

SECTION 4 past tenses

● grammar summary

SIMPLE PAST: *I worked, she worked, he didn't work, etc*

PAST PROGRESSIVE (OR 'PAST CONTINUOUS'): *I was working, she was working, he wasn't working, etc*

English has two 'past' tenses.

- We use the **simple past** for **complete finished actions**. We often use it in **stories**.
I wrote ten letters yesterday. A man walked into a police station and asked ...
- We use the **past progressive** to talk about actions which were **unfinished** at a past time.
'What were you doing at 10.00 last night?' 'I was writing letters.'

● pre-test: which units do you need?

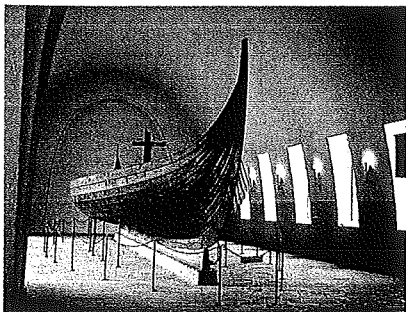
Try this small test. It will help you to decide which units you need. The answers are on page 283.

① Which is correct – A, B or both?

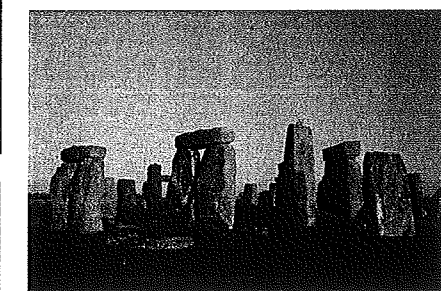
- ▷ A I losed your address. B I lost your address.
- ▷ A I broke a window. B John broke a window.
- 1 A The rain stoped. B The rain stopped.
- 2 A You never visitted me in hospital. B You never visited me in hospital.
- 3 A I didn't know the answer. B I didn't knew the answer.
- 4 A Where did everybody go? B Where everybody went?
- 5 A When John and his family did arrive? B When did John and his family arrive?
- 6 A Who said that? B Who did say that?
- 7 A At ten o'clock last night I read. B At ten o'clock last night I was reading.
- 8 A When I saw John, he was playing tennis. B When I saw John, he played tennis.
- 9 A When Ann came home, John was cooking supper. B When Ann came home, John cooked supper.



◀ About 6,000 years ago, somebody painted this picture on a cave wall in Namibia, south-west Africa.

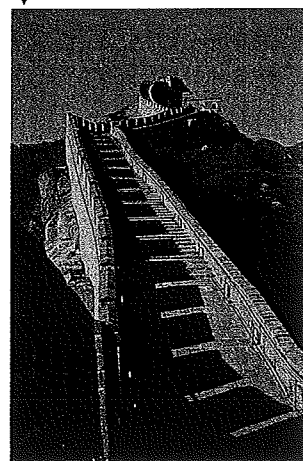


▲ Stonehenge, in southern England, is about 4,800 years old. Who built it? Nobody knows.





◀ About 1,200 years ago, Vikings from Scandinavia made this beautiful ship.

About 2,200 years ago, Shi Huangdi completed the Great Wall of China.



simple past: forms *I worked. I did not work.*

	REGULAR VERBS	AN IRREGULAR VERB
	I/you/he/she/it/we/they worked	I/you/he/she/it/we/they went
	I/you/he/she/it/we/they did not work	I/you/he/she/it/we/they did not go
	Contraction: <i>didn't</i>	

HOW TO MAKE REGULAR SIMPLE PAST FORMS

- **most verbs:** + *-ed* *work* → *worked* *help* → *helped* *rain* → *rained*
- **after -e:** + *-d* *hope* → *hoped* *like* → *liked*

1 Write the simple past.

walk *walked*..... arrive change cook
hate live pass shave watch

VERBS ENDING IN -Y

- **vowel (a, e, o) + y** → *-yed* *play* → *played* *enjoy* → *enjoyed*
- **consonant (d, l, r etc) + y** → *-ied* *try* → *tried* *reply* → *replied*

