

The Past Simple

1 Introduction

It all **happened** very quickly. The car **came** straight out of the side road, and the van **went** into the back of it. The van driver **didn't** have a chance. It **was** the car driver's fault.



2 Positive forms

A regular past form ends in -ed.

*It **happened** very quickly. The van **crashed** into the car.*

*I **posted** the letter yesterday. We once **owned** a caravan.*

For spelling rules, see page 370.

Some verbs have an irregular past form.

*The car **came** out of a side road. Vicky **rang** earlier. I **won** the game.*

*I **had** breakfast at six. The train **left** on time. We **took** some photos.*

For a list of irregular verbs, see page 383.

The Past Simple is the same in all persons except in the past tense of **be**.

POSITIVE

*I/he/she/it **was**
you/we/they **were***

*I **was** ill last week.
Those cakes **were** nice.*

3 Negatives and questions

NEGATIVE

*I/you/he/she/it/we/they **did not stop**
OR **didn't stop***

QUESTION

***did** I/you/he/she/it/we/they **stop**?*

*The car **did not stop**. The driver **didn't look** to his right.*

*What **did** you tell the police? ~ Nothing. **Did** you **ring** home? ~ Yes, I did.*

We do not use a past form such as **stopped** or **rang** in negatives and questions.

NOT *The car **didn't stopped** and NOT **Did you rang**?*

We also use **was** and **were** in negatives and questions.

NEGATIVE

*I/he/she/it **was not** OR **wasn't**
you/we/they **were not** OR **weren't***

QUESTION

***was** I/he/she/it?
were you/we/they?*

*I **wasn't** very well last week. The gates **weren't** open.*

*Where **was** your friend last night? **Was** your steak nice?*

4 Use

We use the Past Simple for something in the past which is finished.

*Emma **passed** her exam **last year**. We **went** to the theatre **on Friday**. Elvis Presley **died** in 1977.*

*I **knew** what the problem **was**. **When did** you **buy** this car? ~ About **three years ago**.*

Practice

A Positive forms (2)

What did Claire do on holiday last month? Look at her photos and use these words:
go out dancing, have a picnic, lie on the beach, play volleyball, swim in the sea



► She lay on the beach.

1 3
2 4

B Positive forms (2)

Complete the newspaper story about a fire. Put in the Past Simple forms of the verbs.

Two people ► died (die) in a fire in Ellis Street, Oldport yesterday morning. They
(1) (be) Herbert and Molly Paynter, a couple in their seventies. The fire
(2) (start) at 3.20 a.m. A neighbour, Mr Aziz,
(3) (see) the flames and (4) (call) the fire
brigade. He also (5) (try) to get into the house and rescue his
neighbours, but the heat (6) (be) too great. The fire brigade
(7) (arrive) in five minutes. Twenty fire-fighters
(8) (fight) the fire and finally (9) (bring) it
under control. Two fire-fighters (10) (enter) the burning building but
(11) (find) the couple dead.

C Negatives and questions (3)

Complete the conversation. Put in the Past Simple negatives and questions.

Claire: ► Did you have (you / have) a nice weekend in Paris?
Mark: Yes, thanks. It was good. We looked around and then we saw a show.
(1) (we / not / try) to do too much.
Claire: What sights (2) (you / see)?
Mark: We had a look round the Louvre. (3) (I / not / know)
there was so much in there.
Claire: And what show (4) (you / go) to?
Mark: Oh, a musical. I forget the name. (5) (I / not / like) it.
Claire: Oh, dear. And (6) (Sarah / enjoy) it?
Mark: No, not really. But we enjoyed the weekend. Sarah did some shopping, too, but
(7) (I / not / want) to go shopping.