

Past Simple

1. Formation

We form the past simple of **regular verbs** by **adding –ed** to the infinitive. But **irregular verbs have their own forms**.

*I worked a lot.
I wrote a letter.*

We form negative statements and questions with **did**.

*She didn't read my letter.
Did you work?*

2. Use

We use the past simple to say that something happened at a **particular point of time in the past** (answering the question *when?*) or in a **particular period of time in the past** (which is now over). The point or period of time can be mentioned, or it may be clear from the context. Some common phrases of time are *yesterday, in 1998, last year/month/week, an hour ago*, etc. We also use the past simple (not the present perfect) after *when...?*

*Tina passed her driving test in 1998.
When did you last see Nicole?*

The past simple is also used in **reports** about past events and in **stories**.

It was late. Penny turned off the TV and went upstairs. ...

We use the past simple when giving more information about a past event we have introduced in the present perfect. The past simple is used to give **further details**, e.g. where and how something happened.

There has been an accident in Carlton Street. A van crashed into a bus. The bus stopped abruptly and three people were injured.

When two or more (short) actions in the past come **directly one after the other**, we use the past simple for all the actions.

The cat ran out when Joanne opened the door.