

THE PAST SIMPLE TENSE

is mostly formed by adding **-ED** (play/played, want/wanted, call/called ...), or **-D** (live/lived; smile/ smiled; like/liked; ...)

but there are a lot of irregular verbs (speak/spoke, write/wrote, eat/ate, buy/bought, ...) that must be learned by heart. See a [list of 50 irregular verbs](#)

IRREGULAR VERBS			
DO DID	HAVE HAD	MAKE MADE	TAKE TOOK
CUT CUT	RUN RAN	GO WENT	WIN WON
LOSE LOST	BE WAS/ WERE	SEE SAW	PUT PUT

The past simple tense in English is used to talk about **completed events in the past**:

*She **worked** at McDonald's last summer.*

*We **bought** a new flat last week.*

*They **went** to the Alps in December.*

We use **DIDN'T (did not)** to make **negatives** with the past simple:

*She **didn't** watch TV yesterday.*

*She **didn't** buy anything for dinner.*

*She **didn't** do her homework on Sunday.*

Positive	Negative	Question
verb+ed	didn't + verb	Did + (he) + verb
<i>He washed his car.</i>	<i>He didn't wash his car.</i>	<i>Did he wash his car?</i>

We use **DID** to make **questions** with the past simple:

Did Jágr play in yesterday's match?

Did she arrive on time last Sunday?

Did you eat spinach when you were young?

Remember: We **often** start the **questions** in the past **with WHEN, WHERE, WHAT, WHY**

When did they start the match?

Where did they meet?

What did she buy on holiday?

Why did you call them last night?

1. Complete the verbs in the correct past simple form.

- a) They (want) to catch the last train, but they (fail)
- b) A man (call) an ambulance and they (arrive) in 15 minutes.
- c) Shakespeare (write) 39 plays.
- d) We (have) a steak for dinner.
- e) Last night he (go) to bed at midnight.
- f) She (buy) a new handbag yesterday.
- g) They (do) homework on Saturday.
- h) He (know) that writing a love letter to her last night (be) a silly thing.
- i) They (be) in a difficult situation, but they (manage) to work it out.

THE PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE

is formed by **WAS/WERE** plus **-ING** form of the verb (was/were playing, was/were doing), etc.

The past continuous tense in English is used to talk about **the events/actions that continued/were in progress for some time in the past.**

*She **was doing** her homework from six to eight last night.*

*He **was teaching** English for ten years. Note: He is not teaching English anymore these days!*

*They **were driving** on D1 when they saw a truck in flames.*

We also use past continuous when:

- a) **Two actions were happening at the same** time in the past:

The students were doing a test and/while the teacher was reading a magazine.

She was watching TV and/while her husband was making breakfast.

- b) An **action in progress was interrupted by another one** in the past:

We were sleeping when the phone rang.

She was shopping when she noticed a shoplifter.

- c) We need to set a **background to a story** in the past:

It was getting dark but the missing child still had to be found.

She knew she was not going the right way. Nothing seemed familiar but she kept walking. She was becoming very frightened ...

We use **WASN'T/WEREN'T** (was not/were not) plus **-ING** form of the verb to make **negative sentences** in the past continuous:

*She **wasn't thinking** about the school (while she was on holiday).*

*The children **weren't eating**. They were awaiting Father Christmas.*

*The other day, I **was not feeling** well. My head was splitting.*

Questions with the past continuous tense **intend to find out what was going on at a particular time** in the past:

What was the teacher doing when the accident happened?

*What were **you** doing at seven yesterday evening?*

What were the men doing at the office at seven in the evening?

2. Fill in the correct form of the past continuous.

- j) The children (eat) dinner when the mother arrived.
- k) The soldiers (march) when it started to rain.
- l) He (laugh) through the movie.
- m) The dog (run) while he (ride) his bike.
- n) Yesterday, at six, I (prepare) dinner.
- o) She (study) English from 8 to 12 yesterday.
- p) When we arrived, our dog (bark) and (wag) its tail.
- q) I opened the door. Two technicians (try) to fix my computer.
- r) A: We (call) you last night after dinner, but you were not in. Where were you? B: I (was) out in the fitness centre.

3. Put the verbs into the correct tense — past simple or past continuous.

- a) Ben (come) home, (switch) on the computer, and (check) his emails.
- b) Nobody (listen) when the teacher (try) to explain the tenses.
- c) While we (do) a sightseeing tour, our parents (sip) mulled wine at a stand.
- d) She (crash) the car when she (drive) home.
- e) He (wake) up and (look) at his wife.
- f) A: What (you, do) when the accident happened? B: Well, I (change) a light bulb.
- g) Bob (arrive) at her place at 9, but she (not/be) in. She (study) at the library.
- h) When I (walk) into the office, the secretary (talk) on the phone with some students.
- i) I (get) up early. When I (open) the door, the snow (fall) heavily.
- j) The snow (fall) heavily when I (drive) on a slippery road back home.
- k) While we (clean) the house, we (break) some glasses.
- l) She (miss) the tram because she (have) a chat with some friends.