



# 3

## What a story!

Narrative tenses • Giving news and responding • Books and films • Showing interest



### TEST YOUR GRAMMAR

Read the story. Put the events into chronological order. What happened first? What happened last?

### Burglar arrested

▶ A COUPLE came home at midnight to find their house had been burgled. Bob and Janet Gilbreath had left their house at six o'clock to go to the theatre. When they got home, the back door had been smashed, and money and jewellery stolen. A neighbour said that she had heard a loud noise at about eight o'clock. Mr and Mrs Gilbreath, who moved to the house five years ago, told police that they had seen a man who had been acting suspiciously for several days before the robbery, and were able to give a description. A man answering the description was later arrested.

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

#### Narrative tenses

- 1 Look at the newspaper headlines. What do you think is the whole story?
- 2 What would you like to know? Write some more questions.  
*Did he mean to fall over?*  
*Where was she climbing?*  
*How did he manage to hack into their systems?*
- 3 **T 3.1** Listen to three conversations about the stories. Which of your questions were answered?
- 4 Here are the answers to some questions. What are the questions?  
1 Just ordinary clothes.  
2 For a dare.  
3 Three hours.  
4 In a shelter.  
5 His own software program.  
6 To download from the Internet.
- 5 Match lines in A and B. Practise saying them with contracted and weak forms.

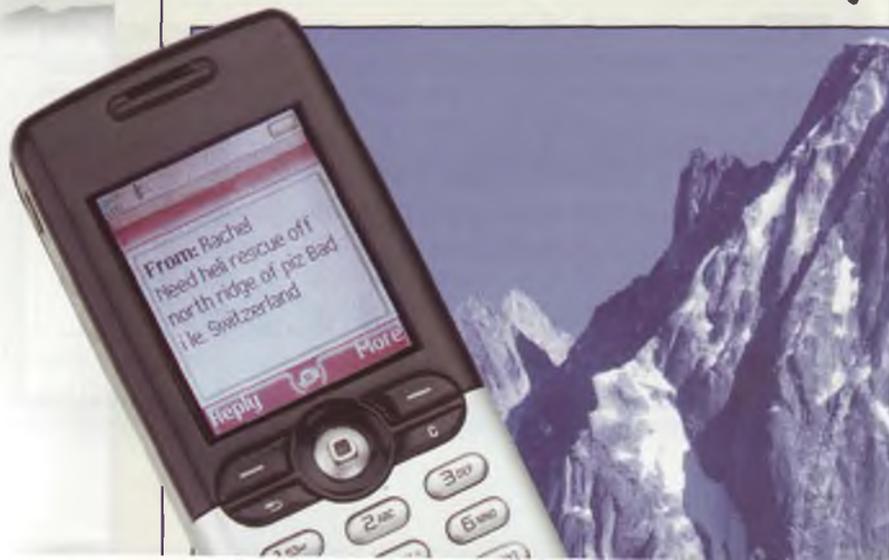
A	B
He was wearing	with a partner.
He'd been talking	he wouldn't do it.
His friends had bet him	the next night.
She was climbing	about doing it for ages.
They were rescued	ordinary clothes.

