

Past simple (I did)

A

Study this example:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart **was** an Austrian musician and composer. He **lived** from 1756 to 1791. He **started** composing at the age of five and **wrote** more than 600 pieces of music. He **was** only 35 years old when he **died**.

Lived/started/wrote/was/died are all *past simple*.



B

Very often the past simple ends in **-ed** (*regular verbs*):

- I work in a travel agency now. Before that I **worked** in a department store.
- We **invited** them to our party, but they **decided** not to come.
- The police **stopped** me on my way home last night.
- Laura **passed** her exam because she **studied** very hard.

For spelling (**stopped**, **studied** etc.), see Appendix 6.

But many verbs are *irregular*. The past simple does **not** end in **-ed**. For example:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| write → wrote | <input type="checkbox"/> Mozart wrote more than 600 pieces of music. |
| see → saw | <input type="checkbox"/> We saw Tanya in town a few days ago. |
| go → went | <input type="checkbox"/> I went to the cinema three times last week. |
| shut → shut | <input type="checkbox"/> It was cold, so I shut the window. |

C

In questions and negatives we use **did/didn't** + *infinitive* (**enjoy/see/go** etc.):

I she they	enjoyed saw went	did	you she they	enjoy? see? go?	didn't	I she they	enjoy see go
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- A: **Did** you **go** out last night?
B: Yes, I **went** to the cinema, but I **didn't enjoy** the film much.
- 'When **did** Mr Thomas **die**?' 'About ten years ago.'
- They **didn't invite** us to the party, so we **didn't go**.
- '**Did** you **have** time to do the shopping?' 'No, I **didn't**.'

In the following examples, **do** is the main verb in the sentence (**did ... do / didn't do**):

- What **did** you **do** at the weekend? (*not* What did you at the weekend?)
- I **didn't do** anything. (*not* I didn't anything)

D

The past of **be** (**am/is/are**) is **was/were**:

I/he/she/it	was/wasn't	was	I/he/she/it?
we/you/they	were/weren't	were	we/you/they?

Note that we do not use **did** in negatives and questions with **was/were**:

- I **was** angry because they **were** late.
- Was** the weather good when you **were** on holiday?
- They **weren't** able to come because they **were** so busy.
- Did you go out last night or **were** you too tired?

Exercises

5.1 Read what Laura says about a typical working day:



Laura

I usually get up at 7 o'clock and have a big breakfast. I walk to work, which takes me about half an hour. I start work at 8.45. I never have lunch. I finish work at 5 o'clock. I'm always tired when I get home. I usually cook a meal in the evening. I don't usually go out. I go to bed at about 11 o'clock, and I always sleep well.

Yesterday was a typical working day for Laura. Write what she did or didn't do yesterday.

- | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|----|--|---------------------------|
| 1 She got up | at 7 o'clock. | 7 | | at 5 o'clock. |
| 2 She | a big breakfast. | 8 | | tired when |
| 3 She | | 9 | | a meal yesterday evening. |
| 4 It | to get to work. | 10 | | out yesterday evening. |
| 5 | at 8.45. | 11 | | at 11 o'clock. |
| 6 | lunch. | 12 | | well last night. |

5.2 Complete the sentences using the following verbs in the correct form:

buy catch cost fall hurt sell spend teach throw write

- Mozart *wrote* more than 600 pieces of music.
- 'How did you learn to drive?' 'My father _____ me.'
- We couldn't afford to keep our car, so we _____ it.
- Dave _____ down the stairs this morning and _____ his leg.
- Joe _____ the ball to Sue, who _____ it.
- Ann _____ a lot of money yesterday. She _____ a dress which _____ £100.

5.3 You ask James about his holiday. Write your questions.

Hi. How are things?

Fine, thanks. I've just had a great holiday.

- Where *did you go* ?
To the U.S. We went on a trip from San Francisco to Denver.
- How _____ ? By car?
Yes, we hired a car in San Francisco.
- It's a long way to drive. How long _____ to get to Denver?
Two weeks.
- Where _____ ? In hotels?
Yes, small hotels or motels.
- _____ good?
Yes, but it was very hot – sometimes too hot.
- _____ the Grand Canyon?
Of course. It was wonderful.

5.4 Complete the sentences. Put the verb into the correct form, positive or negative.

- It was warm, so I *took* off my coat. (take)
- The film wasn't very good. I *didn't enjoy* it much. (enjoy)
- I knew Sarah was busy, so I _____ her. (disturb)
- We were very tired, so we _____ the party early. (leave)
- The bed was very uncomfortable. I _____ well. (sleep)
- The window was open and a bird _____ into the room. (fly)
- The hotel wasn't very expensive. It _____ much to stay there. (cost)
- I was in a hurry, so I _____ time to phone you. (have)
- It was hard carrying the bags. They _____ very heavy. (be)

Unit 6

Past continuous (I was doing)

A

Study this example situation:



Yesterday Karen and Jim played tennis. They started at 10 o'clock and finished at 11.30. So, at 10.30 they **were playing** tennis.

