



# Past Tenses

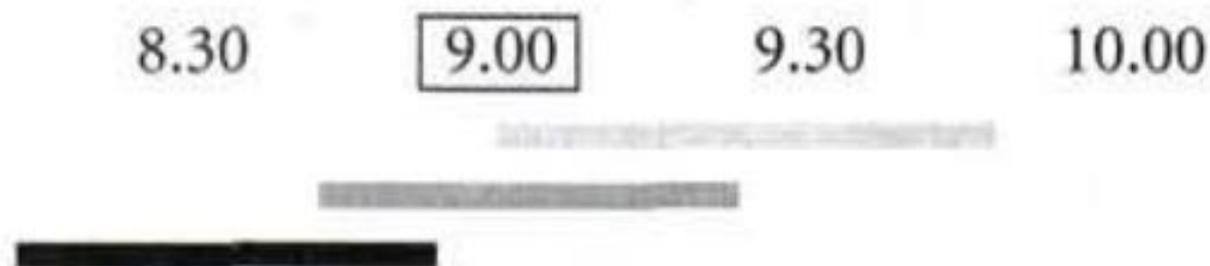
*College of Agriculture  
Department of Agricultural Machines  
English\_3  
Lecture #4*

# Introduction to past tenses

We use different past tenses to focus on different moments and periods of time in the past.

Look at the diagram. Read the sentences.

*When Andrea arrived at work at 9.00 a.m. ...*



-  *Her secretary opened the post.*
-  *Her secretary was opening the post.*
-  *Her secretary had opened the post.*

# Past Simple

## Form

The form of the Past Simple is the same for all persons.

## Positive

I		
He/She/It	finished	yesterday.
We	left	at 3 o'clock.
You	arrived	three weeks ago.
They		

## Negative

I She They (etc.)	didn't	finish leave	yesterday. at 3 o'clock.
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## Question

When	did	you he they (etc.)	finish the report? get married?
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## Short answer

Did you enjoy the meal?	Yes, we did. No, we didn't.
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## Use

The Past Simple is used to express:

- 1 a finished action in the past.

*We **met** in 2000.*

*I **went** to Manchester last week.*

*John **left** two minutes ago.*

- 2 actions that follow each other in a story.

*Mary **walked** into the room and **stopped**. She **listened** carefully. She **heard** a noise coming from behind the curtain. She **threw** the curtain open, and then she **saw** ...*

- 3 a past situation or habit.

*When I **was** a child, we **lived** in a small house by the sea. Every day I **walked** for miles on the beach with my dog.*

This use is often expressed with *used to*.

*We **used to** live in a small house ... I **used to** walk for miles ...*

## Spelling of verb + *-ed*

- 1 Most verbs add *-ed* to the base form of the verb.  
*worked wanted helped washed*
- 2 When the verb ends in *-e*, add *-d*.  
*liked used hated cared*
- 3 If the verb has only one syllable, with one vowel + one consonant, double the consonant before adding *-ed*.  
*stopped planned robbed*  
But we write *cooked, seated, and moaned* because there are two vowels.
- 4 The consonant is not doubled if it is *-y* or *-w*.  
*played showed*
- 5 In most two-syllable verbs, the end consonant is doubled if the stress is on the second syllable.  
*pre'ferred ad'mitted*  
But we write *'entered* and *'visited* because the stress is on the first syllable.
- 6 Verbs that end in a consonant + *-y* change the *-y* to *-ied*.  
*carried hurried buried*  
But we write *enjoyed*, because it ends in a vowel + *-y*.

There are many common irregular verbs.

## Past Simple and time expressions

Look at the time expressions that are common with the Past Simple.

I met her

last night.  
two days ago.  
yesterday morning.  
in 2001.  
in summer.  
when I was young.

# Past continuous

## Form

### Positive and negative

I He She It	was wasn't	working.
We You They	were weren't	

### Question

What	was	I she he it	doing?
	were	we you they	

*Were you looking for me?  
Were they waiting outside?*

### Short answer

*Yes, I was./No I wasn't.  
Yes, they were./No, they weren't.*

## Use

We often use the Past Continuous in sentences with the Past Simple. The Past Continuous refers to longer, background activities, while the Past Simple refers to shorter, completed actions.

*The children were playing in the garden ...*



*... when their grandparents arrived.*



The Past Continuous is used:

- 1 to express activities in progress before, and probably after, a particular time in the past.

