

Narrative tenses!

- Narrative tenses are the grammatical structures that you use when telling a story, or talking about situations and activities which happened at a defined past time.
- When narrating past events, **DO NOT** mix past and present tenses (avoid using the present perfect and present simple), as these will confuse the reader/listener about when things really happened.

PAST SIMPLE

FORM

Affirmative sentences:

We use the **infinitive** of the verb +**ed** for **regular verbs** or a specific form in the case of **irregular verbs**.

e.g. They **played** football. He **won** an oscar.

NOTE: Here you can find a dictionary of irregular verbs.
<http://www.englishpage.com/irregularverbs/irregularverbs.html>

Negative sentences:

We use the auxiliary **did** and the negative particle **not**.

e.g. They **did not** play football.

Questions:

We use the auxiliary **did** and change the word order (auxiliary – subject – verb)

e.g. **Did** they play football?

SPELLING RULES FOR THE PAST SIMPLE

a) If the verb ends in a consonant, **add -ed**.

return - returned, help - helped, cook - cooked

b.) If the verb ends in -e, **add -d**.

live - lived, create - created, die - died

c) In one-syllable words, if the verb ends in a consonant-vowel-consonant combination (CVC), **double the last consonant and add -ed**.

hop - hopped, rub - rubbed

However, do not double one-syllable words ending in -w, -x, or -y.

bow - bowed, play - played, mix - mixed

d) In words of **two or more syllables** that end in consonant-vowel-consonant combination, **double the last consonant only if the last syllable is stressed.**
prefer - preferred (The last syllable is stressed.) **visit - visited** (The last syllable isn't stressed)

e) If the verb ends in a consonant, + y, change **the -y to -i and -ed.**

worry - worried, copy – copied

But if the verb ends in a vowel +y, add -ed. (Do not change the -y to -i.)

play - played, annoy – annoyed

USE

Use the past simple:

- to express a **completed action at a definite time in the past**. The separate events which occur in sequence in a narrative are expressed using this tense.
e.g. I **woke up** at half past seven yesterday, I **had** a shower and **ate** some breakfast. I **left** for work at quarter past eight.
- to express **past habits**.
e.g. I went to school in São Paulo until my family moved to Rio.

NOTE! The past continuous is the most common tense after '**when**' in questions and statements



PAST CONTINUOUS

FORM

Affirmative sentences:

We use a form of **to be** in the past form (was, were), the infinitive of the verb and the ending **-ing**.

e.g. I **was** play**ing** volleyball.

Negative sentences:

We use the negative particle **not** after the verb **to be** in the past and then the infinitive **+ing**.

e.g. I **was not** play**ing** volleyball.

Questions:

We use the verb **to be** in the past as the auxiliary and change the word order (auxiliary – subject – verb)

e.g. **Was** I play**ing** volleyball?

SPELLING RULES FOR THE PAST CONTINUOUS

a.) Add **-ing** to the base form of the verb.

read - reading, stand - standing, jump - jumping

b.) If a verb ends in a silent -e, **drop the final -e and add -ing**.

leave - leaving, take - taking, receive - receiving

c.) In a one-syllable word, if the last three letters are consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC), **double the last consonant before adding -ing**.

sit - sitting, run - running, hop - hopping

However, do not double the last consonant in word that end in w, x, or y.

sew - sewing, fix - fixing, enjoy - enjoying

d.) In words of two or more syllables that end in a consonant-vowel-consonant combination, **double the last consonant** only if the last syllable is stressed.

admit - admitting, regret - regretting

e.) If a verb ends in *-ie*, **change the *-ie* to *y* before adding *-ing*.**

die - dying

USE

As with all continuous tenses, the past continuous gives the idea of activity and duration. The past continuous is used:

- To **describe the past situation** in which the events of the narrative occurred.

e.g. When I saw her, she **was wearing** a blue dress and **was driving** a Mercedes.

