**Past Tenses**

**Past simple**

We can use the past simple for actions that started and finished in the past, for example a series of events in someone’s life.

* *Nelson Mandela****was born****in 1918. He****became****the first black President of South Africa. He****spent****27 years in prison in his battle against the system of apartheid.*

The past simple is often used in stories and dialogue, too.

*- When Bobby****went down****for breakfast, Matt****looked up****.*

*- “****Did you hear****the storm last night?”*

*- Bobby****didn’t answer****.*

*- “Your brother****went out****last night. He****didn’t come back****. Do you know where****he went****?”*

*- Bobby’s heart****sank****. She knew exactly where****Dan had gone****…*

**Past continuous**

We use the past continuous for background information and to describe a scene or situation that continued for some time.

* *At 6 o’clock that evening Dan****was****still****missing****. Bobby****was feeling****worried.*
* *Bonnie****was barking****loudly.*

**Past simple and past continuous**

We often use the past simple and past continuous together when one action interrupts another.

* *I****was strolling****along the beach one day when suddenly, Bonnie****ran off****.*
* *It****was****still****raining****when Bobby****woke up****the next morning. Dan****was sitting****at the table when she****went****into the kitchen.*

**Past simple and past perfect**

We can use the past perfect with the past simple together in a sentence to describe an action that happened before another past action.

* *I quickly****realised****that the storm the previous night****had washed up****the body.*
* *Bobby****knew****that Dan****hadn’t wanted****to come home but she also knew that****he hadn’t had****any other option.*

**Past perfect continuous**

We use this tense to describe something that has been happening over a long period of time.

* *I could tell that the body****had been lying****on the beach for several hours because the man’s clothes were dry.*
* *Britain****had been trying****to negotiate a peaceful settlement between* or actions.*Poland and Germany.*

(https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/course/intermediate/unit-20/tab/grammar)