

Unit

4

The past simple

Getting started

1 In the texts below two children, a five-year-old boy and a ten-year-old girl, talk about how they spent their money one day. Read the texts and answer the questions.

- a) Who is speaking in each text, do you think?
- b) Who do you think spent more money?

Text 1

First of all I went to a fashion shop and bought a necklace with a heart. That cost me £1.50. Then I went to the Body Shop¹ and bought shower gel and bubble bath. Then I went to the book shop and bought a *Babysitters*² book, which cost me £2.99. Then I went to the music shop and bought a CD holder which included five photos of East 17³. After the music shop, I went to the sweet shop and bought some sweets.

¹a shop selling beauty products

²a series of books for children

³a former British pop group

Text 2

I spented my money on a toy car set. It cost me £6.49. It's got street lights and roads and you put it together and play with your cars on it. I didn't want to buy any sweets. Then I went to the cinema with my dad to watch my favourite film, *James and the Giant Peach*. I ate some popcorn. I wish my Mum would give me popcorn every week.

2 a) Find these verbs in the texts:

Text 1: went bought cost included

Text 2: spented cost put play didn't want went ate wish

Which three are **not** in the past simple?

b) There is a mistake in one of the past verbs; can you find it?

3 Are the statements below true or false?

- a) The past simple is used to talk about past, completed actions and events.
- b) You do not need to put a verb in the past simple if you use a time expression, for example, *last year*.
- c) You need to learn the past form of many verbs as they are irregular.

Looking at language

The past simple

Use

We use the past simple to talk about:

- single past actions and events: *I went to a fashion shop and bought a necklace.*
- repeated past actions and events: *I always went shopping on Saturdays.*
- past states (long-lasting situations or feelings): *My father knew the Prime Minister.*

We often use a time expression with the past simple:

I went to the supermarket last Thursday / at lunchtime / in the evening.

Often the time is understood but **not** mentioned:

Oh yes, we had a great time! (we had a great time at the party last night)

In the text below a boy talks about how he spent his money one day. Put the phrases a)–h) back in the right order by numbering them 1–8.

- a) I've got about £250 in it. b) what I'm going to do with the money. c) and then I went to Burger King d) The rest of the money I put into my bank account e) and had a burger with chips. f) I don't know g) which my grandmother opened for me. h) I bought a leather football for £3.99

The past simple is often used in stories and descriptions of past actions and events with the past continuous (see Unit 5) and the past perfect (see Unit 9).

Form

Positive statements	Negative statements	Wh- questions
Regular verbs I / you / he / she / it / we / they watched	I did not (didn't) watch	What did you watch?
Irregular verbs I / you etc. went / ate / had (See Appendix 1.)	I did not (didn't) go	Where did you go?
Yes / No questions	Positive short answers	Negative short answers
Did you watch it? Did you go home then?	Yes, I did.	No, I didn't.

Spelling

- In verbs which end in *e*, a *d* is added: *liked, hated, danced.*
- In verbs which end in a consonant +*y*, the *y* is changed to *i* and *ed* is added: *try – tried, carry – carried.*
- In one-syllable verbs which end in a vowel and a consonant, the consonant is doubled and *ed* is added: *stop – stopped, plan – planned, jog – jogged.*

Pronunciation

The *-ed* ending has three pronunciations:

- after /t/ and /d/ we say /ɪd/: *wanted* /wɒntɪd/, *needed* /niːdɪd/
- after unvoiced consonants we say /t/: *missed* /mɪst/, *kicked* /kɪkt/
- after voiced consonants we say /d/: *turned* /tɜːnd/, *loved* /lʌvd/

See Appendix 2 for a list of unvoiced and voiced consonants.

2 How do you pronounce the *-ed* in these past forms: /t/, /d/ or /ɪd/?

seemed kissed combed repeated depended brushed

Other points

- The past simple of *to be* is: *I / she / he / it was; you / we / they were*. *Did* is not used in negatives and questions:
She wasn't happy.
Were you at home this morning?
- The past of *can* is *could*:
I couldn't understand.
- We can talk about the order of actions and events using the past simple and linking words and phrases:
First of all I went to a fashion shop and bought a necklace with a heart. That cost me £1.50. Then I went to the Body Shop and bought shower gel and bubble bath.

