

03

Past simple and past continuous

Past simple

1 Some examples of the past simple:

*I **walked** to college yesterday.
She **didn't phone** me last week.
When **did** you **arrive** in this country?*

2 Forms of the past simple:

POSITIVE

I/you/he/she/it/we/they **finished**

NEGATIVE (did not / didn't + verb)

I/you/he/she/it/we/they **did not / didn't finish**
NOT **didn't finished**

QUESTIONS (did + subject + verb)

did I/you/he/she/it/we/they **finish**
NOT **did it finished**

3 Regular verbs (positive forms):

We form the **past simple** by adding **-ed** to the verb:

walk → walked visit → visited

For verbs ending with **-e**, we add **-d**:

live → lived love → loved

For verbs ending with a consonant and **-y**, we take away **-y** and add **-ied**:

carry → carried try → tried

For many verbs ending with one vowel and one consonant, we double the last letter and add **-ed**.

stop → stopped plan → planned

(For more regular past simple forms, see p. 130.)

4 Irregular verbs:

Many very common verbs are irregular:

go → went	come → came	do → did
speak → spoke	run → ran	have → had
take → took	see → saw	buy → bought
think → thought	leave → left	make → made

(For more irregular past simple forms, see p. 131.)

5 The past simple forms of be:

I/he/she/it **was/was not/wasn't**
you/we/they **were/were not/weren't**
was I/he/she/it
were you/we/they

Grammar in action

- 1 We use the **past simple** to talk about actions completed in the past, for example when we describe a sequence of events:

He came out of the door, locked it, got into his car and drove away.



- 2 We use the **past simple** to talk about past situations (situations that are not true now). For example, we can use it to describe earlier times in our lives:

I was a waiter when I lived in Spain.

- 3 With the **past simple**, we often say when something happened. Sometimes we don't say when something happened because we understand what point in time in the past we are talking about:

*What did you do last night? ~ I listened to some music, I read a book and then I went to bed.
(= last night)*

A Family history

Complete this description using the past simple forms of the verbs in brackets.

My name is Gurnam and my family originally came⁰ (come) from India. My grandparents¹ (move) to Britain in 1975 and they went to live in the city of Leicester. My grandfather² (open) a restaurant there and he³ (become) very successful. He⁴ (not speak) much English when he⁵ (arrive) in Britain but he⁶ (learn) very

quickly. Lots of people⁷ (eat) at his restaurant. He⁸ (work) very hard for many years and he⁹ (make) plenty of money.

My father¹⁰ (be) born in Leicester and he¹¹ (go) to school there. He¹² (do) very well at school and¹³ (pass) all his exams. Then he¹⁴ (study) at university for three years and¹⁵ (get) a Business degree. After that, he¹⁶ (set) up his own business. At first he¹⁷ (sell) clothes in a shop near the city centre, and after a few years he¹⁸ (own) five shops all over the city. When I was a small child, we¹⁹ (live) in a small house but my father²⁰ (buy) a bigger one two years ago.



B An unpleasant journey

Complete this story about a journey, using the past simple and the correct verbs from the box. Use short forms for negatives.

get not stay drive be (x2) shout not speak come not go make
not start not say arrive start go not arrive want

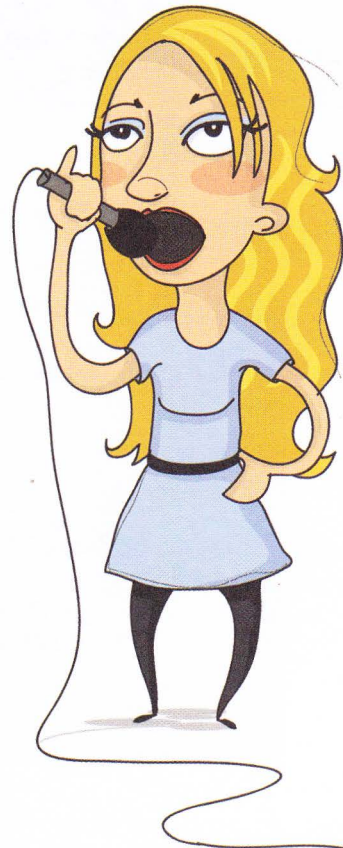
Yesterday I⁰ on a day trip. My friend Liam¹ with me. The day² well because Liam³ at my house late. He⁴ why he⁵ late and I⁶ at him. Then we⁷ our journey. I⁸ the car. A bit later, we⁹ lost. We¹⁰ to go to the seaside but we¹¹ a bad mistake and we¹² in the right direction. We¹³ at the beach until very late in the day, so we¹⁴ for a long time. On the way home, we¹⁵ to each other at all. We¹⁶ both very angry.

C The road to fame

Complete this interview with a famous singer, using the past simple and the correct words from the box.

offer play you feel happen appear be not earn
you become help it happen see leave enjoy buy want make
~~you start~~ take ask know have

INTERVIEWER When⁰ singing in the band?
MIA Well, I¹ 19 years old. The original singer² the band and the others³ me to replace him.
INTERVIEWER⁴ successful very quickly?
MIA No, it⁵ a long time. We⁶ in small clubs for many years and we⁷ much money.
INTERVIEWER⁸ unhappy then?
MIA No, we⁹ ourselves. We¹⁰ a great time. But we¹¹ to succeed.
INTERVIEWER How¹²?
MIA Well, a manager¹³ us playing in a small club and he¹⁴ to be our manager. He¹⁵ a lot about the music business and he¹⁶ us a lot. Because of him, we¹⁷ on a TV show. Then we¹⁸ a record and lots of people¹⁹ it. Everything²⁰ very quickly then.



