

## Business English 20: Past Simple



1. Match the verbs on the left with the nouns on the right.

1. found	<i>c</i>	a. a break
2. take	<i>a</i>	b. a lot of money
3. attend	<i>e</i>	c. a company
4. earn	<i>b</i>	d. an email
5. receive	<i>d</i>	e. a meeting



2. Fill in the gaps below with the matched phrases from exercise 1.

- I am so tired! I need *to take a break* . I'll see you in an hour.
- Jack lives in Switzerland. Switzerland is so expensive, but Jack works as a lawyer there and he *makes a lot of money* so he lives very well.
- It can be risky to *found a company* . However, if you enjoy what you do, it can be amazing.
- Are you available to *attend a meeting* on Friday afternoon? We need to discuss the Paris project.
- Hi Jon, did you *receive an email* from me today? I need you to send me back a signed copy of the contract as soon as possible.



3. Work with a partner and discuss the following questions.

- How long do people usually take breaks for in your country?
- What are some examples of jobs which earn a high salary?
- How many face-to-face meetings do you usually attend per week?
- Do you know anyone who founded their own company?
- How many emails did you receive yesterday?



### Past Simple

In English we have *regular* verbs and *irregular* verbs. *Regular* verbs are easy! When putting a *regular* verb in the past, add -ed to the end of the verb.

For example: work – worked, receive – received

### '-ed' Pronunciation

"ed" has 3 different pronunciations. The first two pronunciations are very similar, and mixing them up is not a serious mistake. In the word "stopped", the letters "ed" are pronounced as a very small "t" sound. The pronunciation is "stop-t." In the word "tired", the letters "ed" are pronounced as a very small "d" sound. The pronunciation is "tire-d."

The third pronunciation of "ed" is quite different. When words end in a "t" or a "d" sound (for example "want" or "decide") the ed is pronounced "id." The word "wanted" is pronounced "want-id"



4. Fill in the gaps with the correct verb from the box. All verbs are *regular* and should be put into the past form.

decide  
bake  
start  
hire

work  
found  
need  
receive

love  
move  
realise  
learn

Valerie is the CEO of *Cakeat*. She **founded** the company from her house six years ago. Valerie **loved** making cakes for her friends' birthdays. Finally, she **decided** to make a business out of it. She **worked** from home and **baked** cakes out of her small kitchen for 3 years. One week she **received** 10 orders! That's when she **realised** she needed a bigger kitchen. Valerie **moved** her business to a new location in the city. She **started** to take orders from people on the street too. The business was so successful that Valerie **needed** people to help her with the baking and the customer service. So, she **hired** two employees, Angela and Simon, who **learned** baking at culinary college.





### 5. Answer the following questions about Valerie and her business.

1. When did Valerie found her business?

..... *She founded her business six years ago.* .....

2. Where did Valerie start her business?

..... *She started her business at home in her kitchen.* .....

3. How long did she work from home?

..... *She worked from home for three years.* .....

4. Why did she move her business to the city?

..... *Because received too many order and she needed a bigger kitchen.* .....

5. Why did she hire two new people?

..... *Because she needed help.* .....

### Past Simple

#### Questions:

To form questions in the past simple we use the auxiliary verb 'did' followed by the 'base form' of the verb.

For example:

Where **did** you **go** last week? (open question)

**Did** you **go** to the meeting? (closed questions)

*\*Note: Closed questions are 'yes' or 'no' questions.*

#### Negatives:

To form negatives in the past simple we use the auxiliary verb 'did', this time we put it into the negative. 'did' becomes 'did not' or 'didn't' for short and is followed by the 'base form' of the verb.

For example:

Jane **didn't go** to the meeting last week.



6. Fill in the gaps using the verb in brackets to ask questions, and make positive and negative sentences (all the verbs are regular verbs).

1. The company ..... *increased* ..... profits by 20% this quarter. (increase)
2. Where ..... *did* ..... you ..... *work* ..... in 2001? (work)
3. When ..... *did* ..... you ..... *move* ..... to Paris? (move)
4. Unfortunately, we ..... *didn't* ..... ..... *sign* ..... the contract. (not/sign)
5. I really ..... *enjoyed* ..... listening to your presentation last week. (enjoy)
6. .... *Did* ..... the company ..... *hire* ..... more people? (hire)
7. They ..... *recruited* ..... 10 people from my university. (recruit)
8. We ..... *didn't* ..... ..... *use* ..... the projector for the presentation. (not/use)
9. .... *Did* ..... the manager ..... *like* ..... your idea about the new project? (like)
10. Jennifer ..... *didn't* ..... ..... *help* ..... me on this project. (not/help)

### Irregular Verbs

#### Base Form

be  
begin  
break  
bring  
choose  
come  
cost  
drive  
eat  
fly

#### Past Simple

was/were  
began  
broke  
brought  
chose  
came  
cost  
drove  
ate  
flew

#### Base Form

forget  
get  
give  
go  
have  
hear  
leave  
make  
send  
write

#### Past Simple

forgot  
got  
gave  
went  
had  
heard  
left  
made  
sent  
wrote



7. Read the email below and fill in the gaps with the correct form of the verb.

\*Note: If the verb isn't in the 'irregular verbs list' than it is a regular verb, finishing in -ed.

