

# Past Simple - Form

How do we make the past simple tense in English?

## How to form the past simple of "be"

### Positive form

I <b>was</b>
you <b>were</b>
he <b>was</b>
she <b>was</b>
it <b>was</b>
we <b>were</b>
they <b>were</b>

*For example:*

- I **was** a teacher.
- It **was** a sunny day.
- They **were** at home last night.

## Negative form

Put **“not”** after the verb.

Full form	Short form
I <b>was not</b>	I <b>wasn't</b>
you <b>were not</b>	you <b>weren't</b>
he <b>was not</b>	he <b>wasn't</b>
she <b>was not</b>	she <b>wasn't</b>
it <b>was not</b>	it <b>wasn't</b>
we <b>were not</b>	we <b>weren't</b>
they <b>were not</b>	they <b>weren't</b>

For example:

- I **wasn't** a good student.
- He **was not** at school today.
- Shakespeare **wasn't** American.
- We **weren't** hungry.

## Question forms

Invert the subject and the verb, and put a question word ("what", "who", etc.) at the beginning for wh- questions.

Yes/No questions	
	<b>Was</b> I?
	<b>Were</b> you?
	<b>Was</b> he?
	<b>Was</b> she?
	<b>Was</b> it?
	<b>Were</b> we?
	<b>Were</b> they?

Wh- questions	
	<b>was</b> I?
What	<b>were</b> you?
Who	<b>was</b> he?
Where	<b>was</b> she?
When	<b>was</b> it?
Why	<b>were</b> we?
How	<b>were</b> they?
etc.	

For example:

- **Was** I right?
- **Were** you tired after work?
- **Was** it helpful?
- Where **were** you on Saturday?
- Who **was** she?
- Why **were** we in the park?
- How **were** they?

## How to form the past simple of other verbs

### Positive form

For all other verbs, the verb is the same for all subjects.

For **regular verbs**, add **-ed** to the base form (the infinitive without "to"), or just **-d** if the verb ends in **-e**. If the verb ends in a **consonant + y**, remove the **"y"** and add **-ied**.

Here are some examples:

play	live	study
I <b>played</b>	I <b>lived</b>	I <b>studied</b>
you <b>played</b>	you <b>lived</b>	you <b>studied</b>
he <b>played</b>	he <b>lived</b>	he <b>studied</b>
she <b>played</b>	she <b>lived</b>	she <b>studied</b>
it <b>played</b>	it <b>lived</b>	it <b>studied</b>
we <b>played</b>	we <b>lived</b>	we <b>studied</b>
they <b>played</b>	they <b>lived</b>	they <b>studied</b>

For example:

- I **played** Monopoly last night.
- We **lived** in a big city.
- She **studied** electrical engineering.

For **irregular verbs**, there is no rule for forming the past simple.

Here are some examples:

have	go	do
I <b>had</b>	I <b>went</b>	I <b>did</b>
you <b>had</b>	you <b>went</b>	you <b>did</b>
he <b>had</b>	he <b>went</b>	he <b>did</b>
she <b>had</b>	she <b>went</b>	she <b>did</b>
it <b>had</b>	it <b>went</b>	it <b>did</b>
we <b>had</b>	we <b>went</b>	we <b>did</b>
they <b>had</b>	they <b>went</b>	they <b>did</b>

For example:

- I **had** lunch at 1 pm.
- He **had** curly hair as a child.
- Mary **went** to the gym two days ago. (she **went**)
- They **went** to Disneyland last year.
- You **did** a good job.
- Ethel and I **did** the dishes. (we **did**)

## Negative form

Put "**did not**" between the subject and the main verb.  
The contraction of "**did not**" is "**didn't**".

Here we will use "**play**" as the main verb.

Full form	Short form
I <b>did not play</b>	I <b>didn't play</b>
you <b>did not play</b>	you <b>didn't play</b>
he <b>did not play</b>	he <b>didn't play</b>
she <b>did not play</b>	she <b>didn't play</b>
it <b>did not play</b>	it <b>didn't play</b>
we <b>did not play</b>	we <b>didn't play</b>
they <b>did not play</b>	they <b>didn't play</b>

For example:

- I **didn't play** basketball yesterday.
- You **didn't make** a mistake.
- They **did not like** the play.

## Question forms

Put **“did”** before the subject and put a question word (what, who, etc.) at the beginning for wh- questions.

Yes/No questions	
	Did I play?
	Did you play?
	Did he play?
	Did she play?
	Did it play?
	Did we play?
	Did they play?

Wh- questions	
What	did I play?
Who	did you play?
Where	did he play?
When	did she play?
Why	did it play?
How	did we play?
etc.	did they play?

For example:

- **Did** you **play** chess at school?
- **Did** she **work** here?
- How **did** you **fix** the computer?
- What **did** we **do** last Monday?
- When **did** it **rain**?

## Advanced grammar point

In old-fashioned English, and even in some formal contexts today, **"have"** is often treated similarly to **"be"** in past simple negative sentences and questions (we do not use "did"). You might see these structures in older books.

In other words, for **negative sentences**, we use "hadn't" instead of "didn't have".

Modern English:

- **You didn't have time.**
- **She didn't have a house.**

Old-fashioned English:

- **You hadn't time.**
- **She hadn't a house.**

Note: "You had not time" and "She had not a house" are also correct, but they are very rare.

For **questions**, we simply invert the subject and the verb.

Modern English:

- **Did you have time?**
- **Did she have a house?**

Old-fashioned English:

- **Had you time?**
- **Had she a house?**