**5 ways you can use past forms to talk about times other than the past**

**1. When a plan isn't certain**

* *I****was******thinking****of going to that party later.*

In this example, the use of the past continuous makes the plan less definite in the speaker's mind than if she had used a present continuous sentence *I****am thinking****of going to the party later*.

**2. To be polite**

* *I****was wondering****if your report****was****ready.*

In this example, the use of the past continous and past simple make the speaker sound more polite than if he had used present tenses *I****am wondering****if your report****is****ready*. This is because the past sounds less direct.

**3. To sound more urgent**

* *It's time we****left****.*

In this example, the use of the past tense makes the speaker sound more urgent than if she had used the present tense *It's time****to leave***. By using the past, the speaker gives the idea that we should have left already.

**4. With 'wish' and 'if only'**

* *I wish I****had****more time.*
* *If only I****had****more time.*

After **wish** and **if only**, we have to use the past tense. Present tenses are not correct. However, these sentences have a hypothetical present of future meaning.

**5. With 'suppose' and 'what if'**

* *Suppose we****went****on holiday to Thailand.*
* *What if we****finished****before the deadline?*

When we use past tenses after **suppose** and **what if**, the situation sounds less likely than if we had used present tenses *Suppose we****go****on holiday to Thailand.*

**Past simple and past continuous review**

**Meaning and use**

We use the past simple for something that happened and finished in the past. We use it when we say or know the time when something happened. It is often used in stories, when one thing happened after another.

* *Last year, we****travelled****by jeep across the Sahara.*
* *When the car****stopped****, we all****got****out*.

We use the past continuous for something that happened in the past but was not finished at a particular time. This can be an exact time in the past (12 o’clock, etc.) or the time when another thing happened.

* *It was 12 o’clock and we****were standing****in the midday sun.*
* *Mick****was checking****the engine when the rescue helicopter arrived.*

We also use the past continuous to describe a scene or situation in the past or for an action that continued for some time.

* *The stars****were beginning****to come out.*
* *The dog****was barking****loudly.*

**Form**

**Past simple: positive**

For regular verbs, the past simple ends in **-ed.** Irregular verbs have different forms. The past simple form is the same for all persons (*I, you, he, she,* etc).

* *Suddenly the jeep****skidded****and****stopped****.*
* *Jake****thought****that we had a puncture.*

**Past continuous: positive**

The past continuous is **subject** **+** **was/were** **+** **-ing form**. There are no short forms of**was/were**.

* *Fortunately, we****were carrying****a toolkit.*

**Past simple: negative**We make the negative past simple with **didn’t** **+** **infinitive**.

* *We****didn’t stay****inside the jeep because that was even hotter*.

**Past continuous: negative**We make the negative past continuous with **wasn’t/weren’t** **+** **-ing form**

* *Despite the heat, Jess and Debs****weren’t wearing****hats.*

**Past simple: question**

The past simple question form is **did** **+** **subject** **+** **infinitive**for all persons. The short answers are **Yes, I did. / No, I didn’t**.

* ***Did****the helicopter****land****in the desert? Yes****it did****.*

**Past continuous: question**

The past continuous question form is **was/were** **+** **subject** **+ -ing** form. The short answers are **Yes, I was. / No, I wasn’t**.

* *How****were you feeling****when it arrived?*

**Take note: spelling changes**

In the past continuous, all verbs end in **-ing**, but sometimes the spelling changes:

* *take – tak****ing****hit – hit****ting****die – d****ying***