2 Write the simple past.

stay study cry annoy carry
hurry pray

DOUBLING (*stopped, planned, etc*)

- **one vowel + one consonant**
→ double consonant + *-ed* *stop* → *stopped* (NOT *stope*) *plan* → *planned*
- **two vowels:** don't double *seem* → *seemed* *wait* → *waited* (NOT *waitted*)
- **two consonants:** don't double *want* → *wanted* (NOT *wantted*) *help* → *helped*
- **only double in STRESSED syllables** *preFER* → *preferred* BUT *WONder* → *wondered*

3 Write the simple past.

shop rain start rob slim
jump shout slip fit turn
Visit reGRET deVELOP GALlop
OPen ANswer reFER

With **irregular verbs**, you have to learn the simple past forms one by one (see page 275).

go → *went* *see* → *saw* *buy* → *bought* *pay* → *paid*

4 Write as many of the simple past forms as you can. Check them on page 275, and learn the ones that you don't know.

become begin break bring catch come
drink eat fall feel forget get give
hear hold keep know learn leave let
make pay put read say shut sit
speak stand take tell think write

We make simple past negatives (❏) with *did not/didn't* + infinitive (without *to*).

STATEMENT ❏	NEGATIVE ❏
<i>He cleaned the car.</i>	<i>He did not clean the car. (NOT He did not cleaned the car.)</i>
<i>He started early.</i>	<i>He did not start early. (NOT He did not starts early.)</i>
<i>She saw you.</i>	<i>She didn't see you. (NOT She didn't saw you.)</i>
<i>John went to Rome.</i>	<i>John didn't go to Rome.</i>

5 Circle the correct form.

- ▶ I break / broke a cup yesterday.
- ▶ Ann did not play / played tennis this morning.
- 1 Harry work / worked last Sunday.
- 2 I didn't know / knew where I was.
- 3 I didn't feel / felt well last night.
- 4 Ann come / came to see us at the weekend.
- 5 I didn't see / saw Bill at the party.
- 6 Peter didn't write / wrote to me for a long time.
- 7 The train did not arrive / arrives on time.
- 8 Mary didn't like / likes / liked her teacher.

6 Make simple past negative sentences.

- ▶ I played hockey. (football) ...I didn't play football.
- 1 We spoke Spanish together. (Arabic)
- 2 My uncle taught mathematics. (science)
- 3 Bill cooked the potatoes. (the fish)
- 4 I took my mother to the mountains. (my father)
- 5 We told our parents everything. (the police)
- 6 I wrote to my sister. (my brother)
- 7 I liked the party. (the music)
- 8 We knew her address. (phone number)

7 Complete the sentences with affirmative (❏) or negative (❏) verbs.

- ▶ I didn't break this window, but (the other one ❏) ...I broke the other one.
- ▶ I worked last week, but (the week before ❏) ...I didn't work the week before.
- 1 He didn't change his trousers, but (his shirt ❏)
- 2 She answered the first question, but (the others ❏)
- 3 He phoned her, but (go to her house ❏)
- 4 I didn't bring any flowers, but (some chocolates ❏)
- 5 She didn't buy a coat, but (a very nice dress ❏)
- 6 I ate the vegetables, but (the meat ❏)
- 7 We kept the photos, but (the letters ❏)
- 8 They didn't speak English, but (German ❏)
- 9 My grandfather shaved on weekdays, but (at weekends ❏)

8 Write five things that you didn't do yesterday.

- 1 I didn't
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

simple past questions *Did you pay? What did she say?*

2	did I work? did you work? did he/she/it work? did we work? did they work?
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We make simple past questions (2) with *did* + subject + infinitive (without to).

