

## The simple past tense

Form: Subject + past tense of the verb

- I **worked**.
- She **sang**.
- He **played**.
- Mother **cooked**.

The simple past tense is used to talk about an action completed in the past. It is often used with adverbs or adverb phrases of past time.

- I **met** him **yesterday**.
- His father **died last year**.
- I **received** the letter **a week ago**.

The simple past tense is sometimes used without an adverb of time. In such cases, the time of the action may be either implied or indicated by the context.

The simple past tense is also used to talk about habitual actions in the past.

- When I was in college, I **studied** eight hours a day. (= When I was in college, I used to study eight hours a day.)
- Edison **sold** newspapers before he became a famous scientist. (= Edison used to sell newspapers before he became a famous scientist.)

## Past continuous tense

Form: **Subject + was/were + ing form of the verb**

- I **was working**
- She **was singing**.
- They **were playing**.
- It **was raining**.
- John **was sleeping**.

Note that we use **was** when the subject is **I** or a singular noun. We use **were** when the subject is a plural noun. The personal pronoun **you** is also followed by **were**.

The past continuous tense represents an action as going on or being done continuously at

some time in the past. The time of action may or may not be mentioned.

- It **was raining** when we went out.
- The children **were playing** in the garden.
- Mother **was cooking** dinner.
- Alice **was learning** her lessons.