Grammar Mini-Lesson: The Past Simple Hi everyone! Your English teacher here. Today, we're going to learn about a very important and easy-to-use tense: The Past Simple!

The Past Simple is for talking about actions or situations that started and finished in the past. It's done! Finished! Complete!

When do we use it? We use the Past Simple to talk about:

Things that happened at a specific time in the past.

A series of actions in the past (like a story).

Important Time Words (Keywords) When you see these words, it's often a sign that you need the Past Simple!

yesterday (e.g., yesterday morning, yesterday evening)

last (e.g., last night, last week, last month, last year)

ago (e.g., two days ago, five years ago, an hour ago)

in (e.g., in 2020, in July)

then

1. Regular Verbs (Easy Peasy!) Most verbs in English are "regular." This is good news! To make them Past Simple, we usually just add -ed to the end of the verb.

Examples:

walk → walked (I walked to school yesterday.)

play → played (She played tennis last Saturday.)

start → started (The movie started at 7 PM.)

watch → watched (We watched TV last night.)

Spelling Rules for -ed:

If the verb ends in -e, just add -d.

live → lived (They lived in London.)

love → loved (He loved the food.)

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

study → studied (I studied English two hours ago.)

try → tried (She tried a new dish.)

If the verb ends in a vowel + consonant (and is a short sound), we sometimes double the last consonant and add -ed. (Don't worry too much about this one yet, focus on the others first!)

stop → stopped (He stopped at the park.)

1. Irregular Verbs (A Little Tricky, but Fun!) Some verbs are "irregular." They do not follow the "-ed" rule. Their Past Simple form is different, and we need to learn them. It's like a special club!

Common Irregular Verbs:

go → went (I went to the shop.)

eat → ate (We ate pizza for dinner.)

see → saw (She saw her friend.)

have → had (They had a great time.)

do → did (He did his homework.)

make → made (She made a cake.)

come → came (My brother came home late.)

get → got (I got a new phone last week.)

take → took (He took a photo.)

give → gave (She gave me a present.)

Don't worry! You will learn more and more irregular verbs as you practice.

1. The Verb "To Be" (Was / Were) The verb "to be" is always special! In the Past Simple, it changes to was or were.

was → for I, he, she, it (singular subjects)

I was happy.

He was a student.

It was cold yesterday.

were → for you, we, they (plural subjects, and "you" always takes "were")

You were at home.

We were friends.

They were in the garden.

1. Making Negative Sentences (Saying "No" in the Past) To say that something didn't happen, we use did not (or the short form didn't) + the base form of the verb (the original verb, without -ed or any changes!).

I didn't watch TV yesterday. (NOT "I didn't watched")

She didn't go to the party. (NOT "She didn't went")

We didn't play football.

For "To Be" (was/were), it's easier: Just add not.

I was not (wasn't) tired.

They were not (weren't) ready.

1. Asking Questions (In the Past) To ask a question about the past, we use Did + the subject + the base form of the verb.

Did you watch the movie? (Yes, I watched. / No, I didn't watch.)

Did she eat breakfast? (Yes, she ate. / No, she didn't eat.)

Did they play outside? (Yes, they played. / No, they didn't play.)

For "To Be" (was/were), swap the subject and the verb:

Was he at work? (Yes, he was. / No, he wasn't.)

Were they happy? (Yes, they were. / No, they weren't.)

Let's Practice! Try to complete these sentences with the Past Simple form of the verb in brackets:

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (visit) my grandparents last weekend.

She \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (go) to Paris last year.

We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (eat) pizza for dinner yesterday.

They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (not / like) the film.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (you / study) for the test?

Keep practicing, and soon you'll be a Past Simple expert!