

Narrative tenses guess the year game

Past Continuous/ Past Perfect Simple/ Past Perfect Continuous

Think of one year in your past, e.g. 1983. Give information about your situation in the middle of that year, using only the Past Perfect (“I had been.../ done.../... ..”) and the Past Continuous (“I was doing.../ living.../ ...ing...”) for your partner to guess the year from. You can use the questions below to help you think of ideas, but make sure you answer in full sentences. Can your partner guess which year you are describing?

Continue the game with different years, this time asking each other questions like those above using only the Past Continuous and Past Perfect (the answers can use other tenses)

Continue guessing by asking questions in the Past Continuous and Past Perfect, but this time not looking at the questions above

Grammar presentation

What is the difference in structure and meaning between the tenses used in these questions?

What level had you reached?/ How long had you been living there?

Which tense is the Past Perfect Continuous and which one is the Past Perfect Simple?

Which tense is used when what you have achieved is more important (e.g. finishing a marathon), and which tense is used when the action is more important (e.g. running in the heat and therefore sweaty)?

Grammar Point 2

What is the difference in structure and meaning between the tenses used in these questions?

What wars were being fought?/ What things were becoming more popular?

Which is passive voice?

Further practice

Pick a different year in your life. How many true sentences can your partner make about your situation in that year?

Suggested questions to answer with narrative tenses

Home

- What kind of accommodation were you living in?
- How long had you been living there?
- Who were you living with?
- Which country/ area/ city were you living in? How long had you been living there?

Work and studies

- Where were you working or studying?
- What was your job (I was working as...) or what were you studying?
- How long had you been doing that?
- What things had you already achieved by that point?
- Were you studying anything in your free time?
- What level had you reached?
- What projects were you working on or what particular subjects were you studying?
- What projects or topics had you already finished?

Friends and family

- What were you friends and family doing at that time?
- How many years had you been married/ engaged/ going out with someone?
- Had your children already started school/ learnt to talk/ learnt to.../ started...?

Travels

- Which countries had you visited? Where were you thinking of visiting next?
- What famous sights had you already seen?

Possessions

- What car were you driving? / What bike were you riding? How long had you had it?
- What possessions had you recently bought? What were you planning to buy next?

Trends

- What things were improving in your life? (e.g. your physical fitness)
- What things were deteriorating? (e.g. your knowledge of French)
- What things had reached a peak? (e.g. your weight)
- What things had bottomed out?

Politics and society

- What wars were being fought?
- Were people getting richer or poorer?
- How had people's attitudes and values changed, or how were they changing?
- What things were becoming more and less popular?

Technology

- What things had recently been introduced?
- What things had recently disappeared?
- What things were becoming more and less popular?