

# III. CHOOSING ONE'S STUDIES

## 1. Before you read

**A Brainstorming.** List all the reasons you can think of that may motivate someone to become an accountant.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Help



rewarding: *gratifiant*  
well-paid: *bien payé*  
accurate: *précis*  
permanent job: *CDI*  
promising = showing signs of success

**B Re-order the sentences and find some reasons to become an accountant.**

1. do/know/didn't/I/what/to
2. I/office/like/and/filling out/working/in/an/forms
3. I/good/at/in/classes/was/accounting/high school
4. demand/in/be/always/will/accountants/high
5. are/paid/well/accountants
6. family/it's/father/a/is/tradition/an accountant/my
7. and/I/good/shy/so/am/this/is/a/job/for me/introvert
8. am/quiet/I/person/a
9. become/I/couldn't/pilot/a

**C Match the words with their translations.**

- |                    |   |                         |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| a while            | • | • avoir des difficultés |
| afterwards         | • | • avoir honte           |
| below              | • | • cauchemars            |
| nightmares         | • | • en dessous            |
| the practical side | • | • ensuite               |
| (to) be ashamed    | • | • le côté pratique      |
| (to) retire        | • | • prendre sa retraite   |
| (to) struggle      | • | • un petit moment       |

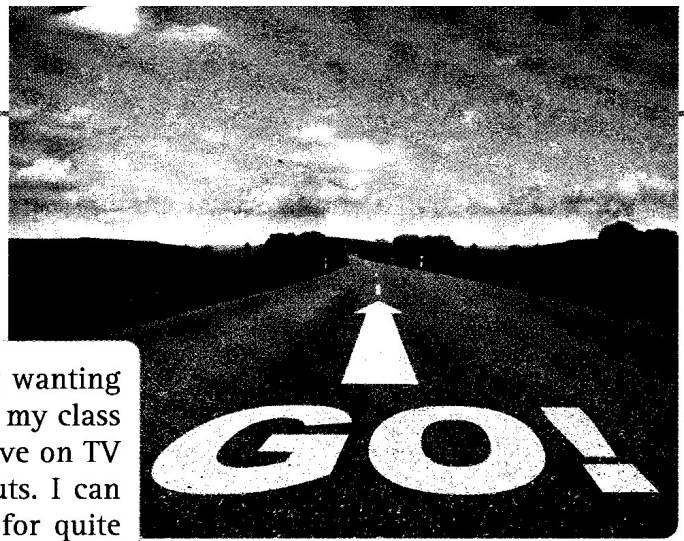
## 2. Read the text



**A Jumbled paragraphs:** The paragraphs of the text got jumbled up. Can you put them back into the correct order? Here are some suggestions to help you:

1. A difficult question 2. The end of a dream 3. A promising student 4. A necessity 5. An example in the family 6. A good choice  
(Highlight the useful words or expressions.)

# Why I became an accountant



**A** The first thing that I can ever remember wanting to be was an astronaut. [...] Then in 5<sup>th</sup> grade my class was watching the launch of the Challenger live on TV when it exploded, killing all of the astronauts. I can honestly say that day gave me nightmares for quite some time afterwards, and left me with a quandary<sup>1</sup> as to what I wanted to do with the rest of my life.

1. with a quandary: *dans l'embarras*

**B** I guess it was also the practical side of me that pushed me into the profession. I saw my parents struggle as I grew up to make sure that we always had food on our plates, clothes to wear, and a roof over our heads. Now I don't want to make it sound like we were destitute<sup>1</sup>, but we did live below the poverty level, and somehow my mother managed to stretch every penny to make it all work. [...] Seeing their struggle convinced me that no matter what I chose to study in college, it had to lead to an employable career.

1. destitute: *pauvre*

**C** I also had a family member (my father's cousin) who had been an accountant before he retired. In my young mind, he was rich. He told me stories of the forensic accounting<sup>1</sup> that he had done during his career, and actually made accounting sound interesting. [...] He encouraged me to go to the university of Michigan because it had one of the country's best undergraduate business programs, and it was in state so that I could get a lot more scholarships<sup>2</sup> that way.

1. forensic accounting: *juricomptabilité* 2. scholarships: *bourses*

**D** My friend, Dan H. asked me today why I became an accountant. I'm ashamed to say that I actually had to stop and think about it for a while before I could remember.

