

Writing about the Past

Unit 4

GOAL: To learn how to write sentences in the simple past tense

- * **Grammar and Sentence Structure:** Simple past tense of *be* and regular verbs; forming questions; simple past tense of irregular verbs; forming the negative simple past tense of *be*; forming the negative simple past tense of other verbs
- * **Sentence Development:** Compound sentences with *but*

Begin with the Simple Past Tense

What happened yesterday? What happened last week? When you talk about actions in the past, you use the **simple past tense**. Both regular verbs and irregular verbs can be used in the simple past tense.

Grammar and Sentence Structure

Simple Past Tense: Statements and Questions

Simple Past Tense of Be: Statements

The most common verb in English, *be*, is an irregular verb. Study the simple past tense form of the verb *be*.

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Verb <i>be</i> | I was | we were |
| | you were | you (plural) were |
| | he / she / it was | they were |

Incorrect: I **am** in Guatemala last year.

Incorrect: I **were** in Guatemala last year.

Correct: I **was** in Guatemala last year.

Simple Past Tense of Be: Questions

To form questions with the verb *be* in the simple past tense, switch the subject and the verb. Study the forms below.

| | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Verb <i>be</i> | Was I . . . ? | Were we . . . ? |
| | Were you . . . ? | Were you (plural) . . . ? |
| | Was he / she / it . . . ? | Were they . . . ? |

Incorrect: **Was** Khalid and Mario at the mall yesterday?

Incorrect: **Khalid and Mario were** at the mall yesterday?

Correct: Were Khalid and Mario at the mall yesterday?

Simple Past Tense of Regular Verbs: Statements

Forming the simple past of regular verbs is easy. Just add *-ed* or *-d* to the ends of regular verbs. (See the Brief Writer's Handbook, pages 218–219, for more about the spelling of regular simple past tense verbs.) Study the examples below.

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Verb <i>live</i> | I <u>lived</u> | we <u>lived</u> |
| | you <u>lived</u> | you (plural) <u>lived</u> |
| | he / she / it <u>lived</u> | they <u>lived</u> |
| Verb <i>visit</i> | I <u>visited</u> | we <u>visited</u> |
| | you <u>visited</u> | you (plural) <u>visited</u> |
| | he / she / it <u>visited</u> | they <u>visited</u> |

Incorrect: We **call** our parents yesterday.

Correct: We called our parents yesterday.

Simple Past Tense of Regular Verbs: Questions

To form questions with regular verbs in the simple past tense, use this form: *did* + subject + base form of main verb (no *-ed/-d!*).

NOTE: *Did* shows that the sentence is in the *simple past* tense and that it is a *question*. Be sure to use the base form (not the simple past) of the main verb.

| | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| Verb <i>live</i> | Did I <u>live</u> . . . ? | Did we <u>live</u> . . . ? |
| | Did you <u>live</u> . . . ? | Did you (plural) <u>live</u> . . . ? |
| | Did he / she / it <u>live</u> . . . ? | Did they <u>live</u> . . . ? |

Incorrect: Did the tourists **hiked** down the mountain last night?

Incorrect: **Do** the tourists hike down the mountain last night?

Incorrect: **The tourists hiked** down the mountain last night?

Correct: Did the tourists hike down the mountain last night?



Writer's Note

Time Phrases with the Simple Past Tense

We use certain words and phrases in a sentence to help show that something happened in the past. Some of these time phrases include:

last night last week this morning yesterday (two minutes) ago

You can put these time phrases at the beginning or the end of a sentence. Avoid using them in the middle of a sentence. Study these examples. Can you think of any others?

Incorrect: I yesterday scratched my knee.

Correct: Yesterday I scratched my knee.

Correct: I scratched my knee yesterday.

Incorrect: Did Maria last night go to the party?

Correct: Did Maria go to the party last night?

ACTIVITY 1 Sentences with the Simple Past Tense

The verbs in these sentences are in the simple present tense. Rewrite the sentences and change the verbs to the simple past tense. The first sentence has been done for you.

1. Mary and her daughter Natalie visit the farm.

Mary and her daughter Natalie visited the farm.

