

# PAST TENSES

## PAST SIMPLE

...

*I studied* every day.

## PAST CONTINUOUS

...

*I was studying* back then.

## PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

...

*I had studied* three chapters so far.

## PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

...

*I had been studying* for three hours.

## PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

### Past events or experiences or When did it happen?

**it's not important when something happened**  
to talk about past experiences and actions  
when we don't say or don't know when they  
happened.

**or**  
to talk about recent events or about people's  
experiences when the time when these events  
happened is not important and we don't  
mention it.

I've lost my keys.  
We've been to a very nice restaurant.  
I've been to Malaysia. (When is not important. The important thing  
is that I have this experience now.)  
She's won three gold medals.  
I've broken my arm.

**we say or ask when something happened**  
when we mention or ask about when something  
happened, or when the time is known by the  
speaker and the listener. We often use a past  
expression (last week, yesterday, when I was a  
child)

**or**  
to talk about completed actions in the past. We  
often say or ask when these actions happened.

We arrived yesterday.  
When did the accident happen?  
We went to Malaysia last year. (NOT We have been to Malaysia  
last year.)  
She won three gold medals at the last Olympic Games.  
When did you break your arm?

### In conversation

to introduce a past event or experience

**or**  
start a conversation about recent events or  
people's experiences

**Giving details in past simple**

continue talking and we give details

**or**

continue talking or asking about the details of  
that event

A: I've been to the cinema.  
B: What did you see?  
A: I saw a very good film by...

A: Oh, you've broken your arm.  
B: Yes, I have.  
A: How did it happen?

John: I've been to the cinema.  
Patrick: What did you see?  
John: I saw a very good film by...  
Sarah: Oh, you've broken your arm!  
Rachel: Yes, I have.  
Sarah: How did it happen?

Rachel: It happened yesterday while I was riding my bike.

I do judo and I've won some competitions. In fact, I've won two medals. I got the first one in Singapore in 2002. The second one was  
different. It was in Tokyo and I was older.

### Duration with how long, for and since

to talk about actions or situations that started in  
the past and still continue or are still true now

to talk about actions or situations that started  
and finished in the past

He's lived in New York for ten years. = He lives in New York now.  
How long have you worked in the bank? = You work in the bank now.

He lived in New York for ten years. = He does NOT live in New York now.  
How long did you work in the bank? = You do NOT work in the bank now.

## PAST SIMPLE

### Formation:

#### + AFFIRMATIVE

S + V<sub>2/-ed</sub> ⇒ I/You/We/They/He/She/It + studied.  
She finished her homework yesterday.

#### - NEGATIVE

S + did not (didn't) + V<sub>1</sub> ⇒ I/You/We/They/He/She/It + did not (didn't) + study.  
They didn't play football last Saturday.

#### ? INTERROGATIVE

Did + S + V<sub>1</sub> ⇒ Did + I/you/we/they/he/she/it + study?  
Did you see the movie last night?

REGULAR VERBS:

**after consonant** - add "ed"  
work ⇒ worked

**after "e"** - add "d"  
live ⇒ lived

**after consonant and "y"** - delete "y", add "ied"  
study ⇒ studied

**after consonant + vowel + consonant** - double consonant, add "ed"  
one syllable verb: stop ⇒ stopped  
two syllables verb with stress in last syllable: préfér ⇒ preferred

### Usage:

The Past Simple tense is used to express...

**PAST FINISHED ACTIONS OR STATES** - events that began and ended in the past, often including a specific time reference, regardless of how long ago they happened

+ She traveled to Paris last summer.

- We didn't go out last Saturday.

? Did you call Jessica last night?

- Rachel was a very good writer.
- I saw Jim yesterday.
- We stayed at home.
- She moved to Chester three years ago.
- We ate out yesterday. (the action is finished)
- We watched a film last Saturday.

**PAST HABITS, STATES OR REPEATED ACTIONS** - events and situations that were true or happened in the past but don't happen in the present

- When I was a child, I ate sweets every day.
- In school, I always played football during break time.
- She washed her hair every day.
- She worked as a nurse.
- I often played in the park when we were children.

- We often went to the bar for a drink before dinner.
- He really liked sport and was very fit.
- My grandfather had two brothers.
- He lived with my grandparents as a child.
- I studied history in college.

## ACTIONS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER - events that go in order within the text or the story

- When I arrived home, I took off my shoes and then I relaxed on the sofa
- When she opened the door, she pretended that we weren't there and she went to her room.
- He called me and told me to go, but when I arrived he wasn't there.

+ frequency expressions: often, always, every day

+ past time expression: yesterday, last, ago

## PAST CONTINUOUS

### Actions in progress

- actions that were in progress (not finished) at a specific moment in the past

'What were you doing at 9?' 'I was studying.'

When I saw them yesterday, they were arguing.

The specific moment in the past can be described by a time expression (at 9 a.m., at midday, at lunchtime, all morning, all day, etc.):

They were swimming at 7 in the morning..

At midday they were still working.

Or by a simple past sentence:

They were swimming when I saw them.

When she arrived, they were still working.

### Describing a scene

- at the beginning of a story to describe the situation

It was getting dark, and I was walking fast. Suddenly ...

## PAST SIMPLE

### completed actions in the past

We ate out yesterday. (the action is finished)

### describes a shorter action or event

When I met her, she was having a drink with a friend.  
We didn't go out because it was raining.

**\*the short action in past simple often interrupts the longer action in past continuous**

He was playing football when he broke his leg.  
When I went to bed, it was raining.

## PAST CONTINUOUS

### actions in progress (not finished) in the past

We were eating at 9. (the action was not finished)

### describes a longer action or situation

### completed actions that happened one after the other

When he arrived, she had a shower.  
(The action of having a shower started after he arrived)

### action that started before the other action

When he arrived, she was having a shower.  
(The action of having a shower started before he arrived)

## PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

We make the past perfect with had/hadn't + past participle:

-ed for regular verbs and the 3rd column form for irregular verbs.

I hadn't been there before.

She had never worked.

The past perfect is the same for all persons.

I/you/he/she/it/we/they had left when I arrived

We can contract had to 'd.

I called him, but he'd gone to a meeting.

! The contraction 'd can be had or would. Remember that we use an infinitive form after would and a past participle after had.

I'd love to go to your party. (= would)

I noticed that he'd eaten my cake. (= had)

1. When we are talking about the past and then we want to talk about something that happened earlier in the past.

When I got out of work I saw that somebody had stolen my car.

Yesterday my mother told me that she had seen you in the park.

PAST SIMPLE	PAST PERFECT
to describe a series of past events in chronological order When I arrived, she left. (= She left after I arrived.)	to make clear that one of the events happened before When I arrived, she had left. (She left before I arrived)

#### SYMBIOSIS:

1. normal narrative past form used for sequentially occurring actions
2. emphasises the progression/process of an action
3. action that took place before another previously mentioned action
4. emphasises how long an action lasted until a certain point in the past