Past simple and past continuous

Past continuous; past simple or continuous?

- 6 Some examples of the **past continuous**:
In 2003, I was studying at college.
Please repeat that, I wasn't listening.
What were you doing at 6 o'clock yesterday evening?

7 Forms of the **past continuous**:

POSITIVE (was/were + -ing)

I/he/she/it **was walking**.

you/we/they **were walking**.

NEGATIVE (was not / wasn't / were not / weren't + -ing)

I/he/she/it **was not / wasn't walking**.

you/we/they **were not / weren't walking**.

QUESTIONS (was/were ... + -ing ...?)

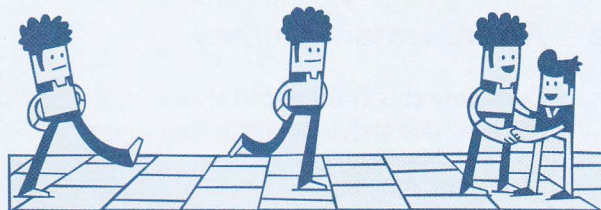
was I/you/he/she/it **walking**

were you/we/they **walking**

(For rules on the **-ing** form, see p. 130.)

- 5 We often use the past continuous in sentences with the past simple to talk about two actions. We use the **past simple** for a completed action and the **past continuous** to describe something in progress when the second action happened:

I was walking down the street when I met an old friend.
While/When I was walking down the street, I met an old friend.



We use **when** before the past simple and **while/when** before the past continuous:

When the doorbell rang, I was lying in bed.
While/When I was lying in bed, the doorbell rang.

TIP

Grammar in action

- 4 We use the **past continuous** for actions and situations that were in progress at a particular time in the past (e.g. *in 1981, at 6 a.m. yesterday morning*):
At 7.30 p.m. last night, I was playing a video game, my sister was doing her homework and my parents were reading.

D What was happening five years ago

Complete this description of situations five years ago, using the past continuous and the verbs in brackets. Use short forms for negatives.

Five years ago, I was living⁰ (live) in a different city. I¹ (study) for my final school exams and I² (try) to decide what to do after school. I³ (do) homework every evening and I⁴ (not go) out much. My friends⁵ (have) more fun than me. They⁶ (go) to clubs and they⁷ (enjoy) themselves while I⁸ (sit) at home. But I'm glad now that I⁹ (not do) that, because I passed my exams and now I've got a good job.

Five years ago, my father¹⁰ (work) very hard. He¹¹ (get) up early every morning and he¹² (come) home quite late at night. He¹³ (feel) under pressure and he¹⁴ (not enjoy) life. He is retired now and he is much happier because he has a lot more free time.

Five years ago, my sister¹⁵ (go) out with a local boy. They¹⁶ (save) money to get married and they¹⁷ (plan) their wedding. She¹⁸ (serve) in a shop and he¹⁹ (live) with his parents. Now they're married and they've got three children.

E A day at the office

Complete these sentences about someone's day at work, using the past simple or the past continuous forms of the verbs in brackets.

- 0 While I was travelling (travel) to work, I got (get) stuck in traffic jam.
- 1 When I (arrive) at work, my boss (speak) to someone on the phone.
- 2 At 11 a.m., I (do) some work when the boss (ask) to see me.
- 3 While I (talk) to my boss, his phone (ring) several times.
- 4 When I (come) out of the boss's office, people (not work), they (look) at me.
- 5 At 1 o'clock, I (stop) work and I (go) for lunch.
- 6 While I (eat) my lunch, a colleague (come) to my table.
- 7 While we (sit) together, he (ask) me a question.
- 8 He asked me: 'What (the boss/talk) about while you (sit) in his office?'
- 9 I said: 'When I (go) into his office, I (feel) nervous, but he (smile).'
- 10 While we (talk), he (offer) me a much better job.'

In exercises B, D and E, there are three phrases with **get**. Complete each phrase. The meaning of each one is in brackets:

- A** get (be unable to find your way to a place)
- B** get (marry someone)
- C** get (be unable to move or progress)

F Travel writers

Complete this story, using the past simple or the past continuous form of the correct verbs from the box. You will need to use some of the verbs more than once.

plan ask have decide meet travel come sit write give
discover become start make do chat continue not like live

Joan was living⁰ in Paris when she¹ Paul. She² in a café when he³ to her table and⁴ if he could sit there. They⁵ talking and while they⁶, they⁷ that they⁸ a lot in common. Both of them⁹ novels and both of them¹⁰ jobs that they¹¹. They¹² very good friends.

One day, while they¹³ lunch in the same café, they¹⁴ an idea. They¹⁵ to travel around the world together. While they¹⁶ their trip, they¹⁷ working. Then they¹⁸ up their jobs and they¹⁹ their journey. While they²⁰, they²¹ all sorts of adventures, and they²² all sorts of interesting people. They²³ lots of notes while they²⁴ these experiences. When they²⁵ home again, both of them²⁶ books about their journey.

OVER TO YOU Now go to page 122.