3A

narrative tenses: past simple, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous

narrative tenses

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1 We **arrived** at the airport and **checked in**.
2 We **were having** dinner when the plane hit some turbulence.
At nine o'clock most people on the plane **were reading** or **were trying** to sleep.
3 When we arrived at the airport, we suddenly realized that we **had left** one of the suitcases in the taxi.
4 We**'d been flying** for about two hours when suddenly the captain told us to fasten our seat belts because we were flying into some very bad weather.

1 We use the **past simple** to talk about consecutive actions or situations in the past, i.e. for the main events in a story.
2 We use the **past continuous** (*was* / *were* + verb + *-ing*) to describe a longer continuous past action or situation which was in progress when another action happened, or to describe an action or situation that was not complete at a past time.
3 We use the **past perfect** (*had* + past participle) to talk about the 'earlier past', i.e. things which happened before the main event(s).
4 We use the **past perfect continuous** (*had been* + verb + *-ing*) with action verbs to talk about longer continuous actions or situations that started before the main events happened and have continued up to that point. Non-action verbs (e.g. *be*, *have*, *know*, *like*, etc.) are not normally used in the past continuous or past perfect continuous.

past perfect simple or continuous?

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Lina was crying because she**'d been reading** a very sad book.
Lina didn't want to see the film, because she**'d** already **read** the book.

- The past perfect continuous emphasizes the continuation of an activity. The past perfect simple emphasizes the completion of an activity.

a Circle the correct verb form.



Meg and Liam McGowan got / *were getting* a nasty surprise when they [1]*had checked in* / *were checking in* at Heathrow airport yesterday with their baby Shaun. They [2]*had won* / *won* three free plane tickets to Rome in a competition, and they [3]*were looking forward to* / *had been looking forward to* their trip for months. But, unfortunately, they [4]*had been forgetting* / *had forgotten* to get a passport for their son, so Shaun couldn't fly. Luckily, they [5]*had arrived* / *were arriving* very early for their flight, so they still had time to do something about it. They [6]*had run* / *ran* to the police station in the airport to apply for an emergency passport. Meg [7]*was going* / *went* with Shaun to the photo machine while Liam [8]*had filled in* / *was filling in* the forms. The passport was ready in an hour, so they [9]*hurried* / *were hurrying* to the gate and [10]*got* / *had got* on the plane.

b Put the verb in brackets in the past perfect simple (*had done*) or continuous (*had been doing*). If you think both are possible, use the continuous form.

His English was very good. He*'d been learning* it for five years. (learn)

1 I was really fed up because we _____ for hours. (queue)
2 She went to the police to report that someone _____ her bag. (steal)
3 It _____ all morning. The streets were wet, and there were puddles everywhere. (rain)
4 She got to work late because she _____ her phone at home and _____ go back and get it. (leave, have to)
5 I almost didn't recognize Tony at the party. He _____ a lot since I last saw him. (change)
6 The tourists' faces were very red. They _____ in the sun all morning and they _____ any sun cream. (sit, not put on)
7 I could see from their expressions that my parents _____. (argue)
8 Jess had a bandage on her arm because she _____ off her bike that morning. (fall)
9 I was amazed because I _____ such an enormous plane before. (never see)
10 How long _____ before you realized that you were lost? (walk)

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