

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.

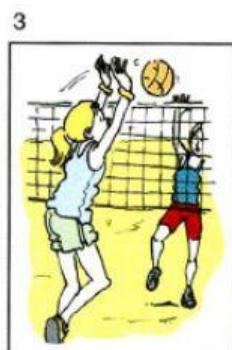
Emma passed her exam last year. We went to the theatre on Friday. Elvis Presley died in 1977.

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 forgot 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.