

# Talking about the past

## Past Simple

We use the Past Simple to talk about something that happened and finished in the past, a completed action. We usually say or know when the action happened. The moment in the past is clearly defined.

**Last Thursday Mark's ship arrived in Southampton. He got there at 8:30 p.m.**

- Often we don't need to say when something happened. It is understood.

**We went to the cinema instead.**

(We know that this happened in the past when we couldn't get tickets for the play)

- **We also use the Past Simple to describe:**

\_ something that happened regularly or continually in the past

**They always visited parks and gardens.**

\_ a situation that existed in the past over a period of time, not just at one fixed moment.

**He didn't like walking the dog.**

## Forms of the Past Simple

We form the Past Simple of most regular verbs by adding -ed to the infinitive.

It is the same for all persons.

talk	talked
like	liked
look	looked

\_ Note the spelling changes:

try	tried
stop	stopped

\_ Many common verbs are irregular. We don't form the Past Simple with -ed.

### INFINITIVE

### SIMPLE PAST

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Be	was/were	hear	heard
Become	became	keep	kept
Begin	began	know	knew
Break	broke	leave	left
Bring	brought	let	let
Buy	bought	lose	lost
Can	could	make	made
Come	came	mean	meant
Cut	cut	meet	met
Do	did	pay	paid
Dream	dreamt	put	put

Drink	drank	read	read
Drive	drove	ride	rode
Eat	ate	ring	rang
Fall	fell	run	ran
Feel	felt	say	said
Find	found	see	saw
Fly	flew	sing	sang
Forget	forgot	swim	swam
Get	got	take	took
Go	went	tell	told
Grow	grew	think	thought
Have	had	understand	understood

— We form the negative of the Past Simple with didn't (did not) + the infinitive without to.

**AFFIRMATIVE**

I liked  
She went  
We had

**NEGATIVE**

I didn't like him  
She didn't go with her mother  
We didn't have enough time.

**Practice**

**Find the Past Simple of the following verbs:**

Work	_____	come	_____
Walk	_____	speak	_____
Talk	_____	see	_____
Clean	_____	do	_____
Live	_____	go	_____
Wash	_____	sing	_____

XXXXXWORKED  
 XXXXA XXXX I  
 WXXXLIVEDD  
 E XXXXKXXXX  
 NXCXX EXXSXX  
 TALKEDXSANG  
 XXEXXXXXWXX  
 XWASHEDXXXC  
 XXNXXX XXXXA  
 XXEXXX XXXXM  
 XXDXXX SPOKE

**What do you usually do in the summer? Do you usually do any of these things?**

- |                 |                   |                |                     |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| play volleyball | build sandcastles | eat ice creams | go fishing          |
| go to the beach | meet your friends | stay at home   | visit your grandma  |
| study hard      | go shopping       | read books     | listen to music     |
| tidy your room  | work hard         | watch TV       | play computer games |

**Now write about you and your family. What did you do last summer?**

e.g: We went to the beach

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**Ask your friend about his holidays. Complete the questions.**

A: Did \_\_\_\_\_ ?

B: Yes. It was a beautiful place.

A: When \_\_\_\_\_ ?

B: I arrived back last Sunday.

A: Where \_\_\_\_\_ ?

B: We stayed at a hotel for a week.

A: How often \_\_\_\_\_ ?

B: It didn't rain at all.

A: Did \_\_\_\_\_ ?

B: No, we didn't rent any car. It was too expensive.

## Past Continuous

We use the Past Continuous to talk about something that started before a certain time in the past and was still in progress at that time.

**At 9:00 I was walking along Middle Street. I was going to the supermarket.**

We often use the Past Continuous to describe a situation, to give the background to a scene that happened in the past.

- What were they eating?

-They were eating cheese sandwiches.

They were having a good time together with their friends.

We don't use the Past Continuous with verbs not normally used in the progressive form; such as know, want, etc.

We don't normally use the Past Continuous to talk about a repeated action in the past, we use used to instead.

### Forms of the Past Continuous

We form the Past Continuous with was/were + the -ing form of the verb.

#### AFFIRMATIVE

#### NEGATIVE

#### INTERROGATIVE

I was reading	I wasn't reading	Was I reading?
You were reading	You weren't reading	Were you reading?
He was reading	He wasn't reading	Was he reading?
She was reading	She wasn't reading	Was she reading?
It was reading	It wasn't reading	Was it reading?
We were reading	We weren't reading	Were we reading?
You were reading	You weren't reading	Were you reading?
They were reading	They weren't reading	Were they reading?

### Practice

Jenny is telling her teacher why she couldn't study for an exam.

Complete what Jenny says using the following verbs in the Past Continuous:

watch listen sing clean cook play lie

It was impossible for me to concentrate! I went to my bedroom and my mother \_\_\_\_\_ the carpet with the vacuum cleaner. Then I went to the living room but my brother Paul \_\_\_\_\_ on the sofa. He \_\_\_\_\_ his guitar. After that I decided to go to the kitchen. There, my grandmother \_\_\_\_\_ and she \_\_\_\_\_ also \_\_\_\_\_ TV. Finally, I went out to the garden where I found my sister. She \_\_\_\_\_ to her Walkman and she \_\_\_\_\_ at the top of her voice.

## Past Continuous or Past Simple?

**Write the correct form of the verb, using the Past Simple or the Past Continuous tense.**

A: I \_\_\_\_\_ (see) Peter and John in the park on Sunday.

B: \_\_\_\_\_ (they/play) football?

They always play football on Sundays.

A: No, they \_\_\_\_\_ (not/be).

They \_\_\_\_\_ (talk) with some girls.

B: \_\_\_\_\_ (you/say) hello to them?

A. Although I \_\_\_\_\_ (call) their names, they \_\_\_\_\_ (not/hear) me.

B: Maybe they \_\_\_\_\_ (not/notice) you \_\_\_\_\_ (be) there

### Complete the sentences

Mr. Ford \_\_\_\_\_ (read) the newspaper when the telephone \_\_\_\_\_ (ring) He \_\_\_\_\_ (pick up) the receiver but nobody \_\_\_\_\_ (answer).

It \_\_\_\_\_ (be) midnight and Dylan \_\_\_\_\_ (sleep).

Suddenly, there \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a crash and he \_\_\_\_\_ (wake up) . He \_\_\_\_\_ (go down) the stairs to see what \_\_\_\_\_ (go on).

It was Sunday afternoon and Frank decided to ring his friend Jason.

**Put the verbs in brackets into the Past Continuous or the Past Simple.**

1) Frank \_\_\_\_\_ (finish) his lunch and \_\_\_\_\_ (ring) his friend Jason.

2) Jason \_\_\_\_\_ (watch) TV when Frank \_\_\_\_\_ (phone) him.

3) He \_\_\_\_\_ (turn off) the TV when he \_\_\_\_\_ (hear) the phone ringing.

4) They \_\_\_\_\_ (decide) what to do when Jason \_\_\_\_\_ (suggest) going to the club.

5) Frank \_\_\_\_\_ Jason \_\_\_\_\_ (pick up) and \_\_\_\_\_ (drive) to the club.

6) Two other people \_\_\_\_\_ (use) their tennis court when they \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive).

7) They \_\_\_\_\_ (drink) a soda and \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) a sandwich while they \_\_\_\_\_ (wait) to play.

8) While they \_\_\_\_\_ (play), it \_\_\_\_\_ (start) to rain so they \_\_\_\_\_ (have) to stop playing.