

UNIT 3

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.

3.1 Past Simple

Form

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

Positive

I He/She/It We You They	finished left arrived	yesterday. at 3 o'clock. three weeks ago.
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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 played on the beach with my brother.
 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

- Most verbs add *-ed* to the base form of the verb.
worked wanted helped washed
- When the verb ends in *-e*, add *-d*.
liked used hated cared
- 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.
- The consonant is not doubled if it is *-y* or *-w*.
played showed
- 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.
- 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.

▶▶ Irregular verbs p157

Past Simple and time expressions

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

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

3.2 Past Continuous

Form

Positive and negative

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

Question

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

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:

- 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?
- 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.
- to express an interrupted past activity.
When the phone rang, I was having a shower.
While we were playing tennis, it started to rain.
- 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 studied English for ten years.
I first met Harry while I was studying English.

▶▶ Workbook p20 More information on *while, during, and for*

3.3 Past Simple or Past Continuous?

- 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 meeting last night.*
B *No. I stayed at home and watched football.*
A *I didn't see you at the meeting last night.*
B *No, I was watching football at home.*
- 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 his father died, Peter was studying medicine at medical school. He decided that it was better to go home to his mother and postpone his studies.
What was Peter doing when his father died?
What did Peter do when his father died?
He was studying. He went home to his mother.

3.4 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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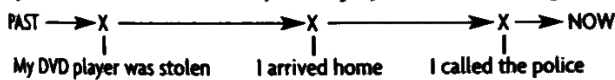
Short answer

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.

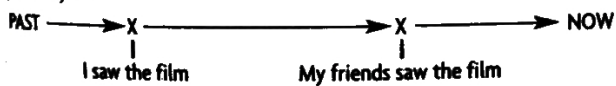
When I got home, I found that someone had broken into my apartment and had stolen my DVD player, so I called the police.



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 cinema with my friends because I'd seen the film before.



Action 1: I saw the film.

Action 2: My friends went to the cinema to see the film.

- 2 Notice the difference between the following sentences:

When I got to the office, Peter went home.

(= First I arrived, then Peter left.)

When I got to the office, Peter had gone home.

(= First Peter left, then I arrived.)

3.5 Past tenses in the passive

Form

Past Simple Passive	was/were + past participle
Past Continuous Passive	was/were being + past participle
Past Perfect Passive	had been + past participle

Use

The uses are the same in the passive as in the active.

The bridge was built in 1876. (finished action in the past)

The bomb was being defused when it exploded. (interrupted past activity)

The letter didn't arrive because it had been sent to my old address. (one action before another action in the past)

- 1 Which tense is used in these two sentences? Which verbs are regular? Which are irregular?

He **laughed** and **went** up to the baby.

He **danced** and **sang**.

Find more examples in the story and underline them.

- 2 What are the tenses in these sentences? What is the difference in meaning?

He **laughed** when he **saw** the baby.

He **was laughing** when he **saw** the baby.

He **laughed** when he'd **seen** the baby. (he'd = he had)

- 3 Find two examples of the Past Simple passive in the story.

▶▶ **Grammar Reference 3.1–3.4 pp137–139**

Pronunciation

- 3 Work with a partner. Write the verbs from the box in the chart according to the pronunciation of the *-ed* ending.

laughed	covered	wanted	stopped	shouted	listened
opened	boasted	looked	danced	screamed	pointed

/t/	/d/	/ɪd/
laughed		

T 3.2 Listen, check, and practise.

Had you heard it before?

4 Work with a partner.

Student A Read a statement from your box.

Student B Answer with the correct response from your box.

STUDENT A
1 I didn't laugh at his joke.
2 Were you surprised by the ending of the film?
3 I went to the airport, but I couldn't get on the plane.
4 I was homesick the whole time I was living in France.
5 The hotel where we stayed on holiday was awful!
6 I met Hassan's parents for the first time last Sunday.
7 My grandfather had two sons from his first marriage.

STUDENT B
3 Why? Had you left your passport at home?
1 Why? Had you heard it before?
5 That's a pity. Hadn't you stayed there before?
7 Really? I didn't know he'd been married before.
6 Really? I thought you'd met them before.
2 No, I'd read the book, so I already knew the story.
4 That's really sad! Had you never lived abroad before?

T 34 Listen and check, then listen and repeat.

5 Choose two of the conversations and continue them.

I didn't laugh at his joke.

Why? Had you heard it before?

No, I hadn't. I just didn't think it was very funny, that's all.

