

Narrative Tenses – Test 1



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Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Score: / 30

Choose the correct option (A, B, C or D) for each question.

Part 1: Form and basic use

Choose the option that correctly completes each sentence.

- By the time I got to the station, the train _____.
A has left B was leaving C had left D leaves
- While Amara _____ dinner, the power suddenly went off.
A cooked B was cooking C had cooked D has been cooking
- I _____ for over two hours when the bus finally came.
A was waiting B waited C have been waiting D had been waiting
- Lucas was very nervous at the interview. He _____ a job interview before.
A hadn't had B didn't have C hasn't had D wasn't having
- 'What _____ when the police stopped you?' 'I was just driving home.'
A did you do B had you done C were you doing D you were doing
- How long _____ for the company when they finally promoted her?
A was she working B had she been working
C has she been working D did she work
- She was exhausted because she _____ all night.
A had been study B has studied C was been studying D had been studying
- Kofi _____ the door, switched on the light and sat down.
A had unlocked B was unlocking C unlocked D has unlocked
- When we lived by the sea, we _____ swim every morning before work.
A were used to B would C had D use to
- I didn't hear the phone because I _____ music with my headphones on.
A was listening to B listened to C had listened D was listen to

Part 2: Meaning, contrast and common errors

Choose the correct sentence, the correct meaning, the best response, or the sentence with an error, as instructed.

- Choose the correct sentence.
A I was knowing the answer, but I didn't say anything.
B I knew the answer, but I didn't say anything.
C I had been knowing the answer, but I didn't say anything.
D I was know the answer, but I didn't say anything.

12. 'When Mei arrived, Tom had left.' What does this sentence mean?
- A** Tom left after Mei arrived.
 - B** Tom was leaving as Mei arrived.
 - C** Tom left before Mei arrived.
 - D** Tom and Mei left together.
13. 'When the teacher came in, the students were talking.' What does this sentence mean?
- A** The students were in the middle of talking when the teacher came in.
 - B** The students started talking after the teacher came in.
 - C** The students had finished talking before the teacher came in.
 - D** The students talked because the teacher came in.
14. Which sentence contains an error?
- A** She had been crying, so her eyes were red.
 - B** We were having lunch when it started to rain.
 - C** By the time the show started, we had found our seats.
 - D** He was falling asleep twice during the lecture.
15. Which sentence contains an error?
- A** I didn't use to like coffee.
 - B** Did you used to play the piano?
 - C** We used to live near the park.
 - D** My grandfather would tell us stories.
16. Choose the correct sentence.
- A** After she has finished her report, she went home.
 - B** After she was finishing her report, she went home.
 - C** After she had finished her report, she went home.
 - D** After she finished her report, she has gone home.
17. 'Why was Leila so upset yesterday?' Choose the best response.
- A** Someone has stolen her bike.
 - B** Someone was stealing her bike.
 - C** Someone steals her bike.
 - D** Someone had stolen her bike.
18. 'I had been painting the kitchen, so my clothes were covered in paint.' What does 'had been painting' emphasise?
- A** The painting is still happening now.
 - B** The activity continued over a period before a past moment, and its result was visible.
 - C** The painting finished long ago and has no connection to the clothes.
 - D** Painting the kitchen was a regular habit.
19. Choose the correct question.
- A** Did you ever been abroad before you went to Japan?
 - B** Have you ever been abroad before you went to Japan?
 - C** Were you ever been abroad before you went to Japan?
 - D** Had you ever been abroad before you went to Japan?
20. Which sentence uses 'would' INCORRECTLY?
- A** As a child, I would spend hours drawing.
 - B** Every summer, we would visit our cousins.
 - C** When I was young, I would have long hair.
 - D** On Sundays, my dad would make pancakes.

Part 3: Narrative tenses in a story

Read the story and choose the correct option for each numbered gap.

Last spring, Daniel finally took the trip he (21) ___ about for years. He (22) ___ in an office for almost a decade and felt he needed a change. On the first morning, he woke up early, packed a small bag and set off into the mountains. The sun (23) ___ and birds were singing in the trees.

After he (24) ___ for about three hours, he realised that he (25) ___ his map at the guesthouse. He (26) ___ a phone signal either, so he couldn't check his location. He (27) ___ his way slowly back down the path when he noticed an elderly woman collecting herbs nearby.