**E** During my junior year of high school, I took an intro to accounting class. I had always enjoyed maths, and so accounting came naturally to me.

**F** So that was it. I became an accountant. For the most part, I'm happy with the decision I made, though there are some times that I wish I had a more creative job. [...] Unfortunately, I can barely draw a stick figure<sup>1</sup> and blood makes me feel queasy<sup>2</sup>, so those career paths were ruled out<sup>3</sup> fairly early on.

1. stick figure: *bonhomme* 2. queasy: *malade*  
3. rule out: *écarter, éliminer*

www.gather.com

**B** How much did you understand? Say whether the following statements are right or wrong. Justify your answers with quotes from the text or in your own words.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Nora is very clear about why she became an accountant.  | R | W |
| 2. She'd always wanted to be an accountant.  | R | W |
| 3. A terrible event made her change her mind about the job she'd wanted to do.                                 | R | W |
| 4. Her parents were rich.  | R | W |
| 5. It was important to get a job when she graduated.   | R | W |
| 6. A family member who was an accountant told her this job was not good and tried to make her change her mind. | R | W |
| 7. She is not happy with her job, she'd rather be a vet.   | R | W |

## Texte original :

### Why I became an accountant

My friend Dan H. asked me today why I became an accountant. I'm ashamed to say that I actually had to stop and think about it for a while before I could remember.

The first thing that I can ever remember wanting to be was an astronaut. [...] Then in 5th grade my class was watching the launch of the Challenger live on TV when it exploded, killing all of the astronauts. I can honestly say that day gave me nightmares for quite some time afterwards, and left me with a quandary as to what I wanted to do with the rest of my life.

During my junior year of high school I took an intro to accounting class. I had always enjoyed math, and so accounting came naturally to me. [...]

I guess it was also the practical side of me that pushed me into the profession. I saw my parents struggle as I grew up to make sure that we always had food on our plates, clothes to wear, and a roof over our heads. Now I don't want to make it sound like we were destitute, but we did live below the poverty level, and somehow my mother managed to stretch every penny to make it all work. [...]

I also had a family member (my father's cousin) who had been an accountant before he retired. In my young mind he was rich. He told me stories of the forensic accounting that he had done during his career, and actually made accounting sound interesting. [...] He encouraged me to go to the University of Michigan because it had one of the country's best undergraduate business programs, and it was in state so that I could get a lot more scholarships that way.

So that was it. I became an accountant. For the most part I'm happy with the decision I made, though there are some times that I wish I had a more creative job [...]. Unfortunately I can barely draw a stick figure, and blood makes me feel queasy, so those career paths were ruled out fairly early on.

## GRAMMAR *in context*

www

### EXPRIMER LE PASSÉ

#### 1/ Group work: grammar competition

Soulignez tous les verbes au passé dans le texte :

Combien en avez-vous trouvés ?

Combien sont irréguliers ?

Combien de formes interrogatives passées y a-t-il dans le texte ?

Question subsidiaire : pourquoi y a-t-il autant de verbes au passé ?

Le groupe gagnant sera le premier à donner toutes les réponses justes !

#### 2/ Complétez les phrases suivantes, extraites du texte, avec les verbes conjugués manquants :

In 5th grade, my class \_\_\_\_\_ the launch of the Challenger live on TV when it \_\_\_\_\_.

He \_\_\_\_\_ me stories about the forensic accounting that he \_\_\_\_\_ during his career.

a) Quel verbe indique une action soudaine ?

b) Quel verbe indique une action en cours (interrompue par une action soudaine) ?

c) Quel verbe indique une action antérieure à une autre action ?

d) Quel verbe indique un simple fait passé ?

#### Conclusion. Entourez les deux bonnes réponses dans chaque phrase :

- Pour exprimer un fait passé daté ou une action soudaine, on emploie un temps simple/ un temps composé. Il s'agit du prétérit (V-ed)/past perfect (have + V-ed)/passé de BE + V-ing.
- Pour exprimer une action en cours interrompue par une action soudaine, on emploie un temps simple/un temps composé. Il s'agit du prétérit (V-ed)/past perfect (have + V-ed)/passé de BE + V-ing.
- Pour exprimer une action antérieure à une autre action passée, on emploie un temps simple/ un temps composé. Il s'agit du prétérit (V-ed)/past perfect (have + V-ed)/passé de BE + V-ing.