

## 6.1 Past simple of *to be*: *was* and *were*

### GR6.1 »

- 1 We **were** in Lisbon last weekend.
- 2 She **wasn't** in class yesterday morning.
- 3 When **were** they born?
- 4 A **Was** it on the table last night?  
B No, it **wasn't**.
- 5 A **Were** they teachers in 2010?  
B Yes, they **were**.

*Was* and *wasn't* (*was not*) are the past forms of *is* and *isn't*.  
*Were* and *weren't* (*were not*) are the past forms of *are* and *aren't*.

Positive (+)		Negative (-)		
I	<b>was</b>	I	<b>wasn't</b>	at home.
He		He		
She		She		
It		It		
We	<b>were</b>	We	<b>weren't</b>	
You		You		
They		They		

### Yes/No questions and short answers

Yes/No questions (?)			Short answers			
<b>Was</b>	I	at home?	Yes, I	<b>was.</b>	No, I	<b>wasn't.</b>
	he		Yes, he		No, he	
	she		Yes, she		No, she	
	it		Yes, it		No, it	
<b>Were</b>	we		Yes, we	<b>were.</b>	No, we	<b>weren't.</b>
	you		Yes, you		No, you	
	they		Yes, they		No, they	

- We often use *was/were* with past time expressions, e.g. *last week*, *in 2003*, *500 years ago*, *yesterday*.  
*I was at work two hours ago.*  
*It wasn't very hot yesterday.*

We use *was/were* with *born*.  
*I was born in 1990.*

### Wh- questions

To make a *Wh-* question we use a *Wh-* question word before *was/were*.

The word order is the same as for *yes/no* questions.

**What** was your last job?

**Why** was she in Spain last week?

**When** were they born?

- 1 Complete the sentences and short answers with the past simple form of the verb *to be*.

- 1 We are in Venice now.  
We were in Rome last month.
- 2 They are in the office today.  
\_\_\_\_\_ they in the office last night? No, they \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 I'm on the bus now.  
I \_\_\_\_\_ on the train two hours ago.
- 4 She's in class now.  
\_\_\_\_\_ she in class at 9 a.m. this morning?  
Yes, she \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 We are at the post office now.  
We \_\_\_\_\_ at the police station at 3.30 p.m. yesterday.
- 6 It is cold today.  
\_\_\_\_\_ it cold yesterday? No, it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 They are at the cinema now.  
\_\_\_\_\_ they at the cinema last Friday? Yes, they \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 My glasses are in my bag.  
My glasses \_\_\_\_\_ on my head five minutes ago.

- 2 Complete the past simple questions 1-10 using the words in (brackets).

- 1 Where were you and your wife last week? (Where)
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ your first boss? (Who)
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ your father born? (When)
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ your favourite toy when you were five?  
(What)
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ you quiet in the meeting yesterday? (Why)
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ good last night? (the film)
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ on holiday last week? (they)
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ our colleagues two hours ago? (Where)
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ your desk messy yesterday? (Why)
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_ the hotel cheap? (Why)

- 3 Match answers a-j to questions 1-10 in exercise 2.

- |                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| a No, it wasn't.                | f In Paris.        |
| b Mr Chen.                      | g Yes, they were.  |
| c It wasn't close to the beach. | h I was very busy. |
| d I was tired.                  | i In a meeting.    |
| e In 1966.                      | j My toy car.      |

- 4 Complete the text. Use *was/were* or *wasn't/weren't*.

This year I'm unemployed and unhappy. Last year was different. Last year the sky <sup>1</sup> was blue all summer and I <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ happy. I <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ an engineer. My house <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ full of flowers and music. My children <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ at an expensive school. There <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ lots of interesting books on my desk. In my living room there <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ two computers and a big TV. I <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ very rich. My life <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ easy and we <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ worried about the future.