# The past simple of 'to be'

# Introduction



They were at the reception desk 5 minutes ago but they are not there now.

## Construction

Affirmative	Negative		Interrogative
	Full form	Contracted form	
l was	l was not	l wasn't	Was I?
You were	You were not	You weren't	Were you?
He was	He was not	He wasn't	Was he?
She was	She was not	She wasn't	Was she?
lt was	lt was not	lt wasn't	Was it?
We were	We were not	We weren't	Were we?
They were	They were not	They weren't	Were they?

## **Short answers**

Question:	'to be' + subject + adjective/noun	Was she at work?
Affirmative answer:	Yes + subject + 'to be'	Yes, she was.
Negative answer:	No + subject + 'to be' + not	No, she wasn't.

#### Note that

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#### We do not use the contracted form for affirmative answers.

Affirmative	Negative
Yes, I was.	No, I wasn't.
Yes, you were.	No, you weren't.
Yes, she was.	No, she wasn't.
Yes, he was.	No, he wasn't.
Yes, it was.	No, it wasn't.
Yes, we were.	No, we weren't.
Yes, they were.	No, they weren't.

## **Examples**



Hans was 35 last year so this year he is 36.



There was a lot of traffic in London last night



Tom and Mary were in Paris last week, they were not in London.



Were your visitors Swiss? No they weren't, they were French.



We were in the Alps for our holiday, it was wonderful.

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