The Past Tenses:

Simple Past & Past Progressive

Student Name:

Instructor:

Date:

Course:

# About This DLA

## Important Note

All the activities (3) in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and signature in that case. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor’s signature included.

## Learning Outcomes

Through computer and other independent work, this activity will familiarize you with the simple past and past progressive tenses and help you create sentences with accurate use of these tenses.

## Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

# The Simple Past Tense

Use the simple past tense to express:

## Completed actions in the past

The simple past expresses actions that began and ended at a time in the past.

* Ex🡪I **came** to school at 8:00. We **started** the class late. He **watched** a movie last night.

## A series of actions completed in the past

We use the simple past to talk about a series of actions that happened in the past, as when telling a story. We talk about what happened first, second, third, and so on.

* Ex🡪 When the alarm clock **rang**, I **got up, took** a shower, **brushed** my teeth, and **put** on my uniform. \*The action in the time clause (*when*) happened **first**.

## Non-action verbs in the past

We can use the simple past form to talk about non-action verbs that were true in the past.

* Ex🡪When I **was** a child, I **believed** in Santa Claus.

# How to Form the Simple Past

There are two forms of *be* in the past: **was**/**were**

* I/he/she/it/singular subjects 🡪 **was**
* you/we/they/plural subjects 🡪 **were**

Many times, you only add **–*ed*** to verbs in the past tense, but sometimes you need more than ***–ed***. Here are some spelling rules:

| **Rule** | **Base Form** | **Past Form** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Add –*ed* to most verbs to form the simple past tense | start  design | started  designed |
| If the word ends in *e*, add -*d* only | creat**e**  mov**e** | created  moved |
| When the base form ends in a consonant + *y*, change *y* to *i* and add *-ed* | car**ry**  stu**dy** | carried  studied |
| Double the final consonant of one-syllable words ending in a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern (CVC)  --Exception: If the word ends in *w* or *x*, do not double the last letter | stop  drag  snow  fix | stopped  dragged  snowed  fixed |
| When a two-syllable verb ends in a consonant-vowel-consonant, double the final consonant and add –*ed* ONLY IF THE LAST SYLLABLE IS STRESSED | occúr  permít | occurred  permitted |
| When the last syllable of a two-syllable verb is not stressed, DO NOT DOUBLE THE FINAL CONSONANT | ópen  óffer | opened  offered |

Sometimes, you do not use **–*ed*** at all for the past tense. Here are some irregular verbs:

| **Simple Form** | **Simple Past** | **Simple Form** | **Simple Past** | **Simple Form** | **Simple Past** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| awake | awoke | get | got | see | saw |
| be | was/were | give | gave | sell | sold |
| become | became | go | went | send | sent |
| begin | began | grow | grew | sing | sang |
| blow | blew | have | had | sit | sat |
| break | broke | hear | heard | sleep | slept |
| buy | bought | keep | kept | speak | spoke |
| catch | caught | know | knew | stand | stood |
| choose | chose | lay | laid | steal | stole |
| come | came | leave | left | sweep | swept |
| do | did | lie | lay | swim | swam |
| draw | drew | lose | lost | take | took |
| drink | drank | make | made | teach | taught |
| drive | drove | mean | meant | tell | told |
| eat | ate | meet | met | think | thought |
| fall | fell | pay | paid | throw | threw |
| feel | felt | ride | rode | understand | understood |
| find | found | rise | rose | wear | wore |
| fly | flew | run | ran | win | won |
| forget | forgot | say | said | write | wrote |

# The Past Progressive Tense

We use the past progressive tense to express:

## An activity that was happening at a point in the past

The past progressive expresses on-going actions in the past. They were not complete at that time.

* Ex🡪At 10:00 p.m. last night, I **was sleeping**.

## Two activities that were happening at the same time in the past

The past progressive also expresses actions that were on-going at the same time in the past.

* Ex🡪At 10:00 p.m. last night, I **was sleeping** while you **were studying**.

