



Simple Past Tense

Learn it!

Simple Past Tense

Simple Past Tense Uses

The simple past tense is used to describe actions that were completed at a specific point in the past.

I visited my friend yesterday.
They traveled to Paris last year.

Simple Past Tense

Forming the Simple Past Tense

- Positive Sentences
- Negative Sentences
- Questions

Simple Past Tense

Positive Sentences

To form a positive sentence in the simple past tense add "-ed" to the base form of the verb.

Subject + verb(ed)

I walked to the store.
I studied last night.

Simple Past Tense

Negative Sentences

To form negative sentences in the simple past ~~with verbs~~ use the past tense form of "to do," which is "did," plus the word "not."

Subject + "did" + "not" + base verb

I didn't go to the party.
They did not see the movie.

Simple Past Tense

Questions

To ask a question in the simple past tense use "did" followed by the subject and the base form of the verb.

"Did" + subject + base verb... ?

Did you finish the book?
Did they visit the museum?

Simple Past Tense

To Be - Positive Sentences

The verb "to be" is irregular in the simple past tense and changes to "was" or "were."

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	I was	we were
2 nd person	you were	you were
3 rd person	he/she/it was	they were

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Simple Past Tense

To Be - Positive Sentences

The verb "to be" is irregular in the simple past tense and changes to "was" or "were."

I was at the park.
You were hungry.
She was beautiful.
We were happy.
They were late.

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Simple Past Tense

To Be - Negative Sentences

To form negative sentences with "to be" in the past simple tense we don't use "did."

Subject + "was" + "not"

He was not (wasn't) right about me.
They were not (weren't) ready for the test.

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Simple Past Tense

To Be - Questions

To form questions with "to be," we don't use "did."
Instead, invert the subject and the verb.

"Was" + Subject... ?

Was I clear enough?
Were they happy with the results?

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Simple Past Tense

Negative Questions

Negative questions in the simple past tense are used for expressing surprise, asking for confirmation, or making a polite request.

Negative questions with regular verbs (using "did not")
Negative questions with "to be" (using "was not/were not")

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Simple Past Tense

Negative Questions

Negative questions with regular verbs (using "did not")

"Did" + subject + "not" + base verb ...?

Did you not see the movie? (more formal)
Didn't you see the movie? (more natural)

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Simple Past Tense

Negative Questions

Negative questions with "to be"

"Was/Were" + subject + not ...?

Wasn't he at the party? (more natural)
Was he not at the party? (more formal)

Weren't they happy? (more natural)
Were they not happy? (more formal)

Simple Past Tense

Negative Questions

Expressing Surprise	Didn't she call you yesterday?	I thought she did.
Asking for Confirmation	Didn't they finish the project?	I want to check if they did or not.
Making a Polite Suggestion	Didn't you want some tea?	I am offering tea.
Expressing Disbelief	Wasn't he at work?	I thought he was.
Asking for Confirmation	Weren't they tired?	Checking if they were tired.
Expressing Disapproval	Wasn't she more prepared for the meeting?	I expected her to be more prepared.

Simple Past Tense

Negative Questions

Short Answers for Negative Questions

Didn't she call you? → Yes, she did. / No, she didn't.
Weren't they at the party? → Yes, they were. / No, they weren't.

Simple Past Tense

Forming Wh- Questions

Wh- questions in the simple past tense are used to ask for specific information about past events.

Wh-word + "did" + subject + base verb?

What did you eat for lunch?
Where did she go yesterday?
Why did he leave early?

Simple Past Tense

Forming Wh- Questions

What	What did you eat for lunch?	I ate a sandwich.
Where	Where did she go yesterday?	She went to the mall.
When	When did they arrive?	They arrived at 6 PM.
Why	Why did he leave early?	He wasn't feeling well.
Which	Which book did you read?	I read The Great Gatsby.
Who	Who called you last night?	My friend called me.
How	How did you travel to work?	I took the train.

Simple Past Tense

Forming Who- Questions

When "who" is the subject, "did" is not used.

"Who" + ~~subject~~ + verb in simple past... ?

Who wrote this book?
Who helped you with the project?

Simple Past Tense

Forming Wh- Questions

How much (uncountable nouns)
How much did it cost?
How many (countable nouns)
How many emails did you send?
How often (frequency)
How often did she visit her grandparents?
How long (duration)
How long did the movie last?
How far (distance)
How far did you walk?

Simple Past Tense

Spelling Rules: Add -ed

In the simple past tense add "-ed" to the end of most regular verbs.

He walked to the store.

play → played
talk → talked

Simple Past Tense

Spelling Rules: Add -d

If a verb ends in "e," you just add "-d."

"dance" becomes "danced"
"hope" becomes "hoped"
"bake" becomes "baked"
"love" becomes "loved"

Simple Past Tense

Spelling Rules: Consonant + y

If a verb ending in a consonant + "y," change the "y" to "i" and add "-ed."

"study" becomes "studied"
"try" becomes "tried"
"cry" becomes "cried"
"fry" becomes "fried"

Simple Past Tense

Spelling Rules: Vowel + y

If the verb ends in a vowel + "y," just add "-ed" without changing the "y."

"play" becomes "played"
"enjoy" becomes "enjoyed"
"stay" becomes "stayed"

Simple Past Tense

Spelling Rules: Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC)

For one-syllable verbs that follow a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern: double the final consonant before adding "-ed."

"stop" becomes "stopped" with two p's
"plan" becomes "planned" with two n's

Simple Past Tense

Spelling Rules: Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC)

But, if the word ends in "w," "x," or "y," do not double the consonant:

"fix" becomes "fixed"
"snow" becomes "snowed"

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Spelling Rules: Syllable Stress

If the verb has more than one syllable and the stress is on the final syllable, double the final consonant before adding "-ed," if it's a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern.

"prefer" becomes "preferred"
"admit" becomes "admitted"

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Spelling Rules: Syllable Stress

But, if the last syllable is not stressed, don't double the consonant:

"visit" becomes "visited"
"happen" becomes "happened"

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Simple Past Tense

Irregular Verbs

Some verbs are irregular and have their own unique past tense forms.

"go" becomes "went"
"have" becomes "had"
"see" becomes "saw"

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Simple Past Tense

Time Markers

Use time expressions when talking about the past to say when the action happened.

I traveled to Japan last year.
She called me two days ago.

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Simple Past Tense

Time Markers

Time markers can be at the beginning of the sentence.

Last year, I traveled to Japan.
Yesterday, she called me.

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Simple Past Tense

Time Markers

Time markers are usually at the end of the sentence.

I traveled to Japan last year.
She called me yesterday.