

Vincent van Gogh - Answers

Identify the tenses in these sentences. What is the difference in meaning?

1. While Vincent was recovering, he painted *Corridor in the Asylum*.

Past continuous – action in progress – he painted *Corridor in the Asylum* during the period of recovery.

When Vincent had recovered, he painted *Corridor in the Asylum*.

Past perfect - Vincent recovered first and then painted *Corridor in the Asylum*.

2. When Gauguin arrived in Arles, Vincent had decorated The Yellow House.

Past perfect – The Yellow House was already finished when Gauguin arrived.

Vincent was decorating The Yellow House.

Past continuous – Vincent was in the middle of decorating The Yellow House when Gauguin arrived. It wasn't ready.

Vincent decorated The Yellow House.

Past simple – Vincent didn't start the decorating until after Gauguin arrived.

3. Vincent used to drink heavily.

Used to – past habit

Vincent had been drinking heavily when he threw a glass at Gauguin's head.

Past perfect continuous – action in progress over a period of time before Vincent threw the glass at Gauguin. It was probably the heavy drinking that led to the glass-throwing.

Vincent drank a lot on the night of the quarrel.

Past simple – stating a fact about a past event.

4. Vincent had cut off his ear when he arrived at the brothel.

Past perfect – Vincent cut off his ear before he arrived at the brothel.

Vincent cut off his ear when he arrived at the brothel.

Past simple – Vincent arrived at the brothel and then cut off his ear.

Vincent was cutting off his ear when he arrived at the brothel.

Past continuous – Vincent was in the middle of cutting off his ear when he arrived at the brothel.