2. Mary and Natalie play with many animals.

3. They laugh at the animals.

4. Natalie really enjoys herself.

5. She likes the chickens best.

6. Natalie watches them play all morning.

7. They play with the baby goats.

8. Finally, they return home.



ACTIVITY 2 More Work with the Simple Past Tense

Read the paragraph and circle the ten simple past tense verbs. When you finish, answer the questions in complete sentences. The first one has been done for you.

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 44

Lao-Tzu and Taoism

Lao-Tzu was an important **philosopher**. He was born in China. He lived in the Hunan **province**, and he worked as a court **librarian**. The government in Hunan was **corrupt**, so Lao-Tzu decided to leave his home. Before he **abandoned** the province, someone asked him to write a book about how to live correctly. He agreed to write the book *Tao Te Ching*. These ideas were the beginning of the philosophy of Taoism.

a philosopher: a person who studies the universe, nature, life, and morals

a librarian: someone who works with books

corrupt: dishonest

a province: a territory in a country

abandoned: left (He left the province.)

Information for this paragraph came from Microsoft Encarta 96 and *Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy* by Sarah Ban Breathnach, published by Warner Books, Inc., 1995.

1. Who was Lao-Tzu?

Lao-Tzu was a famous philosopher.

2. Where was he born?

3. What was his job?

4. What did he do before he left his home?

5. What did this book create?

ACTIVITY 3 An Important Person

Think of an important person who lived in the past. It could be someone famous in history. It could be a famous singer, politician, or athlete. It could be someone from your family. (However, this person should not be alive.) Answer the questions using complete sentences.

1. Who was this person?

2. Where was the person born?

3. What was the person's job?

4. Why is the person important to you? What did he or she do?

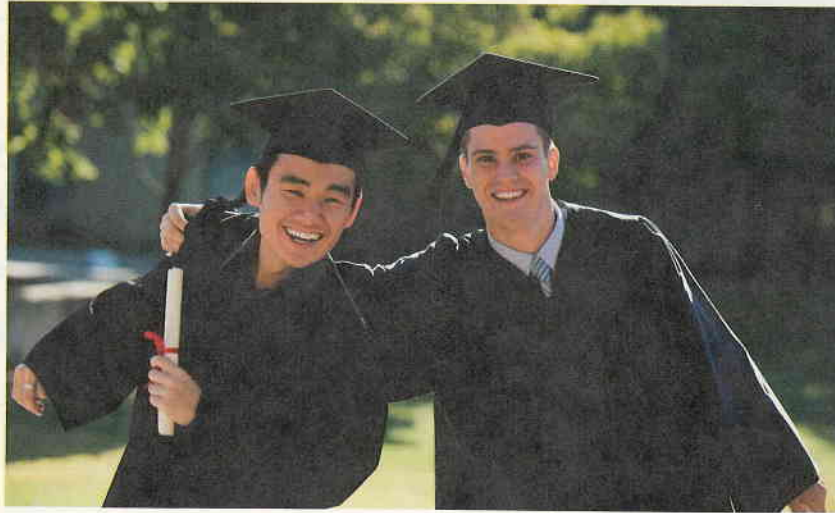
5. How do you feel when you think about this person? Why?

ACTIVITY 4 Editing: Plural to Singular

Read the paragraph. Circle all of the simple past tense verbs. Then follow the directions and make changes to the paragraph. The first sentence has been done for you. (You may want to review subject pronouns and possessive adjectives in Unit 2.)

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 45

The Top of the Class



In 2002, Antonio and Marcus were the top students at the University of North Carolina. They studied in the history department. They excelled in their studies. In class, they answered all of their instructors' questions. Their test grades beat the other students', and their class projects received excellent marks. When they graduated in 2006, they finished at the top of the class. All of the teachers were very proud of Antonio and Marcus.

Rewrite the paragraph on the lines below and make these changes:

1. Change *Antonio and Marcus* to *Fatima*. (NOTE: *Fatima* is a woman's name.)
2. Change the underlined pronouns to go with *Fatima*.
3. Change any other words necessary (such as *students* to *student* in the first sentence).

