



Tense Revision: Past Tenses

Task 1: Read the excerpt from Jarrett J. Krosoczka's TED talk "Why lunch ladies are heroes" and find examples of the following tenses. Analyze the uses of these structures.

1. *past simple*
2. *past continuous*
3. *present perfect*
4. *past perfect*

When my first children's book was published in 2001, I returned to my old elementary school to talk to the students about being an author and an illustrator, and when I was setting up my slide projector in the cafetorium, I looked across the room, and there she was: my old lunch lady. She was still there at the school and she was busily preparing lunches for the day. So I approached her to say hello, and I said, "Hi, Jeannie! How are you?" And she looked at me, and I could tell that she recognized me, but she couldn't quite place me, and she looked at me and she said, "Stephen Krosoczka?" And I was amazed that she knew I was a Krosoczka, but Stephen is my uncle who is 20 years older than I am, and she had been his lunch lady when he was a kid. And she started telling me about her grandkids, and that blew my mind. My lunch lady had grandkids, and therefore kids, and therefore left school at the end of the day? I thought she lived in the cafeteria with the serving spoons. I had never thought about any of that before.

Well, that chance encounter inspired my imagination, and I created the Lunch Lady graphic novel series, a series of comics about a lunch lady who uses her fish stick nunchucks to fight off evil cyborg substitutes, a school bus monster, and mutant mathletes, and the end of every book, they get the bad guy with their hairnet, and they proclaim, "Justice is served!"

And it has been amazing, because the series was so welcomed into the reading lives of children, and they sent me the most amazing letters and cards and artwork. And I would notice as I would visit schools, the lunch staff would be involved in the programming in a very meaningful way. And coast to coast, all of the lunch ladies told me the same thing: "Thank you for making a superhero in our likeness." Because the lunch lady has not been treated very kindly in popular culture over time. But it



meant the most to Jeannie. When the books were first published, I invited her to the book launch party, and in front of everyone there, everyone she had fed over the years, I gave her a piece of artwork and some books. And two years after this photo was taken, she passed away, and I attended her wake, and nothing could have prepared me for what I saw there, because next to her casket was this painting, and her husband told me it meant so much to her that I had acknowledged her hard work, I had validated what she did.

And that inspired me to create a day where we could recreate that feeling in cafeterias across the country: School Lunch Hero Day, a day where kids can make creative projects for their lunch staff.