



NARRATIVE TEXTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Narratives normally use the **past tenses** to tell a story. The Past Continuous often describes the scene. The Past Simple, Past Continuous and Past Perfect are used to describe the sequence of events.

Telling stories is common in any language. Think of all the situations in which you might tell a story in everyday life:

- Talking about last weekend to a friend.
- Giving details about something that happened during a job interview.
- Relating information about your family to your relatives.
- Telling classmates about what happened on a holiday trip.

In each of these situations - and many others - you provide information about something that happened in the past. In order to help your audience understand, you need to link these ideas together. One of the most important ways to link ideas is to sequence them. Sequencing refers to the order in which events happened. Read this example paragraph to get the gist:

A CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO

Last week I visited Chicago to attend a business conference. While I was there, I decided to visit the Art Institute of Chicago. To start off with, my flight was delayed. Next, the airline lost my luggage, so I had to wait for two hours at the airport while they tracked it down. Unexpectedly, the luggage had been set aside and forgotten. As soon as they found my luggage, I found a taxi and rode into town. During the ride into town, the driver told me about his last visit to the Art Institute. After I had arrived safely, everything began to go smoothly. The business conference was very interesting, and I enjoyed my visit to the Art Institute a lot. Finally, I caught my flight back to Seattle.

Luckily, everything went smoothly. I arrived home just in time to kiss my daughter good night.

As you can see, in order to link the ideas together and sequence them, you need to use time expressions and connectors of sequence.

2. TIME EXPRESSIONS AND CONNECTORS OF SEQUENCE

These are some of the most common ways to sequence in writing or speaking:

2.1. BEGINNING YOUR STORY

Make the beginning of your story with these expressions. Make sure to use a comma after the introductory phrase.

	Examples
First of all,	<u>First of all</u> , I opened the cupboard.
To start off with,	<u>To start off with</u> , we decided our destination was New York.
To begin with,	<u>To begin with</u> , I began my education in London.
Initially,	<u>Initially</u> , I thought it was a bad idea, ...

2.2. CONTINUING THE STORY

You can continue the story with this expressions, or use a time clause beginning with "as soon as", or "after", etc. When using a time clause, use the past simple after the time expression.

	Examples
Then,	<u>Then</u> , I started to get worried.
After that,	<u>After that</u> , we knew that there would be no problem!
Next,	<u>Next</u> , we decided on our strategy.
As soon as / When + full clause,	<u>As soon as</u> we arrived, we unpacked our bags. <u>When</u> we arrived, we unpacked our bags.
... but then	We were sure everything was ready, <u>but then</u> we discovered some unexpected problems.
Immediately,	<u>Immediately</u> , I telephoned my friend Tom.

2.3. INTERRUPTIONS AND ADDING NEW ELEMENTS TO THE STORY

You can use the following expressions to add suspense to your story:

	Examples
Suddenly,	<u>Suddenly</u> , a child burst into the room with a note for Ms. Smith.
Unexpectedly,	<u>Unexpectedly</u> , the people in the room didn't agree with the mayor.

2.4. SPEAKING ABOUT EVENTS OCCURRING AT THE SAME TIME

The use of "while" and "as" introduce a dependent clause and require an independent clause to complete your sentence.

➤ **"DURING"** is used with a noun, noun phrase, or noun clause and does not require a subject and object. During + noun (noun clause). For example:

During the meeting, Jack came over and asked me a few questions.

We explored a number of approaches during the presentation.

➤ You can also use “**WHILE**” or “**AS**”: While / As + S + V, + Independent Clause OR Independent Clause + While / As + S + V.

While I was giving the presentation, a member of the audience asked an interesting question.

Jennifer told her story as I prepared dinner.

2.5. ENDING THE STORY

Mark the end of your story with the following phrases:

	Examples
Finally,	<u>Finally</u> , I flew to London for my meeting with Jack.
In the end,	<u>In the end</u> , he decided to postpone the project.
Eventually,	<u>Eventually</u> , we became tired and returned home.

(Main Source: “Telling Stories, Sequencing your Ideas” by Kenneth Beare,
from www.thoughtco.com)