

1 Past simple

+	verb + -ed*	<i>I wanted it.</i>
-	did not + verb	<i>I didn't want it.</i>
?	did ... + verb?	<i>What did you want?</i>

*Regular verbs add -ed or -d to the verb:

want → wanted hope → hoped

Many common verbs are irregular (> See Web page: Irregular verbs):

think → thought make → made

To be is irregular:

am/is (not) → was (not); are (not) → were (not)

We use the past simple:

- for completed actions and events in the past:
*We **had** an exam on Thursday.*
*We **caught** the coach.*
- for a sequence of actions or events:
*I **went** round the shops, then I **went** to the cinema.*
- for permanent or long-term situations in the past:
*I really **enjoyed** myself when I **was** a teenager.*
- for repeated events:
*Jack's grandmother **went** to lots of concerts.*
*She always **asked** for an autograph when she **met** someone famous.*

2 Past continuous

+	was/were + verb + -ing	<i>They were waiting.</i>
-	was/were not + verb + -ing	<i>She wasn't waiting.</i>
?	was/were ... + verb + -ing?	<i>Were you waiting?</i>

We use the past continuous:

- for an activity beginning before a past action and continuing until or after it. The action is usually in the past simple:
*We **did** some revision while we **were travelling**.*
*When we **were queuing** for the cinema, we **saw** a famous footballer.*
- for two things happening at the same time:
*He **was buying** a burger and all the crowds **were walking** past.*
- for repeated events, with a word like *always* or *continually*, especially if the speaker is criticising the activity:
*She **was always worrying** about her homework. (= Jack's grandmother thinks she worried too much.)*
- for unfulfilled plans, with verbs like *hope*, *plan*, etc.:
*I **was hoping** to find a new jacket. (= but I didn't find one)*

⚠ State verbs are nearly always used in the past simple, not the past continuous (> see Unit 1, B3):

*I **didn't know** him. (not ~~I wasn't knowing~~ him)*

2 Fill in the gaps with the past simple or past continuous form of the verbs.

My parents got (get) to know each other when they were studying (study) at university.
 Doctor Fisher travelled (travel) widely as a young man and always kept (always keep) a diary.
 I saw (see) my brother and his friend when I waited (wait) for the bus, but they didn't see (not see) me.
 Lily filled (fill) in the application form and gave (give) it to the receptionist.
 While I worked (work) in Rome, I met (meet) a girl who looked (look) just like your sister.
 Simon bought (buy) a new laptop because his old one always crashed (always crash).
 I missed (miss) your text because my phone was charged (charge) in another room.
 Anna's feeling depressed because she hoped (hope) for a pay rise last week, but she didn't get (not get) one.
 The lights went (go) out while she was having (have) a party in her house.
 She went (go) quietly out of her bedroom and stood (stand) behind the door so she could hear what they were saying.
 I hoped (hope) my colleagues would say 'happy birthday' when I got to work, but nobody said (say) anything.

Review IRREGULAR VERBS

1 Complete the text with the past simple form of these verbs.

be begin come drink eat explain feed find get give go have know learn
meet read seem speak spread write

The mystery of Kaspar Hauser

The mystery of Kaspar Hauser (1) began in Nuremberg, Germany, about 200 years ago. One morning, the people of the town (2) _____ a young man standing alone in the square. He was holding a piece of paper in his hand. The paper (3) _____ only that he (4) _____ the son of a soldier. Kaspar (5) _____ how to say a few words and when given a paper and pencil he (6) _____ his name, but he (7) _____ completely ignorant about everyday life. At first he (8) _____ only bread and (9) _____ only water, but he gradually (10) _____ used to ordinary meals. He also (11) _____ to talk properly.



The real truth about his birth remains a mystery, but it is probable that his father kept him in one small room for the whole of his early life. He (12) _____ him on bread and (13) _____ him water to drink. Kaspar never (14) _____ out, he never (15) _____ to anyone or (16) _____ other children. In spite of this extraordinary childhood, Kaspar was not stupid. He (17) _____ books and (18) _____ discussions with teachers and philosophers. News about Kaspar (19) _____ through Europe and visitors (20) _____ from abroad to meet him.

3 used to + verb and would + verb

+	used to + verb	He used to read comics.
-	did not use to + verb	We didn't use to read comics.
?	did ... use to + verb?	Did you use to read comics?

+	would + verb	He would read comics.
-	would not + verb	We wouldn't read comics.
?	would ... + verb?	Would you read comics?

We use **used to** and **would** to talk about past habits when we are emphasising that they are no longer true:

I used to collect all the autographs of film stars when I was a teenager. (= she doesn't do this now)

I would go up to town on my own. (= she doesn't do this now)

Used to can describe actions and states, but **would** can only describe actions:

All the teenagers **used to / would scream** at pop concerts.

They **used to be** crazy about the Beatles. (**not would be crazy**)

▲ Notice the position of frequency adverbs (> see Unit 8) with **used to**:

I often used to study on my own. (**not I used to often study**)

▲ **Used to** is much more common than **would**.

4 be/get used to + -ing or noun

Be used to means 'be accustomed to'. It can be past, present or future, unlike *used to*, which is a past tense.
I'm used to working at weekends. (= I often work at weekends, it's normal for me now)

The question form is:

Are you used to working at weekends?

Get used to means 'gradually become accustomed to'. It can be past, present or future, unlike *used to*, which is a past tense.

My new school starts at 7.30. I'm not used to starting classes so early but I guess I'll soon get used to doing it.
(= My previous school started later, but I'll soon become accustomed to the change and it won't bother me.)

Be/get used to can be followed by -ing or by a noun/pronoun:

He wasn't used to criticism and found it hard to accept.

(= People hadn't criticised him before so he didn't like it.)

My parents are getting used to a quiet house, now the children have all left home.

(= When the children first left, my parents found the house strangely quiet, but it's gradually becoming normal for them.)

3 Choose the correct form of the verbs in this text.

My granny is 93 and she's come to live with us at our house. We're all pleased because we love having her near us. She's a very independent person and until this year, she (1) *refused* / *was refusing* to move to the flat on our ground floor. But last month she suddenly (2) *changed* / *was changing* her mind and I (3) *asked* / *would ask* her why. She explained that for years, nobody in her village (4) *would lock* / *was locking* their front doors and the place (5) *used to feel* / *would feel* safe, but last month (6) she *met* / *was meeting* a neighbour in the street when she (7) *was walking* / *would walk* home from the shops and (8) *heard* / *was hearing* some bad news. Thieves (9) *were breaking* / *got used to breaking* into people's houses while they (10) *were sitting* / *would sit* in their back gardens.

She (11) *realised* / *was realising* that she (12) *wasn't wanting* / *didn't want* to live alone any more. She (13) *isn't used* / *didn't use* to being in the town yet, but it's not as difficult as she (14) *was thinking* / *thought* it might be, and she loves seeing us more often.

4 Fill in the gaps with a suitable form of be/get used to.

- 1 Rita's very tired this morning. She isn't used to (not) going to bed late.
- 2 Don't worry about the children: they _____ going to school by bus.
- 3 My new boss _____ giving orders, not receiving them.
- 4 She _____ (not) drinking very strong coffee and it made her ill.
- 5 _____ (you) our climate or do you still miss the sunshine?
- 6 I had never stayed in such an expensive hotel before, but I soon _____ it.