THE HISTORY OF SWEDEN

Before we discover the fascinating history of Sweden let's revise the past tenses in English.

A brief review of the different past tenses :

Simple Past - He went to Sweden. Used for:

- action in the past taking place once, never or several times
- actions taking place one after another
- action taking place in the middle of another action

Used with : yesterday, 2 minutes ago, in 1990, the other day, last Friday

Past Progressive - He was speaking Swedish. Used for:

- action going on at a certain time in the past
- actions taking place at the same time
- action in the past that is interrupted by another action

Used with : when, while, as long as

Present Perfect Simple - He has been to Sweden. Used for:

- putting emphasis on the result
- action that is still going on
- action that stopped recently
- finished action that has an influence on the present
- action that has taken place once, never or several times before the moment of speaking

Used with : already, ever, just, never, not yet, so far, till now, up to now

Present Perfect Progressive - He has been working for Ikea for ten years. Used for:

- putting emphasis on the course or duration (not the result)
- action that recently stopped or is still going on
- finished action that influenced the present

Used with : all day, for 4 years, since 1993, how long?, the whole week

Past Perfect Simple - He had been to Sweden before Used for:

- action taking place before a certain time in the past
- sometimes interchangeable with past perfect progressive
- putting emphasis only on the fact (not the duration)

Used with : already, just, never, not yet, once, until that day +'if' type III If I had talked, ...

Past Perfect Progressive - He had been speaking speaking Swedish. Used for:

- action taking place before a certain time in the past
- sometimes interchangeable with past perfect simple
- putting emphasis on the duration or course of an action

Used with : (for, since, the whole day, all day)

Now replace the CAPITAL LETTERS in the text with the correct past tenses.

A very Brief History of Sweden

Swedish history spans more than 10,000 years and starts after the last glacial period. After the inland ice MELT, the climate BECOME warmer, and settlers ARRIVE in the northern parts of the country from the east and south. They LIVE from hunting, fishing and collecting.

Agriculture INTRODUCE during the Stone Age, and there BE a subsequent Bronze Age followed by an Iron Age.

The period from about 1750 to 1850 SEE a far-reaching modernization of agriculture. If you compare a map of a rural area from the 18th century with one from today, you will get an idea of what happened in this period. On the old map, houses, barns etc. belonging to several families STAND close together in a village, perhaps with a church in the middle. The cultivated area SPLIT up into several small lots, the result of centuries of inheritance and marriages. The new map, on the other hand, shows separate farms far apart, where each farm has a few large fields around it. The old village SPLIT UP and the farming land REDISTRIBUTE among the families. In addition, pasture-land that used to belong to the villagers collectively DIVIDED into individual lots and cultivated.

The change RESULT in an increased agricultural production, which was necessary in a country with a rapidly growing population. But the concentration of farming land and the increase in population MEAN that there were more and more people who did not own any land at all. A proletariat of farm labourers without property started forming. Some of them TRY to find jobs in the rapidly growing towns, where the developing industries needed more workers. Emigration was another possibility. All in all, almost one million people left the country this way, many of them ending up in America.

Around 1930, the area used for agricultural production REACH its maximum, and 50 percent of the population were engaged in agriculture. Twenty years later, only some 20 percent lived in the countryside.

We have mentioned the mass exodus from Sweden in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We should not forget, however, that Sweden is also a country of immigrants. From the end of the glacial period and onwards, people SETTLE in the area now called "Sweden". Today, as a result of economic and political changes, many different cultures are represented in the population. Equally important is the foreign influence reaching us through TV, music, fashion, food, etc. As can be expected, the US is a major contributor.

In 1994, a further step towards internationalism was taken, when the Swedish people decided in a referendum to join the EU.

Now explain the facts below using the past tenses.

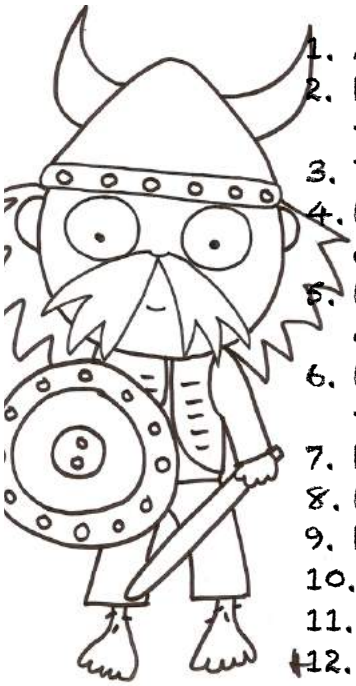
1350: the Black plague, "Svartedauen" sweeps Sweden and Scandinavia killing one third of the inhabitants
1397 - Union of Kalmar unites Denmark, Sweden and Norway under a single monarch. Denmark is the dominant power
1523 Gustav I of Sweden re-establishes separation of the Swedish Crown from the union
1523 - 1654 Vasa Dynasty
1654 - 1720 Wittelsbach Dynasty (Pfalzisks)
1611-1718 Sweden becomes a great power
1632 - 1654 Queen Christina rules Sweden
1720 - 1751 Brabant Dynasty (Hessen)
1751 - 1818 Holsten-Gottorp Dynasty
1814 The peace treaty of Kiel and Denmark cedes Norway to Sweden
1818 - Present Day the Bernadotte Swedish Dynasty
1901 Alfred Nobel, the Swedish millionaire chemist and industrialist, initiates the Nobel prizes
1905 The union with Sweden disintegrates and Norway becomes an independent kingdom
1914-18 World War I Sweden remains neutral
1939 - World War II Sweden declares its neutrality
Sweden rejects a request from Germany to use its territory as a transit route for troops
1940 - Sweden has to allow German troops to march through Sweden to Norway



