

# The Writing Center

## DLA: The Past Tenses (Simple Past & Past Progressive)



This DLA is a writable PDF form. You can enter your answers directly into this document.

**YOU MUST DOWNLOAD AND SAVE THIS FILE TO YOUR COMPUTER.**

**Do not complete this form in a web browser. You will not be able to save your work.**

Student Name:

### Important Note

To get completion credit for this DLA, make sure you complete all the required activities. If you'd like help while working on a specific DLA, you can meet with a specialist at the Writing Center. Keep in mind that you might need to schedule a second appointment to review your work, check your understanding, and get your completion credit. You can only review **ONE** DLA per appointment. (Check the last section of this DLA for information on making your appointment and receiving completion credit for your work).

### Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

### The Simple Past Tense

Use the simple past tense to express:

#### Completed actions in the past

The simple past expresses actions that began and ended at a time in the past.

Ex: I **came** to school at 8:00. We **started** the class late. He **watched** a movie last night.

#### A series of actions completed in the past

We use the simple past to talk about a series of actions that happened in the past, as when telling a story. We talk about what happened first, second, third, and so on.

Ex: When the alarm clock **rang**, I **got up**, **took** a shower, **brushed** my teeth, and **put** on my uniform. \*The action in the time clause (*when*) happened **first**.

#### Non-action verbs in the past

We can use the simple past form to talk about non-action verbs that were true in the past.

Ex: When I **was** a child, I **believed** in Santa Claus.

## How to Form the Simple Past

There are two forms of *be* in the past: **was/were**

I/he/she/it/singular subjects → **was**

you/we/they/plural subjects → **were**

Many times, you only add **-ed** to verbs in the past tense, but sometimes you need more than **-ed**. Here are some spelling rules:

Rule	Base Form	Past Form
Add <b>-ed</b> to most verbs to form the simple past tense	start design	started designed
If the word ends in <i>e</i> , add <b>-d</b> only	create move	created moved
When the base form ends in a consonant + <i>y</i> , change <i>y</i> to <i>i</i> and add <b>-ed</b>	carry study	carried studied
Double the final consonant of one-syllable words ending in a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern (CVC) --Exception: If the word ends in <i>w</i> or <i>x</i> , do not double the last letter	stop drag snow fix	stopped dragged snowed fixed
When a two-syllable verb ends in a consonant-vowel-consonant, double the final consonant and add <b>-ed</b> ONLY IF THE LAST SYLLABLE IS STRESSED	occur permit	occurred permitted
When the last syllable of a two-syllable verb is not stressed, DO NOT DOUBLE THE FINAL CONSONANT	open offer	opened offered

Sometimes, you do not use **-ed** at all for the past tense. Here are some irregular verbs:

Simple Form	Simple Past	Simple Form	Simple Past	Simple Form	Simple Past
awake	awoke	get	got	see	saw
be	was/were	give	gave	sell	sold
become	became	go	went	send	sent
begin	began	grow	grew	sing	sang
blow	blew	have	had	sit	sat
break	broke	hear	heard	sleep	slept
buy	bought	keep	kept	speak	spoke
catch	caught	know	knew	stand	stood
choose	chose	lay	laid	steal	stole
come	came	leave	left	sweep	swept
do	did	lie	lay	swim	swam
draw	drew	lose	lost	take	took
drink	drank	make	made	teach	taught
drive	drove	mean	meant	tell	told
eat	ate	meet	met	think	thought
fall	fell	pay	paid	throw	threw
feel	felt	ride	rode	understand	understood
find	found	rise	rose	wear	wore
fly	flew	run	ran	win	won
forget	forgot	say	said	write	wrote

## The Past Progressive Tense

We use the past progressive tense to express:

### *An activity that was happening at a point in the past*

The past progressive expresses on-going actions in the past. They were not complete at that time.

Ex: At 10:00 p.m. last night, I **was sleeping**.

### *Two activities that were happening at the same time in the past*

The past progressive also expresses actions that were on-going at the same time in the past.

Ex: At 10:00 p.m. last night, I **was sleeping** while you **were studying**.

### *An on-going action interrupted by another action*

We can use the past progressive for an on-going action in the past (1<sup>st</sup> action) that was interrupted by another action (2<sup>nd</sup> action, simple past).

Ex: I **was watching** T.V. when the electricity went out.

## How to Form the Past Progressive {was/were + verb-ing}

Ex: I **was watching** TV at midnight. He **was talking** on the phone. We **were eating** dinner.

\*Non-action verbs (mental states, emotional states, possession, *be*, etc.) are usually not used in a progressive form.

## How to Make Questions and Negative Statements

**Negative statements:** All verbs (except *be*; it never needs a helper) that have only one part to them (one-word verbs) **need the helper** *did* and *not* to become negative. Start with the subject, then *be/did not*, and then the base form of the verb. Verbs that have two or more parts **already have** a helper, so just add *not* between the helper and the main verb.

	Simple Past	Simple Past with Be	Past Progressive
Affirmative	I went to college.	Mr. Gordon was sick.	We <i>were</i> sleeping.
Negative	I <i>did not</i> go to college.	Mr. Gordon was <i>not</i> sick.	We <i>were not</i> sleeping.

**Questions:** All verbs (except *be*; it never needs a helper) that have only one part to them (one-word verbs) **need the helper** *did* for the past tense. The helper is first, then the subject, and then the base form of the verb. Verbs that have two or more parts **already have** a helper—the first part of the verb is the helper. You can add a *wh-* word at the beginning if you need it.

	Simple Past	Simple Past with Be	Past Progressive
Statement	She bought a new car.	You were absent.	They <i>were</i> studying yesterday.
Yes/No Question	<i>Did</i> she buy a new car?	Were you absent?	<i>Were</i> they studying yesterday?
Wh- Question	<i>What did</i> she buy?	<i>Why</i> were you absent?	<i>Where were</i> they studying?

## Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

### ☐ 1. *Past Tenses Review*

Review the information on this sheet. Then, answer the following questions.

In what situations do we use the simple past tense?

In what situations do we use the past progressive tense?

### ☐ 2. Online Quiz

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/pasttensesdlaquiz> and take the DLA quiz. You must score at least 75% on the quiz before meeting with a specialist. After you complete the task, please take a screenshot of the page that has your score and show it to your specialist. Do not exit the quiz until you take the screenshot.

## Choose 3a or 3b Below

### ☐ 3a. Review Your Own Writing

Collect some of your graded work. Find examples of sentences that contain the following:

An action completed at a specific time in the past:

A series of actions completed in the past:

An on-going action in the past:

An on-going action in the past interrupted by another action:

If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (3b).

