

Tenses

Lesson 2: THE PAST TENSE

1. The Past Simple

1. Form: v + ed (except irregular verbs)

forms \ P.P.S	I, he, she, you, we, they
Positive form	Last Sunday, they worked for two hours. She was very well last week.
Negative form	They didn't work / did not work . She wasn't/ was not well.
Interrogative form	Did they work? Was she well? Were you happy?

2. Use

- We use the past tense for **completed events / actions** in the past.
*E.g.: Emma **passed** her exam last year.*
*E.g.: Gerald **was** in Australia twenty years ago.*

NOTE: "Would" and "used to" can also be used to express a **habit** in the past which no longer takes place.

*E.g.: We **used to** go sailing on the lake in summer.*

*E.g.: She **would** sit cross-legged in her red robes.*

2. The Past Continuous

1. Form: The past simple of **to be (was/ were)** + v-ing

Forms \ P.P.S	I, he, she, you, we, they
Positive form	I was walking . We were walking .
Negative form	I was not / wasn't walking . We were not / weren't walking .
Interrogative	Was I walking ? Were you playing ?

2. Use

- The past continuous tense is used to refer to a **long continuous action** that started and finished in the past.
- The past continuous tense is most commonly used when **two past actions** (one short action interrupting a long action) happened **at the same time**. In this situation, the *simple past tense* is used for the *shorter action* and the *past continuous tense* is used for the *longer action*. Time conjunctions **while** and **when** are usually used in order to make the tense differences clear ("**while**" / "**as**" are used to identify the longer action and "**when**" is often used to identify the shorter one).

*E.g.: I **was taking** a shower **when** you **called** me.*

*E.g.: **While** I **was taking** a shower, you **called** me.*

Past continuous or past simple?

- ✓ We use the past continuous when we are in the **middle** of an action in the past. However, the past simple is used for a **completed action** in the past.
*E.g.: I **was driving** home. (I was in the middle of my journey.)*
*E.g.: I **drove** home. (I finished my journey.)*
- ✓ We often use the past continuous and simple together when a shorter action interrupts a long action.
*E.g.: **As we were driving** down the hill, a strange object **appeared** in the sky.*
*E.g.: **While Laura was sitting** in the garden, it suddenly **began** to rain.*
- ✓ We use two past simple verbs for two short actions coming one after another.
*E.g.: When we **saw** the spaceship, we **stopped** the car. (= We saw it and then we stopped.)*

Practice

Activity 1: Put the verbs between brackets in the correct tense.

1. I _____ (sit) in a café when you _____ (call).
2. When you _____ (arrive) at the party, who _____ (be) there?
3. Susie _____ (watch) when she _____ (hear) the noise.
4. Yesterday, I _____ (go) to the library. Then, I _____ (have) a swim. Later, I _____ (meet) Julie for coffee.
5. We _____ (play) when John _____ (hurt) his ankle.
6. He _____ (live) in Russia then _____ (move) to France.
7. Her train _____ (get) to the station as we _____ (wait) on the platform.
8. On holiday, we _____ (visit) Rome, _____ (see) the Vatican, and _____ (spend) a few days at the beach.
9. What _____ (you/do) when I _____ (call) last night?