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 46

The Top of the Class

In 2002, Fatima was the top student at the University of North Carolina.



For more practice with plural and singular, try Unit 4, Activity 2 on the *Great Writing 1* Web site:
elt.heinle.com/greatwriting

ACTIVITY 5 Answering Questions with Be

First, discuss these questions with your classmates.

1. How do deaf people communicate with each other?
2. How do blind people read?
3. Do you know anyone who is both deaf and blind?

Then read the paragraph. Answer the questions below using forms of be. Use complete sentences. The first one has been done for you.

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 47

Helen Keller (1880–1968)

Helen Keller was a famous American author. She was born healthy. However, when she was two years old, she became very ill. The illness made her **deaf** and **blind**. She could not communicate with anyone. When she was seven years old, a teacher taught her how to communicate. The teacher's name was Annie Sullivan. When Helen was twenty years old, she started college. After her graduation, she wrote thirteen books and traveled around the world. She was an incredible human being.

deaf: not able to hear

blind: not able to see



1. What was the blind and deaf person's name?

The blind and deaf person's name was Helen Keller.

2. What country was she from?

3. Was she healthy or unhealthy when she was born?

4. How old was she when she became ill?

5. Who was her teacher?

6. How old was she when she learned to communicate?

7. How old was she when she went to college?

8. What kind of person was Helen Keller?

Irregular Simple Past Tense Verbs

In this unit, you learned how to make the simple past tense of a regular verb—add *-ed* or *-d* to the base form of the verb. Some verbs, however, are irregular. This means that they take a different form in the simple past tense.

Grammar and Sentence Structure

Simple Past Tense of Irregular Verbs

Here are some common irregular verbs. (See the Brief Writer's Handbook, page 220, for a complete list of common irregular simple past tense verbs.)

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| be → was/were | feel → felt | pay → paid | send → sent |
| buy → bought | go → went | run → ran | sit → sat |
| cut → cut | have → had | ride → rode | speak → spoke |
| do → did | leave → left | say → said | teach → taught |
| draw → drew | make → made | see → saw | write → wrote |

NOTE: To form questions with irregular verbs, follow the rules for regular verbs on page 94. Use *did* and the simple (base) form of the verb.

There is no special rule that tells when a verb is irregular. You must memorize the simple past tense form when you learn the word. A dictionary will tell you when a verb is irregular. Now study these sentences for correct forms of the irregular simple past tense in statements and in questions.

Incorrect: Last night, I **buy** a new CD.

Incorrect: Last night, I **buyed** a new CD.

Correct: Last night, I bought a new CD.

Incorrect: Did you **left** your dictionary at home?

Incorrect: **Do** you **left** your dictionary at home?

Correct: Did you leave your dictionary at home?

ACTIVITY 6 Irregular Simple Past Tense Verbs

Answer the following questions. Use the irregular form of the simple past tense. Use verbs from the list in *Grammar and Sentence Structure: Simple Past Tense of Irregular Verbs* on page 101. The first one has been done for you.

1. Where were you last summer?

I was in Dubai.

2. How did you feel yesterday?

3. Where did you go last weekend?

4. When did you see a funny movie?

5. What did you buy last week?

6. Whom did you speak with yesterday?

7. When did you leave for school this morning?

8. When did you do your homework?

9. Where did you eat lunch yesterday?

10. When did you last send an e-mail?



For more practice with the simple present tense and simple past tense of irregular verbs, try Unit 4, Activity 3 and Activity 4 on the *Great Writing 1* Web site: elt.heinle.com/greatwriting

Grammar and Sentence Structure

Making *Be* Negative

When you want to make a negative sentence with *be*, you use the word *not*. *Not* comes after the form of *be*.

Paula was not home The CDs were not in their cases.

See Grammar and Sentence Structure—Simple Past Tense: Statements and Questions on pages 93–94 for a review of the forms of *be*.

Simple Past Tense Verb Forms: Negatives

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Verb <i>be</i> | I was not | we were not |
| | you were not | you (plural) were not |
| | he / she / it was not | they were not |

NOTE: Some contractions are possible with the verb *be* in negative form.

was not = wasn't were not = weren't

Careful! Be sure that the apostrophe (') is placed directly before the letter *t*. Remember that the apostrophe in negatives takes the place of the missing letter.

