Unit 8 · Talking about the Past

STUDY NOTES

WHAT THE BLE ASKS

- **CDC's grid tests skills, not units:** Reading 25 · Writing 20 · Grammar 5
- **Reading 1–2 (seen texts, 5 marks each):** *Having Fun*; *Historical Inventions*
  - order of events
  - word meanings
  - who made what and when
- **Reading 3–4 (new texts, 5 + 10 marks):** one can be a **story**
- **Writing**
  - ten punctuation errors (5 marks)
  - guided writing, 5 marks: a **story from clues**
  - free writing, 10 marks: an **account of events**
- **Grammar (5 marks):** *Change the sentence into the past perfect*; ***used to*** in the blanks

Reading I: Having Fun

- **Kind: moral story**: few characters, one event, one lesson
- **Walk:** one evening, a father and son find a pair of shoes on the path; they belong to a poor farmer nearby
- **Son's idea:** a little **mischief**: hide the shoes, watch from the bushes; a **memorable** evening
- **Father:** never make fun of the poor and weak with what they need; the shoes are **precious** to the owner; put **coins** in them instead
- **Farmer:** feels something hard, finds the coins, looks around **in vain**
- **Prayer:** kneels, hands folded, **cries out** thanks to God: medicine for his sick wife, food for his **starving** children
- **End:** father **satisfied**; son in tears; father **hugs** him, asks what the farmer would have done
- **Lesson:** real joy lies in **giving**, not in taking away
- **retell as the boy:**
  - *the son → I*
  - *the father and the son → we*
  - past tense
  - leave out what he couldn't know

Reading II: Historical Inventions

- **Kind: informative article**; opening, then paragraphs A–G:
  - **what**
  - **how it helps**
  - **who and when**
- **Before:**
  - pigeons carried letters
  - walking, horses, pack animals
  - no electricity or phones
  - firewood
- **advancement** changed all this

	Invention	The text says
A	steam engine	**James Watt**, kettle lid; great idea **1765**; **Stephenson's** engine **1829**, father of the **locomotive**
B	motor car	German **Daimler**, **1885**; **swift**, cheap; has **expelled** the train for short distances
C	electricity	light, heat, trains, factories, email; **white coal**; **Michael Faraday**, father of electricity
D	airplane	**Orville and Wilbur Wright**, **1903**; months → hours
E	spaceship	latest **wonder**; a kind of **artificial satellite**; a large team; **Sputnik 1**, Soviet Union, **October 4, 1957**, 83.6 kg
F	radio, TV	**Marconi** from **wireless telegraphy**; **John Logie Baird** with television
G	mobile phone	**Bell**, telephone, **1876**; **Reginald Fessenden**, speech without wires, **December 23, 1900**: **paved the way**; **Martin Cooper**'s team, first practical mobile

- in a reading test, **answer from the passage**
- elsewhere:
  - Newcomen's engine working by 1712
  - Trevithick's locomotive 1804
  - Faraday found how to make a current in 1831
  - **Sputnik 1** only went round the Earth; first to reach the Moon: **Luna 2**, September 1959 (asked "launched to the moon?", give the passage's date and say it was the first spacecraft)
  - first handheld mobile call: **Martin Cooper**, 3 April **1973**
- **invent** what wasn't there; **discover** what was: nobody invents electricity

Key words

memorable: worth remembering.
mischief: naughty but not very serious behavior.
precious: of great value.
in vain: without success.
starving: very hungry.
satisfied: pleased because it has gone well.

advancement: progress.
innovation: a new idea or thing.
locomotive: the engine that pulls a train.
swift / expelled: fast / forced out.
white coal: water as a source of power.
artificial: made by people.
satellite: an object traveling around a planet.
telegraphy: messages as electric signals.
remarkable: surprising and worth noticing.
pave the way: make something possible later.
foundation: what something is based on.

Grammar: three past tenses

Tense	Form	Says
past simple	*-ed* or irregular	finished: *Pemba walked to Namche last week.*
past continuous	*was / were* + *-ing*	in the middle: *At six, Yasmin was feeding the hens.*
past perfect	*had* + p.p.	the **earlier** of two: *When we reached the bus park, the bus had left.*

Clues

- *yesterday, last year, in 2019, ago* → past simple
- *at this time yesterday, at 8 last night, all morning* → past continuous
- *while* + longer action → past continuous: *While Tashi was cooking, the lights went out.*
- *when* + a short action cutting in → past simple
- *before, after, by the time, already* + two actions → past perfect for the earlier
- *was* with I, he, she, it; *were* with you, we, they; *X and Y were*
- *did* + **base**: *Did you see him?*
- past perfect needs another past action; with *before, after* past simple is fine too, unless the exam asks

Grammar: *used to*

- **regularly then, not now**
- **form:** *used to* + base: *Karma used to walk to school.*
- negative: *didn't **use** to*: *Karma didn't use to take the bus.*
- question: *Did you **use** to swim in the river?*
- **habit:** *My sister used to sing every morning.*
- **state:** *There used to be a pond here.* (*was* → *be*)
- **not** for something that happened once, a set number of times, or still goes on
- no present form: *I walk to school.*
- said /juːstə/, with an **s**
- compare: *used to* + *but now* + present simple

The sounds of -ed

- **/t/:** *looked, finished, laughed*
- **/d/:** *belonged, surprised, remembered, believed*
- **/ɪd/** (after /t/, /d/): *waited, folded, halted*

Writing: a story from clues

1. each clue → a **full sentence**, past tense: *A man was walking along a beach.*
2. add small details:
   - when
   - where
   - how someone felt
3. keep the **speech exactly** where the clue gives it
4. a **title** that makes the reader curious, not the ending

- **filling gaps in a story:** check
  - the capital letter
  - the word before
  - the word after
  - the order of events

Writing: a narrative essay

- a true story from your life; *I*, past tense
- **Beginning:**
  - what
  - when
  - where
- **Middle:** what happened, step by step
- **End:** how you felt, what stayed with you
- time words:
  - *first*
  - *then*
  - *after that*
  - *while*
  - *when*
  - *before*
  - *at last*
  - *finally*
- all three past tenses; one or two small details only you noticed

Idioms

- learn them whole, like ~~टुक्का~~; words fixed, verb can change; not for formal letters
- **a piece of cake:** very easy
- **add fuel to the fire:** make it worse
- **call it a day:** stop working for now
- **see eye to eye:** agree
- **burn the midnight oil:** work late at night
- **on cloud nine:** very happy
- **cost an arm and a leg:** be very expensive
- **out of the blue:** suddenly, no warning
- **rain cats and dogs:** rain very heavily
- **teacher's pet:** a teacher's favorite
- **when pigs fly:** never
- **once in a blue moon:** very rarely

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ Did you saw him?
✓ Did you **see** him?

✗ Nirajan and Sneha was playing.
✓ Nirajan and Sneha **were** playing.

✗ When we reached, the bus left. (it had gone)
✓ ...the bus **had left**.

✗ Did you used to swim?
✓ Did you **use** to swim?

✗ We didn't used to go.
✓ We didn't **use** to go.

✗ I use to walk to school. (now)
✓ I **walk** to school.

✗ see eyes to eyes
✓ see **eye to eye**

✗ Faraday invented electricity.
✓ Nobody did; he **discovered** how to make a current.