

Narrative Tenses

skyteach

Task I

Tick the correct tense and write an example about yourself for each rule

	Example	Past Simple	Past Continuous	Past Perfect	Past Perfect Continuous
<i>actions that started and finished in the past</i>					
<i>to describe the background setting of the story</i>					
<i>to describe an action that happened before another past action</i>					
<i>action happening for a period of time before another action in the past</i>					
<i>action happening for a period of time in the past</i>					
<i>two actions happening at the same time in the past</i>					

Task II

Put the verbs in the correct tense. Discuss with your partner why you have used this tense.

1. Not for the first time, an argument **(break)** _____ out over breakfast at number four, Privet Drive. Mr. Vernon Dursley **(to be woken)** _____ in the early hours of the morning by a loud, hooting noise from his nephew Harry's room.

2. "This could well be the day I make the biggest deal of my career," **(say)** _____ Uncle Vernon. Harry **(go)** _____ back to his toast. Of course, he **(think)** _____ bitterly, Uncle Vernon **(talk)** _____ about the stupid dinner party. He **(talk)** _____ for two weeks. Some rich builder and his wife **(come)** _____ to dinner and Uncle Vernon **(hope)** _____ to get a huge order from him (Uncle Vernon's company **(made)** _____ drills).

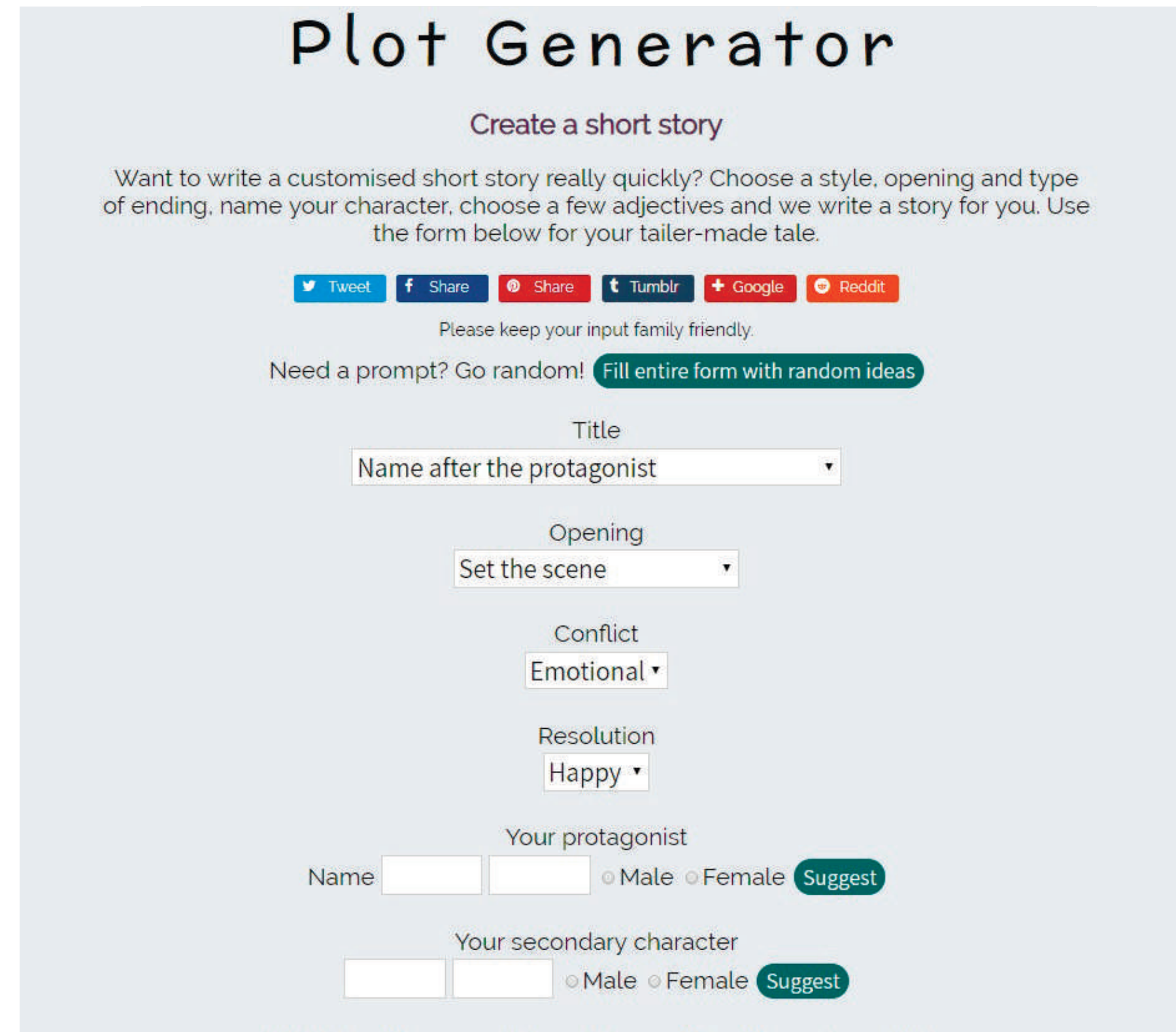
3. For the first couple of weeks back, Harry **(enjoy)** _____ muttering nonsense words under his breath and watching Dudley tearing out of the room as fast as his fat legs would carry him. But the long silence from Ron and Hermione **(make)** _____ Harry feel so cut off from the magical world that even taunting Dudley **(lose)** _____ its appeal — and now Ron and Hermione **(forget)** _____ his birthday.

