

13 Past Tense

Practice Run 2 *In the following story you have a choice between using the Past Simple, the Past Continuous and the Past Perfect. Fill in the correct verb form and justify your choices.*

We **were entering** Port Said harbour when I **came** on deck. As soon as our ship **had come** near enough, a large number of boats **set** out from the shore. We could see that they **were bring** money-changers, guides, and men selling all the wonderful things of the East. While I **was leaving** the ship I noticed that the rest of the passengers **were argueing** about the prices in loud voices. I **walked** about for an hour and **watched** the busy street life: men **were selling** strange fruit and vegetables, or they **were making** carpets in their little shops. When I **returned**, the sun **was setting** and the “market” on the ship was still continueing. An old man who **was sitting** on the deck and **offered** me a beautiful Persian rug for only £20. I **talked** hard for ten minutes, and just as the ship **was leaving / about to leave**, I **bought** it for £2. As I **was going / went** to my cabin I **saw** a sailor with a rug like mine. I **asked** him the price. “Fifty- pence,” he said, “but I **paid** too much for it. A man that I **talked** to a few moments ago (**had**) **paid** only twenty-five pence.” As I **was undressing / undressed** that night, I noticed a little piece of cloth which **was hanging/hung** from the corner of my rug. On it were the words “Made in China”.

Practice Run 3 *The following texts use both present and past tense forms (in the simple and continuous aspects). Fill in the gaps and try to explain your choices of verb forms.*

Brenda Pearl **joined** our department ten years ago. She **had worked** for the previous five years with a private research institute in Reading and (**had**) **acquired** much useful experience there. For the first eight years with us she **worked** in the EFL Department, and **was working** there when I **became** principal. Since then, as my deputy she **has been helping** me with some fairly extensive reorganisation problems, and **has proved** herself to be outstandingly capable in this respect. She **normally occupies** the office next to mine, but at the moment she **is carrying** out a special research assignment in Saudi Arabia.

A: What **have you been doing** with yourself recently? I **haven't seen** you for ages.

B: I **was staying** in Stockholm since I last **saw** you.

A: Really? How long **were you** there? And what **were you doing** there?

B: Nearly three months. I **went** in August and I **investigated** use of I.Q. tests in secondary schools.