- To express an **activity in progress at a time in the past.**

e.g. What **were** you **doing** when I phoned you?

NOTE! The past continuous is the most common tense after 'while' in questions and statements.

The past continuous also expresses the idea of:

An interrupted activity

Eg. She was cooking dinner when the door bell rang. (She cooked dinner = she finished it)

A temporary situation

Eg. He was standing on the corner waiting for a bus. (It stood on the corner. = Permanent situation)

NOTE! The past continuous can also be used as '**future in the past**'.

ACTION AND NON-ACTION VERBS

REMEMBER:

Action verbs can be used in the past simple and continuous but **non-action verbs** are not normally used in the past continuous

PAST PERFECT

FORM

Affirmative sentences:

We use **had** + the **past participle** of the verb.

e.g. I **had played** volleyball.

Negative sentences:

We use the negative particle **not** after **had** and then the **past participle**.

e.g. I **had not played** volleyball.

Questions:

We use **had** as the auxiliary and change the word order (auxiliary – subject – **past participle of the verb**)

e.g. **Had** I **played** volleyball?

USE

The past perfect is used:

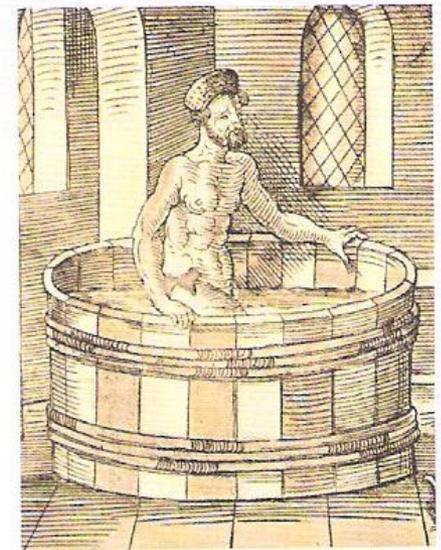
- To show that an **action or situation happened BEFORE the events in the narrative described in the simple past.**
e.g. I woke up at half past seven yesterday. I **had slept** very badly because there **had been** a power cut during the night.

NOTE! If the subject of two verbs is the same, you don't have to repeat the 'had' auxiliary.

Eg. When I arrived, he'd finished his dinner and left the room.

5 Read the story of Archimedes and his bath. Then complete the text with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Archimedes, the Greek mathematician, is probably most famous for the story of King Hieron II of Syracuse and the gold crown. The king **a** (want) *wanted* to give a gold crown as a gift to the gods, and **b** (give) a carefully weighed amount of gold to a goldsmith. The man **c** (produce) a beautiful crown, but the king was worried that the **craftsman** **d** (not use) all the gold to make the crown. Dishonest craftsmen often **e** (mix) gold with silver, which was cheaper, but the king could not find a way of proving that the man **f** (do) this. He **g** (ask) Archimedes to solve the problem. Archimedes **h** (know) that gold and silver have different **densities**. The problem was that nobody could calculate the **mass** of an object like a crown. While Archimedes **i** (think) about this problem, he decided to go to the public baths to relax. While he **j** (climb) into the bath, he **k** (notice) some water on the floor. It **l** (spill) over the side of the bath, and he **m** (realize) that he **n** (solve) the problem by accident. The total amount of water that **o** (spill) out of the bath must be the same as the **volume** of his body. He could use a piece of pure gold and calculate its volume, and then test the crown and see if it was the same. *A* the story, he **p** (jump) straight out of the bath and **q** (run) down calling 'Eureka – I've found it.' The goldsmith soon **r** (admit) that he **s** (cheat) the king, and was punished. Archimedes **t** (discover) a principle of buoyancy.



GO ON PRACTICING AT HOME

http://www.cesdonbosco.com/filologia/english/narrative_tenses.htm

<http://www.vivquarry.com/wkshts/narrex1.html>

http://www.studypage.net/l_index.php?id=201

<http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/simplepast.html>