

THE SIMPLE PAST: QUICK REFERENCE

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When do we use the simple past	Examples
To describe an <u>action</u> that has <u>completely finished</u> (we know when it happened)	I did a presentation yesterday. He changed jobs last summer. The project started 6 weeks ago.

Vocabulary often used with the simple past	Examples
Yesterday	She worked all day yesterday
Last night/week/month/year	We visited the factory last week
In 1980	They arrived in France in 2010
Two days/weeks/months/years ago	I came here for the first time two days ago

Regular Verb Formation

Questions and negative sentences in the simple past are formed with the **auxiliary verb 'do'**

	+	-	?
I	worked	didn't work	Did I work?
You	worked	didn't work	Did you work?
He/she/it	worked	didn't work	Did he/she/it work?
We	worked	didn't work	Did we work?
They	worked	didn't work	Did they work?

Affirmative sentences are formed with verbs ending in "ed". There are three types of pronunciation for these:

"t"	"d"	"id"
danced shopped taxed worked	applied cleaned listened stayed	invented suggested needed wanted

Irregular Verb Formation

There are many irregular verbs in English. In the simple past “to be” and “to do” are the most common ones:

To be

	+	-	?
I	was	was not/wasn't	Was I...?
You	were	were not/weren't	Were you...?
He/she/it	was	was not/wasn't	Was he/she/it...?
We	were	were not/weren't	Were we...?
They	were	were not/weren't	Were they...?

The verb “to be” is often followed by an **adjective**.

Example Questions	Example Answers
Were you tired last night?	Yes I was
What was the weather like yesterday?	It was cold.
Why were they angry?	They were angry because the plane was very late.
How was the hotel?	It was ok but a bit expensive.

To do

	+	-	?
I	did	didn't	Did I...?
You	did	didn't	Did you...?
He/she/it	did	didn't	Did he/she/it...?
We	did	didn't	Did we...?
They	did	didn't	Did they...?

In the simple past you can use the verb “to do” as a **main verb** or as an **auxiliary verb**.

Example Questions	Example Answers
Why did she do that?	She did it because she felt like it.
Where did they go at the weekend?	They went to London.
What did you have for breakfast?	I had toast and cereal.

Here are some more frequently used irregular verbs:

Infinitive	Simple Past	Examples
begin	began	The company began in 2000
buy	bought	We bought a new car last month
come	came	They came to our house for lunch a week ago
cost	cost	Dishonest clients cost me a lot of money last year
feel	felt	She felt sick yesterday so she didn't go to work
go	went	He went to the meeting last night
know	knew	She knew him from school
put	put	He put the shelf up a couple of days ago
say	said	Last night you said that he could stay for a few more days
sell	sold	We sold our house in 2010
speak	spoke	The last time I spoke to her was last week
spend	spent	I spent Christmas in the Alps in 2013
take	took	They took the car in for a service yesterday
think	thought	I thought he could do it but I was wrong
write	wrote	He wrote a very interesting book ten years ago