

2. Past Tenses

2.1. The simple past tense

Regular verbs form the Simple Past with the addition of '-ed' in affirmative sentences , but use the forms 'did' and 'didn't' followed by the bare infinitive in negative and interrogative forms for question and answer forms.

- *He worked hard on the car yesterday.(affirmative form)*
- *Did he work hard on the car yesterday?(interrogative form)*
- *He didn't work hard on the car yesterday. (negative form)*

Irregular verbs take many forms in the affirmative, but use the forms 'did / didn't' in negative and interrogative forms question and answer forms as regular verbs do.

- *He drove a long way yesterday.*
- *Did he drive a long way yesterday?*
- *He didn't drive a long way yesterday.*

The Simple Past Tense is used:

1- for an action completed in the past at a known time:

- *He had six accidents last year.*

2- in the interrogative to ask a question about a definite past time: !!!!!

- *When did he have his last accident?*

3- for a definite period of time in the past:

- *He drove along the motorway for two hours.*

4- for an action which took place in the past for which the time is understood but not stated :

- *I bought my new car in London.*

5- for habitual actions and states in the past:

- *He was furious every time he got a parking ticket.*
- *He never drove faster than the speed limit.*

The simple past or the present perfect

Very often there is confusion in the use of the present perfect and the past simple.

1- We use the past simple when we think that the situation is finished and the present perfect when we think that the situation has not yet finished.

- My father worked in this bank for 25years. (He is no more working now)
- My father has worked in this bank for 25 years. (He's still working there)
- We lived in Algiers in 2005. (No more now)
- We've lived in Algiers since 2005. (Until now)

2- With time expressions referring to the present, such as this morning/year and today, we use the past simple when we think that this time period is completed; and we use the present perfect when we think that this time period has not yet finished.

- I didn't take my coffee this morning. (The morning is over and I didn't take my coffee)
- I haven't taken my coffee this morning. (It's still the morning and I may take my coffee later)

3-We use the present perfect to give a piece of news and the past simple to give and ask for details about things such as what, where and why.

- A: I have sold my car. (A piece of news)
B: Oh, have you? When did you sell it? (Asking for details)
A: I sold it the day before yesterday. (Giving details)

2.2. The Past Continuous Tense

The Past Continuous Tense is formed with 'was/were' followed by the Present Participle of the verb, '—ing', in affirmative and question forms. The negative is formed by 'wasn't/weren't', followed by the Present Participle of the verb, '—ing'.

- *They were crossing the road while the traffic lights were changing. (affirmative form)*
- *Were they crossing the road while the traffic lights were changing? (interrogative form)*
- *They weren't crossing the road while the traffic lights were changing. (negative form)*

The Past Continuous Tense is used

1- for continuous past action:

- *It was snowing heavily all day yesterday so I drove carefully.*

2- for frequently repeated actions in the past:

- *My old car was always breaking down.*

3- for interrupted past action (first action interrupted by second) :

- *He was racing down the motorway when a tyre burst.*

4- for two actions in the past occurring simultaneously:

- *The lorry driver was braking hard while the traffic lights were changing.*

5- to express intention in the past but in fact not done:

- *I was going to buy a car but I didn't have enough money.*

2.3. The Past Perfect Tense

The Past Perfect Tense is formed with 'had' followed by the Past Participle of the verb in the affirmative and **question** forms. The negative is formed with 'hadn't' followed by the Past Participle.

- *The thief had driven off in the stolen car before the police arrived. (affirmative form)*
- *Had the thief driven off in the stolen car before the police arrived? (interrogative form)*
- *The thief hadn't driven off in the stolen car before the police arrived. (negative form)*

The Past Perfect Tense is used:

1- to express the first of two past actions:

- *He had already parked the car when I arrived.*

2- to show an action that happened before a stated past time:

- *I had finished cleaning the car before one o'clock.*
- *He had changed the wheel by lunch time.*

3- to explain a past situation before a time understood but not stated:

- *He had never driven before.*

2.4. The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

The Past Perfect Continuous Tense is formed with 'had been' followed by the Present Participle of the verb in the affirmative and question forms. The negative is formed with 'hadn't been' followed by the Present Participle.

