

Past simple (I did)

A Study this example:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was an Austrian musician and composer. He **lived** from 1756 to 1791. He **started** composing at the age of five and **wrote** more than 600 pieces of music. He **was** only 35 years old when he **died**.

Lived/started/wrote/was/died are all *past simple*.



B Very often the past simple ends in **-ed** (*regular verbs*):

- I work in a travel agency now. Before that I **worked** in a shop.
- We **invited** them to our party but they **decided** not to come.
- The police **stopped** me on my way home last night.
- She **passed** her examination because she **studied** very hard.

For spelling (stopped, studied etc.), see Appendix 6.

But many verbs are *irregular*. The past simple does *not* end in **-ed**. For example:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| write → wrote | • Mozart wrote more than 600 pieces of music. |
| see → saw | • We saw Rose in town a few days ago. |
| go → went | • I went to the cinema three times last week. |
| shut → shut | • It was cold, so I shut the window. |

For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

C In questions and negatives we use **did/didn't** + *infinitive* (enjoy/see/go etc.):

I	enjoyed	you	enjoy?	I		enjoy
she	saw	she	see?	she	didn't	see
they	went	they	go?	they		go

- A: **Did** you go out last night?
- B: Yes, I **went** to the cinema but I **didn't** enjoy the film much.
- 'When **did** Mr Thomas **die**?' 'About ten years ago.'
- They **didn't** invite her to the party, so she **didn't** go.
- '**Did** you have time to write the letter?' 'No, I **didn't**.'

Be careful when **do** is the main verb in the sentence:

- What **did** you **do** at the weekend? (*not* 'what did you at the weekend')
- I **didn't** **do** anything. (*not* 'I didn't anything')

D The past of **be** (am/is/are) is was/were:

I/he/she/it	was/wasn't	was	I/he/she/it?
we/you/they	were/weren't	were	we/you/they?

Note that we do *not* use **did** in negatives and questions with **was/were**:

- I **was** angry because they **were** late.
- **Was** the weather good when you **were** on holiday?
- They **weren't** able to come because they **were** so busy.
- **Did** you go out last night or **were** you too tired?