## An on-going action interrupted by another action

We can use the past progressive for an on-going action in the past ( 1st action ) that was interrupted by another action ( 2nd action , simple past).

* Ex🡪I **was watching**  T.V. when the electricity **went** out.

# How to Form the Past Progressive { was/were + verb-ing }

* Ex🡪 I **was watch**ing TV at midnight. He **was talk**ing on the phone. We **were eat**ing dinner.

\*Non-action verbs (mental states, emotional states, possession, *be*, etc.) are usually not used in a progressive form.

# How to Make Questions and Negative Statements

**Negative statements:** All verbs (except *be*; it never needs a helper) that have only one part to them(one-word verbs) **need the helper** *did* and *not* to become negative. Start with the subject , then *be/did not*, and then the base form of the verb. Verbs that have two or more parts **already have** a helper, so just add not between the helper and the main verb.

|  | **Simple Past** | **Simple Past with Be** | **Past Progressive** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Affirmative | I went to college. | Mr. Gordon was sick. | We were sleeping . |
| Negative | I did not go to college. | Mr. Gordon was not sick. | We were not sleeping . |

**Questions**: All verbs (except *be*; it never needs a helper) that have only one part to them (one-word verbs) **need the helper** *did* for the past tense. The helper is first, then the subject , and then the base form of the verb. Verbs that have two or more parts **already have** a helper—the first part of the verb is the helper. You can add a wh- word at the beginning if you need it.

|  | **Simple Past** | **Simple Past with Be** | **Past Progressive** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Statement | She bought a new car. | You were absent. | They were studying yesterday. |
| Yes/No Question | Did she buy a new car? | Were you absent? | Were they studying yesterday? |
| Wh- Question | What did she buy ? | Why were you absent? | Where were they studying ? |

# Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

## 1. Past Tenses Review

Review the information on this sheet. Then, answer the following questions.

| Write the answer. |
| --- |
| In what situations do we use the simple past tense? |
|  |
|  |
|  |
| In what situations do we use the past progressive tense? |
|  |
|  |

## 2. Online Quiz

Go to http://tinyurl.com/PastTensesDLAQuizand take the [Past Tenses DLA Quiz](http://tinyurl.com/PastTensesDLAQuiz). You must score at least 80% on the exercises before seeing a tutor. After you complete the task, **PLEASE ASK A LAB TUTOR OR FRONT DESK ATTENDANT TO PRINT THE PAGE THAT HAS YOUR SCORE. DO NOT EXIT THE PROGRAM UNTIL THIS PAGE HAS BEEN PRINTED (FREE OF CHARGE).** If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to ask a lab tutor.

## Choose 3a or 3b Below

## 3a. Review Your Own Writing

Collect some of your graded work. Find examples of sentences that contain the following:

| Write the answers. |
| --- |
| An action completed at a specific time in the past: |
| A series of actions completed in the past: |
| An on-going action in the past: |
| An on-going action in the past interrupted by another action: |

**If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (3b).**

## 3b. Past Tenses Practice

Get the envelope that reads “The Past Tenses—Activity 3b Word Cards” in the DLA file. In it, you will find word cards. Form the following statements or questions. Try to use a **different** subject and verb every time. Make a sentence using the word cards, write it down below, and then form another sentence. You will do this four times.

| Write sentences using past tense. |
| --- |
| 1. A question in the simple past tense. |
| 1. A negative statement in the simple past tense. |
| 1. An affirmative statement in the past progressive. |
| 1. A sentence with both simple past and past progressive. |

## 4. Review the DLA

Go to https://mtsac2.mywconline.com and use the [Mt. SAC Writing Center Appointment System](https://mtsac2.mywconline.com/) to make a DLA appointment, or sign-up to see a tutor on the “**Walk-in**” list in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your work to demonstrate your understanding of the past tenses. Refer to your own graded writing (or the completed activity) and explain to the tutor strategies that you used to create sentences with simple past and past progressive. ?

Student’s Signature:

Tutor’s Signature

Date:

Date:

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center’s website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

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