

Use of Past Tense

Past tense also has four forms.

- Past Indefinite Tense
- Past Progressive (Continuous) Tense
- Past Perfect Tense
- Past Perfect Progressive Tense

Past Indefinite Tense

The past indefinite tense, also known as simple past tense is used to indicate a **finished or completed** action/task that occurred/happened at a **specific point in time** in the past. 'A specific time' can be diverse and can cover a long period of time but it cannot be undeterminable.

Structure:

Subject + verb in the past form + + adverb of time +

Note: Adverb of time can also be at the beginning of the sentence. Other sentences can also refer to that adverb and can use simple past tense.

Example:

- Alex went to Mexico last year.
- I ate a mango a few minutes ago.
- He had an exam yesterday.
- I used to travel around the world when I was fit. (It can also indicate a habit of the past which is not a habit in the present.)

Past Progressive (Continuous) Tense

The **past progressive tense** is used to demonstrate an action that **was happening** in the past for a period of time in a particular context. The context can be a specific time or another action.

Structures:

Subject + was/were + verb + *ing* + a specific time

Alex was sleeping yesterday at 6.30 AM

I was cleaning the dishes at around 5.30-6.30 yesterday.

When + subject + simple past tense + subject + was/were + verb+*ing*

When I went out, you were shouting from behind.

When Alex came, I was sleeping.

Subject + was/were + verb+ *ing* + when + subject + simple past tense

You were shouting from behind when I went outside.

I was sleeping when Alex came home.

While + subject + was/were + verb+ *ing* + subject + was/were + verb+ *ing*

While I was sleeping, you were making noises.

While Alex was playing, I was sleeping.

Note: *While* can also be placed between the two clauses, and one of the clauses can be of simple past tense.