

# PAST SIMPLE

## Form

- positive: I played tennis yesterday
- negative: Jane didn't visit her friends last week
- question: Did you travel to London last year

## be careful with all the irregular verbs

- positive: Tom ran 2 miles yesterday in the morning
- negative: Jane didn't run too fast yesterday because she was too tired
- question: Did the students run at the elementary school at PE

## spelling

- *arrive/arrived*: verbs ending in -e add -d: phone/phone
- *wait/waited*: verbs not ending in -e add -ed: ask/asked, follow/followed
- *stop/stopped*: verbs spelt with a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant letter double the consonant: beg/begged, rub/rubbed
- *cry/cried*: when there is a consonant before -y, they change to -i before we add -ed: carry/carried, deny/denied, try/tried, but compare!!! play/played, delay/delayed which have a vowel before -y and therefore simply add -ed in the past

## Use

- we normally use the simple past tense to talk about events, actions or situations which occurred in the past and are now finished = COMPLETED ACTIONS e.g. *Sam phoned a moment ago. / I saw Fred in town when I was there this morning. / I never met my grandfather because he is dead*
- we use it when we are usually concerned with when an action occurred, not with its duration (how long it lasted) When did it happen?
- past habit: like USED TO e.g. *Tom used to do the sport every day when he lived in the countryside. / Tom didn't use to run every day. / Did he use to play football?* e.g. *Tom did the sport every day when he lived in the countryside.*
- we can sometimes use the simple past without a time reference to describe something that happened a very short time ago e.g. *Did the telephone ring? / Who left the door open?*
- it can be used also for polite inquiries = asking for favour, so it doesn't refer to past time e.g. *I wonder if you could give me a lift. / I wondered if you could give me a lift*

### Adverbials with the simple past tense:

- typical adverbials like: **YESTERDAY**, **LAST SUMMER**, combinations with **AGO** = back from now
- it is often used with **WHEN** to ask and answer **WH**- questions
- e.g. When did you learn about it?/ When I saw it in the papers.
- other adverbials can be used when they refer to past time
- e.g. adverbs: always, often, ever/ prepositional phrases: at 4 o'clock, in July, adverbial clauses/ as + adverb + as (as recently as)

## PAST CONTINUOUS

### Form

- to be in the past = **WAS/WERE** + **VERB - ING**
- positive: *I was playing the piano all the afternoon yesterday.*
- negative: *He wasn't watching the TV while I was cooking.*
- question: *What were you doing last weekend?*

### Use

- we use the past continuous to describe the past situations or actions that were in progress at some time in the past
- e.g. *I was living abroad in 1987, so I missed the general election.*
- often we don't know whether the action was completed or not
- e.g. *Jane was working on her essay last night.*
- adverbials beginning with **ALL** emphasize the continuity
- e.g. *It was raining all night/ all yesterday/ all the afternoon.*
- we use it for actions which began before something else happened: the past progressive describes a situation or action in progress in the past, and the simple past describes a shorter action or event, the action in progress is often introduced by conjunctions like **WHEN/ AS/ JUST AS/ WHILE**
- e.g. *Just as I was leaving the house, the phone rang./ Jane met Frank Sinatra when she was living in Hollywood./ We were having supper when the phone rang.*

- **PROGRESSIVE FORM** puts more emphasis on the duration of the action
- e.g. While I was walking at the street, someone stole my wallet.
- **PARALLEL ACTIONS:** we can emphasize the fact that 2 or more actions were in progress at the same time by using while or at the time
- e.g. While I was cooking, my friend was working in the garden.
- **REPEATED ACTIONS:** e.g. When he worked here, Roger was always making mistakes.
- **POLITE INQUIRIES:** it is more polite like past simple
- e.g. I was wondering if you could give me a lift.

## SUMMARY

*We use the past tenses when we are talking or writing about the past. Past continuous is used for scene-setting. They are used in story-telling, biography, autobiography, reports, eye-witness accounts...*