STATEMENT 2	QUESTION 2
<i>He cleaned the car.</i>	<i>Did he clean the car? (NOT Did he cleaned the car?)</i>
<i>The class went to Rome.</i>	<i>Where did the class go? (NOT Where did the class went?)</i>

1 Circle the correct form.

- ▶ I take / took my father to Spain last week.
- ▶ Did you hear / heard me?
- 1 Did John bring / brought his wife with him?
- 2 When did Ann start / starts school?
- 3 I see / saw Eric in the supermarket yesterday.
- 4 Why did you leave / left your job?
- 5 Did Fred speak / spoke to you about Andy?
- 6 Where did that woman keep / kept all her money?
- 7 Derek learn / learnt English when he was young.
- 8 Sorry - I forget / forgot to buy milk.

2 Make simple past questions.

- ▶ John enjoyed the food, but (the music 2) *did he enjoy the music?*
- 1 She listened to everything, but (remember it 2)
- 2 You didn't pay Andy, but (the others 2)
- 3 You liked the book, but (the film 2)
- 4 He played football, but (well 2)
- 5 You gave them some help, but (any money 2)

3 Make simple past questions with *what*, *who* and *where*.

- ▶ Pete saw somebody. *Who did he see?*
- 1 John went somewhere.
- 2 Bill bought something.
- 3 Alice married somebody.
- 4 Mary broke something.
- 5 Mike stayed somewhere.

Be careful when questions have long subjects - the word order does not change.

Where did Ann stay?
Where did Ann and her mother stay?
Where did Ann and her mother and the children stay? (NOT ~~Where stayed Ann ...?~~ OR ~~Where did stay ...?~~)

4 Make simple past questions.

- ▶ Jake and his wife went to Moscow. *Where did Jake and his wife go?*
- 1 Mrs Potter's two boys played football yesterday.
When
- 2 All the people in the class felt tired.
Why
- 3 The big man with the grey beard said something.
What
- 4 The people who were sitting at the back of the bus started to sing.
Why

questions without *did* *Who phoned?* *What happened?*

When *who* and *what* are subjects, we make questions without *do/does/did*. Compare:

'Who^{SUBJ} phoned?' 'Sue^{SUBJ} phoned.' (NOT 'Who ~~did~~ phone?')

'Who^{OBJ} did you see?' 'I saw Sue^{OBJ}.'

'What^{SUBJ} happened?' 'Something^{SUBJ} nice happened.' (NOT 'What ~~did~~ happen?')

'What^{OBJ} did he say?' 'He said something^{OBJ} nice.'

1 Circle the correct form.

▶ Who gave / *did give* you that ring?

▶ What *wanted* John? / did John want?

1 Who *said* / *did say* that?

2 What *made* / *did make* that noise?

3 Who *asked* she / *did she ask*?

4 Who *told* / *did tell* you?

5 What *fell* / *did fall* out of your bag?

6 What *put* you / *did you put* in the soup?

2 Complete the questions.

▶ 'Somebody heard me.' 'Who heard you?

▶ 'I heard somebody.' 'Who did you hear?

1 'I phoned somebody.' 'Who'

2 'Somebody wrote to me.' 'Who'

3 'Something broke the window.' 'What'

4 'I broke something.' 'What'

5 'Mary played something.' 'What'

6 'Something fell off the table.' 'What'

3 GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY: beginnings

Make sure you know all the words in the first box. Use a dictionary if necessary. Then complete the questions, and see if you can put in the answers.

build	compose	direct	discover ✓	invent	paint
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A Patty and Mildred Hill, in 1893.

D Alexander Fleming, in 1928. ✓

B Stone Age people, about 15,000 years ago.

E Probably the Chinese, about 1,000 years ago.

C Alfred Hitchcock, in 1963.

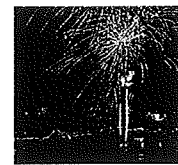
F King Khufu of Egypt, about 4,600 years ago.



▶ Who discovered
penicillin? D.



1 Who
the Great Pyramid? ...



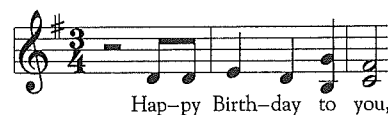
2 Who
gunpowder? ...