Read the statements below and answer the questions :

Sweden is a fair place to live!

a. • Swedish people have the longest life expectancy in Europe (80.51 years in 2006).
b. • Swedish people have the second lowest income inequality in Europe (after Denmark), with a Gini index of 25 in 2000.
c. Sweden has a constitutional monarchy. The Monarch's power is regulated by the Swedish constitution. The constitutional monarchy emerged at end of the 1800s and at the beginning of the 1900s.
d. • Sweden has the smallest gender employment-rate gap in the developed world, with only 4% more men in employment than
e. • As of 2006, Sweden was the most generous country in the world regarding aid to poor countries. It is the only nation where donations exceed 1% of the GDP.
f. • As of 2006, Sweden had obtained 27 Nobel prizes, including 5 Peace prizes. This is the 5th highest number of laureates in the world, and the highest per capita ratio.
g. • With 42.7% of female parliamentarians (in 2002), Sweden has the highest proportion of women lawmakers in the world.
h. • In 1862, Sweden became the first country to grant suffrage for (married) women in local elections.
i. • Sweden is set to become the first country in the world to phase out petrol for bio fuel.



1. Are you surprised by any of the above facts ?
2. How do Ikea's HR, charity and environmental policies relate to the above information?
3. Do you think Ikea is typical of its country ?
4. What other Swedish companies are famous in the world?
5. Which aspects of Swedish culture are reflected in the companies policies?
6. Which aspects of the countries culture and history are reflected in the stores and the product lines or food?
7. Have you visited Sweden?
8. Would you like to live in Sweden?
9. How many Swedish people do you know?
10. How many words in Swedish do you know?
11. What colours is the Swedish flag?
12. What's the history of the Swedish flag?

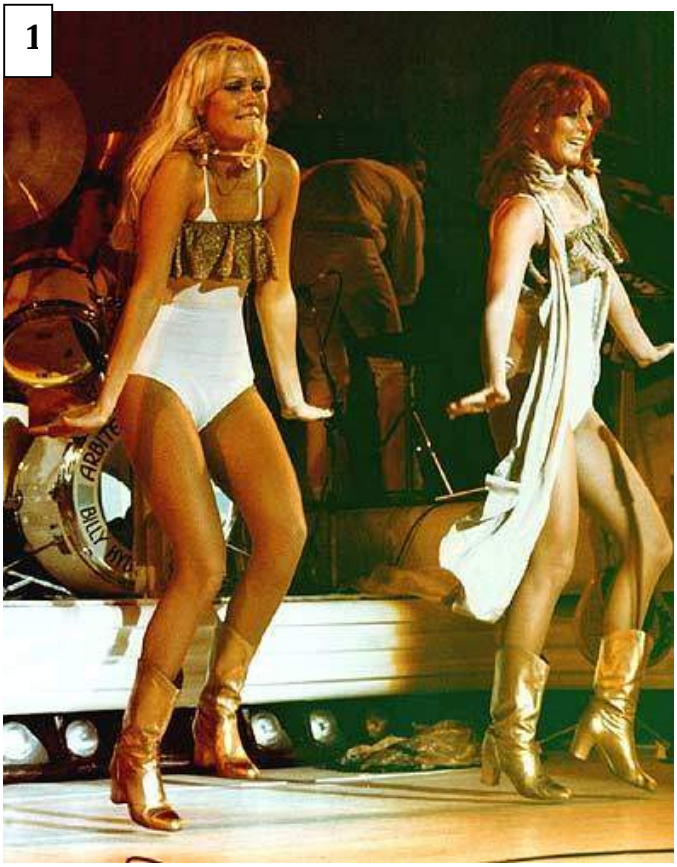


Easy Access English

Swedish Stories

Using the pictures below as prompts invent a story IN THE PAST TENSE about the picture.

1



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3



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5



6

