

Time Distance

Task 1. Look at these two examples.

A/ I lived there in 1998.

B/ I live here.

A/ is **distant** in time. The ‘past’ tense ‘lived’ tells us this. The time phrase ‘in 1998’ tells us exactly when.

B/ is **close** in time. The present tense ‘live’ tells us this. Time is not important so there is no time phrase.

Task 2. Look at these examples. Decide if they are distant in time or close in time.

1. I went to 8 different schools – I was a very bad boy. I kept getting expelled.
2. In 1993 I was living in a small cottage in Dorset. It was lovely.
3. I’ve been living here for 3 years now.
4. He didn’t want to see her so he left early.
5. I could read before I went to school.
6. But seismologist yesterday confirmed a quake registering 2.4 on the Richter scale at Blackford near Auchterarder in Perthshire.
7. Women are polite and supportive in conversation, men interrupt more.
8. Bob Talley read his 100th birthday telegram from the Queen, proudly announced “Yes, I made it”, then promptly died.
9. Europe and America are clearly working hard to come to an agreement.
10. When I was younger I really liked the Rolling Stones.

Rule: One use of the ‘past’ tense is to show **time distance**. We use time distance to show there is no direct connection with our present state. Time phrases tell us exactly ‘when’. Sometimes time phrases are not needed.

Task 3. Complete this text about a Scottish earthquake with the correct form of the verbs.

Lorna Desouza, manageress of the Blackford Hotel,(think) passing lorries had caused light shades in the function room to shake.

She said: “We.....(get) a lot of lorries going through the village because of the Highland Spring factory so I(think) it was that. I(am) in the function room and the light shades.....(begin) to rattle. There.....(is) also a bang which I put down to the lorries. I(can) not believe it(is) an earthquake.”

Key

Task 2. Look at these examples. Decide if they are distant in time or close in time.

1. I went to 8 different schools – I was a very bad boy. I kept getting expelled. *Distant*
2. In 1993 I was living in a small cottage in Dorset. It was lovely. *Distant*
3. I've been living here for 3 years now. *Close*
4. He didn't want to see her so he left early. *Distant*
5. I could read before I went to school. *Distant*
6. But seismologist yesterday confirmed a quake registering 2.4 on the Richter scale at Blackford near Auchterarder in Perthshire. *Distant*
7. Women are polite and supportive in conversation, men interrupt more. *Close*
8. Bob Talley read his 100th birthday telegram from the Queen, proudly announced "Yes, I made it", then promptly died. *Distant*
9. Europe and America are clearly working hard to come to an agreement. *Close*
10. When I was younger I really liked the Rolling Stones. *Distant*

Task 3. Complete this text about a Scottish earthquake with the correct form of the verbs.

Lorna Desouza, manageress of the Blackford Hotel, **thought** passing lorries had caused light shades in the function room to shake.

She said: "We **get** a lot of lorries going through the village because of the Highland Spring factory so I **thought** it was that. I was in the function room and the light shades began to rattle. There **was** also a bang which I put down to the lorries. I **can** not believe it **was** an earthquake."