**T 3.2** Listen and check.

## Man survives plunge over Niagara Falls



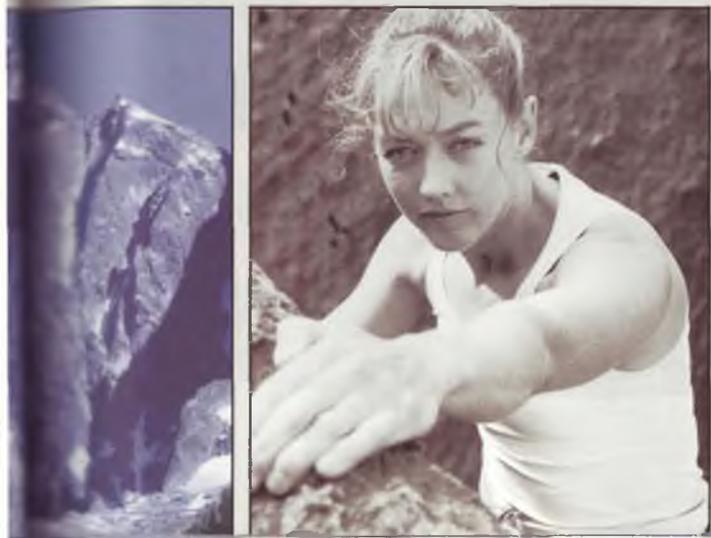
### Climber saved by



# The nerd who hacked into US Defence systems



## text plea to friend



### LANGUAGE FOCUS

1 Complete the chart using the verb in brackets.

Past Simple (fall)	Past Continuous (read)
Past Perfect (hear)	Past Perfect Continuous (act)
Past Simple passive (arrest)	Past Perfect passive (burgle)

Look at tapescript T 3.1 on p127. Find an example of each tense. When do we use the Past Perfect? When do we use continuous tenses?

2 Why are different tenses used in these paragraphs?

*John cooked a lovely meal. His guests had a good time. They left at midnight.*

*Just after midnight, John was looking at the mess. His guests had just left. He'd cooked a lovely meal, and everyone had had a good time.*

▶▶ Grammar Reference pp142–143

## PRACTICE

### Discussing grammar

1 Compare the use of tenses in these sentences. Say which tense is used and why.

1 *I read* | a book on the plane.  
*I was reading*

2 When Alice arrived, *I made a cake.*  
*I was making a cake.*  
*I had made a cake.*

3 *The film started* | when we got to the cinema.  
*The film had started*

4 He was sacked because *he had stolen some money.*  
*he had been stealing money for years.*

5 When I got to the garage, my car *was being repaired.*  
*had been repaired.*

## Writing narratives

- 2 Rewrite the sentences as one sentence, beginning with the part in bold.

She won £2,000 in a competition. **Last night Sally was celebrating.**  
*Last night Sally was celebrating because she'd won £2,000 in a competition.*

- 1 He got up at dawn. He was driving for ten hours. **Peter was tired when he arrived home.**
- 2 I parked my car on a yellow line. It was towed away. **I went to get my car, but it wasn't there.** (*When ...*)
- 3 He wasn't always poor. He had a successful business. Unfortunately, it went bust. **Mick was a homeless beggar.**
- 4 They were shopping all day. They spent all their money on clothes. **Jane and Peter arrived home. They were broke.** (*When ...*)
- 5 He saw a house in Scotland. He first saw it while he was driving on holiday. **Last week John moved to the house.**

## The news

- 3 **T 3.3** Listen to the first story. Correct the mistakes in the sentences.

- 1 Ten workers have died.
- 2 They'd been trapped up a mountain.
- 3 They'd been building a new road.
- 4 There was an avalanche.
- 5 Sixteen men managed to escape.
- 6 Ten were fatally injured.
- 7 The men were recovering at home.
- 8 The cause of the accident is known.

- 4 **T 3.4** Listen to the second news item. Here are the answers to some questions. Write the questions.

- 1 For two days.
- 2 After school on Wednesday.
- 3 Their photographs.
- 4 Nearby houses.
- 5 A neighbour.
- 6 In a garden shed.
- 7 No, they hadn't. (... *realized ...?*)

## SPOKEN ENGLISH News and responses

When we tell a story, we use certain expressions. When we listen to a story, we respond with different expressions. Put G (giving news), R (reacting to news), or A (asking for more information) after each expression.

- 1  Did you read that story about ... ?
- 2  What happened to him?
- 3  That's amazing!
- 4  What did he do it for?
- 5  Apparently ...
- 6  What a crazy guy!
- 7  You're kidding!
- 8  Then what happened?
- 9  Actually, ...
- 10  I don't get it.

Work with a partner. You are going to read and discuss two news stories.

**Student A** Read the story on p155.

**Student B** Read the story on p156.

When you've read your story, tell your partner about it. Try to use some of the phrases for giving and responding to news.

## ▶▶ WRITING Narrative writing 1 – Using adverbs in narratives p113



# VOCABULARY AND SPEAKING

## Books and films

1 We usually want to know some things about a book before we start reading it. Here are some answers. Write in the questions.

