

Past Simple: Narrative and Personal History

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: -ed endings, Spelling variations (e.g., stopped, studied), Vowel and consonant patterns, Regular action verbs, Common irregular stems (go/went, see/saw), High-frequency verbs, Spelling of irregular forms, Zero-change verbs (e.g., shut/shut), Use of 'did' and 'didn't', Infinitive after auxiliary

The **Past Simple** is the primary tense used to describe completed actions in the past, tell stories, and recount personal history.

1. Regular Verbs: Spelling Rules (-ed)

Most verbs are **regular**. We add **-ed** to the base form to make the past simple affirmative. However, spelling changes occur based on how the verb ends.

Rule	Example (Base → Past)
General Rule (Add -ed)	walk → walked , watch → watched
Ends in -e (Add -d)	live → lived , dance → danced
Consonant + y (Change -y to -ied)	study → studied , try → tried
Vowel + y (Add -ed)	play → played , enjoy → enjoyed
CVC Pattern (Double the consonant + ed)	stop → stopped , plan → planned

2. Irregular Verbs

Many high-frequency verbs are **irregular**. They do not follow the -ed rule. They must be memorized.

- **Vowel Changes:** *write* → *wrote*, *know* → *knew*, *speak* → *spoke*.
- **Completely Different:** *go* → *went*, *be* → *was/were*.
- **Zero-Change Verbs:** Some verbs remain exactly the same in the past.
 - *cost* → *cost*, *put* → *put*, *shut* → *shut*, *cut* → *cut*.

3. Negatives and Questions (The Rule of "Did")

For **all** verbs (except *to be*), we use the auxiliary verb **did** to form negatives and questions.

CRITICAL RULE: When you use **did** or **didn't**, the main verb must change back to the **infinitive (base form)**.

- **Negatives:** Subject + **didn't** + **Infinitive**
 - *Correct:* She **didn't go** to school.
 - *Incorrect:* ~~She didn't went to school.~~
- **Questions:** **Did** + Subject + **Infinitive?**
 - *Correct:* **Did** you **see** the movie?
 - *Incorrect:* ~~Did you saw the movie?~~

Practice Exercises

Instruction: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

- For **affirmatives**, use the Past Simple form (regular or irregular).
- For **negatives**, use didn't + verb.
- For **questions**, use did + subject + verb.

1. When I was a child, we _____ (live) in a small village near the coast.
2. They _____ (not/enjoy) the concert because the music was too loud.
3. Where _____ you _____ (go) for your summer holiday last year?
4. The famous author J.K. Rowling _____ (write) the first Harry Potter book in a café.
5. I dropped my phone, but fortunately, it _____ (not/break).
6. _____ (she/finish) her university degree in 2019?
7. We were very hungry, so we _____ (stop) at a roadside diner for lunch.
8. He _____ (study) very hard for the exam, so he passed with flying colors.
9. Why _____ (not/you/call) me when you arrived at the airport?
10. The ticket was very expensive; it _____ (cost) over one hundred dollars!
11. My grandmother _____ (teach) me how to bake bread when I was ten years old.
12. _____ (your parents/meet) at university or at work?
13. The meeting _____ (not/begin) on time because the manager was late.
14. They _____ (plan) a surprise party for their friend, but she found out about it.
15. How long _____ the journey _____ (take) by train?

Answer Key

1. lived
2. didn't enjoy
3. did ... go
4. wrote
5. didn't break
6. Did she finish
7. stopped
8. studied
9. didn't you call
10. cost
11. taught
12. Did your parents meet
13. didn't begin
14. planned
15. did ... take