

**PRESENT SIMPLE**

# FORM

## Form of the simple past tense with regular verbs

- The form is the same for all persons

## Pronunciation spelling

- I played* **Id I**                      *arrive/arrived*
- He arrived* **IdI**                      *wait/waited*
- She worked* **I t I**                      *stop/stopped*
- dreamed/dreamt* **/dri:md/ or /dremt/**                      *occur/occurred*
- posted* **/id/**                      *cry/cried*
- You*
- They*

*We use did + infinitive to form questions and didn't + infinitive to form negatives.*

*I **didn't want to tell** him that he was fired. Why **didn't you tell** this before?*

# SPELLING

## **Spelling of the regular past**

- The regular past always ends in *-d*:

### ***arrive/arrived***

- Verbs ending in *-e* add *-d*: e.g. *phone/phoned, smile/smiled*- This rule
- applies equally to *agree, die, lie, etc.*

### ***wait/waited***

- Verbs not ending in *-e* add *-ed*: e.g. *ask/asked, clean/cleaned,*
- *follow/followed, video/videoed*

### ***stop/stopped***

- Verbs spelt with a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant
- letter double the consonant: *beg/begged, rub/rubbed*

# SPELLING

## ***occur/occurred***

- In two-syllable verbs the final consonant is doubled when the last syllable contains a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant letter and is stressed: *pre'fer/preferred, re'fer/referred-*

Compare:

*'benefit/benefited, 'differ/differed* and *'profit/profited* which are stressed on their first syllables and which therefore do not double their final consonants

In AmE *labeled, quarreled signaled* and *traveled* follow the rule

In BrE *labelled quarrelled, signalled* and *travelled* are exceptions to the rule

## ***cry/cried***

- When there is a consonant before -y, the y changes to i before we add ed eg. *carry carried deny denied fry fried try tried*

Compare

- *delay delayed obey obeyed play played*, etc which have a vowel before -y and therefore simply add -ed in the past

# IRREGULAR VERB FORM

I, you, he, she, it, we, they + sat on the suitcase/ shut the door.

## **Notes on the past form of irregular verbs**

- Unlike regular verbs, irregular verbs (about 150 in all) do not have past forms which can be predicted

### ***shut/shut***

A small number of verbs have the same form in the present as in the past

*cut/cut, hit/hit, put/put*

It is important to remember, particularly with such verbs, that the third person singular does not

1. change in the past *eg he shut (past), he shuts (present)*

### • ***sit/sat***

The past form of most irregular verbs is different from the present

*bring –brought, catch –caught, keep-kept, leave-left, lose-lost*

# USE

## Completed actions

We normally use the simple past tense to talk about events, actions or situations which occurred in the past and are now finished They may have happened recently OR in the distant past:

*Sam **phoned** a moment ago / The Goths **invaded** Rome in A.D. 410*

A time reference must be given

*I **had** a word with Julian **this morning***

or must be understood from the context

*I **saw** Fred in town (i.e. when I was there this morning)*

*I **never met** my grandfather (i.e. he is dead)*

When we use the simple past, we are usually concerned with *when* an action occurred, not with its duration (*how long* it lasted)

# USE

The simple past can be used to describe past habits [compare present habit:

*/ **smoked forty cigarettes a day** till I gave up*

## **The immediate past**

We can sometimes use the simple past without a time reference to describe something that happened a very short time ago:

*Jimmy punched me in the stomach / Did the telephone ring? Who left the door open?*

## **Polite inquiries, etc.**

The simple past does not always refer to past time It can also be used for polite inquiries (particularly asking for favours), often with verbs like *hope think* or *wonder* Compare:

*/ **wonder** if you could give me a lift*

***I wondered** if you could give me a lift (more tentative/polite)*

# ADVERBIALS

## Adverbials with the simple past tense

The association of the past tense with adverbials that tell us *when* something happened is very important. Adverbials used with the past tense must refer to past (not present) time. This means that adverbials which link with the present (*before now, so far, till now, yet*) are not used with past tenses.

Some adverbials like *yesterday, last summer* and combinations with *ago* are used only with past tenses

/ ***saw Jane yesterday/last summer***

*Ago* - meaning 'back from now', can combine with a variety of expressions to refer to the past: e.g. *two years ago, six months ago, ten minutes ago, a long time ago.*

***I met Robert Parr many years ago in Austria.***

# ADVERBIALS

The past is often used with *when* to ask and answer questions:

***When did you learn about it? - When I saw it in the papers***

*When* often points to a definite contrast with the present:

***I played football every day when I was a boy***

Other adverbials can be used with past tenses when they refer to past time, but can be used with other tenses as well:

**adverbs:** *I always liked Gloria / I often saw her in Rome / Did you ever meet Sonia? I never met Sonia*

**adverbial/prepositional phrases.** *We left at 4 o'clock/on Tuesday / We had our holiday in July*

**adverbial clauses:** *I waited till he arrived I met him when I was at college*

**as + adverb + as:** *I saw him as recently as last week*