

Look at the short story and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

### Preparation

Circle *True* or *False* for these sentences.

- |    |   |             |              |
|----|---|-------------|--------------|
| 1. | You should divide your story into clear paragraphs.                                     | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 2. | In English, we normally write stories using present tenses.                             | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 3. | It's a good idea to use direct speech ('Go away!') to make your story more interesting. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 4. | When characters in the story speak, you should use inverted commas ('.....').           | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 5. | You shouldn't use humour in a story.  | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 6. | The reader of your story will enjoy a surprising or funny ending.                       | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |

### Exam question

Write a story with the title 'The English Exam'. You should use a variety of tenses and your story must be between 180 and 220 words.

#### The English Exam

*Dimitri woke up at 7:00 a.m. He had been chatting with a friend on the computer until nearly midnight the previous night so he was feeling quite tired but also rather nervous because this was the day of an important English exam at school. Dimitri had been studying very hard for this exam for the previous two weeks so he thought he had a good chance of passing it.*

*While Dimitri was travelling to school on the bus, he remembered that he had forgotten to take his wallet with him so he didn't have any money to buy lunch. Just after this, his friend Lucas got on the bus.*

*'Can I borrow some money, Lucas?' asked Dimitri. 'Sure, no problem,' replied Lucas. 'Here you go.'*

*The two boys did the English exam. While they were having lunch, Dimitri asked Lucas if he thought the exam had been difficult. Lucas smiled and picked up the slice of chocolate cake that he was eating.*

*'It was so easy! It was a piece of cake!' said Lucas, smiling.*

#### Top Tips for writing

1. Your story should have a clear beginning, middle and end.
2. Use clear paragraphs.
3. Use a variety of narrative tenses.
4. Use direct speech or indirect speech when the characters talk.

### 1. Check your understanding: multiple choice

Circle the best word to complete these sentences.

1. When Dimitri woke up he felt **annoyed with his friend** / tired and a bit anxious .
2. He thought he was **unprepared** / well prepared for the exam.
3. Dimitri realised he didn't have his wallet when he was **on the bus** / in the exam .
4. His friend Lucas **lent him some money** / bought him lunch .
5. Lucas thought the exam was **easy** / difficult .
6. If you want to say something is easy in English, you can say it is 'a piece of **cake** / bread '.

### 2. Check your writing: matching – tenses

Match the example sentence with the purpose (and tense).

Example sentences	Purposes and tenses
1..... The sun was shining and the birds were singing.	a. a completed action before a time in the past (Past perfect)
2..... I was having a shower when she called.	b. something that started and continued until a time in the past (Past perfect continuous)
3..... I saw that film last week.	c. setting the scene (Past continuous)
4..... I had been waiting for nearly an hour when he finally arrived.	d. a finished action at a specific time in the past (Past simple)
5..... She had seen that boy somewhere before.	e. an action that was in progress when there was an interruption (Past continuous and past simple)

### 3. Check your writing: gap fill – tenses

Complete the sentences with the correct tense of the verb in brackets. Write one, two or three words.

1. We decided to stop and rest our legs as we \_\_\_\_\_ (*walk*) all day.
2. After breakfast, Tim \_\_\_\_\_ (*go*) down to the garden to get some fresh air.
3. I tried to open the door but someone \_\_\_\_\_ (*lock*) it from the inside.
4. I \_\_\_\_\_ (*travel*) in Italy when I first met her.
5. It \_\_\_\_\_ (*rain*) softly and people were starting to put up their umbrellas.
6. He looked again at the open door and the old, half-broken steps. His mother \_\_\_\_\_ (*warn*) him not to go near that house, but it fascinated him.
7. 'Come in out of the rain!' Dad said. While we \_\_\_\_\_ (*get*) dry and chatting about the evening's events, Dad made hot chocolate.
8. She was really excited about the race. She \_\_\_\_\_ (*train*) for weeks, and she knew she was ready.

#### Discussion

Have you taken an exam recently? How did it go?

Do you like writing stories?