

## Past simple (I did)

**A** Study this example:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart **was** an Austrian musician and composer. He **lived** from 1756 to 1791. He **started** composing at the age of five and **wrote** more than 600 pieces of music. He **was** only 35 years old when he **died**.

**lived/started/wrote/was/died** are all *past simple*



**B** Very often the past simple ends in **-ed** (*regular verbs*):

- I work in a travel agency now. Before that I **worked** in a department store.
- They **invited** us to their party, but we **decided** not to go.
- The police **stopped** me on my way home last night.
- Laura **passed** her exam because she **studied** very hard.

For spelling (st**opped**, stud**ied** etc.), see Appendix 6.

But many verbs are *irregular*. The past simple does *not* end in **-ed**. For example:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| write → <b>wrote</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Mozart <b>wrote</b> more than 600 pieces of music. |
| see → <b>saw</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> We <b>saw</b> Alice in town a few days ago.        |
| go → <b>went</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> I <b>went</b> to the cinema three times last week. |
| shut → <b>shut</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> It was cold, so I <b>shut</b> the window.          |

For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

**C** In questions and negative sentences we use **did/didn't** + infinitive (**enjoy/see/go** etc.):

I she they	enjoyed <b>saw</b> <b>went</b>	<b>did</b>	you she they	<b>enjoy?</b> <b>see?</b> <b>go?</b>	I she they	<b>didn't</b>	<b>enjoy</b> <b>see</b> <b>go</b>
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- I enjoyed the party a lot. **Did** you **enjoy** it?
- How many people **did** they **invite** to the wedding?
- I **didn't buy** anything because I **didn't have** any money.
- '**Did** you **go** out?' 'No, I **didn't**.'

Sometimes **do** is the main verb in the sentence (did you **do**?, I didn't **do**):

- What **did** you **do** at the weekend? (*not* What did you at the weekend?)
- I **didn't do** anything. (*not* I didn't anything)

**D** The past of **be** (**am/is/are**) is **was/were**:

I/he/she/it	<b>was/wasn't</b>	<b>was</b>	I/he/she/it?
we/you/they	<b>were/weren't</b>	<b>were</b>	we/you/they?

- I **was** annoyed because **they were** late.
- Was the weather** good when **you were** on holiday?
- They weren't** able to come because **they were** so busy.
- I **wasn't** hungry, so I didn't eat anything.
- Did you go out last night or **were you** too tired?

# Exercises

## 5.1 Read what Laura says about a typical working day:



LAURA

I usually get up at 7 o'clock and have a big breakfast. I walk to work, which takes me about half an hour. I start work at 8.45. I never have lunch. I finish work at 5 o'clock. I'm always tired when I get home. I usually cook a meal in the evening. I don't usually go out. I go to bed at about 11 o'clock, and I always sleep well.

Yesterday was a typical working day for Laura. Write what she did or didn't do yesterday.

- |   |            |               |                  |       |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------------|-------|---------------|
| 1 | She got up | at 7 o'clock. | 7                | ..... | at 5 o'clock. |
| 2 | She        | .....         | a big breakfast. | 8     | .....         |
| 3 | She        | .....         |                  | 9     | .....         |
| 4 | It         | .....         | to get to work.  | 10    | .....         |
| 5 | .....      | at 8.45.      |                  | 11    | .....         |
| 6 | .....      | lunch.        |                  | 12    | .....         |

## 5.2 Complete the sentences using the following verbs in the correct form:

buy    catch    cost    fall    hurt    sell    spend    teach    throw    ~~write~~

- Mozart wrote more than 600 pieces of music.
- 'How did you learn to drive?' 'My father ..... me.'
- We couldn't afford to keep our car, so we ..... it.
- Dave ..... down the stairs this morning and ..... his leg.
- Joe ..... the ball to Sue, who ..... it.
- Kate ..... a lot of money yesterday. She ..... a dress which ..... £100.

## 5.3 You ask James about his holiday in the US. Write your questions.

- YOU: Where did you go ?  
JAMES: To the US. We went on a trip from San Francisco to Denver.
- YOU: How ..... ? By car?  
JAMES: Yes, we hired a car in San Francisco.
- YOU: It's a long way to drive. How long ..... ?  
JAMES: Two weeks. We stopped at a lot of places along the way.
- YOU: Where ..... ? In hotels?  
JAMES: Yes, small hotels or motels.
- YOU: ..... good?  
JAMES: Yes, but it was very hot – sometimes too hot.
- YOU: ..... the Grand Canyon?  
JAMES: Of course. It was wonderful.

## 5.4 Complete the sentences. Put the verb into the correct form, positive or negative.

- It was warm, so I took off my coat. (take)
- The film wasn't very good. I didn't enjoy it much. (enjoy)
- I knew Sarah was busy, so I ..... her. (disturb)
- We were very tired, so we ..... the party early. (leave)
- It was hard carrying the bags. They ..... really heavy. (be)
- The bed was very uncomfortable. I ..... well. (sleep)
- This watch wasn't expensive. It ..... much. (cost)
- The window was open and a bird ..... into the room. (fly)
- I was in a hurry, so I ..... time to call you. (have)
- I didn't like the hotel. The room ..... very clean. (be)

# Past continuous (I was doing)

**A** Study this example situation:



Yesterday Karen and Joe played tennis. They started at 10 o'clock and finished at 11.30.

