

## 6.1 Past simple of *to be*: *was* and *were*

### GR6.1 )))

- 1 We **were** in Lisbon last weekend.
- 2 She **wasn't** in class yesterday morning.
- 3 When **were** they born?
- 4 A **Was** it on the table last night?  
B No, it **wasn't**.
- 5 A **Were** they teachers in 2010?  
B Yes, they **were**.

*Was* and *wasn't* (*was not*) are the past forms of *is* and *isn't*.

*Were* and *weren't* (*were not*) are the past forms of *are* and *aren't*.

Positive (+)		Negative (-)		
I He She It	<b>was</b>	I He She It	<b>wasn't</b>	at home.
We You They	<b>were</b>	We You They	<b>weren't</b>	

### Yes/No questions and short answers

Yes/No questions (?)			Short answers			
<b>Was</b>	I he she it	at home?	Yes, I Yes, he Yes, she Yes, it	<b>was.</b>	No, I No, he No, she No, it	<b>wasn't.</b>
<b>Were</b>	we you they		Yes, we Yes, you Yes, they	<b>were.</b>	No, we No, you No, they	<b>weren't.</b>

- We often use *was/were* with past time expressions, e.g. *last week*, *in 2003*, *500 years ago*, *yesterday*.

*I was* at work two hours ago.

*It wasn't* very hot yesterday.

We use *was/were* with *born*.

*I was born* in 1990.

### Wh- questions

To make a *Wh-* question we use a *Wh-* question word before *was/were*.

The word order is the same as for *yes/no* questions.

**What** was your last job?

**Why** was she in Spain last week?

**When** were they born?

- 1 Complete the sentences and short answers with the past simple form of the verb *to be*.

- 1 We are in Venice now.  
We were in Rome last month.
- 2 They are in the office today.  
\_\_\_\_\_ they in the office last night? No, they \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 I'm on the bus now.  
I \_\_\_\_\_ on the train two hours ago.
- 4 She's in class now.  
\_\_\_\_\_ she in class at 9 a.m. this morning?  
Yes, she \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 We are at the post office now.  
We \_\_\_\_\_ at the police station at 3.30 p.m. yesterday.
- 6 It is cold today.  
\_\_\_\_\_ it cold yesterday? No, it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 They are at the cinema now.  
\_\_\_\_\_ they at the cinema last Friday? Yes, they \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 My glasses are in my bag.  
My glasses \_\_\_\_\_ on my head five minutes ago.

- 2 Complete the past simple questions 1–10 using the words in (brackets).

- 1 Where were you and your wife last week? (Where)
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ your first boss? (Who)
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ your father born? (When)
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ your favourite toy when you were five?  
(What)
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ you quiet in the meeting yesterday? (Why)
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ good last night? (the film)
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ on holiday last week? (they)
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ our colleagues two hours ago? (Where)
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ your desk messy yesterday? (Why)
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_ the hotel cheap? (Why)

- 3 Match answers a–j to questions 1–10 in exercise 2.

- |                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| a No, it wasn't.                | f In Paris.        |
| b Mr Chen.                      | g Yes, they were.  |
| c It wasn't close to the beach. | h I was very busy. |
| d I was tired.                  | i In a meeting.    |
| e In 1966.                      | j My toy car.      |

- 4 Complete the text. Use *was/were* or *wasn't/weren't*.

This year I'm unemployed and unhappy. Last year was different. Last year the sky <sup>1</sup> was blue all summer and I <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ happy. I <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ an engineer. My house <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ full of flowers and music. My children <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ at an expensive school. There <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ lots of interesting books on my desk. In my living room there <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ two computers and a big TV. I <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ very rich. My life <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ easy and we <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ worried about the future.

# The past

## Grammar *was and were*

1 Make positive (+) or negative (-) sentences, or questions (?) using the past form of *be*.

- 1 (+) the co-founders of Microsoft / Bill Gates and Paul Allen *The co-founders of Microsoft were Bill Gates and Paul Allen.*
- 2 (?) the restaurant / expensive \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 (-) Harry's meal / very good \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 (+) I / very tired last night \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 (?) where / you / yesterday \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 (-) we / late for work this morning \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 (?) why / Vincent van Gogh / famous \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 (-) I / born in England \_\_\_\_\_

2 Choose the correct options to complete the article.

## IKEA is born

Ingvar Kamprad <sup>1</sup>*was* / *were* the founder of the furniture company IKEA. He <sup>2</sup>*was* / *were* born in 1926 in Sweden. His parents <sup>3</sup>*wasn't* / *weren't* rich – they <sup>4</sup>*was* / *were* farmers and the family home <sup>5</sup>*was* / *were* near a small village in the south of Sweden. Ingvar <sup>6</sup>*wasn't* / *weren't* interested in farming. He started IKEA in his uncle's kitchen in 1943. His first products <sup>7</sup>*was* / *were* pencils and other small items. There <sup>8</sup>*wasn't* / *weren't* any IKEA stores before 1958 – it <sup>9</sup>*was* / *were* only possible to buy things from IKEA by mail. The first IKEA store <sup>10</sup>*was* / *were* in Sweden, but now there are stores around the world.



3 Read the article in exercise 2 again. Complete the questions below with *was* or *were*, then write short answers.

- 1 *Was* Ingvar Kamprad born in Sweden?  
*Yes, he was.*
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ his parents rich?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ they farmers?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Ingvar interested in farming?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ IKEA furniture on sale in 1950?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ANSWERS

- 1)
2. Were / weren't.
3. was
4. Was / was
5. were
6. Was / wasn't
7. Were / were
8. were

- 2)
2. Who was
3. When was
4. What was
5. Were you
6. Was the film
7. Were they
8. Where were
9. Why was
10. Why was

- 3)
1. f
2. b
3. e
4. j
5. d
6. a
7. g
8. i
9. h
10. c

- 4)
2. was
3. was
4. was
5. were
6. were
7. were
8. was
9. was
10. weren't

## Grammar was and were

- 1 1 *The co-founders of Microsoft were Bill Gates and Paul Allen.*  
2 Was the restaurant expensive?  
3 Harry's meal wasn't very good.  
4 I was very tired last night.  
5 Where were you yesterday?  
6 We weren't late for work this morning.  
7 Why was Vincent van Gogh famous?  
8 I wasn't born in England.

- 2 1 *was*                      6 wasn't  
2 was                      7 were  
3 weren't                8 weren't  
4 were                    9 was  
5 was                    10 was

- 3 1 *Was; Yes, he was.*  
2 Were; No, they weren't.  
3 Were, Yes, they were.  
4 Was; No, he wasn't.  
5 Was; Yes, it was.