

The past simple

Introduction



We **booked** the room online yesterday.

Construction

Regular verbs in the past simple end with 'ed'. For most verbs, we simply add 'ed' after the **bare infinitive**.

Affirmative: Subject + **bare infinitive** + ed
I **worked** yesterday.

Negative: subject + 'did' + 'not' + **bare infinitive**
I **didn't work** yesterday.

Interrogative: Did + subject + **bare infinitive**
Did you work yesterday?

Irregular verbs

There are many **irregular verbs**, including some of the most common verbs in the English language. Some of the most useful are:

Do	Be	Go	Have
I did	I was	I went	I had
You did	You were	You went	You had
He did	He was	He went	He had
She did	She was	She went	She had
It did	It was	It went	It had
We did	We were	We went	We had
They did	They were	They went	They had

Uses

The most common uses are:	Examples
For completed actions in the past	He worked yesterday. Did you go to work yesterday? No, I had the day off. I went to school when I was young. We travelled around Italy in June.
For a past state	My grandparents loved each other very much. She knew him before he joined the company. Was John a teacher before he became a consultant? It wasn't noisy here before the new road was built.
For past habits	I cycled to school every day. They closed the factory for two weeks each summer. We didn't go to the sea for our holidays. We went to the mountains.
For historical events	Louis XII was king of France. Henry VIII had six wives. Dinosaurs lived on earth.

Time phrases

When using the past tense, time phrases are often used to define when the action happened.

Examples

Specific	General
yesterday	a few days/weeks ago
last night	earlier today
last week	the other evening
last month	before lunch
last year	many years ago
on 21st January 2001	a long time ago
in 1925	when I was young
	when I was living in Africa

Examples



We once **had** a neighbour called Xavier. He **washed** his car every Sunday and **fixed** any problems. He **had** a son. He **helped** his father. On Friday afternoons, he **did** the shopping and he **watched** TV in the evenings.



What **did** you **do** at the weekend? I **went** to visit my parents.
Did you **stay** all weekend? No I **didn't**. We just **had** Sunday lunch but I **didn't do** much else. How about you?
 I **bought** this really big melon. They **were** on offer in Tesco's.

Did they have any peaches? I didn't see any.

Pronunciation of past tense regular verbs

In the **past simple**, all regular verbs end in **-ed** but the pronunciation is not the same for all of them. This depends on the **SOUND** of the last letter of the infinitive. There are three different ways to pronounce the end of the verbs.

'id' ending. /ɪd/

For verbs ending in -ed preceded by /t/ or /d/

This is the only ending that is pronounced as an extra syllable on the end of the words.

needed
seated
posted
wanted
created
visited
handed

'd' ending. /d/

For verbs ending in -ed preceded by a voiced consonant [b, g, v, z, , l, m, n , etc.] or a vowel

This is not pronounced as an extra syllable. The 'e' is silent.

Examples

lived
enjoyed
listened
applied
telephoned
played
pleased
offered

't' ending. /t/

For verbs ending in -ed preceded by a voiceless consonant [p, k, f, s, etc.]

This is not pronounced as an extra syllable. The 'e' is silent.

stopped
wished
knocked
washed
watched
helped
cooked

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