

# 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 <b>worked</b> for two hours. She <b>was</b> very well last week.
Negative form	They <b>didn't work / did not work</b> . She <b>wasn't/ was not</b> well.
Interrogative form	<b>Did</b> they work? <b>Was</b> she well? <b>Were</b> 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 <b>was walking</b> . We <b>were walking</b> .
Negative form	I was <b>not / wasn't walking</b> . We <b>were not / weren't walking</b> .
Interrogative	<b>Was</b> I <b>walking</b> ? <b>Were</b> you <b>playing</b> ?

### 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?