The simple past tense: regular verbs

We use the **simple past tense** to show action that took place in the past and finished taking place in the past. To write something in the simple past tense we change the verb from the simple present tense to the simple past tense.

We add *-ed* to some **regular verbs** in the simple past tense.

Example: I play soccer. ⟶ I played soccer.

We can also add *-d* or *-t* to some regular verbs in the simple past tense.

Examples: I arrive home. ⟶ I arrived home.
We learn English ⟶ We learnt English.

Help

We often use the past tense to tell a story in books or newspaper reports.

1. Write the past tense of the verbs below. The first one has been done for you.

Simple present tense	Simple past tense
a) I lick the icing.	I licked the icing.
b) We count the cars.	We _____ the cars.
c) I suck the sweet.	I _____ the sweet.
d) She opens the door.	She _____ the door.
e) Dad mows the grass.	Dad _____ the grass.
f) I play the game.	I _____ the game.
g) Grace irons the shirt.	Grace _____ the shirt.
h) I pray every night.	I _____ every night.

2. Circle the correct form of the verb in brackets to make sentences in the simple past tense.

a) Shafiek (bake/baked) biscuits.

b) He (burnt/burn) the biscuits.

c) The cat (chase/chased) the mouse.

d) Ferdinand the bull (smell/smelled) the flowers.

e) Norma (tasted/taste) the pie.

f) I (leapt/leap) across the ditch.

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The simple past tense: irregular verbs

Remember, we use the **simple past tense** to show action that took place in the past and finished taking place in the past. To write a past tense sentence we change the verb in the sentence. Some past tense verbs are **irregular**.

Examples: We write sentences. ⟶ We wrote sentences.
They hang pictures on the wall. ⟶ They hung pictures on the wall.
Her mother sings in the choir. ⟶ Her mother sang in the choir.

You need to learn irregular verbs. The verb *to be* is an irregular verb that you use often. Take note of how this irregular verb changes in the past tense.

I *am*. ⟶ I *was*.	We *are*. ⟶ We *were*.
You *are*. ⟶ You *were*.	You *are*. ⟶ You *were*.
He/She/It *is*. ⟶ He/She/It *was*.	They *are*. ⟶ They *were*.

1. Choose the correct verbs from the list to create sentences in the simple past tense.

   a) I (hold) _____ the puppy in my arms.

   b) My face (feel) _____ warm in the sun.

   c) My grandfather (tell) _____ many stories.

   d) They (be) _____ good soccer players.

   e) The dog (see) _____ the rabbit.

   f) She (be) _____ pretty and she (know) _____ it.

2. Read the paragraph below. Complete it using the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Our dog (bark) _____ though the window. It (see) _____ a strange man at the door. The stranger (ring) _____ the doorbell. Mother (open) _____ the door carefully. She (know) _____ the strange man! He (be) _____ her brother. They (say) _____ hello for the first time in years.

Turn to the *irregular verbs* at the back of this book.

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