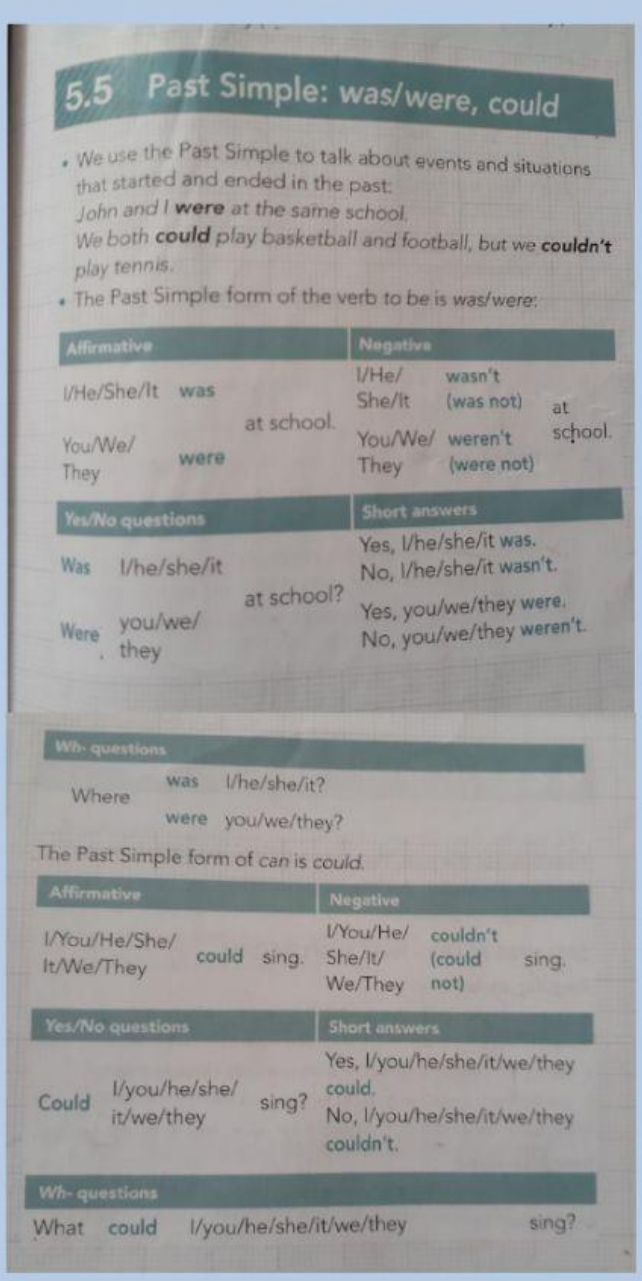

5.5 Past Simple: was/were, could

- We use the Past Simple to talk about events and situations that started and ended in the past:
  John and I ***were*** *at the same school.*
  We both ***could*** *play basketball and football, but we* ***couldn't*** *play tennis.*
- The Past Simple form of the verb *to be* is *was/were*:

Affirmative			Negative		
I/He/She/It	was	at school.	I/He/She/It	wasn't (was not)	at school.
You/We/They	were		You/We/They	weren't (were not)	

Yes/No questions			Short answers
Was	I/he/she/it	at school?	Yes, I/he/she/it was. No, I/he/she/it wasn't.
Were	you/we/they		Yes, you/we/they were. No, you/we/they weren't.

Wh- questions		
Where	was	I/he/she/it?
	were	you/we/they?

The Past Simple form of *can* is *could*.

Affirmative			Negative		
I/You/He/She/It/We/They	could	sing.	I/You/He/She/It/We/They	couldn't (could not)	sing.

Yes/No questions			Short answers
Could	I/you/he/she/it/we/they	sing?	Yes, I/you/he/she/it/we/they could. No, I/you/he/she/it/we/they couldn't.

Wh- questions			
What	could	I/you/he/she/it/we/they	sing?

1. **CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTIONS.**
   - **School *wasn't / couldn't* always fun for me.**
   - **When I was younger, I *wasn't / weren't* very good at sports.**
   - **I *wasn't / couldn't* understand Maths.**
   - **A: *Could / Were* you play a musical instrument when you were a child?**
     B: Yes, I *was / could*.
   - **A: *Were / Was* high school a nice experience for you?**
     B: Yes, it *was / were*.
   - **All my children *was / were* bad at History when they were at school.**
   - **A: What *was / were* your favourite school subjects?**
     B: History *was / could* great. I *couldn't / wasn't* speak French well, but that *was / could* interesting,too!
   - **Your sister *could / was* Miss Teen London. *Could / Were* you jealous?**

2. **COMPLETE THE SENTENCES WITH *was/wasn't, were/weren't OR could/couldn't.***

- Science _____ a compulsory subject at my school. I _____ study Geography instead.
- When I _____ five, I _____ speak a little French.
- A: _____ you a noisy child? B: No, I _____.
- The other kids my age _____ very friendly to me, so I often felt lonely.
- At school I _____ understand Science at all. I _____ very bad at it.
- A: _____ Einstein good at Maths? B: Yes, he _____.
- A: What _____ you good at as a child? B: Well, I _____ run really fast.
- When my children_____ at primary school, they _____ play any musical instruments yet.
- Her secondary school _____ single-sex. There _____ boys and girls in her class.
- Last week it _____ very cold in the classroom. We _____ think or write!