3 Who
this picture? ...



4 Who
the film 'The Birds'? ...



5 Who
'Happy Birthday To You'? ...

➔ For more about questions like these, see page 110.

simple past: use *I left school in 1990.*

We often use the simple past to talk about when things happened.

I left school in 1990.

I didn't see Ann yesterday.

What time did you arrive?



We use the **simple past**, not the present perfect (*have seen*, etc) with **finished time-expressions**.

I saw that film last week. (NOT *I have seen that film last week.*)

Did you pay William on Sunday? (NOT *Have you paid William on Sunday?*)

1 Put the beginnings and ends together, using the verbs in the box.

die ✓ forget learn like read speak stop

1 Shakespeare *died*

2 I my girlfriend's

3 That's a really good book.

4 When we were children

5 I didn't my piano teacher

6 When did you

A birthday on Monday. ...

B in 1616. ~~I~~

C so I my lessons last week. ...

D I it last year. ...

E we always French at home. ...

F to speak Spanish so well? ...

Note the **word order** with **ago**.

I started this job three years ago. (NOT *...ago-three-years.*)

It happened a long time ago.

2 How long ago was your last birthday? Ten days ago? Five weeks ago? Eight months ago? Write the answer, and answer the other questions.

1 my last birthday

3 last January

2 last Tuesday

4 my third birthday

We often use the **simple past** for things that happened **one after another**, for example in **stories**.

He parked his car, went into the station and bought a ticket. Then he had a cup of coffee and ...

3 Put simple past verbs into the story.

1-6: come hear open say not see stand

7-10: give hold not read take

11-15: run say not speak turn write

He 1 outside her door for a long time. Then he 2 her footsteps inside the house. She 3 the door and 4 out.

At first she 5 him, but then she 6 'Oh, hello, Harold.'

He 7 a paper out of his pocket and 8 it to her.

She 9 it in one hand, but 10 it. 'Listen,'

he 11 She 12 'I 13 you this letter

because -' She 14 back into the house. He 15 and walked

slowly down the street.

simple past: revision

	REGULAR VERBS	AN IRREGULAR VERB
1	I/you/he/she/it/we/they <i>worked</i>	I/you/he etc <i>went</i>
2	<i>did</i> I/you/he etc <i>work?</i>	<i>did</i> I/you/he etc <i>go?</i>
3	I/you/he/ etc <i>did not work</i>	I/you/he etc <i>did not go</i>
	Contraction: <i>didn't</i>	

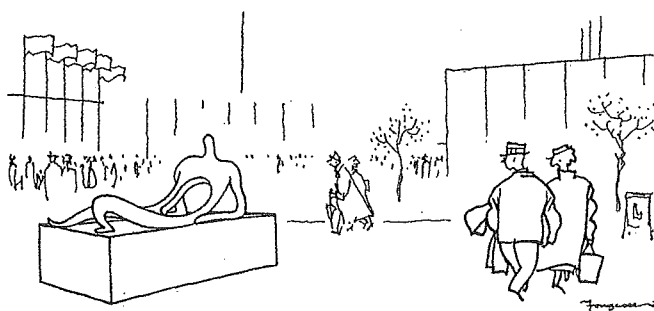
1 Complete the sentences with affirmative (1), verbs, questions (2) or negatives (3).

- She didn't feel well last night, but (OK this morning 1) *she felt OK this morning.*
- 'I bought a new coat yesterday.' ('shoes 2') *'Did you buy shoes?'*
- We saw the Eiffel Tower, but (see Notre Dame 3) *we didn't see Notre Dame.*
- 1 I didn't learn much French at school, but (a lot of Latin 1)
- 2 I remembered to buy the bread, but (the milk 2)
- 3 I spoke to Ann's father, but (her mother 3)
- 4 'Peter didn't phone yesterday.' ('this morning 2')
- 5 I didn't take the bus to London; (the train 1)
- 6 I know you went to Singapore, but (Malaysia 2)
- 7 The train stopped at Edinburgh, but (Glasgow 3)
- 8 'Did the children see a film?' ('two films 1')
- 9 'I ate your cake.' ('my chocolates 2')

