

Past Simple

Here you can find some tips that will help you remember how to form and use Past Simple in English.

Look at this example:

'I **came** to Easter Island last Friday to see the Solar Eclipse. I **was** there with a group of classmates from college. We **stayed** at a hotel for five days. During our time in the Island we also **spent** our time sight-seeing. We **studied** the moais and **went** to see some cave paintings. I also **had** some time to do some shopping. I **bought** some souvenirs to take home with me. I **tried** the local food as well. The weather was ok and we **could** see the total solar eclipse yesterday. I can't believe my trip is over'

Came, was, stayed, spent, studied, went, had, bought, tried, and **could** are all Past Simple.

Very often the past simple is formed by adding the ending '-ed' to the base form of verbs. These are called **regular** verbs.

Examples:

- We stayed at a hotel for five days. (*Base form: Stay*)
- We studied the moais. (*Base form: Study*)
- I tried the local food as well. (*Base form: Try*)

But many important verbs are **irregular** which means the past simple does not end in '-ed'. These irregular verbs have different changes.

Examples:

- Go-Went/See-Saw/Buy-Bought/Have-Had/Spend-Spent
- I **came** to Easter Island last Friday. (*Base form: Come*)
- I **was** there with a group of classmates. (*Base form: Be*)
- We **also** spent our time sightseeing. (*Base form: Spend*)
- I **bought** some souvenirs to take home with me. (*Base form: Buy*)

In questions and negative sentences we use **did/didn't** + base form (come/buy/study etc.):

Examples:

- **Did** you **enjoy** the trip? What part **did you enjoy** the most?
- I went to Eastern Island but **I didn't see** any cave paintings.
- What **did you buy** at the mall?
- **I didn't stay** with a local family, I stayed at a hotel.

Remember that the past of 'Be' is **was** and **were** (I/he/she/it was; You/we/they were) and we do not use **did** in negative sentences and questions with verb 'Be'.

Examples:

- The weather **wasn't** very good. In fact, it rained the whole time.
- People in my group **weren't** very nice.
- When we got to the airport we found out that our plane **wasn't** on time. It was three hours late.
- **Were you** too tired to go out last night?
- Why **was she** late?