- 1 Who wrote it ?  
Charles Dickens/Jane Austen.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
It's a romantic novel/It's a thriller/It's a biography.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
It's about a tragic marriage/It's about politics and corruption.
- 4 Where and \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
In India in the last century/In New York in the 80s.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
A lawyer called Potts and his client, Lady Jane /A detective called Blunket.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
Yes, it has. It came out quite a few years ago and starred Johnny Depp.
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
It ends really tragically/It's frustrating because we don't really know/They all live happily ever after.
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
I thought it was great/I couldn't put it down/I didn't want it to end/It was OK but I skipped the boring bits.
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
Yes, I would. It's great if you like a good love story/It's a terrific holiday read.

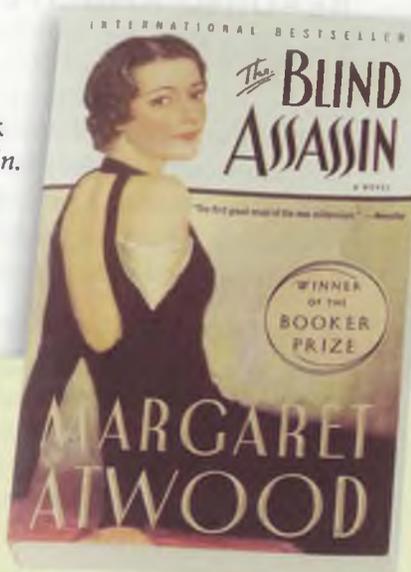
2 Which questions could also be asked about a film? Some might have to change. What extra questions can be asked about a film?

3 **T 3.5** Listen to two people, one talking about a film and the other a book. Take notes under these headings.

Title	Setting	Characters	Plot	Personal opinion

4 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in exercise 1 about your favourite book or film.

5 Look at the front and back covers of *The Blind Assassin*. Which of the questions in exercise 1 can you answer?



### FICTION/LITERATURE

**'Grand storytelling on a grand scale . . . . Sheerly enjoyable.'**  
*The Washington Post Book World*

The Booker Prize-winning sensation from the incomparable Margaret Atwood— a novel that combines elements of gothic drama, romantic suspense, and science fiction fantasy in a spellbinding narrative.

*The Blind Assassin* opens with these simple resonant words: "Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge." They are spoken by Iris Chase Griffen, sole surviving descendant of a once rich and influential Ontario family, whose terse account of her sister's death in 1945 is followed by an inquest report proclaiming the death accidental. But just as the reader expects to settle into Laura's story, Atwood introduces a novel-within-a-novel. Entitled *The Blind Assassin*, it is a science fiction story improvised by two unnamed lovers who meet in dingy backstreet rooms. When we return to Iris, it is through a 1947 newspaper article announcing the discovery of a sailboat carrying the dead body of her husband, a distinguished industrialist.

What makes this novel Margaret Atwood's strongest and most profoundly entertaining is the way in which the three wonderfully rich stories weave together, gradually revealing through their interplay the secrets surrounding the entire Chase family – and most particularly the fascinating and tangled lives of the two sisters. *The Blind Assassin* is a brilliant and enthralling book by a writer at the top of her form.

**'Absorbing....Expertly rendered....Virtuosic storytelling.'**  
*The New York Times*

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## READING AND SPEAKING

### The Blind Assassin

- 1 Read the first part of *The Blind Assassin*. Which two words would you like your teacher to explain? Which statement do you agree with?
  - The facts are presented coldly and clinically.
  - The violence of the accident is described with great emotion.
- 2 Read the second part. Answer the questions.
  - 1 Who are Laura, Richard, Mrs Griffen, and Alex? How are they related? (The narrator's name is Iris.)
  - 2 What are the various suggested causes of the crash? How does Iris explain the crash to the policeman? Does she really believe this?
  - 3 Why is she angry with her sister?
- 3 Read the final part. Answer the questions.
  - 1 Why is Iris wondering what clothes to wear?
  - 2 What impression do you have of her and her background?
  - 3 Who is Reenie? What do we learn about the mother of Iris and Laura?
  - 4 Who do you think the last line refers to?
- 4 When is Iris ...?
  - calm • nostalgic • very angry
  - clear thinking • cold and factualWhat evidence is there that Laura ...?
  - didn't care about people's feelings • had bad experiences in life
  - felt guilty about something • had suffered even as a child