Dear Jeff,

I hope you are well. I am writing to you about last week's meeting with the potential client.

How .....*did*..... the meeting .....*go*..... (go)? I ...*wanted*..... (want) to be there but my flight to Paris .....*was*..... (be) cancelled so I .....*drove*..... (drive) to Berlin and .....*worked*..... (work) from our offices there. Janet .....*gave*..... (give) me a short update on the meeting, she thinks it ...*went*..... (go) well. Do you feel the same?

As you know, this is a very important potential client. The company .....*made*..... (make) over €5 million last quarter. Getting them as a client would be a game changer for our company. They .....*left*..... (leave) their last IT support company because the communication .....*was*..... (be) not good. It ...*cost*..... (cost) them a lot of money to leave their contract, but they want to work with an IT support company that has excellent communication and IT skills. I think we are the perfect fit for what they need!

It would be great if we could have a chat about the meeting sometime this week. Let me know when you're available.

Enjoy the rest of you day.

Regards,

Tim





8. Look at the list of irregular verbs. Select as many verbs as you like to write at least six sentences in the past. Use the examples of time phrases below at the start or the end of your sentences. Feel free to change the dates.

yesterday

last summer/autumn/winter/spring

3 day/weeks/months/years ago

last night/week/month/year

in 1997/March

the day before yesterday

*For example:* Last summer I went to Spain for a business meeting.

I ate lunch with my colleague yesterday.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### Past Simple

#### Questions with the verb 'Be' (was/were):

To form questions in the past simple with the verb 'be' we do not use the auxiliary verb 'did'. Instead we move the verb to the first part of the sentence.

For example: Was she in Hamburg yesterday?

Where were they?

#### Negatives with the verb 'Be' (was/were):

To form questions in the past simple with the verb 'be' we do not use the auxiliary verb 'did'. Instead we add 'not' to the verb.

For example: She was not in Hamburg. / She wasn't in Hamburg.

They were not happy. / They weren't happy.



9. Put the following sentences into the negative form.

1. Jane called me last week.

.....*Jane didn't call me last week.* .....

2. I went to the meeting this morning.

.....*I didn't go to the meeting this morning.* .....

3. We were happy with your presentation.

.....*We weren't happy with your presentation.* .....

4. They came to Japan for a team building event.

.....*They didn't come to Japan for a team building event.* .....

5. We want to sign a contract with your company.

.....*We didn't want to sign a contract with your company.* .....

6. Mr. Yoko was in London for a networking event.

.....*Mr. Yoko was not in London for a networking event.* .....

7. The manager sent an email to all the employees.

.....*The manager didn't send an email to all the employees.* .....

8. They installed a new system yesterday.

.....*They didn't install a new system yesterday.* .....

9. Peter got the new job with Tesla.

.....*Peter didn't get the new job with Tesla.* .....

10. They were very hard working.

.....*They weren't very hard working.* .....

11. We got the new budget this morning.

.....*We didn't get the new budges this morning.* .....

12. We began talking about the project early last year.

.....*We didn't begin talking about the project early last year.* .....

13. We were disappointed with the quality of your work.

.....*We were not disappointed with the quality of your work.* .....

12. I was at the meeting last week.

.....*I was not at the meeting last week.* .....



## 10. Write down the questions to the answers.

1. *Where did you go to university?*

I went to university in London.

2. .... *What did you do after university?*.....

After university I got an internship in the IT department at Amazon.

3. .... *How long did you work for Amazon?* .....

I worked for Amazon for 10 years.

4. .... *Where did you work after Amazon? What did you do after Amazon?* .....

After Amazon I got a job at Google.

5. .... *What did you do at Google?*.....

I worked as a project manager.

6. .... *Did you like working for Google?* .....

Yes, I liked working for Google.

7. .... *Why did you stop working for Google?* .....

I stopped working for Google because I wanted to work for a smaller company.

8. .... *When did you work for Google? / How long did you work for Google?* .....

I worked at Google between 2012 and 2021.