Incorrect: She **is'nt** my sister.

Incorrect: She **isn,t** my sister.

Correct: She isn't my sister. (Or: She's not my sister.)

Incorrect: I **was'nt** in class yesterday.

Incorrect: I **wasn,t** in class yesterday.

Correct: I wasn't in class yesterday.



Writer's Note

Using Contractions

It is important to remember that contractions might be too informal for academic writing. Ask your instructor if using contractions in this course is acceptable.

ACTIVITY 7 Practicing Negative Forms of Be in the Simple Past

Read the following paragraph. Write the correct form of the be verb in the blanks. Be sure to use the negative form where indicated. The first one has been done for you.

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 48

Moving to the United States

My name is Panadda, and I (1.) was born in Thailand. I (2. negative) _____ the first child. My sister Suntri (3.) _____ born three years before I (4.) _____ born. My parents (5. negative) _____ rich, but they (6.) _____ always happy. They (7.) _____ hard workers. In 1999, we moved to the United States. Everyone in my family (8.) _____ very excited. We (9.) _____ also scared. My parents (10. negative) _____ able to speak English. When we arrived, they began English classes. My sister and I started school. We (11. negative) _____ comfortable in the classroom because we did not know the language. After a few years, we learned the language and the culture of the United States.

ACTIVITY 8 Improving Your Own Writing

Turn to page 3 and look at Activity 2. Read your sentences again. Can you make these sentences better? Try to change the sentences to the simple past tense. Add three more sentences about your family. Make the sentences into a simple paragraph. Write your changes on the lines below. Use Example Paragraph 48 in Activity 7 as a guide.

Grammar and Sentence Structure

Other Negative Verbs

Aside from the verb *be*, the negative form of all other verbs in English is formed in the same way in the simple past tense. Just write *did not* and the simple (base) form of the verb. Look at these examples.

Verb *live* (negative past)

I **did not live**
you **did not live**
he / she / it **did not live**

we **did not live**
you (plural) **did not live**
they **did not live**

NOTE: Contraction: *did not* = *didn't*

Incorrect: Ahmed **no finish** his homework.

Incorrect: Ahmed **no finished** his homework.

Correct: Ahmed did not (didn't) finish his homework.

ACTIVITY 9 Practicing Negative Verbs in the Simple Past

The words in the sentences below are not in the correct order. First, make the verbs negative. Then write the words in the correct order to make correct English sentences. The first one has been done for you.

1. lived (negative) / . / in Johannesburg in 2002 / Carmen

Carmen did not live in Johannesburg in 2002.

2. Ling / engineering / . / studied (negative)

3. last year / him / Humberto's parents / visited (negative) / .

4. large brains / had (negative) / . / Dinosaurs

5. ! / John / helped (negative) / me / with my homework

6. Edda / the letter / . / sent (negative) / to her parents

7. spoke (negative) / . / Karl / with his parents / last night

8. I / my homework / did (negative) / . / yesterday

9. Janiel and Yosemy / last night / . / left (negative) / the party early

10. went (negative) / My brother / to the grocery store / last Saturday / .



For more practice with negative verbs in the simple past, try Unit 4, Activity 5 on the *Great Writing 1* Web site: elt.heinle.com/greatwriting

Simple Past Tense Review

In this unit, you learned about simple past tense verbs, questions, and negatives. The next activities will help you review what you have learned.

ACTIVITY 10 Editing: Writing Negative Simple Past Sentences

The sentences below are false. Work with a partner and rewrite each sentence using the negative form of the verb to make the sentence true. Then write a correct sentence. Follow the example. Some verbs are regular and some are irregular. Refer to the complete list of irregular verbs in the *Brief Writer's Handbook*, page 220.

1. Tony Blair was a leader of Mexico.

Tony Blair was not a leader of Mexico. He was a leader of Great Britain.

