



B1 —

Past tense aspects and sequencing words

Using past tense aspects and sequencing words to tell compelling stories

Warm-up discussion

1. Do you usually read the news online or in print?
2. Do you think journalists should only write about serious news? Why / why not?
3. What makes a good news article?

Matching activity

1. Fluff piece

a. Refusing to follow rules or authority

2. Clickbait

b. A headline designed only to make people click

3. Rebellious

c. Very interested in academic or technical subjects

4. Nerdy

d. An article with little real content, often for entertainment

5. Catering company

e. A business providing food for events

The Journalist's Struggle

First, Mark, a journalist at a busy newspaper, was sitting at his desk and staring at the computer screen. He had wanted to write serious stories for years, but instead his editor always made him write fluff pieces with clickbait headlines.

Then, his phone rang. His wife was calling to say that her catering company had lost another client because she hadn't listened to their requests. Mark was listening patiently, but he felt frustrated. He had been trying to talk honestly with her for months, but she always changed the subject.

After that, Mark's thoughts moved to his family. His mother had become forgetful, and he often spent evenings helping her remember important things. His 13-year-old daughter was shouting at him the night before because she didn't want to follow the rules. Meanwhile, his 9-year-old son had been building a science project all week and was excited to show it to him.

Finally, Mark realised that his life was full of stories worth writing. He decided that he would no longer let his editor control his voice. The next morning, he wrote the article he had always dreamed of writing.

Comprehension questions

1. What kind of articles does Mark want to write?
2. Why is his wife's catering company struggling?
3. How is Mark's relationship with his mother?
4. What happened with his daughter the night before?
5. What decision does Mark make at the end?



Past tense aspects guide

Tense	Structure	Example	Use
Past simple	Subject + verb-ed / irregular	<i>“Mark wrote the article.”</i>	Completed past actions.
Past continuous	Subject + was/were + verbING	<i>“He was sitting at his desk.”</i>	Actions in progress in the past.
Past perfect simple	Subject + had + past participle	<i>“He had wanted to write serious stories.”</i>	Action before another past action.
Past perfect continuous	Subject + had been + verbING	<i>“He had been trying to talk honestly with her.”</i>	Ongoing action before another past event.

Sequencing words

“First”, “then”, “after that”, “finally” → used to order events in a story.

Commonly used when explaining the process of cooking a recipe.

Almond flour gluten-free vegan cupcakes [I]

This is a quick recipe that requires very few ingredients. It is loaded with vitamin E and is perfect for gluten-free and vegan diets. This recipe also does not require any oil or butter as almonds have enough natural grease to make the cupcakes soft and moist. Honey replaces sugar to make it even more healthier.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups blanched almond flour
- 3 eggs
- 1 ripe banana
- 3 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup berries (whatever you like)



Almond flour gluten-free vegan cupcakes [II]

Steps:

1. First, mix whisked eggs, honey, and mashed banana together with vanilla essence.
2. Then, add baking powder and salt to the almond flour.
3. After that, mix the wet and dry ingredients together along with berries.
4. Finally, spoon the mixture into cupcake moulds and bake for 15-20 minutes on 180C in a preheated oven on the middle rack or until brown.

Gap-fill — tense practice

1. Mark _____ (sit) at his desk when the phone rang.
2. His wife's company _____ (lose) another client because she didn't listen.
3. The daughter _____ (shout) at him the night before.
4. His son _____ (work) on a science project all week.
5. Mark _____ (decide) to write the article he always wanted.



Sequencing practice

Put the events in the correct order using sequencing words:

He thought about his family.

His wife called.

He wrote his dream article.

He sat at his desk.

The Day I Got My Dream Job

First, I woke up earlier than usual because I had been preparing for this interview all week. I had already chosen my clothes the night before, so I didn't waste time deciding. While I was eating breakfast, my phone rang — it was my best friend wishing me good luck.

Then, I took the bus to the city centre. It was raining, and people were running to avoid getting wet, but I just smiled because I had been dreaming of this moment for years. By the time I arrived, I had reviewed my notes three times.

After that, I met the manager, who was waiting for me in the lobby. She told me that she had already read my CV and was impressed. During the interview, I was answering questions confidently because I had practised with my friends many times.

Finally, after what felt like hours, she shook my hand and said, "Congratulations, you're hired!" I couldn't believe it. I had been hoping for this chance since I finished university. I called my best friend right away and told her everything. It was the happiest day of my life.

Gap-fill — choose the correct verb form

1. I _____ (wake) up earlier than usual because I _____ (prepare) for this interview all week.
2. While I _____ (eat) breakfast, my phone _____ (ring).
3. By the time I arrived, I _____ (review) my notes three times.
4. She told me that she _____ (already / read) my CV.
5. During the interview, I _____ (answer) questions confidently because I _____ (practise) with my friends many times.
6. I couldn't believe it. I _____ (hope) for this chance since I finished university.

Sequencing practice

Put the events in order and add sequencing words (First, Then, After that, Finally).

I took the bus to the city centre.

I called my best friend.

I met the manager.

I woke up earlier than usual.



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