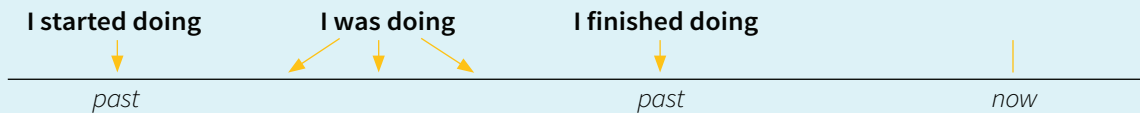
So, at 10.30 they **were playing** tennis.

they **were playing** =  
they were in the middle of playing, they had not finished

**was/were + -ing** is the past continuous:

he/she/it	<b>was</b>	<b>playing doing working</b> etc.
we/you/they	<b>were</b>	

**B** I **was doing** something = I was in the middle of doing it at a certain time. The action or situation started before this time, but had not finished:



- This time last year I **was living** in Hong Kong.
- What **were** you **doing** at 10 o'clock last night?
- I waved to Helen, but she **wasn't looking**.

**C** Compare I **was doing** (*past continuous*) and I **did** (*past simple*):

I **was doing** (= in the middle of an action)

- We **were walking** home when I met Dan. (in the middle of walking home)
- Kate **was watching** TV when we arrived.

I **did** (= complete action)

- We **walked** home after the party last night. (= all the way, completely)
- Kate **watched** TV a lot when she was ill last year.

**D** You can say that something **happened** (past simple) in the middle of something else (past continuous):

- Matt **phoned** while we **were having** dinner.
- It **was raining** when I **got** up.
- I **saw** you in the park yesterday. You **were sitting** on the grass and **reading** a book.
- I **hurt** my back while I **was working** in the garden.

But we use the past simple to say that one thing happened *after* another:

- I **was walking** along the road when I **saw** Dan. So I **stopped**, and we **talked** for a while.

Compare:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we <b>were having</b> dinner. (= we had already started before she arrived) | <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we <b>had</b> dinner. (= Karen arrived, and then we had dinner) |
|--|--|

**E** Some verbs (for example, **know** and **want**) are not normally used in continuous forms (**is + -ing**, **was + -ing** etc.). See Unit 4A for a list of these verbs.

- We were good friends. We **knew** each other well. (*not* we were knowing)
- I was enjoying the party, but Chris **wanted** to go home. (*not* was wanting)

# Exercises

## 6.1 Complete the sentences. Choose from:

was looking    ~~was wearing~~    wasn't listening    weren't looking  
was snowing    was working    were sitting    were you going

- Today Helen is wearing a skirt. Yesterday she was wearing trousers.
- 'What did he say?' 'I don't know. I .....
- We ..... at the back of the theatre. We couldn't hear very well.
- This time last year Steve ..... on a farm.
- They didn't see me. They ..... in my direction.
- The weather was bad. It was very cold and it .....
- I saw you in your car. Where .....?
- I saw Kate a few minutes ago. She ..... for you.

## 6.2 Which goes with which?

- When I got to the cafe
- We fell asleep
- Amy learnt Italian
- Tom didn't come out with us
- The car began to make a strange noise
- The TV was on
- When I first met Jessica

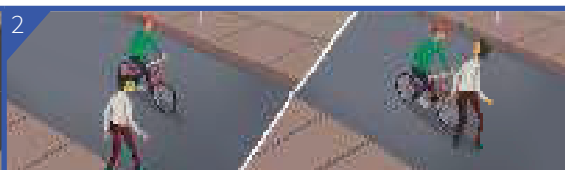
- when she was living in Rome.
- she was working in a clothes shop.
- when I was driving home.
- but nobody was watching it.
- while we were watching a film.
- ~~my friends were waiting for me.~~
- because he wasn't feeling well.

- f .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

## 6.3 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.



I saw (see) Sue in town yesterday, but she ..... (not/see) me. She ..... (look) the other way.



I ..... (cycle) home yesterday when a man ..... (step) out into the road in front of me. I ..... (go) quite fast, but luckily I ..... (manage) to stop in time, and I ..... (not/hit) him.

## 6.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

- Jenny was waiting (wait) for me when I arrived (arrive).
- 'What ..... (you / do) at this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'
- '..... (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'
- How fast ..... (you / drive) when the accident ..... (happen)?
- Sam ..... (take) a picture of me while I ..... (not / look).
- We were in a very difficult position. We ..... (not / know) what to do, so we ..... (do) nothing.
- I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last ..... (see) him, he ..... (try) to find a job.
- I ..... (walk) along the street when suddenly I ..... (hear) something behind me. Somebody ..... (follow) me. I was scared and I ..... (start) to run.
- When I was young, I ..... (want) to be a pilot. Later I ..... (change) my mind.
- Last night I ..... (drop) a plate when I ..... (do) the washing up. Fortunately it ..... (not / break).