

1 Corporate culture

Refresh your memory

Past simple

He told them.
completed actions

Past continuous

He was telling them.
background situations

Past perfect

He had already told them.
one past event before another

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Advice structures

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1.3 Grammar Past tenses and advice structures

Test yourself: Past tenses

- 1 Complete the anecdote by choosing the best tense in each case: past continuous (*was / were doing*), past simple (*did*) or past perfect (*had done*).

A large corporation had just hired a new CEO. As the old CEO was leaving, he discreetly presented his successor with three envelopes numbered one, two and three. 'If you have a problem you can't solve, open the first of these,' he (1) _____ (tell) the new CEO.

Well, at first things went smoothly, but after six months sales (2) _____ (fall) by 10% and the shareholders were getting very impatient. The CEO (3) _____ (begin) to despair, when he remembered the envelopes the old CEO (4) _____ (give) him.

He went to his office, closed the door and opened the first envelope. The message read, 'Try blaming your predecessor.' The new CEO (5) _____ (call) a press conference and tactfully blamed the previous CEO for the company's problems. The shareholders and the press were satisfied with his explanations, and a few weeks later the CEO was relieved to see that sales (6) _____ (improve) by 12%.

About a year later, the company was having serious production problems. The CEO (7) _____ (learn) from his previous experience: as soon as he (8) _____ (close) his office door, he opened the second envelope. The message read, 'You ought to reorganize.' He immediately reorganized production, and the company quickly recovered.

A year or two after that, costs (9) _____ (rise) day by day and the company was in trouble again. The CEO went to his office, (10) _____ (close) the door and opened the third envelope. The message read, 'You might want to prepare three envelopes.'

Test yourself: Advice structures

- 2 An intern needs help understanding a company's work culture. Complete the advice structures using *ask*, *asking* or *to ask*.

- 1 You should _____ your supervisor.
- 2 Have you considered _____ your supervisor?
- 3 How about _____ your supervisor?
- 4 It's a good idea _____ your supervisor.
- 5 Have you thought of _____ your supervisor?
- 6 You could _____ your supervisor.
- 7 It's wise _____ your supervisor.
- 8 Why don't you _____ your supervisor?
- 9 You ought _____ your supervisor.
- 10 You might want _____ your supervisor.
- 11 Have you tried _____ your supervisor?
- 12 It's important _____ your supervisor.


Which five phrases are examples of strong recommendations?

Which seven phrases are examples of careful or friendly suggestions?

Internet research

Search for the keywords "business jokes". Which other tenses do business jokes use? Tell a joke in your own words, without using notes.

Listening for detail

3  1:04 Listen to an after-dinner story. In each pair of events below, underline the event that happened first.

- 1 The CEO did very well for himself. The CEO gave a party.
- 2 The CEO challenged his team. He showed the executives the pool.
- 3 There was a loud splash. Everyone followed the CEO to the barbecue.
- 4 The CFO swam for his life. Everyone arrived back at the pool.
- 5 The CFO reached the edge. The crocodiles tried to catch him.
- 6 A crocodile tried to bite the CFO. The CFO climbed out of the pool.

4 Complete the sentences from the story. Then listen again and check your answers.

- 1 The boss _____ very well for himself, so he _____ the executives around his luxurious country house.
- 2 At the back of the house, he _____ the largest swimming pool any of them had ever seen.
- 3 They _____ to follow the CEO towards the barbecue when suddenly there _____ a loud splash.
- 4 Everyone _____ and _____ to the pool where the Chief Financial Officer _____ for his life.
- 5 The crocodiles _____ him when he _____ the edge of the pool.
- 6 He _____ to climb out of the pool when he _____ the mouth of the biggest crocodile close shut - snap - behind him.

Telling a story

5 With a partner, tell a story in your own words using appropriate past tenses.

Student A: turn to page 110.

Student B: turn to page 114.

Giving advice

6 Match the parts of these sentences to give advice to new employees.

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|-----------------------|-------|--|
| 1 You should | _____ | a) expect to finish on time every day. |
| 2 It's unwise | _____ | b) learn to set goals. |
| 3 It's a good idea | _____ | c) dress appropriately. |
| 4 You should | _____ | d) to make too many personal phone calls. |
| 5 You shouldn't | _____ | e) to learn proper meeting behaviour. |
| 6 It's a good idea to | _____ | f) accept responsibility for mistakes. |
| 7 It's important | _____ | g) learn who does what and how things get done. |
| 8 You shouldn't | _____ | h) not to neglect forming effective relationships at work. |
| 9 You should | _____ | i) to reduce stress by balancing your life. |
| 10 You ought | _____ | j) expect that you will like every task. |

7 With a partner, take turns asking for and giving advice.

Student A: turn to page 110.

Student B: turn to page 114.