

Dinner was going well...

A2-B1 · Teens and adults · 40-50 minutes

This was the kitchen at 6:55 p.m. Five minutes later, something unexpected happened.



Left: Maya, green apron. **Centre:** Ben, blue shirt. **Right:** Sara, ochre top.

1. Build the scene, then predict

Describe what each person was doing. Look near the cat, phone, shopping bag and flour. Agree two possible events. Point to a clue for each prediction.

Start: At 6:55, Maya was... Ben was... Sara was...

Predict: Perhaps... / I think... because...

Ask: What makes you think that? What else could happen?

A quick grammar reminder

An activity in progress: Ben **was stirring** the sauce.

An event in the story: Sara **put** a plate on the table.

Form: was/were + verb-ing · past form · did + base verb

Question: What **was** Ben **doing**? What **did** he **do** next?

Keep your predictions. A picture shows one moment; it does not prove what happened later.



Dinner takes a different turn

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How to use the audio: Listen to one part at a time, then pause and talk. Keep the scripts closed. Listen again only if you need a detail. Audio and downloads are also on the lesson page.

2. Part 1: The lights go out

► Play Part 1

Listen: What changed in the kitchen? Compare it with your picture predictions.

Check together: What did Maya put down? What did Ben decide to switch off?

Pause and talk: You are in the kitchen too. What would you say or do first? Choose one idea together and explain why.

3. Part 2: A visitor in the dark

► Play Part 2

Listen: Why was Jo useful? What was Ben doing when the phone rang?

One detail: Name two things Ben found instead of the torch.

Pause at the crash: What do you think fell? Who or what might have caused it? Agree on one explanation before Part 3.

Try: I think... because... / Perhaps someone was... when...

Our prediction: _____



What really happened?

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4. Part 3: What fell?

► Play Part 3

Listen: Was Ben right about the plates? What was on the floor?

Compare clues: Where was the cat? Whose shoes were beside the white line?

Pause and decide: Keep your prediction or change it. Tell your partner which clue helped you. What do you think Ben will explain?

5. Part 4: The explanation

► Play Part 4

Listen: Why did the flour fall? What was Sara doing when the lights returned?

React: Why did Jo mention dessert? What would you say to him?

6. Send a voice message about the evening

Imagine you are Jo, telling a friend about dinner. Take 30 seconds to choose four keywords. Then speak for about 45 seconds. Your partner asks one question. Swap roles.

Start: When I arrived, they were... / While we were..., ...

Connect: Just then... / A moment later... / In the end...

Optional homework: four quick gaps

1. Maya _____ tomatoes when the lights went out. (slice)
2. While Ben _____, the phone rang. (look for the torch)
3. Ben _____ the towel and the flour _____. (pull / fall)
4. What _____ Sara _____ when the lights returned? (do)

Then write your own two-sentence scene and event. Answers are in the teacher PDF.

Your turn: what happened next?

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Choose a few questions. Give examples and ask follow-up questions.

Invent a story or pass if you prefer. You do not need to answer every question.

1. When did a meal go differently from the plan?

What were you making, and what happened?

2. Tell us about a journey with an unexpected moment.

What were you doing when things changed?

3. When did a phone call interrupt something?

What were you doing? Did you stop?

4. Think of a time you lost something.

What were you doing before you noticed?

5. When did technology stop working at an awkward moment?

What did you do next?

6. Tell us about a surprise visitor or message.

What were you doing when they arrived or it came?

7. When did the weather change your plans?

What were you planning to do?

8. Tell us about a small mistake that became a funny story.

Who noticed it first?

9. Think of a time someone helped you unexpectedly.

What was happening, and how did they help?

10. What were you doing at this time yesterday?

What happened before or after that?

11. Tell us about something interesting you saw while travelling.

What was happening around you?

12. When did an ordinary day become memorable?

What changed, and how did the day end?

Follow the story: Where were you? / Who was there? / What did you do next?

To finish: Share one detail you found interesting.



Let the story do the work

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Share: Learner pages **1-4**; keep pages **5-7** and the scripts private.

Audio: Four short chapters, plus one combined MP3. Play separately or pause the combined track at each part break. Microsoft synthetic voices: Maya/British, Ben/Irish, Sara/Australian, Jo/French multilingual. Keep each character's voice consistent.

Aim: Follow a story, predict using clues, then use past scene-and-event language to tell it.

A flexible 40-50 minute route

Picture and brief grammar | 6 minutes. Keep the existing opening. Describe the activities, make two predictions, then move on.