2. Confucius lived in Japan.

3. Pelé played basketball.

4. In the 1980s, Madonna sang in Arabic.

5. The *Titanic* sank in the Pacific Ocean.

6. The Statue of Liberty came from Italy.

7. The Wright Brothers invented the radio.

8. Stephen King wrote *Romeo and Juliet*.

ACTIVITY 11 Simple Past Tense Review

Read the following paragraph. Change the verbs in parentheses to the simple past tense. Write the negative form where indicated. The first one has been done for you.

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 49

Bob's Horrible Day

Bob (1. have) had a horrible day on Monday. First, he (2. be) _____ supposed to get up at 6 A.M., but his alarm clock (3. work, negative) _____. He (4. wake up) _____ at 8 A.M. There (5. be, negative) _____ any hot water for a shower, so he had to use cold water. After that, his car (6. start, negative) _____, and he had to take the bus. When Bob (7. get) _____ to work, his boss (8. yell) _____ at him for being late. Next, his computer (9. crash) _____, and he (10. lose) _____ all of his documents. He (11. stay) _____ at work until midnight to redo the documents. Bob (12. decide) _____ to stay home the next day because he (13. be) _____ too tired from all his bad luck.



For more practice with reviewing the simple past tense, try Unit 4, Activity 6 on the *Great Writing 1* Web site: elt.heinle.com/greatwriting

Compound Sentences with *But*

One common sentence connector is *but*. This word is often used to make compound sentences. The connector *but* shows a contrast.

Sentence Development

Compound Sentences with *But*

The connector *but* indicates a contrast between the ideas it connects. Study this example.

Two simple sentences: I bought a car. John bought a truck.

One compound sentence: I bought a car, *but* John bought a truck.

This example is a compound sentence because it is two complete sentences connected by the word *but*. It has two separate subject-verb combinations.

I bought a car, *but* John bought a truck.

SUBJ. VERB

SUBJ. VERB

Look at another example.

Two simple sentences: She studied for the exam. She did not pass it.

One compound sentence: She studied for the exam, *but* she did not pass it.

NOTE: Notice the comma before *but*. You must put a comma before a connector in a compound sentence.

NOTE: Sometimes *but* is not a connector. In these cases, it is a preposition that means the same as the word *except*. Notice that there is no comma before *but*. Consider these examples:

We visited all of the countries in South America *but* Chile.

SUBJ. VERB

All of the new cars *but* this one are luxury cars.

SUBJ.

VERB

These two sentences are simple sentences. There is only one subject-verb combination in each sentence.

ACTIVITY 12 Compound Sentence Review

Read the following sentences. Some are compound sentences, and some are simple sentences. First, identify the type of sentence as S (simple) or C (compound). If the sentence is compound, insert a comma where it is necessary. The first three have been done for you.

1. S The girls practiced every day.
2. S They did not win the tennis tournament.
3. C The girls practiced every day, but they did not win the tennis tournament.
4. _____ The committee members made a decision but the manager did not like it.
5. _____ Neal worked with his father at the shoe store for almost twenty years.

6. _____ We went to Canada but we did not visit Toronto.
7. _____ With the recent increase in crime in that area of the city, the local residents there are worried about their safety.
8. _____ Summer is a good time to practice outdoor sports but winter is not.
9. _____ All of the workers but Marian arrived at yesterday's income tax meeting on time.
10. _____ Saudi Arabia and Kuwait import equipment, cars, food, and medicine.
11. _____ The chairs in the living room are made of pine but the chairs in my office are made of oak.
12. _____ All of the chairs in the kitchen but this one are made of maple.

ACTIVITY 13 Writing Compound Sentences

Read these charts. They give information about two brothers.

| | |
|------------|------------------------|
| Name: | Andrew Bright |
| Born: | January 14, 1915 |
| Died: | March 23, 1985 |
| Home City: | Washington, D.C. |
| Education: | high school |
| Work: | firefighter |
| Family: | wife and five children |
| Hobbies: | singing |

| | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Name: | Ian Bright |
| Born: | May 1, 1920 |
| Died: | September 12, 1992 |
| Home City: | Chicago, Illinois |
| Education: | college degree |
| Work: | high school math teacher |
| Family: | single |
| Hobbies: | playing baseball |

Now read the incorrect statements below about the brothers. Then write a compound sentence with *but*. Use the information in the charts. The first one has been done for you.

