

## Past simple (I did)

A

Study this example:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart **was** an Austrian musician and composer. He **lived** from 1756 to 1791. He **started** composing at the age of five and **wrote** more than 600 pieces of music. He **was** only 35 years old when he **died**.

**Lived/started/wrote/was/died** are all *past simple*.



B

Very often the past simple ends in **-ed** (*regular verbs*):

- ☐ I **work** in a travel agency now. Before that I **worked** in a department store.
- ☐ We **invited** them to our party, but they **decided** not to come.
- ☐ The police **stopped** me on my way home last night.
- ☐ Laura **passed** her exam because she **studied** very hard.

For spelling (**stopped**, **studied** etc.), see Appendix 6.

But many verbs are *irregular*. The past simple does **not** end in **-ed**. For example:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| write → <b>wrote</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Mozart <b>wrote</b> more than 600 pieces of music. |
| see → <b>saw</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> We <b>saw</b> Tanya in town a few days ago.        |
| go → <b>went</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> I <b>went</b> to the cinema three times last week. |
| shut → <b>shut</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> It was cold, so I <b>shut</b> the window.          |

C

In questions and negatives we use **did/didn't** + *infinitive* (**enjoy/see/go** etc.):

I	<b>enjoyed</b>		you	<b>enjoy?</b>	I		<b>enjoy</b>
she	<b>saw</b>	<b>did</b>	she	<b>see?</b>	she	<b>didn't</b>	<b>see</b>
they	<b>went</b>		they	<b>go?</b>	they		<b>go</b>

- ☐ A: **Did** you **go** out last night?
- B: Yes, I **went** to the cinema, but I **didn't enjoy** the film much.
- ☐ 'When **did** Mr Thomas **die**?' 'About ten years ago.'
- ☐ They **didn't invite** us to the party, so we **didn't go**.
- ☐ '**Did** you **have** time to do the shopping?' 'No, I **didn't**.'

In the following examples, **do** is the main verb in the sentence (**did ... do / didn't do**):

- ☐ What **did** you **do** at the weekend? (*not* What did you at the weekend?)
- ☐ I **didn't do** anything. (*not* I didn't anything)

D

The past of **be** (**am/is/are**) is **was/were**:

I/he/she/it	<b>was/wasn't</b>	<b>was</b>	I/he/she/it?
we/you/they	<b>were/weren't</b>	<b>were</b>	we/you/they?

Note that we do not use **did** in negatives and questions with **was/were**:

- ☐ I **was** angry because they **were** late.
- ☐ **Was** the weather good when you **were** on holiday?
- ☐ They **weren't** able to come because they **were** so busy.
- ☐ Did you go out last night or **were** you too tired?



## Exercises

## 5.1 Read what Laura says about a typical working day:



Laura

I usually get up at 7 o'clock and have a big breakfast. I walk to work, which takes me about half an hour. I start work at 8.45. I never have lunch. I finish work at 5 o'clock. I'm always tired when I get home. I usually cook a meal in the evening. I don't usually go out. I go to bed at about 11 o'clock, and I always sleep well.

Yesterday was a typical working day for Laura. Write what she did or didn't do yesterday.

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 She got up ..... at 7 o'clock. | 7 ..... at 5 o'clock.             |
| 2 She ..... a big breakfast.     | 8 ..... tired when ..... home.    |
| 3 She .....                      | 9 ..... a meal yesterday evening. |
| 4 It ..... to get to work.       | 10 ..... out yesterday evening.   |
| 5 ..... at 8.45.                 | 11 ..... at 11 o'clock.           |
| 6 ..... lunch.                   | 12 ..... well last night.         |

## 5.2 Complete the sentences using the following verbs in the correct form:

buy catch cost fall hurt sell spend teach throw ~~write~~

- Mozart wrote more than 600 pieces of music.
- 'How did you learn to drive?' 'My father ..... me.'
- We couldn't afford to keep our car, so we ..... it.
- Dave ..... down the stairs this morning and ..... his leg.
- Joe ..... the ball to Sue, who ..... it.
- Ann ..... a lot of money yesterday. She ..... a dress which ..... £100.

## 5.3 You ask James about his holiday. Write your questions.

Hi. How are things?

Fine, thanks. I've just had a great holiday.

- Where did you go ?  
To the U.S. We went on a trip from San Francisco to Denver.
- How ..... ? By car?  
Yes, we hired a car in San Francisco.
- It's a long way to drive. How long ..... to get to Denver?  
Two weeks.
- Where ..... ? In hotels?  
Yes, small hotels or motels.
- ..... good?  
Yes, but it was very hot – sometimes too hot.
- ..... the Grand Canyon?  
Of course. It was wonderful.

