

Past Tenses



Past Simple

Past Continuous

Past Perfect Simple

Past Tenses: Structures

▶ Past Simple:

Subject + Verb-**ed** (or irregular form)

- **Negative:** Subject + **did not/didn't** Verb (basic form)
- **Interrogative:** **Did** + Subject + Verb (basic form)

▶ Past Continuous:

Subject + **was/were** + Verb-**ing**

- **Negative:** Subject + **was/were** + **not** (**wasn't/weren't**) + Verb-**ing**
- **Interrogative:** **Was/Were** + Subject + Verb-**ing** ?

▶ Past Perfect Simple:

Subject + **had** + Past Participle (Verb-**ed** or irregular form)

- **Negative:** Subject + **had** + **not** (**hadn't**) + Past Participle
- Interrogative:** **Had** + Subject + Past Participle

Past Simple: uses

To talk about **finished** actions in the past:

- ▶ One action after the other:
 - *“She opened the door, turned on the lights and entered the house”*
- ▶ An action that happened in a certain situation.
 - *“The car knocked the child down when he was crossing the road”*
- ▶ A short action finished in the past (you indicate when it happened with an adverb of Time):
 - *“Yesterday, I arrived at home too late”.*
- ▶ A finished action that takes a long period of time (indicated in the sentence):
 - *“I lived in Britain when I was young”*

Past Simple: spelling rules

- ▶ If the verb ends in “**silent –e**” → It disappears
 - “*I lived in Italy*” (*live + ed* → *lived*)
- ▶ If the verb ends in “**consonant + y**” → -ied
 - “*They carried the boxes home*” (*carry + ed* → *carried*)
- ▶ **Duplication of the final consonant ONLY IF:**
 1. The verb ends in **CVC**: Consonant + vowel + ONE only Consonant (except X or W)
 2. The last syllable is stressed
 3. The vowel of the last syllable is “short”

They dropped the ball / *They kidnapped my sister*

Exception: when the verb ends in “l” it doubles though the last syllable is not stressed. (example: “travelled”)

Past Continuous: uses

- ▶ To talk about an **action in progress** in the past (i) or a **temporal situation** in the past (ii):

(i) *At midday last Sunday, I was working with my laptop*

(ii) *In 1998, I was living with my cousin*

- ▶ To express the **action in progress** in which another past action happened:

“The little kid was crossing the road when a car knocked him down”

- ▶ To talk about the **context** in which the events of a story happened:

“It was getting dark, the sun was beginning to hide behind the hills, women were tidying up the entrance of the church. Suddenly, a strange red light appeared in the sky”

- ▶ To talk about two actions that were **taking place simultaneously** in the past:

“My wife was talking on the phone while I was surfing the web”

Past Perfect Simple: uses

- ▶ To express a finished action that took place before another completed action in the past.

*“My family had already arrived **before** I left”.*

*“**After** we had finished dinner, we got ready to go out.”*

*“**When** the police arrived, the murderer had killed everyone”.*

*“**By the time** we met, I had eaten all the packets of salt & vinegar crisps”*

- ▶ To show the cause of a past action

I was tired on Monday, I hadn't slept well the night before

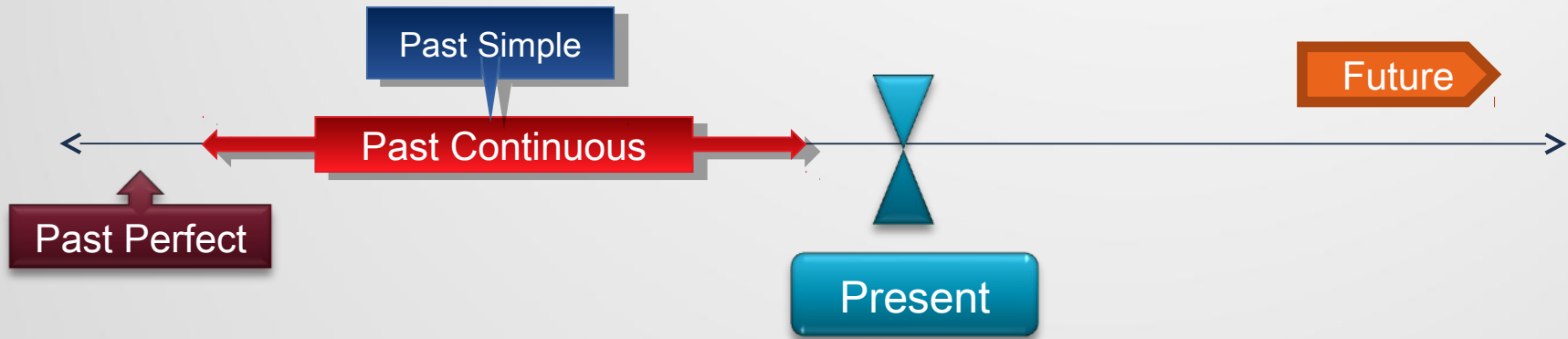
- ▶ With time expressions such as when, after, before, as soon as, by the time, by, until

***By the time** I got home, my mother had already prepared dinner*

- ▶ With adverbs such as ever, never, already, yet, just, so far and still

*I had never been to such a beautiful place **before***

SUMMARY



Time expressions

- ▶ **FOR** + a period of time (duration)
*I stayed in Scotland **for two years**.*
- ▶ **SINCE** + a year, an event, etc. (indicates starting point)
*I know him **since** my wedding.*
***Since** 1978 people can vote in Spain.*

- ▶ **[PAST PERFECT] BEFORE WHEN + PAST SIMPLE BY THE TIME**

*I had (already) bought my house **before** I got married / **before** I moved to UK
when I got married / **when** I moved to UK
by the time I got married / **by the time** I moved to UK*

- ▶ **WHILE / AS** + past continuous or past simple
= **WHEN** + past simple, past continuous

***As/ while** I was walking, I phoned my grandmother
= **When** I phoned her, I was walking*

Time expressions

▶ AS SOON AS

- Phone me, *as soon as* you arrive in Italy.
- *As soon as* the news had been broadcast, I phoned them.

BE CAREFUL!!!

▶ AS/SINCE can also mean BECAUSE

- I didn't go out *because* it was raining
= *Since/ As* it was raining, I didn't go out.

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