1. They were born on the same day.

Andrew was born on January 14, but Ian was born on May 1.

2. The brothers were born in the same year.
-

3. They both sang as a hobby.
-

4. Both brothers were married.

5. They lived in the same city.

6. They had the same level of education.

7. Both men had the same kind of job.

8. They died on the same date.

ACTIVITY 14 Interviewing Your Classmates

Walk around the classroom and ask different classmates the following questions. Write down the answers. When you have finished, write complete sentences using information about yourself and the information you received from your classmates. The first one has been done for you.

1. Where are you from? *Classmate's answer:* Peru

I am from Kuwait, but José is from Peru.

2. What did you eat for dinner last night? *Classmate's answer:* _____

3. Where was your last vacation? *Classmate's answer:* _____

4. Why did you come to this school? *Classmate's answer:* _____

5. What country do you want to visit? *Classmate's answer:* _____



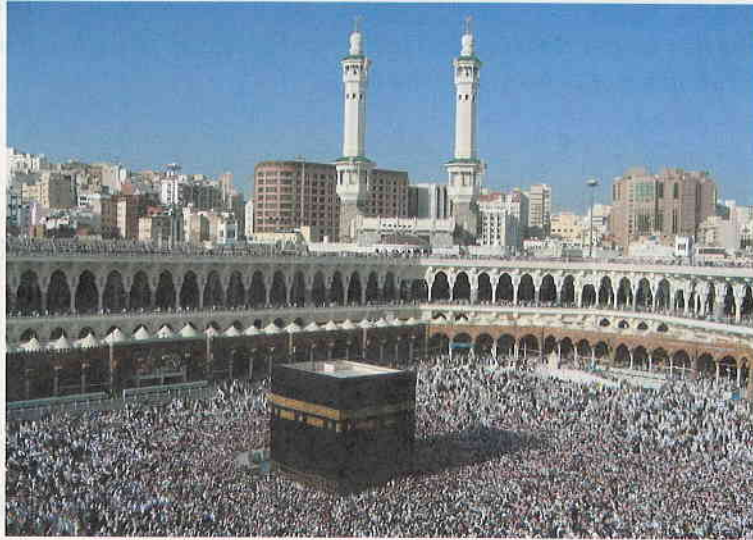
For more practice with compound sentences using *but*, try Unit 4, Activity 7 on the *Great Writing 1* Web site: elt.heinle.com/greatwriting

ACTIVITY 15 Editing: Grammar and Sentence Review

Read the following paragraph. Find and correct the 14 errors. If you need some help locating the errors, look at the numbers in parentheses on the left. This number tells you how many errors are in each line. The first one has been done for you.

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 50

Muhammad Ibn Batuta



- (3) Ibn Batuta ^{was} a famous moroccan traveler. He live in Morocco in the fourteenth century.
- (2) When he was a man young, he made a religious trip to Mecca. However, Ibn Batuta loves to
- (2) see new places so much that he continued to travel. This was no his original plan but he
- (2) continued on his journey. He had many adventures during her travels and he met many
- (1) interesting people. After he returned home, he did not forgot about his journey. He wrote a
- (2) book about his travels, this book now gives us a lot of information important about life in the
- (2) fourteenth century. Also gives us more information about this interesting and important man



Building Better Sentences

Correct and varied sentence structure is essential to the quality of your writing. For further practice with the sentences and paragraphs in this unit, go to Practice 4 on page 235 in Appendix 1.