2 Make simple past questions.

- Ann and her brother went to Beijing. Where *did Ann and her brother go?*
- 1 Sarah and her baby came out of hospital this morning. When
- 2 Peter's friends from the office gave him a bicycle. Why
- 3 The small woman with long hair said something. What
- 4 The children bought something. What
- 5 Somebody left a bicycle in the garden. Who
- 6 Something fell off the table. What
- 7 Bill found a cat in his office. Who

3 Look at the picture, and complete the sentence correctly.



- A did you remember
- B did you remembered
- C do you remembered
- D did you to remember

'That reminds me, dear - the sandwiches?'

past progressive* What were you doing at 8.00?

+	I was working	you were working	he/she/it was working	we/they were working
?	was I working?	were you working?	was he/she/it working?	were we/they working?
-	I was not working	you were not working	he/she/it was not working	etc
	Contractions: wasn't, weren't			

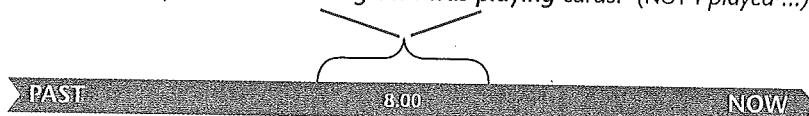
We make the **past progressive** with **was/were + ...ing**. (For spelling rules, see page 21.)

At 8 o'clock I **was waiting** for a train. What **were you doing**?

We use the **past progressive** to say what was (not) happening **around** (before, at and perhaps after) **a past time**.

'What **were you doing** at 8.00? Were you **watching** TV?' (NOT ~~What did you do ...?~~)

'At 8.00? No, I **wasn't watching** TV. I **was playing** cards.' (NOT ~~+played ...~~)



- ① What were the people doing yesterday evening?
Look at the pictures and complete the sentences
with words from the box.
Use past progressive verbs.

cook supper	dance	drive home
not watch TV	play cards ✓	

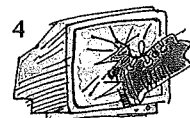
► At 9.15 Sarah was playing cards.

1 At 10.30 Fred and Alice

2 At 8.20 Keith

3 At 7.50 Mary

4 At 11.00 Oliver



We make past progressive questions with **was/were + subject + ...ing**.

STATEMENT [+]: It was raining. You were working. All the children were singing.

QUESTION [?]: Was it raining? Were you working? What were all the children singing?

② Write questions.

► 'At 10.00 I was reading.' (a newspaper) 'Were you reading a newspaper?'

► 'When I saw Peter he was eating.' (what) 'What was he eating?'

1 'When I went into Pat's office, she was writing.' (letters)

2 'At lunchtime Joe was shopping.' (where)

3 'At 8.30 Ann was cooking.' (what)

4 'When I arrived, all the children were crying.' (why)

5 'At midnight, Mary and Jack were driving.' (to Scotland)

③ What were you doing at 10 o'clock last night?

* Also called 'past continuous'

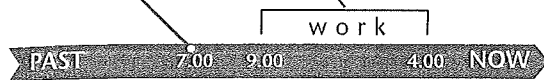
simple past or past progressive? *I walked / I was walking*

We use the simple past to talk about a complete action (long or short).

We use the past progressive for actions which were not complete at a past time.

Joe *got up* at 7.00 and *worked* from 9.00 to 4.00.

At 8.00, when Joe came home, I *was reading*



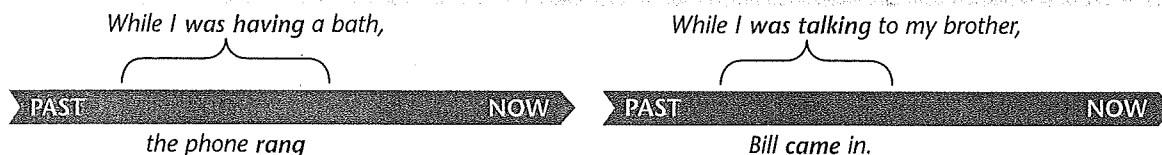
1 Simple past or past progressive?

