



## Past Perfect: Narrative Contexts

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- The detective examined the room. Someone \_\_\_\_ (break) the window from outside.  
a) has broken  
b) broke  
c) had broken  
d) was breaking
- Sarah sat down and ordered a coffee. She \_\_\_\_ (walk) for hours and needed a rest.  
a) walked  
b) has walked  
c) had walked  
d) was walking
- The house was empty. The family \_\_\_\_ (move) away long before we arrived.  
a) moved  
b) was moving  
c) had moved  
d) has moved
- James looked tired. He \_\_\_\_ (not/sleep) the night before because of the storm.  
a) wasn't sleeping  
b) hadn't slept  
c) didn't sleep  
d) hasn't slept
- The restaurant was closed. The owner \_\_\_\_ (retire) and nobody \_\_\_\_ (take) over the business.  
a) retired ... took  
b) had retired ... took  
c) had retired ... had taken  
d) was retiring ... was taking
- Maria was nervous. She \_\_\_\_ (never/give) a presentation before.  
a) has never given  
b) never gave  
c) had never given  
d) was never giving
- The police caught the thief. A witness \_\_\_\_ (see) him running from the bank.  
a) saw  
b) has seen  
c) was seeing  
d) had seen
- Tom smiled when he saw the letter. His daughter \_\_\_\_ (write) to him from abroad.  
a) wrote  
b) was writing  
c) has written  
d) had written
- The garden looked beautiful. My mother \_\_\_\_ (plant) new flowers in the spring.  
a) has planted  
b) had planted  
c) planted  
d) was planting
- Anna was angry with her brother. He \_\_\_\_ (forget) her birthday again.  
a) was forgetting  
b) had forgotten  
c) has forgotten  
d) forgot
- The students were celebrating. They \_\_\_\_ (finally/pass) their exams.  
a) were finally passing  
b) had finally passed  
c) have finally passed  
d) finally passed

12. I couldn't enter the museum. I \_\_\_\_ (leave) my membership card at home.  
a) was leaving  
b) have left  
c) left  
d) had left
13. The couple looked happy. They \_\_\_\_ (just/get) engaged the day before.  
a) had just got  
b) just got  
c) have just got  
d) were just getting
14. The building was damaged. A fire \_\_\_\_ (break out) before the residents could call for help.  
a) was breaking out  
b) broke out  
c) had broken out  
d) has broken out
15. David felt confident in the interview. He \_\_\_\_ (prepare) for weeks.  
a) has prepared  
b) had prepared  
c) prepared  
d) was preparing
16. The roads were flooded. It \_\_\_\_ (rain) heavily all week.  
a) rained  
b) had rained  
c) was raining  
d) has rained
17. Emma returned home. She \_\_\_\_ (be) away for three months.  
a) has been  
b) is  
c) had been  
d) was
18. The children were excited. Their grandparents \_\_\_\_ (promise) to take them to the zoo.  
a) promised  
b) have promised  
c) were promising  
d) had promised
19. The company went bankrupt. It \_\_\_\_ (lose) money for several years.  
a) has lost  
b) lost  
c) had lost  
d) was losing
20. Lucy knew the answer immediately. She \_\_\_\_ (study) this topic just last week.  
a) was studying  
b) has studied  
c) had studied  
d) studied



## Answers

1. c) had broken
2. c) had walked
3. c) had moved
4. b) hadn't slept
5. c) had retired ... had taken
6. c) had never given
7. d) had seen
8. d) had written
9. b) had planted
10. b) had forgotten
11. b) had finally passed
12. d) had left
13. a) had just got
14. c) had broken out
15. b) had prepared
16. b) had rained
17. c) had been
18. d) had promised
19. c) had lost
20. c) had studied



# Explanations

**1. “had broken” (c)**

In narratives, use Past Perfect to provide background information about what happened before the main event.

**2. “had walked” (c)**

Past Perfect explains why she needed rest—the walking happened before she sat down.

**3. “had moved” (c)**

'Long before we arrived' anchors the moving in a time prior to our arrival, requiring Past Perfect 'had moved'. The family's departure explains the empty house we found.

**4. “hadn't slept” (b)**

The lack of sleep (earlier event) explains his tiredness (narrative present).

**5. “had retired ... had taken” (c)**

Both the retirement and the failure to take over the business happened before the narrative moment when we found the restaurant closed. Both actions need Past Perfect to show they are background events explaining the current state.

**6. “had never given” (c)**

Her lack of experience (Past Perfect) explains her nervousness at the time of the story.

**7. “had seen” (d)**

The witness seeing the thief happened before the police caught him. Past Perfect for background information.

**8. “had written” (d)**

The writing happened before he received and saw the letter.

**9. “had planted” (b)**

Planting in spring (earlier) led to the beautiful garden later.

**10. “had forgotten” (b)**

Forgetting the birthday (earlier event) caused her anger.

**11. “had finally passed” (b)**

Passing exams (Past Perfect) happened before and led to the celebration.

**12. “had left” (d)**

Leaving the card at home happened before arriving at the museum.

**13. “had just got” (a)**

The engagement (one day earlier) explains their happiness in the narrative.

**14. “had broken out” (c)**

'Before the residents could call for help' anchors the fire in a time before another past action, requiring Past Perfect 'had broken out'. The fire explains the damage described in the narrative.

**15. “had prepared” (b)**

Weeks of preparation before the interview gave him confidence.

**16. “had rained” (b)**

Heavy rain throughout the week caused the flooding observed later.

**17. “had been” (c)**

Three months of absence (Past Perfect duration) before returning (Past Simple).

**18. “had promised” (d)**

The promise (earlier) caused their excitement at the time of the story.

**19. “had lost” (c)**

Years of losing money led to eventual bankruptcy. Past Perfect for the extended earlier period.

**20. “had studied” (c)**

Recent studying (last week) before the question explains her quick answer.