Building Better Vocabulary

ACTIVITY 16 Word Associations

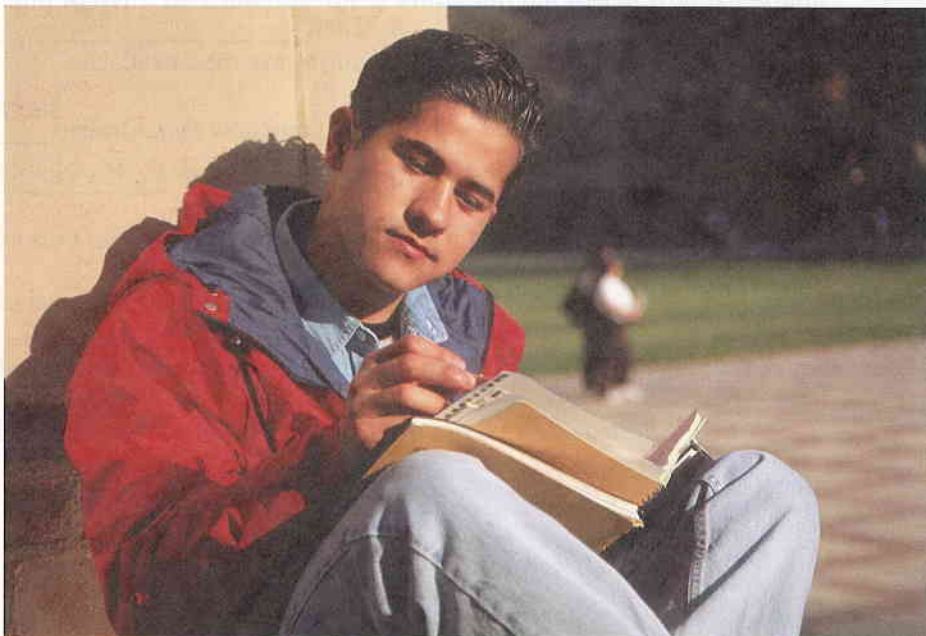
Circle the word or phrase that is most closely related to the word or phrase on the left. If necessary, use a dictionary to check the meaning of words you do not know.

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. horrible | very bad news | very good news |
| 2. century | ten years | one hundred years |
| 3. to communicate | to share information | to keep information |
| 4. excellent | the worst | the best |
| 5. to continue | to pause | to not stop |
| 6. proud | grade of 45% | grade of 100% |
| 7. province | region | project |
| 8. librarian | books | cars |
| 9. separate | together | apart |
| 10. to graduate | to complete work | to complete school |
| 11. beginning | initial | final |
| 12. manager | boss | teacher |
| 13. original | a copy | not a copy |
| 14. to arrive | to come to a place | to leave a place |
| 15. to scare | to laugh | to scream |

ACTIVITY 17 Using Collocations

Fill in each blank with the word on the left that most naturally completes the phrase on the right. If necessary, use a dictionary to check the meaning of words you do not know.

1. before / first the _____ thing to do
2. to / for a trip _____ Puerto Rico
3. to / at arrive _____ the supermarket
4. information / communication share _____ about the problem
5. about / for have a question _____ your homework
6. abandon / excel _____ all hope
7. take / make _____ a decision
8. excellence / communication effective _____
9. freedom / beginning the _____ to do anything that you want to do
10. supposed / excited be _____ about a new class



ACTIVITY 18 Parts of Speech

Study the following word forms. For the sentences on the right, choose the best word and write it in the blank space. Be sure to use the correct form of the verb. If necessary, use a dictionary to check the meaning of words you do not know. (NOTE: The word in bold is the original word that appears in the unit.)

| Noun | Verb | Adjective | Sentence Practice |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| pride | Ø | proud | 1. She was very _____ when she graduated. |
| <u>excellence</u> | excel | excellent | 2. I have a lot of _____ in my children. |
| <u>communication</u> | communicate | <u>communicative</u> | 3. Damon _____ in swimming when he was younger. |
| <u>continuation</u> | continue | <u>continuous/continual</u> | 4. That was an _____ movie! |
| culture | Ø | <u>cultural</u> | 5. We _____ for three hours by phone yesterday. |
| | | | 6. Roberto was shy, but now he is more _____. |
| | | | 7. The students _____ to study after the semester ended. |
| | | | 8. The _____ traffic noise gave me a headache. |
| | | | 9. Do you know about Indian _____? |
| | | | 10. Kim and Jo's _____ differences are small. |

Noun endings: -ence, -ion, -tion

Adjective endings: -ive, -ous, -al

Original Student Writing

ACTIVITY 19 Original Writing Practice

Reread the paragraph about Lao-Tzu on page 96 and your answers to Activity 3 on page 97. You will use this kind of information to write in the simple past tense about an important person.