4. Harry suddenly **(sit)** _____ bolt upright on the garden bench. He **(stare)** _____ absentmindedly into the hedge — and the hedge **(stare)** _____ back. Two enormous green eyes **(appear)** _____ among the leaves.

(From "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" by J.K. Rowling)

Task III

Use the [random plot generator](#) to generate a story. Then replace the verbs with blanks and give them to your partner to fill in. Check.



The image shows a web interface for a 'Plot Generator'. At the top, it says 'Plot Generator' and 'Create a short story'. Below that, there is a paragraph of instructions: 'Want to write a customised short story really quickly? Choose a style, opening and type of ending, name your character, choose a few adjectives and we write a story for you. Use the form below for your tailor-made tale.' There are social media sharing buttons for Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Tumblr, Google+, and Reddit. A note says 'Please keep your input family friendly.' Below that, there is a link that says 'Need a prompt? Go random!' and a button that says 'Fill entire form with random ideas'. The form consists of several dropdown menus: 'Title' (set to 'Name after the protagonist'), 'Opening' (set to 'Set the scene'), 'Conflict' (set to 'Emotional'), and 'Resolution' (set to 'Happy'). At the bottom, there are two sections for character names: 'Your protagonist' and 'Your secondary character'. Each section has two input boxes for first and last names, radio buttons for 'Male' and 'Female', and a 'Suggest' button.

Task IV

Choose one of these writing prompts and together with your partner write a short story.

Make sure to include 2 examples of

- Past Simple
- Past Perfect
- Past Continuous
- Past Perfect Continuous

Prompt 1

"I'd like to buy a plane ticket to your furthest destination today," you told the airline employee.

Prompt 2

It's your first day in a new city where you don't speak the language.

Prompt 3

"The grass is always greener on the other side." You were prepared to find out.

Prompt 4

You are granted one wish. But you have to use the wish for someone else.

Answers: Task I

	Example	Past Simple	Past Continuous	Past Perfect	Past Perfect Continuous
	<i>actions that started and finished in the past</i>	✓			
	<i>to describe the background setting of the story</i>		✓		
	<i>to describe an action that happened before another past action</i>			✓	
	<i>action happening for a period of time before another action in the past</i>				✓
	<i>action happening for a period of time in the past</i>		✓		
	<i>two actions happening at the same time in the past</i>		✓		

Answers:

Task II

1. Not for the first time, an argument **had broken** out over breakfast at number four, Privet Drive. Mr. Vernon Dursley **had been woken** in the early hours of the morning by a loud, hooting noise from his nephew Harry's room.
2. "This could well be the day I make the biggest deal of my career," **said** Uncle Vernon. Harry **went** back to his toast. Of course, he **thought** bitterly, Uncle Vernon **was talking** about the stupid dinner party. He'd **been talking** for two weeks. Some rich builder and his wife **were coming** to dinner and Uncle Vernon **was hoping** to get a huge order from him (Uncle Vernon's company **made** drills).
3. For the first couple of weeks back, Harry **had enjoyed** muttering nonsense words under his breath and watching Dudley tearing out of the room as fast as his fat legs would carry him. But the long silence from Ron and Hermione **had made** Harry feel so cut off from the magical world that even taunting Dudley **had lost** its appeal — and now Ron and Hermione **had forgotten** his birthday.
4. Harry suddenly **sat** bolt upright on the garden bench. He **had been staring** absentmindedly into the hedge — and the hedge **was staring** back. Two enormous green eyes **had appeared** among the leaves.

(From "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" by J.K. Rowling)