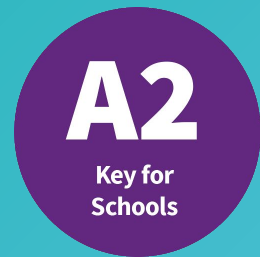# GOLD
experience

A2
Key for Schools

Unit 3 – past simple

The past simple

Let's look at:

1. When we use the past simple.

2. The verb *to be* in the past simple.

3. Regular verbs in the past simple.

4. Irregular verbs in the past simple.

5. Negative, question and short answer forms in the past simple.

When do we use it?

Function: When do we use it?

Function: When do we use it?

1. To talk about completed or finished actions in the past.

Last year, I travelled to Paris.

She travelled in the past. The action is completed. She isn't travelling now.

2. To describe states or feelings from a specific time in the past.

I wanted to visit the Eiffel Tower. I really liked it.

She had these feelings at this specific time in the past (last year).

3. Often used with past time expressions (which refer to specific times).

Last year, I travelled to Paris.

Other past time expressions used with the past simple are:
1. **Yesterday**
2. **Last month/year/week**
3. **Two days/a month ago**
4. **In 1997**

The verb *to be* in the past simple.

Form: the verb *to be* in the past simple

The Eiffel Tower is always very busy in the afternoons. What time were you there?

I was at the Tower early, but my friends were late. It was 2pm when we climbed to the top and we were very hot! I wasn't very happy!

I	wasn't (was not)
you	weren't (were not)
he/she/it	wasn't (was not)
we	weren't (were not)
you (plural)	weren't (were not)
they	weren't (were not)

Look at the example of a question in the conversation above. Do we use an auxiliary verb with the verb *to be*?

No. We invert the subject and the verb to be.

was

was

were

were

were

were

Now add the negatives. Look at the example first…

Look at the continuation of the conversation above about Paris. Find examples of the verb *to be* in the past and complete the table.

Form: the verb *to be* in the past simple

subject	positive	negative
I	was **e.g. I was early.**	wasn't (was not) **e.g. I wasn't on time.**
you	were **e.g. You were tired.**	weren't (were not) **e.g. You weren't there.**
he/she/it	was **e.g. It was busy.**	wasn't (was not) **e.g. She wasn't tired.**
we	were **e.g. We were hot.**	weren't (were not) **e.g. We weren't there early.**
you (pl.)	were **e.g. You were happy.**	weren't (were not) **e.g. You weren't tired.**
they	were **e.g. They were late.**	weren't (were not) **e.g. They weren't there on time.**

question form			short answer
(question word) + **e.g. Where** **-**	**verb *to be* +** **were** **Were**	**subject ?** **you?** **you tired?**	**Yes/No, + subject + verb *to be*.** **-** **Yes, I was./No, I wasn't.**

We make questions with the verb *to be* by inverting the subject and the verb. Look at the example below.

Remember, there are two types of questions – open questions (which need long answers) and closed questions (which need *yes/no* answers).

We use short answers with closed questions.

Regular verbs...

Regular verbs

Last year, I **travelled** to Paris because I **wanted** to visit the Eiffel Tower. I really **liked** it, but it was very busy and there were many people.

Look at the conversation you read earlier. There are three examples of regular verbs in the past simple. Can you find them?

What do we add to the verb to create a regular conjugation in the past simple?

We add -ed.

Sometimes the spelling changes a little. Is there an example here?

Yes - 'travelled'. Double the consonant 'l' + -ed.

Regular verbs

We add _-ed_ to the verb to make a regular past simple conjugation.

regular verbs in the past simple		
wanted	liked	travelled
visited	cooked	arrived
decided	danced	lived
studied	watched	played

Here are some examples of regular past simple verbs.

Here, the verb ends in -y (_study_) and it changes to -ied. This doesn't always happen, e.g. _play – played_.

Verb ends in the letter -e so just + -d.

Double consonant + -ed.

In American English, '_travelled_' only has one '_l_'.

Notice how some of the verbs have small changes in spelling.

