

Technology in everyday life

Grammatik

2.2H Handys – das Gute, das Schlechte und das Hässliche

When to use the imperfect and perfect tenses

Remember that though these are both past tenses, there are some subtle differences between them!

The imperfect tense:

- is used mainly in **written** German, to narrate past events:
Es war windig und kalt, als wir in Ambleside ankamen.
- does use some frequently-used verbs in the spoken language:
ich war, er hatte, es gab, er durfte, ich musste, wir konnten, sie wollten
- is also used to refer back to how something used to be where the past event has little connection with the present time:
Als Kind spielte ich jeden Tag Tischtennis.
Er trank nur Milch, als er klein war.

The perfect tense:

- is often used when **speaking** about past events:
Hast du mich gestern Abend angerufen?
Wie hast du den Film gefunden?
- is used to make more of a connection between a past event and the present:
Ich habe am Samstag bei New Look diese schönen Schuhe gekauft (suggesting 'I'm wearing them now ... aren't they great!').

1 These comments and questions are all examples of spoken language. Translate them into German.

1 "Have you seen the new Jurassic Park film?"

1 _____

2 _____

2 "Did you get to school on time."

3 "Wow! My parents have bought me a digital radio for my birthday."

3 _____

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4 "When did you arrive, darling?" (you – familiar singular)

4 _____

5 "We stayed late at the party last night. Lots of friends were there!"

5 _____

2 Translate these sentences into German, choosing the perfect or imperfect tense for each past tense verb.

1 When she was younger, the family lived abroad.

2 Last night I had so much homework! I'm very tired today!

3 Did you go into town at the weekend?

4 She was my best friend when we were in primary school.

5 The journey was awful! The train was late and we had to wait for hours.

6 My brother used to be fat and lazy.

7 Unfortunately, we couldn't find the shop.

8 Have you talked to your parents about your marks?

9 He's bought me a lovely present! Look!

10 Why did you say that?