## 5.4 Complete the sentences. Put the verb into the correct form, positive or negative.

- It was warm, so I took off my coat. (take)
- The film wasn't very good. I didn't enjoy it much. (enjoy)
- I knew Sarah was busy, so I ..... her. (disturb)
- We were very tired, so we ..... the party early. (leave)
- The bed was very uncomfortable. I ..... well. (sleep)
- The window was open and a bird ..... into the room. (fly)
- The hotel wasn't very expensive. It ..... much to stay there. (cost)
- I was in a hurry, so I ..... time to phone you. (have)
- It was hard carrying the bags. They ..... very heavy. (be)



## Past continuous (I was doing)

A

Study this example situation:



Yesterday Karen and Jim played tennis. They started at 10 o'clock and finished at 11.30.

So, at 10.30 they **were playing** tennis.

They **were playing** = they were in the middle of playing. They had not finished playing.

**Was/were -ing** is the *past continuous*:

I/he/she/it	<b>was</b>	<b>playing</b>
we/you/they	<b>were</b>	<b>doing</b>
		<b>working</b> etc.

B

**I was doing** something = I was in the middle of doing something at a certain time. The action or situation had already started before this time, but had not finished:



C

Compare the *past continuous* (I **was doing**) and *past simple* (I **did**):

*Past continuous* (in the middle of an action)

- ☐ I **was walking** home when I met Dan. (in the middle of walking home)
- ☐ Kate **was watching** TV when we arrived.

*Past simple* (complete action)

- ☐ I **walked** home after the party last night. (= all the way, completely)
- ☐ Kate **watched** television a lot when she was ill last year.

D

We often use the past simple and the past continuous together to say that something happened in the middle of something else:

- ☐ Matt **phoned** while we **were having** dinner.
- ☐ It **was raining** when I **got** up.
- ☐ I **saw** you in the park yesterday. You **were sitting** on the grass and **reading** a book.
- ☐ I **hurt** my back while I **was working** in the garden.

But we use the past simple to say that one thing happened after another:

- ☐ I **was walking** along the road when I **saw** Dan. So I **stopped**, and we **had** a chat.

Compare:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we <b>were having</b> dinner. (= we had already started before she arrived) | <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we <b>had</b> dinner. (= Karen arrived, and then we had dinner) |
|--|--|

E

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **want**) are not normally used in the continuous (see Unit 4A):

- ☐ We were good friends. We **knew** each other well. (*not* We were knowing)
- ☐ I was enjoying the party, but Chris **wanted** to go home. (*not* was wanting)



## Exercises

**6.1** What were you doing at these times? Write sentences as in the examples. The past continuous is not always necessary (see the second example).

1 (at 8 o'clock yesterday evening) I was having dinner.

2 (at 5 o'clock last Monday) I was on a bus on my way home.

3 (at 10.15 yesterday morning)

4 (at 4.30 this morning)

5 (at 7.45 yesterday evening)

6 (half an hour ago)

**6.2** Use your own ideas to complete the sentences. Use the past continuous.

1 Matt phoned while we were having dinner.

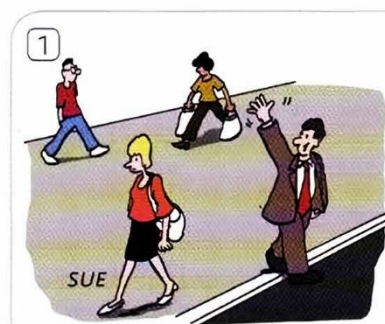
2 The doorbell rang while I

3 The car began to make a strange noise when we

4 Jessica fell asleep while she

5 The television was on, but nobody

**6.3** Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.



1 I saw (see) Sue in town yesterday, but she

(not / see) me.

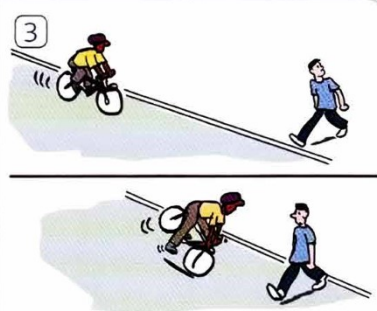
She (look) the other way.



2 I (meet) Tom and Jane at the airport a few weeks ago. They

(go) to Paris and I (go) to Rome. We (have) a chat while we

(wait) for our flights.



3 I (cycle) home yesterday when a man (step) out into the road in front of me. I

(go) quite fast, but luckily I (manage) to stop in time and (not / hit) him.

**6.4** Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

1 Jenny was waiting (wait) for me when I arrived (arrive).

2 'What (you / do) at this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'

3 ' (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'

4 How fast (you / drive) when the accident (happen)?

5 Sam (take) a picture of me while I (not / look).

6 We were in a very difficult position. We (not / know) what to do.

7 I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last (see) him, he (try) to find a job.

8 I (walk) along the street when suddenly I (hear) footsteps behind me. Somebody (follow) me. I was scared and I (start) to run.

9 When I was young, I (want) to be a pilot.

10 Last night I (drop) a plate when I (do) the washing-up. Fortunately it (not / break).