

2.2 Grammar

Past Perfect Simple and Continuous

I can talk about a past action or situation that took place before another past action or situation.

- 1 Read the story. Why did Amelie and Steve wait seventeen years to get married?

IT WAS MEANT TO BE

- Amelie was studying English in the UK when she met Steve. It was love at first sight and they spent a wonderful summer together. Amelie returned to France after her course finished. They tried to keep a long-distance relationship going, but they drifted apart.
- A few years later, Steve wrote to Amelie but Amelie's mother put the letter on the mantelpiece, forgot to tell Amelie, and it slipped down the back of the fireplace. Many years later, a builder was removing the fireplace when he found the letter. It had been there for ten years.
- During that time, Amelie had remained single and had never forgotten the love of her life. Meanwhile, Steve had been working in a factory in his home town. He had been thinking about Amelie too, but he assumed she had got married to somebody else.
- When she finally read the letter, Amelie was too nervous to call as so much time had passed. But she finally plucked up courage and they arranged to meet.
- 20 They got married seventeen years after they first met.



- 2 Read the GRAMMAR FOCUS. Match the underlined examples in the story with rules 1–4.

GRAMMAR FOCUS

Past Perfect Simple and Continuous

You use the **Past Perfect** to make it clear that an activity took place before the main events in a story.

- You use the **Past Perfect Simple** to describe a completed action.
 - You use the **Past Perfect Continuous** to describe an activity in progress.
 - You use the **Past Perfect Simple (NOT Continuous)** with state verbs (be, have, know, etc.).
 - You don't have to use the **Past Perfect** if a time expression (i.e. before or after) makes the order of events clear.
- 3 Find other examples of the Past Perfect in the story. Then discuss why the simple or continuous forms have been used.
- 4 Choose the correct options.
- Amelie didn't know that Steve wrote / *had written* to her.
 - Steve didn't know that Amelie *had never received* / *had never been receiving* his letter.
 - Steve thought Amelie *had got* / *got* married to somebody else.
 - Amelie found the letter and realised it was *lying* / *had been lying* behind the fireplace for ten years.
 - Amelie was nervous about calling Steve because they *hadn't seen* / *didn't see* each other for a long time.

- 5 Complete the sentences with the Past Perfect Simple or Continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

- The roads were wet this morning. It had been raining (rain) all night.
- Yesterday I was tired. I _____ (not sleep) well the night before.
- I went to the doctor last week because I _____ (not feel) well.
- I _____ (have) the same phone for ages, so I got a new one last month.
- I didn't understand yesterday's homework because I _____ (not listen) to the teacher in class.
- By the time I arrived, the lesson _____ (already/start).

- 6 Tick the sentences in Exercise 5 that are true for you. Then write three more sentences using the Past Perfect Simple or Continuous.
- 7 Complete the story with the Past Perfect Simple or Continuous form of the verbs in the box. Why did Eric and Vilma wait forty years to get married?

grow hear know live make
meet move search see work

ERIC AND VILMA FORTY YEARS ON



Vilma was my wife's best friend. They ¹ _____ each other since childhood. When Vilma moved away, we lost touch but she ² _____ a big impression on me. So when my wife and I separated, I decided to ask my friends if anyone ³ _____ from her, but no one had. Vilma was a very compassionate person, so I imagined that she ⁴ _____ to Tibet and ⁵ _____ for a charity for a few years. Finally, my niece called to say she ⁶ _____ Vilma's profile on Facebook. I rang her and found that she ⁷ _____ in Paris, so I ⁸ _____ in the wrong place! We met up and when we saw one another, it was magical. We ⁹ _____ older, but that didn't matter. She was widowed and didn't have children. I proposed immediately. Forty years after we ¹⁰ _____ for the first time, we got married.

- 8 Use the prompts to write questions about the story. Then answer the questions.

- how long / Eric's ex-wife / know / Vilma?
How long had Eric's ex-wife known Vilma?
- any of Eric's friends / hear / from Vilma / after she / move away?
- why / Eric / think / Vilma / move / to Tibet?
- where / Vilma / live / since Eric / lose / touch with her?
- Vilma / have / any children / with her late husband?