

Unit 40: VERBS & PAST TIME

Which do you use?

	SIMPLE?	CONTINUOUS?
Past?	He worked	He was working
Present perfect?	He has worked	He has been working
Past perfect?	He had worked	He had been working

1 **Simple formation** or **Continuous Formation**

a **Activities: did you finish them?**

YES

I **read** my itinerary last night.
It was very exciting.

He **had studied** Arabic before, so
it was easy for him to understand.

The ice machine is OK now. They **have repaired** it. Their hands are dirty because they **have been repairing** the ice machine.

She **watched** a pay-per-view movie last night.

IT IS NOT IMPORTANT or **NO**

I **was reading** my itinerary. That's why
I missed the TV show.

He **had been studying** Arabic for four
years and he wanted to practice.

She **was watching** a pay-per-view movie
when the phone rang.

b **States**

I **didn't know** anybody there.

They **liked** the indoor pool more than anything else.

I **believed** all his stories.

NOT *I wasn't knowing*

NOT *They were liking*

NOT *I was believing*

You cannot decide to do these things and then stop. They are not actions, so we cannot use the continuous formation.

NOTICE: If you want to show clearly that the state is now finished, you can use **used to** (Unit 38). For example:

I **used to believe** all his stories, but now I know he's a liar.

I **didn't use to know** anybody there, but now I have lots of friends.

2 **Past simple** or **Present perfect simple**

a **Are we interested in exactly when?**

YES

NO

I **saw** that pay-per-view movie yesterday.
Did you **go** to Winnipeg on your holiday?
He **didn't ask** for a wake-up call last night.

I've seen that pay-per-view movie. It's good.
Have you ever **been** to Winnipeg?
He **has not asked** for a wake-up call yet.

b **Is it important for now?**

NO

I **broke** my leg, so I had to go to the hospital.
It **wasn't** a comfortable trip. I needed two days to recover from it.
Emily Carr, the famous artist, **died** at the age of seventy-three.
(This is history.)

YES

Help! I think I've **broken** my leg.
It **hasn't been** a comfortable trip. I feel terrible.
Oscar Peterson, the famous pianist, **has died** at the age of eighty-two.
(This is news.)

c **Can it happen again?**

NO

Pierre Berton **wrote** many books.
(He is dead now.)

YES

My friend Sam **has written** many plays.
(He may write more.)

NOTICE: I **was** in Toronto for three days.

(finished)

I **have been** in Toronto for three days.

(unfinished)

3 **Past perfect**

Use past perfect when it is important to show what happened first (Unit 26).