'Are you lost?' she asked kindly. Daniel explained what (28) ___. The woman smiled and showed him a shortcut that he (29) ___ on any map. That evening, back at the guesthouse, Daniel thought about the day. He (30) ___ such a kind stranger in his life, and he knew he would never forget her.

21. (21) Last spring, Daniel finally took the trip he _____ about for years.
A was dreaming **B** had been dreaming **C** has dreamed **D** dreams
22. (22) He _____ in an office for almost a decade and felt he needed a change.
A was working **B** has worked **C** had been working **D** works
23. (23) The sun _____ and birds were singing in the trees.
A was shining **B** had been shine **C** shines **D** has been shining
24. (24) After he _____ for about three hours, he realised...
A was walking **B** has walked **C** walks **D** had been walking
25. (25) ...he realised that he _____ his map at the guesthouse.
A has left **B** had left **C** was leaving **D** leaves
26. (26) He _____ a phone signal either, so he couldn't check his location.
A didn't had **B** wasn't having **C** doesn't have **D** didn't have
27. (27) He _____ his way slowly back down the path when he noticed an elderly woman.
A was making **B** has made **C** makes **D** had been make
28. (28) Daniel explained what _____.
A has happened **B** happens **C** had happened **D** had been happen
29. (29) ...a shortcut that he _____ on any map.
A has never seen **B** had never seen **C** was never seeing **D** never sees
30. (30) He _____ such a kind stranger in his life...
A had never met **B** has never met **C** was never meeting **D** never meets

Answer key – Narrative Tenses – Test 1

1 C	2 B	3 D	4 A	5 C	6 B	7 D	8 C	9 B	10 A
11 B	12 C	13 A	14 D	15 B	16 C	17 D	18 B	19 D	20 C
21 B	22 C	23 A	24 D	25 B	26 D	27 A	28 C	29 B	30 A

Explanations

- C** – The past perfect shows that the train left before I got to the station.
- B** – The past continuous describes an action in progress when a shorter action interrupted it.
- D** – The past perfect continuous expresses an activity that lasted for a period up to a moment in the past.
- A** – The negative past perfect shows he had no experience before that past moment.
- C** – A past continuous question asks about an activity in progress, with the auxiliary before the subject.
- B** – The past perfect continuous question asks about the duration of an activity up to a past event.
- D** – The past perfect continuous is formed with had been + -ing.
- C** – The past simple is used for a sequence of completed actions in the order they happened.
- B** – 'Would' + infinitive describes repeated past actions.
- A** – The past continuous describes the background activity that explains why I didn't hear the phone.
- B** – 'Know' is a stative verb, so it is not normally used in continuous forms.
- C** – The past perfect 'had left' shows that Tom's leaving happened earlier than Mei's arrival.
- A** – The past continuous shows that the talking was already in progress at that moment.
- D** – A completed action repeated a specific number of times needs the past simple: 'He fell asleep twice'.
- B** – In questions with 'did', the base form 'use to' is required: 'Did you use to play...?'
- C** – The past perfect marks the earlier action, followed by the past simple for the later one.
- D** – The past perfect explains an earlier event that caused her feelings at a past time.
- B** – The past perfect continuous focuses on a longer activity before a past moment and its visible result.
- D** – A past perfect question uses 'had' + subject + past participle to ask about experience before a past event.
- C** – 'Would' is not used for past states; we say 'I used to have long hair'.
- B** – The past perfect continuous shows a long activity that continued up to the time of the trip.
- C** – A duration ('for almost a decade') up to a past moment requires the past perfect continuous.
- A** – The past continuous sets the background scene of the story.
- D** – The past perfect continuous describes an activity lasting three hours before he realised something.
- B** – Leaving the map happened before the moment he realised it, so the past perfect is needed.
- D** – The negative past simple uses 'didn't' + base form, and 'have' meaning possess is not used in the continuous.
- A** – The past continuous shows the action in progress when he noticed the woman.
- C** – The events he explained happened before the conversation, so the past perfect is used.
- B** – The past perfect expresses experience (or lack of it) up to that point in the past.
- A** – Looking back from that evening, the past perfect describes his experience up to that time.

Notes for teachers: Use this test after teaching the full range of narrative tenses, or as a diagnostic before a storytelling or writing unit. It targets common B2 errors: using the past continuous for durations or repeated actions, stative verbs in continuous forms, 'did you used to', 'would' with states, and mixing the present perfect into past narratives. As a follow-up, ask students to rewrite the Part 3 story from the elderly woman's point of view using all four narrative tenses.