Grammar Reference

Past simple - Meaning and use

We use the past simple when an action or situation happens and finishes in the past. We usually say or know when it happened.

She **called** me at the office yesterday.

I **worked** in London in 2010.

Steve **went** to the US three times last year.

We often use the past simple in stories, when one thing happens after another in the past.

I **stopped** working in London and I **looked** for another job.

Past simple positive

For regular verbs, the past simple ends in **-ed**. Irregular verbs have a different past form. The past simple form is the same for all persons (*I, you, he, she,* etc.)

I **finished** university in 2010 and I **started** a job in a bank.

Then he **left** that job and **went** to live in Japan.

We **lived** there for a year.

Past simple negative

We make the negative form with **didn't (did not) + infinitive without 'to'**.

I **didn't like** working in a bank.

He **didn't go** to the US. He went to Japan.

Past simple questions

Past simple wh-word questions are made from **question word + did + subject + infinitive.**

Where did you go last night?

The question word **how** is usually combined with other words when asking for information, such as **size**, **time**, or the **price** of something.

How long did it take to cook dinner?

Past simple yes/no questions are made from **did + subject + infinitive without 'to'**.

Did you like living in Japan?

What **did your children do** there?

We can use short answers:

Did you go to Anjali's party last night? **Yes**, **I did. / No, I didn't.**

Take note: spelling changes

Some regular verbs end in **-ed,** but have some spelling changes in the past simple.

stop – stop**ped**
travel – travel**led**
marry – marr**ied**
study - stud**ied**

Take note: time expressions

We often use the past simple with time expressions like **yesterday**, **last month**, **six years ago**, **when I was a child**.

Did you travel a lot **when you were young**?

He married Sonya **three years ago**.

Irregular verbs

Infinitive - Past simple - Past participle

fall - fell - fallen

feel - felt - felt

get - got - got

go - went - gone/been

have - had - had

hurt - hurt - hurt

keep - kept - kept

put - put - put

run - ran - run

take - took - taken

tell - told - told