Workshop 17: Yesterday ◄

Talking about the past: was, were, and the past simple

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Nina asked all three of you the same two questions: **How was your day today?** and **What did you do today?**

Those two questions are about the past, and the past is what this workshop is for. Once you can answer them, you can tell anyone about your day, your weekend, your childhood, or your last holiday. It is the single most useful thing you can add to your English right now.

Everything here comes from your book, **Grammar Bank 7A, 7B and 7C on pages 136 and 137**. Keep the book open beside you.

Your plan for today ►

- **Part 1** was / were: the past of *be*
- **Part 2** Regular verbs: + **ed**
- **Part 3** Irregular verbs: the ones that change
- **Part 4** Questions and negatives: **did** / **didn't**
- **Part 5** could: the past of *can*
- **Part 6** Putting it together: How was your day?

① was / were

The past of *am*, *is* and *are* is **was** and **were**. Two words cover every person.

	was	**were**
Who	I · he · she · it	you · we · they
Positive	She was at home.	They were at home.
Negative	She wasn't at home.	They weren't at home.
Question	Was she at home?	Were they at home?
Short answer	Yes, she was. / No, she wasn't.	Yes, they were. / No, they weren't.

⚠ **Careful** Not *Was you at home?* With **you** it is always **Were you…?**

★ **Two things worth memorising now** **was born**: *I was born in Pasca.* This is *nací*. Never *borned*.
Past time words: yesterday · last night · last week · two years ago · in 2020

a. ✎ Complete with was, were, wasn't or weren't.

8 points

1 Nina _____ our guest last Thursday.
2 Erika and Adriana _____ both a little nervous at the beginning.
3 The conversation _____ fifteen minutes long.
4 I _____ at work yesterday, because it _____ a holiday and everything was closed.
5 Where _____ you last Saturday?
6 My parents _____ at home when I called.
7 Didier _____ born in 2010.

b. ✎ Make these sentences negative.

4 points

1 The class was easy. → _____
2 We were tired. → _____
3 I was at the shop. → _____
4 They were in Bogotá. → _____

c. ✎ Write the question.

4 points. Write the question that fits the answer.

1 _____ → Yes, I was at home last night.
2 _____ → No, the film wasn't good.
3 _____ → I was in Fusagasugá last weekend.
4 _____ → She was born in 1990.

② Regular verbs: + ed

For almost every other verb, the past simple adds **-ed**. The best part: the form is **the same for every person**. I worked, you worked, she worked, they worked. One word covers all of them.

I **worked** in the shop yesterday.
We **arrived** at eight o'clock.
She **studied** English last night.

Use the past simple for finished actions: something that happened **once** in the past, or **many times** in the past. Either way, it is finished.

The four spelling rules ▸

Rule	Example	Another one
Most verbs: add -ed	work → worked	play → played
Verb ends in -e: add -d	arrive → arrived	live → lived
Consonant + y: -y becomes -ied	study → studied	carry → carried
One vowel + one consonant: double the consonant	stop → stopped	plan → planned

Tip: *The doubling rule is only for **short verbs of one syllable**: stop → stopped, plan → planned. Longer verbs do not double: listen → listened, visit → visited. One British exception: verbs ending in **-l** always double, so travel → travelled.*

a. ✎ Write the past simple. Watch the spelling.

8 points

Infinitive	Past simple	Infinitive	Past simple
1 cook	_____	2 like	_____
3 try	_____	4 travel	_____
5 watch	_____	6 dance	_____
7 study	_____	8 listen	_____

b. ✎ Complete with the past simple of the verb in brackets.

6 points

1 Last Thursday we _____ to Nina for fifteen minutes. (talk)
2 Erika _____ in the shop all morning. (work)
3 I _____ the questions before the class. (study)
4 Adriana _____ lunch for her family. (cook)
5 The conversation _____ at six o'clock. (stop)
6 We all _____ our answers out loud. (practise)

③ Irregular verbs

Some verbs do not take **-ed**. They change into a completely different word, and the only way is to learn them. The good news is that they are the verbs you use most, so they come quickly.

buy	bought	**come**	came	**feel**	felt
find	found	**get**	got	**go**	went
have	had	**know**	knew	**put on**	put on
say	said	**take**	took	**think**	thought
wear	wore				

Tip: *Watch **put on**: the past is exactly the same word. Only the sentence tells you it is the past.*

> ★ **Three more you needed with Nina**
>
> These are not on page 136, but you all reached for them and did not have them. Learn them now: **make → made** · **eat → ate** · **wake up → woke up**
>
> *I made arepas.* *I ate breakfast at six.* *I woke up at half past four.*

a. ✎ Write the past simple.