*At 7 o'clock this morning I **was having** my breakfast.*

*I walked past your house last night. There was an awful lot of noise.*

*What **were** you **doing**?*

- 2 for descriptions.

*Jan looked beautiful. She **was wearing** a green cotton dress. Her eyes **were shining** in the light of the candles that **were burning** nearby.*

- 3 to express an interrupted past activity.

*When the phone rang, I **was having** a shower.*

*While we **were playing** tennis, it started to rain.*

- 4 to express an incomplete activity in the past in order to contrast with the Past Simple that expresses a completed activity.

*I **was reading** a book during the flight. (I didn't finish it.)*

*I **watched** a film during the flight. (the whole film)*

### **Note**

The Past Simple is usually used to express a repeated past habit or situation. But the Past Continuous can be used if the repeated habit becomes a longer setting for something. Compare:

*I went out with Jack for ten years.*

*I first met Harry while I was going out with Jack.*

# Past Simple or Past Continuous

1 Sometimes we can use the Past Simple or the Past Continuous. The Past Simple focuses on past actions as simple facts. The Past Continuous focuses on the duration of past situations and activities. Compare:

A *I didn't see you at the party last night.*

B *No. I **stayed** at home and **watched** football.*

A *I didn't see you at the party last night.*

B *No, I **was watching** football at home.*

2 Questions in the Past Simple and Past Continuous refer to different time periods: the Past Continuous asks about activities before; the Past Simple asks about what happened after.

*When the war broke out, Peter **was studying** medicine at medical school. He **decided** that it was safer to go home to his parents and postpone his studies.*

*What **was** Peter **doing** when the war broke out?*

*He **was studying**.*

*What **did** Peter **do** when the war broke out?*

*He **went** home to his parents.*

# Past Perfect

- *Perfect means “**before**” so Past Perfect refers to an action in the past that was completed before another action in the past.*

## Form

The form of the Past Perfect is the same for all persons.

## Positive and negative

I You We (etc.)	'd (had) hadn't	seen him before. finished work at 6 o'clock.
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## Question

Where had	you she they (etc.)	been before?
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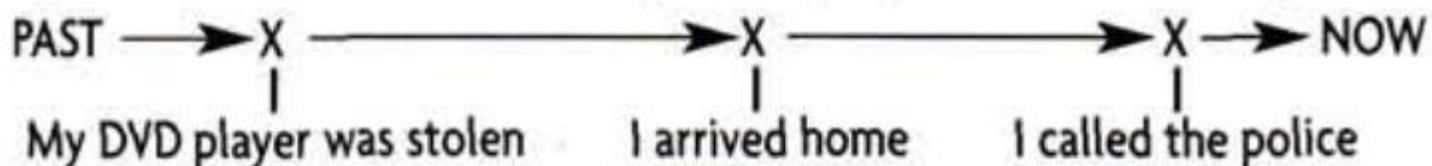
## Short answer

Had he already left?	Yes, he had. No, he hadn't.
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## Use

- 1 The Past Perfect is used to make clear that one action in the past happened *before* another action in the past.

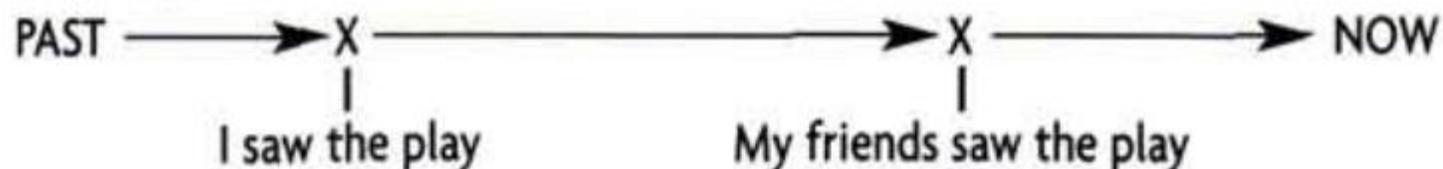
*When I got home, I found that someone **had broken** into my apartment and **had stolen** my DVD player, so I called the police.*



Action 1: Someone broke into my apartment and stole my DVD player.

Action 2: I got home and called the police.

*I didn't want to go to the theatre with my friends because I'd seen the play before.*



Action 1: I saw the play.

Action 2: My friends went to the theatre to see the play.

2 Notice the difference between the following sentences:

*When I got to the party, Peter **went** home.*

(= First I arrived, then Peter left.)

*When I got to the party, Peter **had gone** home.*

(= First Peter left, then I arrived.)

**Thank you**