Parts 1-2 | 10 minutes. Listen, compare ideas and answer briefly. Stop at the crash; let learners commit to one explanation.

Parts 3-4 | 10 minutes. Compare clues, revise predictions and hear the explanation. React to the ending. Do not analyse every sentence.

Jo's voice message | 6 minutes. Allow 30 seconds of notes, take turns telling, then ask a follow-up. Give one useful language correction after the story.

Choose and chat | 8-18 minutes. Explore a few questions on page 4. Homework is optional.

Listening answers and open responses

Part 1: The lights went out. Maya put down the knife; Ben decided to switch off the cooker. First-action suggestions vary; accept a plausible response to the scene.

Part 2: Jo brought a torch. Ben was looking in the drawer when the phone rang. He found old batteries, a key and a birthday candle; accept any two. Crash explanations are predictions, not facts.

Part 3: The plates were still on the table; a flour bag was on the floor. The cat was under a chair. The white line was beside Ben's shoes. Accept supported predictions; the cause is still unrevealed.

Part 4: Ben pulled the tea towel, which brought the flour bag off the chair. Sara was moving the bag when the lights returned. Jo jokes that dessert would be more useful than a torch next time. Other reactions are open.

Homework: 1 **was slicing**; 2 **was looking for the torch**; 3 **pulled / fell**; 4 **was / doing**. Check the learner's own example for coherent time and meaning.

Keep it light and adaptable

Support: Check torch, flour, tea towel and power cut. Allow short answers and keywords. Replay a difficult detail rather than restarting the whole lesson.

Online / one-to-one: Share only learner pages; let the teacher be the prediction partner. Use the linked chapter MP3s.

30-minute route: Picture 5; Parts 1-2 and one prediction 8; Parts 3-4 and explanation 8; voice message 5; one conversation question/feedback 4.

Without playback: Read each scripted part using the speaker labels. Grammar focus is was/were + -ing for a past activity and past simple for a story event. When/while do not automatically determine tense; an event need not stop an activity.



The story, word for word

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Part 1: The lights go out

Maya: Part one. Dinner was going well. It was five to seven, and Jo was coming for dinner. I was slicing tomatoes. Ben was stirring the sauce, and Sara was laying the table. The cat was sitting beside the shopping bag, watching us. For once, everything was nearly ready.

Ben: That smells good. Do you want me to turn the heat down?

Maya: Before I could answer, the lights went out. The cooker fan stopped, and the kitchen went quiet. I put the knife down.

Sara: Nobody move. There are bags on the floor. Where is the torch?

Ben: In the drawer, I think. I'll switch off the cooker first.

Part 2: A visitor in the dark

Maya: Part two. Ben was looking in the drawer when the phone rang. My hands were wet, so Sara picked it up.

Sara: Hello? Jo? Are you outside? Yes, we're here. The power has gone off. Give me a moment.

Maya: Then the doorbell rang. Sara walked carefully to the door. Ben was still looking for the torch.

Ben: It isn't here. I can find three old batteries, a key and a birthday candle. But no torch.

Sara: You can stop looking. Jo's got one.

Jo: I was walking down the road when the street lights went out. I had a torch in my bag, so I brought it to the door. Is dinner still happening?

Maya: Just then, we heard a crash behind us.

Original fictional story. Synthetic Microsoft voices; no real speaker endorsement is implied.



The story, word for word

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Part 3: What fell?

Maya: Part three. Jo held up the torch. Sara was standing by the door. Ben was near the cooker. I was beside the chopping board. The shopping bag was on its side, and the cat was under a chair.

Ben: Oh, no. Was that the plate with the tomatoes?

Maya: Jo shone the torch across the table. The plates were still there. Then he pointed the light at the floor.

Sara: There's a bag of flour down there. Don't walk through it.

Maya: A white line crossed the floor beside Ben's shoes. Ben looked down at the chair next to him.

Ben: I think I know what happened. But it wasn't the cat.

Part 4: The explanation

Maya: Part four. Ben showed us the tea towel he was holding.

Ben: I left this on the chair while I was cooking. The flour was on the chair too. When I pulled the towel, the bag fell. I didn't see it in the dark.

Maya: We checked the shopping bag. The bread was still inside, and the cat was just hiding under the chair. While Sara was moving the flour bag out of the way, the lights came back on.

Jo: Excellent. I carried a torch all this way and used it for about two minutes.

Sara: You helped us find the flour. That counts.

Maya: We cleared the floor before cooking again. Then Jo put the torch away and smiled.

Jo: Next time, I'm bringing dessert.

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