We've got issues!



EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Review the past tense and practice using it, learn useful expressions for talking about work related problems. Practice dialogues. Expressions for discussing problem solving.

Activity One - '***There are no problems, just solutions!'***

Sometimes when there is a problem we don't want to sound negative, so it's best to talk about an 'issue' instead. It's also preferable to talk in terms of solutions as soon as you can!

Discuss ***with your group or teacher:***

1. Do you like finding solutions to issues you encounter* at work? (*encounter = meet, come across)
2. What is the most recent issue you had to resolve*? (*resolve = solve)
3. What is the most common problem you have in your team or department?
4. What's the most creative solution you found recently to an issue at work?
5. What's the biggest issue you have encountered this month at work?
6. Are you good at solving problems?



Activity Two - ***Expressions***: Read the expressions paying attention to your intonation and stress..

Explaining a problem

- The thing is that…
- The issue is that…
- There seems to be a problem because..
- The question is that…
- Basically…
- Essentially the situation is that…
- What's happened is that…
- We have an issue because…
- We have a slight problem in that…
- We have an issue with…



Review the expressions before the lesson and look up any new words in the dictionary.

Suggesting a solution

- ☑ It would be a good idea to…
- ☑ It seems like the best option would be to..
- ☑ Have you thought about..
- ☑ I think that it would be best to..
- ☑ One solution would be to…
- ☑ One idea would be to..
- ☑ It would be great if we could…
- ☑ Let's…
- ☑ Let's look at this another way..
- ☑ Don't worry, let's just…

Justifying a decision

- We decided to… because..
- I decided that the best idea was to… so
- We made the decision to…
- We did that because…
- We proceeded with… so that….



Activity Three - ***Problem solving***

Imagine that you are speaking to a co-worker about one of the issues below. Explain why it's an issue and give the co-worker some instructions to solve the problem.

1. A logistics co-worker is wearing earphones and listening to music while he works.
2. A sales assistant in the kitchen area is in a really bad mood and was frowning all day and sometimes swearing and getting really annoyed whilst in the store in front of customers.
3. Two co-workers have been arguing over a girl. Now they don't want to work near each other any more.
4. One of your team members comes to work late very regularly, he always stays extra time at the end of the day though.

Activity Four - ***Explaining things*** in the **past tense.**



When we talk about past events in English we usually use the past simple, it's the most commonly used past tense. This is why you really need to learn the irregular past participles off by heart. (See the list at the end of this lesson).

When you are unsure of which past tense to use, if you choose the simple past then at least you can be sure that people will understand that you are talking about the past and more often than not it is the right choice. So, don't worry and hesitate, just use the simple past when you are not sure.

Don't be tempted to use the Present perfect systematically. French students of English tend to do (mainly because they are translating directly from French). For example they think *'j'ai mangé un gateau'* and say 'I have eaten a cake' because in French there is an auxiliary verb in this sentence.

In English you should say 'I ate a cake' if you are talking about an action that is finished with no link to the present. So, no auxiliary verb. We only use the present perfect (have done) when there is some connection or link to what you are talking about in the present or to your present situation. This is one of the most common errors French people make with the past tense in English. When we are making a simple statement about the past, something that is over and finished, you use the simple past tense.

Another common mistake is to use the present tense when you are talking about something that started in the past and continues today. For example people often say - ~~I am working for~~ Ikea for two years. The correct sentence is **I have been working** for Ikea for two years. This is the present perfect continuous, an action in the past which is still happening today.

Let's **review** the different past tenses and their uses so that you can feel more confident.

SIMPLE PAST

I went to Ikea and I saw the furniture.

Action in the past taking place once, never or several times
Actions taking place one after another

PRESENT PERFECT

Have you been to Ikea before?

We use the Present Perfect to say that an action happened at an unspecified time before now. You **can't** use it with specific time expressions such as: yesterday, one year ago, last week, etc.

PAST CONTINUOUS

I was visiting Ikea when you called.

Use the Past Continuous to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the Simple Past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

I have been living in Paris for five years.

We use the Present Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and has continued until now.

PAST PERFECT

I had studied English for three years before I moved to Paris to work for Ikea.