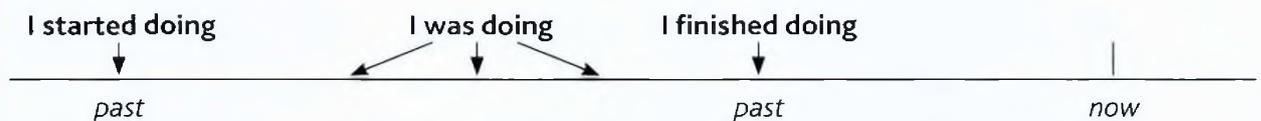
They **were playing** = they were in the middle of playing. They had not finished playing.

Was/were -ing is the *past continuous*:

I/he/she/it we/you/they	was were	playing doing working etc.
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B

I was doing something = I was in the middle of doing something at a certain time. The action or situation had already started before this time, but had not finished:



- This time last year I **was living** in Brazil.
- What **were you doing** at 10 o'clock last night?
- I waved to Helen, but she **wasn't looking**.

C

Compare the *past continuous* (I was doing) and *past simple* (I did):

Past continuous (in the middle of an action)

- I **was walking** home when I met Dan. (in the middle of walking home)
- Kate **was watching** TV when we arrived.

Past simple (complete action)

- I **walked** home after the party last night. (= all the way, completely)
- Kate **watched** television a lot when she was ill last year.

D

We often use the past simple and the past continuous together to say that something happened in the middle of something else:

- Matt **phoned** while we **were having** dinner.
- It **was raining** when I **got** up.
- I **saw** you in the park yesterday. You **were sitting** on the grass and **reading** a book.
- I **hurt** my back while I **was working** in the garden.

But we use the past simple to say that one thing happened after another:

- I **was walking** along the road when I **saw** Dan. So I **stopped**, and we **had** a chat.

Compare:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we were having dinner. (= we had already started before she arrived) | <input type="checkbox"/> When Karen arrived, we had dinner. (= Karen arrived, and then we had dinner) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

E

Some verbs (for example, **know** and **want**) are not normally used in the continuous (see Unit 4A):

- We were good friends. We **knew** each other well. (*not* We were knowing)
- I was enjoying the party, but Chris **wanted** to go home. (*not* was wanting)

Exercises

6.1 What were you doing at these times? Write sentences as in the examples. The past continuous is not always necessary (see the second example).

- 1 (at 8 o'clock yesterday evening) I was having dinner.
- 2 (at 5 o'clock last Monday) I was on a bus on my way home.
- 3 (at 10.15 yesterday morning) _____
- 4 (at 4.30 this morning) _____
- 5 (at 7.45 yesterday evening) _____
- 6 (half an hour ago) _____

6.2 Use your own ideas to complete the sentences. Use the past continuous.

- 1 Matt phoned while we were having dinner.
- 2 The doorbell rang while I _____.
- 3 The car began to make a strange noise when we _____.
- 4 Jessica fell asleep while she _____.
- 5 The television was on, but nobody _____.

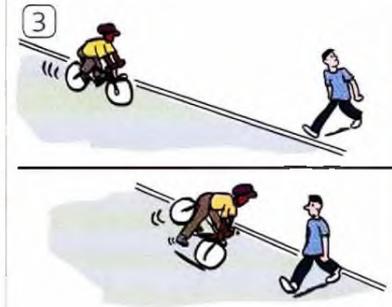
6.3 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.



1 I saw (see) Sue in town yesterday, but she _____ (not / see) me. She _____ (look) the other way.



2 I _____ (meet) Tom and Jane at the airport a few weeks ago. They _____ (go) to Paris and I _____ (go) to Rome. We _____ (have) a chat while we _____ (wait) for our flights.



3 I _____ (cycle) home yesterday when a man _____ (step) out into the road in front of me. I _____ (go) quite fast, but luckily I _____ (manage) to stop in time and _____ (not / hit) him.

6.4 Put the verb into the correct form, past continuous or past simple.

- 1 Jenny was waiting (wait) for me when I arrived (arrive).
- 2 'What _____ (you / do) at this time yesterday?' 'I was asleep.'
- 3 '_____ (you / go) out last night?' 'No, I was too tired.'
- 4 How fast _____ (you / drive) when the accident _____ (happen)?
- 5 Sam _____ (take) a picture of me while I _____ (not / look).
- 6 We were in a very difficult position. We _____ (not / know) what to do.
- 7 I haven't seen Alan for ages. When I last _____ (see) him, he _____ (try) to find a job.
- 8 I _____ (walk) along the street when suddenly I _____ (hear) footsteps behind me. Somebody _____ (follow) me. I was scared and I _____ (start) to run.
- 9 When I was young, I _____ (want) to be a pilot.
- 10 Last night I _____ (drop) a plate when I _____ (do) the washing-up. Fortunately it _____ (not / break).