

Lecture Two: Tenses Overview Part Two

Simple Past and Past Continuous

The English language employs various tenses to convey different temporal aspects of actions. Two essential past tenses are the Simple Past and Past Continuous tenses.

Simple Past Tense:

The Simple Past Tense is utilized to express actions that are completed or finished at a specific point in the past. Regular verbs typically add '-ed' to the base form, while irregular verbs have specific past forms.

Usage:

Used for completed actions or events in the past.

Often used with specific time expressions (yesterday, last week, in 2005).

Structure:

Regular verbs: Verb + "-ed" (e.g., walked, played).

Irregular verbs: Follow irregular patterns (e.g., went, saw).

Examples:

She traveled to Paris last year.

We visited our grandparents on the weekend.

He graduated from college in 2010.

Negative Form:

Auxiliary Verb "Did" + "Not" (Didn't): To form negative sentences in the simple past, use the auxiliary verb "did" with "not" before the base form of the main verb.

Subject + Didn't + Base Verb (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Example: I didn't see the movie last night.

Questions Form:

1. Yes/No Questions:

Did + Subject + Base Verb (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Examples:

Did she study for the exam? (Yes/No question)

Did they go to the party last night? (Yes/No question)

Explanation: Yes/No questions in the past simple tense start with the auxiliary verb "did," followed by the subject, the base verb, and the rest of the sentence.

2. Wh-Questions:

Wh-word + Did + Subject + Base Verb (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Examples:

What did you eat for breakfast? (Wh-question)

Where did he go on vacation? (Wh-question)

Explanation: Wh-questions in the past simple tense begin with a question word (such as what, where, when, why, who, how), followed by the auxiliary verb "did," the subject, the base verb, and the rest of the sentence.

Summary:

Yes/No Questions in Past Simple Tense:

Did + Subject + Base Verb (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Wh-Questions in Past Simple Tense:

Wh-word + Did + Subject + Base Verb (+ Rest of the Sentence)

In both cases, it's important to note the use of the auxiliary verb "did" for questions in the past simple tense. For Yes/No questions, the structure is straightforward, and for Wh-questions, a question word is added before "did."

Past Continuous Tense

The Past Continuous Tense describes actions that were ongoing or in progress at a specific moment in the past. It is formed using the past tense of the verb "to be" (was/were) and the present participle (base verb + -ing).

Usage:

Describes actions that were ongoing or in progress at a specific moment in the past.

Often used to set the scene or describe interrupted actions.

Structure: **Subject + was/were + verb-ing**

Examples:

While I was studying, my friends were watching TV.

At 8 PM yesterday, she was cooking dinner.

They were talking when the teacher entered the room.

Negative Form:

Auxiliary Verb "To Be" (Was, Were) + "Not": To create negative sentences in the past continuous, use the auxiliary verb "to be" (was, were) with "not" and add the past participle.

Subject + Was / Were + Not + Base Verb + -ing (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Example: I wasn't watching TV when you called.

Question Form:

1. Yes/No Questions:

Structure: **Was / Were + Subject + Base Verb + -ing (+ Rest of the Sentence)**

Examples:

Was she studying when I called? (Yes/No question)

Were they working on the project yesterday? (Yes/No question)

Explanation: Yes/No questions in the past continuous tense begin with the auxiliary verbs "was" or "were," followed by the subject, the base verb + "-ing," and the rest of the sentence.

2. Wh-Questions:

Structure: Wh-word + Was / Were + Subject + Base Verb + -ing (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Examples:

What were you doing at 8 PM last night? (Wh-question)

Why were they waiting for the bus in the rain? (Wh-question)

Explanation: Wh-questions start with a question word (such as what, where, when, why, who, how), followed by the auxiliary verbs "was" or "were," the subject, the base verb + "-ing," and the rest of the sentence.

Summary:

Yes/No Questions in Past Continuous Tense:

Was / Were + Subject + Base Verb + -ing (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Wh-Questions in Past Continuous Tense:

Wh-word + Was / Were + Subject + Base Verb + -ing (+ Rest of the Sentence)

Remember to use the appropriate question word at the beginning of Wh-questions to inquire about specific information. For Yes/No questions, the structure is straightforward with the inversion of the auxiliary verb "was" or "were."

Differences:

Past Simple:

Emphasizes the completion of actions.

Often used for a sequence of completed events.

Past Continuous:

Emphasizes the duration of actions.

Often used for actions that were ongoing at a specific moment.

Example to illustrate the difference:

Past Simple: "I wrote a letter." (Emphasis on completing the action of writing a letter.)

Past Continuous: "I was writing a letter when the phone rang." (Emphasis on the ongoing action of writing, which was interrupted by the phone ringing.)

Note

These verbs don't follow the regular "-ed" pattern in the past simple and past participle forms, so it's essential to memorize them. Keep in mind that there are more irregular verbs, but these are some of the commonly used ones.

Infinitive	Past Simple	Past Participle
Be	was/were	been
Have	had	had
Do	did	done
Say	said	said
Go	went	gone
Get	got	got/gotten
Make	made	made
Come	came	come
See	saw	seen
Take	took	taken
Give	gave	given
Find	found	found
Tell	told	told
Think	thought	thought
Know	knew	known
Become	became	become
Leave	left	left
Bring	brought	brought
Begin	began	begun
Understand	understood	understood

Exercise 01: Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in either the past simple or past continuous tense.*

1. Yesterday, while I _____ (read) a book, the power suddenly _____ (go) out.
2. They _____ (visit) the museum when they _____ (discover) a hidden room.
3. My family and I _____ (go) on a road trip last summer. We _____ (have) a great time.
4. While I _____ (work) on my project, my friends _____ (play) video games.
5. He _____ (break) his leg while he _____ (ski) in the Alps.