Getting it right

► Exercise 1 Thinking about use

Are the past simple verbs in these sentences single actions (sa), repeated actions (ra), or past states (ps)?

Example: I *took* the new CD player out of the box, *plugged* it in, and *switched* it on. .sa.

- 1 We *lived* in a small house on the coast which *didn't have* any heating, but we *had* a wonderful, exciting childhood.
- 2 As children, we *went* to the town centre on Saturday afternoons, and *spent* our pocket money on sweets and CDs.
- 3 They *left* at six in the evening and *drove* all the way home without stopping.
- 4 My friend Sally *came* to my house, and we *talked* about the new baby.
- 5 In those days I *got up* really early and nearly always *got* to work before 8.00.
- 6 I *knew* her when she was a shop assistant.

▷ Exercise 2 Learning from learners

Some learners keep a diary about their progress in English. In this diary, write *right* if a verb form is right, or correct it if it is wrong.

We had an English lesson this morning on the past simple. ...right.....
 It didn't was too difficult; we 1 read about some children ...wasn't.....
 and how they spent their pocket money, and then 1
2 studied the grammar. My problem was the irregular 2
 verbs - I 3 didn't knew that there were so many of 3
 them, and I just 4 couldn't remember all the past forms. 4
 I 5 fell silly once or twice when I 6 was wrong. I also 5
7 didn't realise that you need to put a verb in the past 6
 even when you say the time something happens, like 7
 'yesterday'. After the lesson I went shopping, and 8 bought 8
 some clothes, which 9 costed more than I meant to spend! 9
 I didn't even have enough money left to catch the train 10
 home, so I walked, and it 10 taked me nearly an hour.

Read the learner's diary again. Do you feel the same as the writer about the past simple?

▷ Exercise 3 Text completion

The article below describes an unsuccessful driving test. Fill in each gap with a verb from the box in the past simple.

be	not brake	feel	move	pay	push	run	say	say	stop	try
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On my first test, I ~~run~~ out of petrol. Shortly after the restart from the emergency stop*, the car **1** again, although I **2**
 I **3** five times to restart it.
 'No,' I **4** to the examiner. 'It won't start.'
 The examiner **5** into the driving seat, and I **6**
 the car to the nearest service station, where I **7** for the petrol.
 'This is not your fault and will not affect whether you pass the test,'
 he **8** , but I **9** terrified and **10** not
 surprised to fail for lack of observation.

*the emergency stop is the part of the test that shows that you can stop quickly in an emergency

▷ Exercise 4 Question formation

Complete the past simple questions in the extracts from conversations. Which extracts come from a conversation about a holiday, and which from a conversation about a job interview?

Example: Did *you have a good time?*... (*Holiday*).

Yes, we did thanks. The weather was good and the hotel was lovely.

- 1 Where
In a small hotel just next to the beach.
- 2 Did
Yes, very nervous. My hands were shaking!
- 3 What
Lots of things – my education, interests, and career.
- 4 Why
Because a friend told us that it was a nice place, and he was right.
- 5 How much
Don't ask! It was very expensive, but we enjoyed ourselves so it didn't matter!
- 6 How long
About 45 minutes, and then they spent a few minutes showing me round the office.
- 7 What
I bought a new suit specially.
- 8 Did
Yes, wonderful. We ate fantastic seafood every night.
- 9 How many
Three, but one of them never said anything.
- 10 How long
Just a week. It wasn't really long enough.

Classwork

Work as a whole class, sitting in a circle if you can. Together, tell a story about something that happened yesterday. Each person must use a different verb.

Example:

A: Yesterday I went shopping.

B: Yesterday I went shopping and bought a CD.

C: Yesterday I went shopping and bought a CD. Then I took the CD home.

D: Yesterday I went shopping and bought a CD. Then I took the CD home and tried to play it, but ...