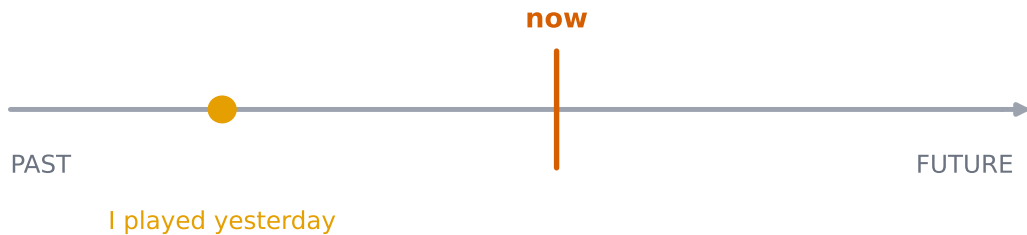


Past simple

English Grammar · A2

Regular Verbs (-ed)

Past simple - a finished action



Past simple: a finished action: tense timeline

The Past Simple tense describes actions or states that were **completed in the past**. Regular verbs add **-ed** to the end.

Structure: + **-ed**(same for all persons)

I watched a film yesterday.

I watched a movie yesterday.

We played basketball last week.

We played basketball last week.

Spelling of -ed:

- Generally add -ed directly: work → worked, play → played.
- End in -e, only add -d: like → liked, live → lived.
- Consonant + -y ending, change y to i and add -ed: study → studied, try → tried.
- Stressed closed syllable, double the final consonant: stop → stopped, plan → planned.

Note

- The past tense form does **not change** based on person: I worked, she worked (no -s).
- Often used with past time markers: yesterday, last week, in 2019, two days ago.

Irregular Verbs

Many common verbs are **irregular**; their past forms must be memorized individually without adding -ed.

I went to Beijing last month.

I went to Beijing last month.

She saw her friends.

She met her friend.

High-frequency irregular verbs you must memorize:

- go → **went**, have → **had**, do → **did**, make → **made**.
- see → **saw**, come → **came**, get → **got**, take → **took**.
- eat → **ate**, buy → **bought**, think → **thought**, say → **said**.

We had a big dinner.

We had a big dinner.

Note these follow no pattern; practice reading and memorizing them frequently.

Negatives & questions (did)

For negative and interrogative forms in the Past Simple, use the auxiliary **did** (past form). The following verb **returns to its base form**.

Negative structure: + didn't +

I didn't go to school.

I didn't go to school.

Interrogative structure: Did + + ?

Did you see the film?

Did you see that movie?

Short answers: **Yes, I did.** / **No, I didn't.**

Note

- After using did / didn't, the verb must be in the **base form**: ~~I didn't went~~
× → I didn't go ✓.
- The past tense of the be verb (was / were) does **not** use did: *Were you tired?*
(Were you tired?)

Common Errors

- × ~~I go to Beijing last month.~~ → ✓ I **went** to Beijing last month. — Chinese verbs do not change form, but in English, once a past time marker is present, you must switch to the past tense. This is the most common error.
- × ~~She buyed a new phone.~~ → ✓ She **bought** a new phone. — Irregular verbs cannot simply add -ed.
- × ~~I didn't was hungry.~~ → ✓ I **wasn't** hungry. — For negative sentences with the verb 'be', use wasn't / weren't directly, not didn't.
- × ~~yesterday night~~ → ✓ **last night** — Fixed expression: 'last night' is used for last evening, not 'yesterday night' (though 'yesterday morning/afternoon' is correct).