Let's consider…

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Let's consider pronunciation

There are three different ways to pronounce the *-ed* past simple ending.

regular verbs in the past simple		
verbs ending in /t/ or /d/ = + /ɪd/ EXTRA SYLLABLE	**verbs ending an unvoiced sound= + /t/**	**verbs ending an voiced sound= + /d/**
wanted	liked	travelled
visited	cooked	arrived
decided	danced	lived
studied	watched	played

Let's look at this table again. Notice the three different columns.

The pronunciation of the *-ed* ending depends on the last sound in the verb.

Verbs that end in a /t/ or /d/ sounds = add an extra syllable with /ɪd/. Look at this example…

Verbs that end in an *unvoiced* sound (your throat doesn't vibrate when you make the sound) = + /t/ sound.
NO EXTRA SYLLABLE.

Verbs that end in an *voiced* sound (your throat vibrates when you make the sound) = + /d/ sound.
NO EXTRA SYLLABLE.

/t/ sound **/ɪd/ sound**

WANT WANTED

one syllable **two syllables**

/k/ sound (unvoiced) **/t/ sound**

LIKE LIKED

one syllable

/v/ sound (voiced) **/d/ sound**

LIVE LIVED

one syllable

Irregular verbs…

Irregular verbs

When I went to Paris, I ate a lot of different food. I visited lots of places and saw the famous Eiffel Tower too! I met new friends and really liked the city. I had a great time and bought lots of souvenirs!

Look at this part of the conversation. How many irregular past simple verbs can you find?

Six.

Can you match the irregular verbs in the conversation to the infinitives in the table? Look at the example.

infinitives	irregular past simple
be	was/were
meet	met
have	had
eat	ate
buy	bought
see	saw
go	went

Irregular verbs

infinitives	irregular past simple
be	I **was** happy.
meet	I **met** new friends.
have	I **had** a great time.
eat	I **ate** different food.
buy	I **bought** souvenirs.
see	I **saw** the Eiffel Tower.
go	I **went** to Paris.
come	I **came** home late.
win	I **won** the competition.
find	I **found** some money.

These are just a few examples of past simple irregular verbs.

Make a list of all the different irregular verbs you find. You need to learn them!

Negative and question forms…

Negative and question forms

negative form

I	didn't	go	to	the party.

subject + ? verb infinitive

question forms

Where	did	you	go?

question word . ? . subject ?

Did	you	go	to the party?

? + subject + verb infinitive

short answers

Yes,	I	did.

Yes/No, + ? + *did/didn't*

Look at the examples in the tables and complete the patterns with the boxes below.

verb infinitive

didn't (did not)

did

Did

subject

Negative and question forms

negative form

| I | | didn't | | go | to | the party. |

| subject | + | *didn't* | + | verb infinitive |

We use the auxiliary verb *didn't* with *I, you, he/she/it, we, you* (pl.), and *they*. It doesn't change.

question forms

| Where | | did | you | | go? |

| question word | + | *didn't* | + | subject | + | verb infinitive |

| Did | you | | go | | to the party? |

| *Did* | + | subject | + | verb infinitive |

We use short answers after closed questions (*yes/no* questions) like this one.

Short answers

| Yes, | | I | | did. |

| *Yes/no,* | + | subject | + | *did/didn't* |

Let's practise!

Practice activities

Complete the gaps in the past simple.

1. I never………**wanted**………………(want) to live in a big city, but I…………**moved**……………..(move) to New York last year!

2. When…………**did Sophie go**…………(Sophie/go) on holiday? I………**didn't see**……………(not see) her before

   she……………**left**……………..(leave).

3. Laura…………**was**…………(be) hungry, so she…………**went**……………(go) to a café and…………**ate**……….(eat) a sandwich.

4. A. …………**Did you speak**…………(you/speak) to your sister about your mum's birthday party? B. No. She………**wasn't**……(not be) at home

   when I…………**called**……….(call).

5. Chris and Glen…………**didn't buy**……………(not buy) anything, but I…………**bought**…………(buy) some new shoes.