- *He had been drinking when the police stopped him. (affirmative form)*

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- *Had he been drinking when the police stopped him? (interrogative form)*
- *He hadn't been drinking when the police stopped him. (negative form)*

The Past Perfect Continuous Tense is used:

1- for a repeated action in the past implying continuity:

- *He had been trying to telephone the breakdown service for two hours.*

2- for a continuous past action completed before another past action:

- *He had been driving all day, so he was very tired when he arrived.*

Past tenses:

Exercises:

Ex7: Choose a verb to complete the sentence. Use the present perfect or the past simple.

oversleep wear go have spend read

1. I a lot this week, but I have to get the book completely finished by this weekend.
2. A: Shall I make us some dinner? It's already 8 o'clock. B: No, thanks. I to the dentist this afternoon and my mouth hurts too much to eat anything.
3. I three lectures today and I still have two more later this afternoon.
4. It was so hot today that Ishorts and T-shirt at work.
5. We £200 on food this month and there's another week to go before I get paid.
6. A: Do you want to lift home? B:No, I this morning because my alarm clock didn't go off, so I need to work late.

Ex8: Things that have happened today are on the radio and TV news. Give the news using the present perfect and the past simple.

1. The Prime Minister / visit Luton University / speak to students there / earlier today

The Prime Minister has visited Luton University. He spoke to students there earlier

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today.

2. The train drivers / go on strike / stop work /at twelve o'clock

.....

3. The Queen / arrive in Toronto / fly there / in an RAF aircraft

.....

4. Two men / escape from Parkhurst Prison / get away / during the night

.....

5. The actor Howard Bates / die in car accident / his car / crash into a wall

.....

6. Linda Jones / win the woman's marathon / run it / in 2 hours 27 minutes

.....

Ex9: In the following sentences put the verbs in brackets in either the past simple or the past continuous tense. Put any other words in the brackets in the correct place. Look at the example provided.

1. While the teacher *was explaining* (explain) the sum on the blackboard, the children *were throwing* (throw) paper aeroplanes around the classroom.
2. Eve (live) in Athens when she (meet) the man who was to become her husband.
3.you..... (not work) at Maclroy's when they (have) that terrible fire?
4. As it (get) foggier it (become) almost impossible to steer the boat along the narrow canal.
5. I (hear) a strange noise just as I (go) to sleep.
6. When the fire alarm (go) off, we (leave) the building as quickly as possible.
7. At the place where we (live) before, our neighbours (always/ have) violent arguments late at night.
8. I (hope) you'd come round for tea one afternoon next week.

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9. Fiona (live) in New York when her first novel
(publish).
10. On looking out of the window, Dick (see) it was another dry day.
The wind (blow) hard and big clouds
(gather) on the horizon.
11. While the others (lie) on the beach, poor old Gary
..... (work) in the office as usual.
12. When the phone (ring), she (pick)
it up and (put) it down again!
13. I (never/understand) why you
(always/ get) to school late on Monday mornings.
14. Beverly (work) in a fast-food restaurant for a few months
before she (go) to college.
15. When I (be) a lad, we (always/go)
to Heysham for summer holidays. I (really/love) the place
even though it (often/rain).

Ex10: Daniel is telling the story of how he forgot his passport. Put the verbs in brackets in correct form.

..... (1-it/happen) last August at the airport. A few weeks before,
a group of us (2-decide) to go to Greece together for a
holiday.(3-we/wait)in the queue at passport control when
suddenly (4-I/realize) that
(5-I/forget) my passport. (6-it/be) quite a shock.
..... (7-I/hurry) to a phone and
(8-ring) my parents. (9-they/work) in the garden, but
luckily..... (10- my mother /hear) the phone.
.....(11-they/find) the passport and immediately
..... (12-drive) to the airport with it.
(13-I/meet) them at the information desk. (14-we/have) no
time to talk, but (15-I/say) goodbye to them earlier that

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morning. (16-I/run) all the way to the plane. I was just in time.
When(17-I/get) there, the passengers
(18-sit) in their seats ready for take-off. When (19-they/see)
me, everyone (20-start) clapping.

Ex11: Complete this text with these verbs.

was (×2) explained didn't eat have gone had cooked hadn't eaten
were went didn't lock have heard had reached hadn't locked

One of the four-year-olds in the reading group suddenly said, 'This is the silliest story I (1)ever!' I (2) in the middle of reading Goldilocks and the three Bears to the group. We (3)just the part in the story where Goldilocks goes into the bears' house and eat some of the food from bowls on the table.

'Where (4) the bears?' he asked.

'Maybe outside or playing in the woods,' I suggested.

'And their house was wide open? They (5)even the door before going out?'

'Well, in the old days, people (6) their doors.'

'And their food was on table, but they (7) it before they (8)outside?'

'Maybe they (9) it because it (10) too hot.'

'If you (11) that meal, you wouldn't (12)
Out and left it, would you?'

'Probably not, but it's just a story,' I (13) rather weakly.