

# Shaw Academy

LESSON 3 NOTES

[English for Beginners]



# Past Tenses

## Past Simple

### Form

[VERB+ed] or **irregular verbs**

Examples:

- You **called** Debbie.
- **Did** you **call** Debbie?
- You **did not call** Debbie.

### Completed Actions in the Past

Use the Simple Past to express the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past. Sometimes, the speaker may not actually mention the specific time, but they do have one specific time in mind.

Examples:

- I **saw** a movie yesterday.
- I **didn't see** a play yesterday.
- Last year, I **travelled** to Japan.
- Last year, I **didn't travel** to Korea.
- **Did** you **have** dinner last night?
- She **washed** her car.
- He **didn't wash** his car.

### Duration in the Past

The Simple Past can be used with a duration which starts and stops in the past. A duration is a longer action often indicated by expressions such as: for two years, for five minutes, all day, all year, etc.

Examples:

- I **lived** in Brazil for two years.
- Shauna **studied** Japanese for five years.
- They **sat** at the beach all day.
- They **did not stay** at the party the entire time.
- We **talked** on the phone for thirty minutes.
- A: How long **did** you **wait** for them?  
B: We **waited** for one hour.

## Past Facts or Generalisations

The Simple Past can also be used to describe past facts or generalizations which are no longer true. As in USE 4 above, this use of the Simple Past is quite similar to the expression "used to".

Examples:

- She **was** shy as a child, but now she is very outgoing.
- He **didn't like** tomatoes before.
- **Did** you **live** in Texas when you **were** a kid?
- People **paid** much more to make cell phone calls in the past.

## Past Continuous

### Form

[was/were + present participle]

Examples:

- You **were studying** when she called.
- **Were** you **studying** when she called?
- You **were not studying** when she called.

## Interrupted Action in the Past

Use the Past Continuous to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the Simple Past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

Examples:

- I **was watching** TV when she called.
- When the phone rang, she **was writing** a letter.
- While we **were having** the picnic, it started to rain.
- What **were** you **doing** when the earthquake started?
- I **was listening** to my iPod, so I didn't hear the fire alarm.
- You **were not listening** to me when I told you to turn the oven off.
- While John **was sleeping** last night, someone stole his car.

## Parallel Actions

When you use the Past Continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions were happening at the same time. The actions are parallel.

Examples:

- I **was studying** while he **was making** dinner.
- While Ellen **was reading**, Tim **was watching** television.
- **Were** you **listening** while he **was talking**?
- I **wasn't paying** attention while I **was writing** the letter, so I made several mistakes.
- What **were** you **doing** while you **were waiting**?

## Repetition (with 'always')

The Past Continuous with words such as "always" or "constantly" expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happened in the past. The concept is very similar to the expression "used to" but with negative emotion. Remember to put the words "always" or "constantly" between "be" and "verb+ing."

Examples:

- She **was always coming** to class late.
- He **was constantly talking**. He annoyed everyone.
- I didn't like them because they **were always complaining**.

# Quantifiers

A **quantifier** is a word or phrase which is used before a noun to indicate the amount or quantity: 'Some', 'many', 'a lot of' and 'a few' are examples of **quantifiers**.

Examples:

- *There are **some** books on the desk.*
- *He's got **only a few** dollars.*
- *How **much** money have you got?*
- *There is **a large quantity of** fish in this river.*
- *He's got **more** friends than his sister.*

## Examples of Quantifiers

With uncountable nouns:

- much
- a little / little / very little
- a bit (of)
- a great deal of
- a large amount of
- a large quantity of

With countable nouns:

- many
- a few / few / very few
- a number (of)
- several
- a large number of
- a great number of
- a majority of

With both:

- all
- enough
- more / most
- less / least
- no / none
- not any
- some
- any
- a lot of
- plenty of

# Requests and Offers

## Making Requests – asking someone to do something for you

These are the three most common ways for making requests:

"**Could you** open the door for me, please?"

"**Would you mind** opening the door for me, please?"

"**Can you** open the door for me, please?"

**Speaking tip:** **could** and **can** are followed by the verb without 'to'.

**Would you mind** is followed by the verb and **-ing**.

## Making Requests – asking if you can do something

Here are the four most common ways for making requests (when you want to do something):

"**Can I** use your computer, please?"

"**Could I** borrow some money from you, please?"

"**Do you mind if I** turn up the heating?"

"**Would you mind if I** turned up the heating?"

**Speaking tip:** **Could** is more polite than **can**.

**Do you mind if...** is followed by the verb in the **present tense**, but **would you mind if...** is followed by the verb in the **past tense**.

When you're using these two sentences, don't use **please**. It's already polite enough!

## Offering to do something for another person

You can make an offer using a phrase like **Can I...?**, **Shall I...?**, **Would you like me to...?**

For example:

"Can I help you?"

"Shall I open the window for you?"

"Would you like another coffee?"

"Would you like me to answer the phone?"

"I'll do the photocopying, if you like."

**Shall**, **can** and **will** are followed by the verb without 'to'.

**Shall** is particularly British English and is more formal than **can**. **Would you like...** is followed either by a noun, or by an object pronoun and the verb with **to**.

# Relative Clauses

## Relative Pronouns

Who	I told you about the woman <b>who</b> lives next door.
Where	I can't remember the place <b>where</b> I met her.
Which	Do you see the cat <b>which</b> is lying on the roof?
Whose	Do you know the boy <b>whose</b> mother is a nurse?
Whom	I was invited by the professor <b>whom</b> I met at the conference.
That	I don't like the table <b>that</b> stands in the kitchen.

## Defining Relative Clauses

Defining relative clauses give detailed information defining a general term or expression. Defining relative clauses are **not put in commas**.

Imagine, Tom is in a room with five girls. One girl is talking to Tom and you ask somebody whether he knows this girl. Here the relative clause defines which of the five girls you mean.

*"Do you know the girl who is talking to Tom?"*

Defining relative clauses are often used in definitions.

*"A seaman is someone who works on a ship."*

## Non-Defining Relative Clauses

Non-defining relative clauses give additional information on something, but do not define it. Non-defining relative clauses are **put in commas**.

Imagine, Tom is in a room with only one girl. The two are talking to each other and you ask somebody whether he knows this girl. Here the relative clause is non-defining because in this situation it is obvious which girl you mean.

*"Do you know the girl, who is talking to Tom?"*

Note: In non-defining relative clauses, 'who'/'which' may not be replaced with 'that'.



THANK YOU

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