- ▶ I *(lived)* / *was living* in France for eight years.
- ▶ Sue *lived* / *(was living)* in France when her uncle died.
- 1 At 6.15, when you phoned, I *had* / *was having* a shower.
- 2 We *watched* / *were watching* TV all evening.
- 3 Bill *watched* / *was watching* TV when Ann came in.
- 4 My father *worked* / *was working* hard all his life.
- 5 They got married while they *studied* / *were studying* at London University.
- 6 Yesterday we *drove* / *were driving* from Oxford to Edinburgh and back.
- 7 It was a nice evening, so she *walked* / *was walking* home from work.

We often use the past progressive and the simple past together, for example with *while*.

Past progressive: longer action or situation.

Simple past: complete shorter action that happened during the longer action.



2 Put in the simple past or the past progressive.

- ▶ While I *..was walking..* down the road, I *..saw..* Bill. (*walk; see*)
- 1 While I the newspaper, the cat on to the table. (*read; jump*)
- 2 Alan Helen while he in Morocco. (*meet; travel*)
- 3 Sally her leg while she (*break; ski*)
- 4 While I, somebody my car. (*shop; steal*)

We can use *when* in different ways with past tenses.

When Ann came home, John was cooking supper. (Ann came home **during** the cooking.)

When Ann came home, John cooked supper. (First Ann came home; then John cooked supper.)

3 Put in the correct tense (simple past or past progressive).

- ▶ When I went out, it *..was raining..* (*rain*)
- ▶ When Mary got home, she *..made..* tea. (*make*)
- 1 When I saw John, he (*shop*)
- 2 When John saw me, he (*stop*)
- 3 When we asked, they 'No'. (*say*)
- 4 When I walked in, they (*talk*)
- 5 When I dropped the glass, it (*break*)
- 6 When I phoned him, he (*work*)

test yourself past tenses

1 Write the simple past forms.

like *liked* bring cry feel stay stop

2 Make simple past sentences.

- ▶ the train / stop / at every station ☒ *The train stopped at every station.*
- ▶ when / my letter / arrive ☒ *When did my letter arrive?*
- ▶ the doctor / remember / my name ☒ *The doctor didn't remember my name.*
- 1 what / all those people / want ☒
- 2 all your brothers / send / birthday cards ☒
- 3 the baby / eat / some toothpaste this morning ☒
- 4 the teacher / answer / my question ☒

3 Make questions.

- ▶ John did something. (what) *What did John do?*
- 1 Peter telephoned. (why)
- 2 Mary expected something. (what)
- 3 Something happened. (what)
- 4 Somebody took the car. (who)

4 Complete the sentences with past progressive verbs.

- ▶ When I walked in (children fight ☒) *the children were fighting.*
- 1 At 9.00 on Sunday (we watch TV ☒)
- 2 When I saw him he was holding a paper, but (read ☒)
- 3 When you heard them, (they speak English ☒)

5 Put in simple past or past progressive verbs.

- ▶ They *told* the police that they *were playing* cards at 10.00. (tell; play)
- 1 When I out of the house I took my umbrella because it (go; rain)
- 2 This morning I the newspaper before I went out. (read)
- 3 you the football match last night? (watch)
- 4 When I into the room they about clothes. (walk; talk)
- 5 At 8 o'clock yesterday morning I in the sea. (swim)

6 Put verbs from the box (simple past or past progressive) into the text.

drive	open	pass	pull	run	shine ✓	sing	start	turn	wait
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It was a beautiful morning. The sun ▶ *was shining* and birds 1
 About five thousand people 2 in front of the Palace. At 10.00, the guards
 3 the Palace gates, and the President's car 4 out and
 5 left into Democracy Street. The crowds 6 to sing the
 National Anthem. Then suddenly, just as the President's car 7 the Ritz Hotel,
 a man 8 out in front of it and 9 a gun from his pocket.

☒ More difficult question