Really? I thought it was hilarious!

Discussing grammar

8 Complete the sentences. Check your answers with a partner. Discuss the differences in meaning.

1 When I arrived at the barbecue, they were eating burgers.

When I arrived at the barbecue, they had eaten all the burgers.

2 We thanked our teacher for everything she was doing to help us pass the test.

We thanked our teacher for everything she had done to help us pass the test.

3 He told me that they were staying at the Carlton Hotel.

He told me that they had stayed at the Carlton Hotel before.

4 Did you learn Italian when you went to Italy?
Had you already learned Italian when you went to Italy?

5 Did Shakespeare write *Hamlet*?

Was *Hamlet* written by Shakespeare?

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The writer



HIS EARLY LIFE

ERNEST HEMINGWAY was one of the great American writers of the twentieth century. He was born on 21 July 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, the second of six children. His family was strict and very religious. His father taught his children a love of nature and the outdoor life. Ernest caught his first fish at the age of three, and was given a shotgun for his twelfth birthday. His mother taught him a love of music and art. At school, he was good at English and wrote for the school newspaper. He graduated in 1917, but he didn't go to college. He went to Kansas City and worked as a journalist for the *Star* newspaper. He learned a lot, but left after only six months to go to war.

HEMINGWAY AND WAR

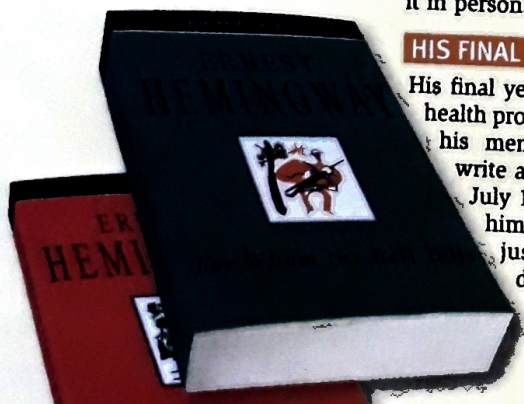
Hemingway was fascinated by war. He had wanted to become a soldier, but couldn't because he had poor eyesight. Instead, in the First World War, he became an ambulance driver and was sent to Italy, where he was wounded in 1918. After the war, he went to live in Paris, where he was encouraged in his work by the American writer Gertrude Stein. In the 1930s, he became a war correspondent in the Spanish Civil War and World War II. Many of his books were about war. His most successful book, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, was written in 1940 and is about the Spanish Civil War. Another novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, is about the futility of war.

HIS PERSONAL LIFE

Hemingway's success in writing was not mirrored by similar success in his personal life. He married four times. His first wife divorced him in 1927. He immediately married again and moved to Key West, Florida, where he enjoyed hunting and fishing, but he also suffered from depression. This wasn't helped when, in 1928, his father committed suicide. Hemingway's health was not good and he had many accidents. Two more marriages failed. In 1954, he survived two plane crashes. In October of the same year he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, but he was too ill to receive it in person.

HIS FINAL YEARS

His final years were taken up with health problems. He began to lose his memory and he couldn't write any more. On Sunday, 2 July 1961, Hemingway killed himself with a shotgun, just as his father had done before him.



5 Answer the questions about your person.

- 1 Where and when was he born? When and how did he die?
- 2 Did he have a happy family life?
- 3 How did his parents play a part in his career?
- 4 What do you think were the most important events in his early life?
- 5 When did he move to Paris? Who did he meet there?
- 6 How did war play a part in his life?
- 7 How many times was he married?
- 8 Which of these dates relate to your person? What do they refer to?

1891	1917	1918	1927	1928
1937	1940	1949	1954	

6 Find a partner from the other group and go through the questions in exercise 5. What similarities and differences can you find between the two men?

They were both born in the nineteenth century. Picasso was spoiled, but Hemingway's parents were strict.

GRAMMAR SPOT

1 What tense are these verbs?

Guernica was painted by Pablo Picasso.

A Farewell to Arms and For Whom the Bell Tolls were written by Ernest Hemingway.

Find more examples in the texts and underline them.

2 Complete the sentences with the auxiliaries *was*, *were*, or *had*.

- a Pablo's father left the room. When he returned, Pablo had completed the picture.
- b Picasso was given his father's palette and brushes.
- c Both Hemingway and Picasso were living in Paris when they met Gertrude Stein.
- d Both men were honoured in their lifetime.

▶ Grammar Reference 3.5 p139