

PAST SIMPLE vs USED TO vs PAST CONTINUOUS

PAST SIMPLE

1. FORM

Irregular past tense form:

begin → *began*

or

infinitive + **-ed**:

finish → *finished*

Watch out for spelling and pronunciation:

Spelling:

plan → *planned* / *carry* → *carried*

2. USE

- To refer to completed events, states or actions (finished periods of time), usually with a past time expression (**last** week, in 1986, a year **ago**):

Shakespeare wrote over 30 plays

Did you go to the party? (last Saturday)

- To refer to a list of completed events... in the past:

First I woke up and then I had breakfast.

Later, I went shopping. Finally, I ate in a restaurant and walked back home.

USED TO + INFINITIVE

1. FORM

*I **used to love** peanut butter as a kid.*

*I **didn't use to listen** to my parents' advice as a teenager.*

*What **did you use to like** as a kid?*

2. USE

Use the *past simple* and *used to + inf.* for *past habits, repeated actions and states which are now finished*:

There is a nice cinema down the road. *I **usually went** there to see the great classics when I was young = I **used to go** there to see the great classics when I was young.*

PAST CONTINUOUS

1. FORM

Subject + was / were + -ing (+ time reference)

I was still working at 6 o'clock yesterday
(WORK - and I continued working after that point)

2. USE

a) Actions in progress in the past (not finished at the time of speaking)

- *Were you **studying** at 8 pm yesterday?*
- *Yes, I was*

b) Parallel actions in progress in the past

At 8 pm yesterday I was **ironing** **while** Mike and Liam were **tidying up**

c) Description in narratives / picture description (to set the scene)

Last Sunday, the sun **was shining** and I **was jogging**...

!!!! STATIVE VERBS (love, like, understand ...)

I didn't understand (-wasn't-understanding) the lesson.

!!!! LONG ACTION – INTERRUPTION

Yesterday evening, *I **was watching** TV* (long action) **when suddenly I **heard**** (interruption) a terrible noise.