10 points

Infinitive	Past simple	Infinitive	Past simple
1 go	_____	2 have	_____
3 say	_____	4 buy	_____
5 think	_____	6 get	_____
7 wear	_____	8 come	_____
9 find	_____	10 take	_____

b. ✎ Complete the story with the past simple.

8 points. Use the verb in brackets. They are all irregular.

Last Thursday we _____ (have) a special class. Our guest Nina _____ (come) from Melbourne, and we all _____ (go) online at six o'clock. I _____ (feel) nervous at the beginning, and I _____ (think) it was a very long time. Nina _____ (say) hello and asked about our day. We _____ (get) to the end without Spanish, and everybody _____ (know) more English than before.

④ did / didn't

For questions and negatives you do not change the main verb at all. You use **did** or **didn't**, and the main verb goes back to its ordinary form.

Positive	I **went** to Bogotá. She **bought** a dress.
Negative	I **didn't go** to Bogotá. She **didn't buy** a dress.
Question	**Did** you **go** to Bogotá? **Did** she **buy** a dress?
Short answer	Yes, I did. No, I didn't. Yes, she did. No, she didn't.

⚠ **The most common mistake** Not *Did you went?* Say **Did you go?** After **did** or **didn't**, the verb is always the ordinary form. **Did** is already the past, so the second verb does not need to be.

Word order in questions ▸

Without a question word: **Did** + you + **go** + shopping yesterday?
With a question word: **Where** + **did** + you + **go** + yesterday?
Your book calls these **ASI** (Auxiliary, Subject, Infinitive) and **QuASI** (Question word, Auxiliary, Subject, Infinitive) on page 136. The order never changes, so learn it once and every past question follows it.

a. ✎ Make these sentences negative.

5 points

1 I watched the film. → _____
2 She went to work. → _____
3 They had breakfast. → _____
4 We bought the tickets. → _____
5 He said goodbye. → _____

b. ✎ Write the question.

6 points. Use the words in brackets.

1 (what time / you / wake up) _____
2 (where / she / go) _____
3 (you / cook / yesterday) _____
4 (what / they / buy) _____
5 (he / like / the film) _____
6 (when / you / study / English) _____

c. ✎ Find the mistake and write the sentence correctly.

5 points. Each sentence has a mistake.

1 Did you went to the party? → _____

2 I no went to work. → _____

3 She didn't bought a dress. → _____

4 Where you did go? → _____

5 Was you at home last night? → _____

⑤ could

The past of *can* is **could**. It behaves like *can*, not like an ordinary verb, so it never takes *did*.

Positive	I **could** swim when I was six.
Negative	I **couldn't** understand the question.
Question	**Could** you understand Nina?
Short answer	Yes, I could. No, I couldn't.

⚠ **Careful** Not *I didn't can understand.* Say **I couldn't understand.**

a. ✎ Complete with could or couldn't.

5 points

1 I _____ hear the question, so I asked Nina to repeat it.

2 Erika _____ answer every question about her job, and Nina was impressed.

3 When I was a child I _____ speak any English.

4 _____ you understand Nina at the beginning?

5 We _____ talk for fifteen minutes without Spanish, and Nina understood everything.

⑥ How was your day?

This is the part that matters. Nina asked two questions and none of us had a good answer ready. Here they are again, and this time you have the grammar for them.

How was your day today?

It **was** good, thank you. It **was** a busy day. It **wasn't** an easy day.

What did you do today?

I **woke up** at half past four. I **made** breakfast for my family. Then I **went** to work and I **worked** until six.

a. ✎ Write six sentences about yesterday.

6 points. Use the past simple in every sentence. Start with the time you woke up and finish with the evening. Then read them out loud three times.

✓ **When you can answer those two questions without thinking, you can talk about anything that already happened. That is most of what people ask each other.**

Before the next class ▸

- ☐ I know when to use was and when to use were.
- ☐ I can spell the four regular endings: worked, arrived, studied, stopped.
- ☐ I know sixteen irregular verbs by heart.
- ☐ I never say *Did you went*. I say **Did you go**.
- ☐ I use **couldn't**, never *didn't can*.
- ☐ I wrote my six sentences and said them out loud.

Written total: 75 points. Part 1 16 · Part 2 14 · Part 3 18 · Part 4 16 · Part 5 5 · Part 6 6
Nota = (correct ÷ 75) × 5.0, to one decimal. Pass = 3.0.