

**a·go**

S1 W1

/ə'gəʊ \$ ə'gəʊ/

adverb

PAST used to show how far back in the past something happened:

**5 minutes/an hour/20 years etc ago**

*Her husband died 14 years ago.*

**long ago/a long time ago**

*He should have finished at university long ago, but he kept taking extra courses.*

**a minute/moment ago**

*The little girl you saw a moment ago was my niece.*

**a little/short while ago**

*Tom got a letter from him just a little while ago.*

*They moved to a new house **some time ago** (= a fairly long time ago) .*

*We had our bicentenary celebrations not that long ago.*

## Grammar

### **ago, before, previously**

Use **ago** to say how much time has passed from the time something happened to the present time:

*We went to Madrid two years ago.*

Use **before** to say how much time passed from the time something happened to a time in the past:

*Her husband had died many years before.*

**Previously** is used in the same way, but is more formal:

*The meeting was a follow-up to one that had been held*

*four days previously.*

⚠ Use the past tense, not the present perfect, with **ago**:

*I started (NOT I've started) a new job a few weeks ago.*

⚠ Do not use a preposition ('at', 'in', 'on' etc) before a phrase with **ago**:

*They first met fifteen years ago (NOT at/in fifteen years ago).*

⚠ Do not use 'since' or 'before' with **ago**:

*I came to the US two months ago (NOT since/before two months ago).*

### Word origin

**Date:** 1400–1500

**Origin:** From the past participle of *ago* 'to pass away' (11–17 centuries), from Old English *agan*, from *gan* 'to go'

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

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