Think of an important person. Then follow these steps for writing. Put a check (✓) next to each step as you complete it. When you finish your paragraph, use the checklist that follows to edit your work. Remember to write in the simple past tense. You may want to review *What Is a Paragraph?* in Unit 2 on page 39.

- Step 1 ____ In your first sentence, tell the name of the person and how that person was important.
- Step 2 ____ In your next sentence, write where the person was born.
- Step 3 ____ In the next sentence, tell about the person's job.
- Step 4 ____ In the next three or four sentences, tell a short story about the person. The story should show why the person is important.
- Step 5 ____ Try to use the word *but* in one of the sentences in Step 4. Remember to use a comma!
- Step 6 ____ Use a negative verb in one of the sentences in Step 4.
- Step 7 ____ In the last sentence, write why you chose this person.
- Step 8 ____ Use at least three of the vocabulary words or phrases presented in Activity 16, Activity 17, and Activity 18. Underline these words and phrases in your paragraph.

✓ Checklist

1. Make sure every sentence has a subject and a verb.
2. Make sure the verbs are the correct form of the simple past tense.
3. Make sure every sentence begins with a capital letter.
4. Make sure that all the proper nouns (names, cities, countries, etc.) are capitalized.
5. Make sure every sentence ends with the correct punctuation.
6. Create a title for your paragraph.

ACTIVITY 20 Peer Editing

Exchange papers from Activity 19 with a partner. Read your partner's writing. Then use Peer Editing Sheet 4 on page 255 to help you comment on your partner's writing. Be sure to offer positive suggestions and comments that will help your partner improve his or her writing. Consider your partner's comments as you revise your own writing.

Additional Topics for Writing

Here are ten ideas for journal writing. Choose one or more of them to write about. Follow your teacher's directions. (We recommend that you skip a line after each line that you write. This gives your teacher a place to write comments.)

TOPIC 1: Describe a vacation you took. Where did you go? What did you do? Who went on this vacation with you? How old were you when you went on this trip? Did you like this vacation?

TOPIC 2: Describe a home you lived in when you were a child. How big was the house? What color was the house? Where was the house? Did you like the house? What was your favorite room in the house?

TOPIC 3: Write about a movie you saw or a book you read. Did you like it? Who was your favorite character? What was the story about? Did the author have a message for the audience of this book or movie?

TOPIC 4: Write about what you did last weekend. Where did you go? Who did you go with? Did you enjoy it?

TOPIC 5: Write about a person you used to know. Who was this person? Where did you meet this person? What was special about this person?

TOPIC 6: Write about an important event in your life. How old were you? What happened? Why is this event important to you?

TOPIC 7: Describe a holiday that you and your family spent together. What was the occasion? Which family members were there? What did you do?

TOPIC 8: Write about something embarrassing that happened to you. How old were you? What happened? Why were you embarrassed? Who saw this happen? How did you feel afterwards?

TOPIC 9: Write about a day you spent outdoors. What did you do? Where did you go? Who did you go with? What specific activities did you do? How was the weather?

TOPIC 10: Describe a pet you had in the past. What was the pet's name? What kind of animal was it? How long did you have this pet? Why did you like this pet? (Or: Why did you dislike this pet?)

Timed Writing

How quickly can you write in English? There are many times when you must write quickly—on a test for example. It is important to feel comfortable during those times. Timed-writing practice can make you feel better about writing quickly in English.

Take out a piece of paper. Then read the writing prompt below this paragraph. Your teacher will give you 5 minutes to brainstorm ideas about the topic. You must write 8 to 10 sentences about this topic. You will have 20 minutes to write these sentences. At the end of the 20 minutes, your teacher will collect your work and return it to you later.

Describe a sad (or happy, frightening, funny, important, etc.) event or time from your past. What was the event or time? Give examples of how this event or time made you feel that emotion.

More Writing

For extra writing practice, see the activities in Unit 8 and Appendix 2.