### Language work

- 1 The writer uses many dramatic words. Match a word from the extract with a more neutral description.

charred	turning and twisting
smithereens	things people do
plunged	knocking together (teeth)
swirling	making a loud cry (in pain)
suspended	very small pieces
chattering	lift quickly
deeds	badly burnt
scoop	fell suddenly downwards
howling	hung

### What do you think?

- 1 The first chapter of this novel raises more questions than it answers. What has the author *not* told us? What do you want to know?
- 2 Which do you think is true?
  - Laura's notebooks are ... her childhood diaries/a record of a secret relationship/a novel.
  - Laura suffered because ... she was mentally ill/her mother died/she had an unhappy love life.
  - Iris ... feels responsible for her sister's death/never loved her husband.

# The BLIND ASSASSIN

## CHAPTER I

### *The bridge*

Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge. The bridge was being repaired: she went right through the Danger sign. The car fell a hundred feet into the ravine, smashing through the treetops feathery with new leaves, then burst into flames and rolled down into the shallow creek at the bottom. Chunks of the bridge fell on top of it. Nothing much was left of her but charred smithereens.



I was informed of the accident by a policeman: the car was mine, and they'd traced the licence. His tone was respectful: no doubt he recognized Richard's name. He said the tires may have caught on a streetcar track or the brakes may have failed, but he also felt bound to inform me that two witnesses – a retired lawyer and a bank teller, dependable people – had claimed to have seen the whole thing. They'd said Laura had turned the car sharply and deliberately, and had plunged off the bridge with no more fuss than stepping off a curb. They'd noticed her hands on the wheel because of the white gloves she'd been wearing.

It wasn't the brakes, I thought. She had her reasons. Not that they were ever the same as anybody else's reasons. She was completely ruthless in that way.

'I suppose you want someone to identify her,' I said. 'I'll come down as soon as I can.' I could hear the calmness of my own voice, as if from a distance. In reality I could barely get the words out; my mouth was numb, my entire face was rigid with pain. I felt as if I'd been to the dentist. I was furious with Laura for what she'd done, but also with the policeman for implying that she'd done it. A hot wind was blowing around my head, the strands of my hair lifting and swirling in it, like ink spilled in water.

'I'm afraid there will be an inquest, Mrs. Griffen,' he said.

'Naturally,' I said. 'But it was an accident. My sister was never a good driver.'

I could picture the smooth oval of Laura's face, her neatly pinned chignon, the dress she would have been wearing: a blue or steel grey or hospital-corridor green. Penitential colours – less like something she'd chosen to put on than like something she'd been locked up in. Her solemn half-smile; the amazed lift of her eyebrows, as if she were admiring the view.

The white gloves: a Pontius Pilate gesture. She was washing her hands of me. Of all of us.

What had she been thinking of as the car sailed off the bridge, then hung suspended in the afternoon sunlight, glinting like a dragonfly for that one instant of held breath before the plummet? Of Alex, of Richard, of bad faith, of our father and his wreckage: of God, perhaps, and her fatal triangular bargain. Or of the stack of cheap school exercise books that she must have hidden that very morning, in the bureau drawer where I kept my stockings, knowing I would be the one to find them.

When the policeman had gone I went upstairs to change. To visit the morgue I would need gloves, and a hat with a veil. Something to cover the eyes. There might be reporters. I would have to call a taxi. Also I ought to warn Richard, at his office: he would wish to have a statement of grief prepared. I went into my dressing room: I would need black, and a handkerchief.

I opened the drawer, I saw the notebooks. I undid the criss-cross of kitchen string that tied them together. I noticed that my teeth were chattering, and that I was cold all over. I must be in shock, I decided.