The Past Perfect shows that something happened before another action in the past or before a specific time in the past.

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

She had been living in Paris for several years before she got her job at Ikea

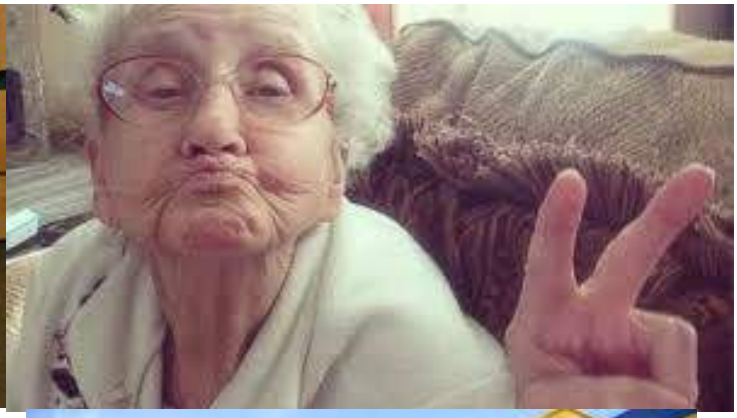
We use the Past Perfect Continuous to show that something started in the past and continued up until another time in the past.



Activity Five - ***What was the problem?***

Identify the problems below (invent a story). Then explain what happened using the past tense.









Activity Six - ***Agony Aunt.***

Read the problem page letters below, identify the past tenses used and invent an answer…

Dear Agony Aunt,

My girlfriend always wants more stuff! We have already decorated our house and bought new furniture for the lounge. Last week we went to IKEA and she said that she liked everything in there. We had a massive argument because she wanted to walk through the whole showroom and she wouldn't take any short cuts! Now she has told me that she wants a new kitchen. Last time it took me a week to assemble all the new furniture. I can't face any more flat packs. I don't know what to do! Yours desperately,

Steve.

Dear Agony Aunt,

I really want a new kitchen but my boyfriend is really bad at DIY. I found it really irritating already last week when he was looking round IKEA with me. It' obvious that he doesn't want to buy anything there because he is afraid of assembling it! I'm really good at that kind of thing. We bought some furniture and he found it really hard to put it up. I could have done it in a day and it took him a week. I didn't like to say anything because I didn't want to offend him. I don't know what to do now. Should I tell him how I feel? Best regards,

Stephanie.

Activity Seven - Saying sorry - expressions… Here are some useful expressions to apologise for a problem you have caused :

- I'm afraid that
- I'm sorry but
- Please excuse us, the…
- We're really sorry for any inconvenience but..
- I must apologise:…

Activity Eight - What seems to be the problem… Read the dialogue and then each person in the group, or you and your teacher, will invent what happens next …

IKEA co-worker: Excuse me madam but you can't smoke inside the store
Customer: Well I've been waiting in queues most of the day and now I need a smoke.
IKEA co-worker: I understand but please could you go outside to smoke.
Customer: As I have said, I've been waiting for far too long and there is no way that I'm going to lose my place in the queue now to pick up my furniture.



LIST OF COMMON IRREGULAR VERBS

be	was, were	been
beat	beat	beat
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bet	bet	bet
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burn	burnt	burnt
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
dive	dived	dived
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamed	dreamed
drive	drove	driven
drink	drank	drunk
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung	hung
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt	knelt
knit	knit	knit
know	knew	know
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
learn	learned	learned
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
mistake	mistook	mistaken
pay	paid	paid
prove	proved	proved
put	put	put
quit	quit	quit
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
shine	shone	shone
shoot	shot	shot
show	showed	showed
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid
speak	spoke	spoken
speed	sped	sped
spend	spent	spent
spit	spat	spit
split	split	split
spread	spread	spread
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
stink	stank	stunk
strike	struck	struck
string	strung	strung
swear	swore	sworn
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
tread	trod	trodden
understand	understood	understood
uphold	upheld	upheld
upset	upset	upset
wake	woke	woken
wear	wore	worn
wind	wound	wound
win	won	won
write	wrote	written