contact** afterwards

D

I was cycling by the river near my apartment on a stormy day a few years ago, when **I heard someone shout** – a woman had fallen in.



Reflect on the texts

Discuss the questions below with your classmates.



Think about James' and Elsa's stories. How often do you think these kinds of encounters happen?

Which story did you find most surprising? Why?

What are some common ways that people meet their friends or partners these days?

Have you ever met someone by chance, who then became an important person in your life?

Talk about the important people in your life

Tell the class about an important person in your life, and the story of how you met them. Use the prompts in the red box, and the examples below, to help you.

Narrative tenses:

- past simple
- past continuous
- past perfect

Vocabulary from the lesson

- to bump into someone
- to get talking to someone
- Turns out...
- The rest is history...
- to exchange details with someone
- to stay in contact with someone
- to be in the right place at the right time

So, I was working in a café when I met Richard... He came back at closing time because he had forgotten his credit card.... We got talking...

I had seen Sarah in a few of my classes at university, and I thought she was really cool... Turns out...

My best friend and I have known each other since we were kids... We lived on the same street... We stayed in contact when we grew up... Then one day...



End of the lesson

Idiom

To cross paths

Meaning: When you meet someone in an unexpected way

Example: We first crossed paths in university – we sat beside each other in a lecture, and we've kept in contact ever since.



Additional practice



Multiple choice



- 1 My dad is always bumping _____ old friends wherever we go.
- a. onto b. in c. on d. into
- 2 Turns _____, we had been born in the same hospital and our mums knew each other!
- a. in b. for c. out d. into
- 3 We met completely _____ chance when we were seated next to each other on the plane.
- a. with b. on c. by d. to



Vocabulary match

Match these words and phrases from the text to the correct picture. Choose a word or phrase and build a sentence.

1



2



3



4



5



6



a stormy

b to throw

c lifebuoy

d riverbank

e to be in shock

f to exchange details



Wrong place, wrong time

Answer the questions below.

Have you ever been in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Why were you in that place?

What happened?

Did it turn out OK in the end?





Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps using the words in the red box.

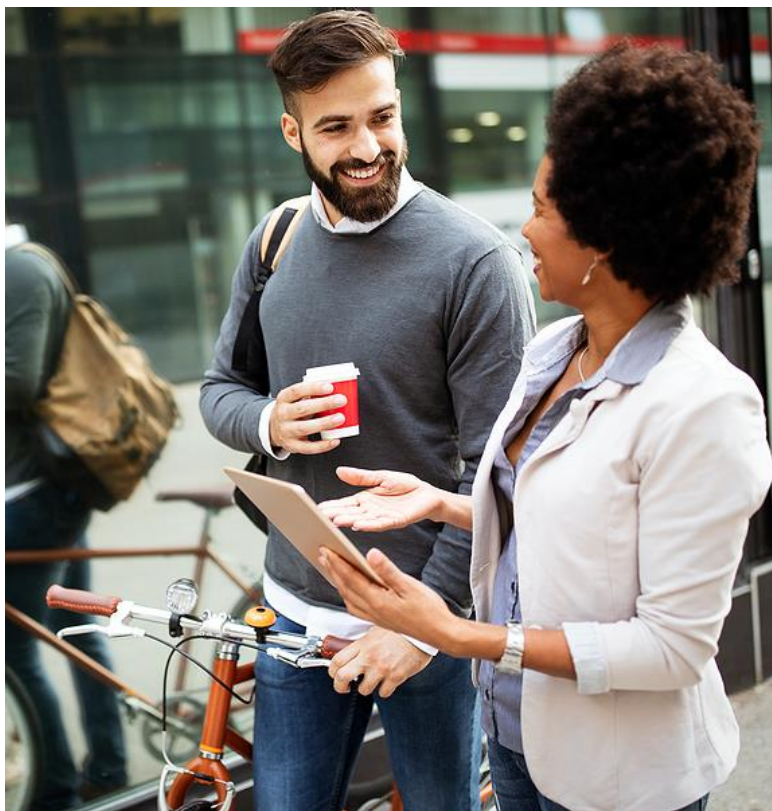
- 1 She asked me _____ and we went on a date straight away to a little coffee shop around the corner.
- 2 I had seen him on the bus so many times and one day we _____ talking and we had so much in common. Now we chat every morning.
- 3 I met my wife when I got on the wrong bus in London. It was such a _____ encounter and we love telling the story.
- 4 My best friend and I started work at the same company on the same day. We didn't know each other but we got on well and the rest is _____.
- 5 Celia rescued my dog during a very stormy night. She was in the _____ at the _____.

chance
right time
got
out
right place
history



An important person in my life

Look back at slide 12 and choose a different person from your life to talk about.



I got talking to James when our train was delayed one day.

We exchanged details, which was strange because I normally never give my number to people.

Turns out, she lived right around the corner from me.



Answer key

P.4: 1. They are together/ They are in a relationship / Aaron is James' partner/boyfriend 2. James was working in a record shop 3. Aaron was asking about really old records that they didn't have in stock 4. shy

P.5: 1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (e) 4. (b) 5. (c)

P.7: 1. They are best friends 2. She was cycling by the river 3. Elsa threw Anja a life-buoy and helped her to the riverbank 4. Because Anja can't swim

P.10: (**past simple**) *bumped into; invited* (**past continuous**) was working (**past perfect**) had been ... interested

We use the past continuous tense to give background information

We use the past simple tense to talk about a single or series of completed past actions.

We use the past perfect tense for an action that happened before another action in the past

P.11: 1. (d) 2. (a) 3. b) 4. (c)



Answer key

Additional practice:

P. 17: 1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (c)

P.18: 1. (d) 2. (e) 3. (f) 4. (c) 5. (a) 6. (b)

P. 20: 1. out 2. got 3. chance 4. history 5. right place, right time



Summary

Vocabulary for describing chance encounters:

- *to bump into; to get talking to; to exchange details; to stay in contact*
- *to be in the right place at the right time*

Narrative tenses:

- **Past simple:** a single or series of completed events in the past
- **Past continuous:** background information
- **Past perfect:** an action that happened before another action in the past



Vocabulary

chance encounter

to bump into...

to get talking

The rest is history

Turns out...

to ask someone out

to be in the right place at the right time

stormy

to throw

life-buoy

riverbank

to be in shock

to exchange details