What I remembered then was Reenie, from when we were little. It was Reenie who'd done the bandaging, of scrapes and cuts and minor injuries: Mother might be resting, or doing good deeds elsewhere, but Reenie was always there. She'd scoop us up and sit us on the white enamel kitchen table, alongside the pie dough she was rolling out or the chicken she was cutting up or the fish she was gutting, and give us a lump of brown sugar to get us to close our mouths. *Tell me where it hurts, she'd say. Stop howling. Just calm down and show me where.*

But some people can't tell where it hurts. They can't calm down. They can't ever stop howling.

## LISTENING AND SPEAKING

### The money jigsaw

- 1 Look at the headlines and photographs. With a partner, use the prompts to invent the story.

walking to school / ripped up bank notes / flying all over / a bin / a plastic bag / jammed full / torn up notes / had to go to school

after school playing / police / told them where / police took away / Bank of England / long time / gave back / stick together

# Our £2,000 jigsaw



## Stick-up job on torn bank notes leaves schoolgirls £1,200 richer

### What do you think?

Why do you think someone tore up the money? Rachel and her friend have two theories.

- Maybe an old lady decided she wasn't going to leave it to anyone.
- It could have been a divorce – one person didn't want the other to have it.

Do you agree? Do you have any better explanations?

- 2 **T 3.6** Listen to one of the girls, Rachel Aumann, being interviewed. Compare your story with hers. (*Sainsbury's* is the name of a supermarket.)

- 3 Answer the questions.

- 1 Where did the girls find the money?
- 2 How big are the pieces?
- 3 Are they being allowed to keep it?
- 4 Is it easy to stick the notes together?
- 5 How do they do it?
- 6 How long have they been doing it?
- 7 How much money is there?

### SPOKEN ENGLISH *like*

Rachel uses the word *like* a lot.

Yeah, it was ... erm ... like really out of the ordinary. ... we traced it to like a bin.

This use of *like* suggests that the speaker (often a younger person) is not making an effort to be precise when describing or reporting a situation.

Look at the tapescript on p127. Find more examples of *like*. Which example shows the correct use of *like* as a preposition?

# EVERYDAY ENGLISH

## Showing interest and surprise

- 1 **T 3.7** Listen to the dialogue. Write in B's answers. How does she show interest and surprise?

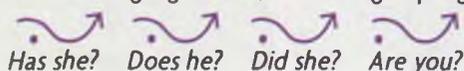


- A Jade's got a new boyfriend.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? Good for her!  
 A Apparently, he lives in a castle.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? How amazing!  
 A Yes. She met him in Slovenia.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? That's interesting.  
 A Unfortunately, he can't speak much English.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? I thought everyone could these days!

- 2 B uses *echo questions* and *reply questions*. Which are which? Practise the conversation with your partner. Pay particular attention to the stress and intonation.

### Music of English

To show interest, the intonation on echo and reply questions should start high, go down, and then go up high at the end.



- T 3.8** Listen and repeat.

If you use these short questions without any intonation, you will sound bored and uninterested!

- 3 Complete the conversations with either an echo or a reply question.

- 1 A Sam wants to apologize.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_?  
 A Yes. He's broken your mother's Chinese vase.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? Oh, no!
- 2 A We had a terrible holiday.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_?  
 A Yes. It rained all the time.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_?  
 A Yes. And the food was disgusting!  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? What a drag!
- 3 A I'm broke.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? How come?  
 A Because I just had a phone bill for £500.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? Why so much?  
 A Because I have a girlfriend in Korea.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? How interesting!
- 4 A It took me three hours to get here.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_?  
 A Yes. There was a traffic jam ten miles long.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? That's awful!  
 A Now I've got a headache!  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? Poor darling. I'll get you something for it.
- 5 A I'm on a mountain, watching the sun set.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_?  
 A Yes. And I've got something very important to ask you.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? What is it? I can't wait!  
 A You'd better sit down. I'd like to marry you.  
 B \_\_\_\_\_? Wow!

- T 3.9** Listen and compare. Practise them with a partner.

- 4 Your teacher will read out some sentences about himself/herself. Respond, using a reply question or an echo.