

PRACTICAL LESSON

Be - Past Simple

Lesson category: Mësimet në gjuhë angleze

Learn was and were for past states, ages, locations, weather and feelings. Includes full conjugation, negatives with wasn't and weren't, questions, short answers, there was / there were, and past time expressions.

Be - Past Simple (was, were)

The past simple of **be** is far simpler than the present: there are only two forms, **was** and **were**. You use them to describe how things were at a finished time in the past — where someone was, how they felt, what the weather was like, how old they were. Because **be** is an auxiliary in its own right, it needs no help from *did*.

Learning objectives

- Choose correctly between **was** and **were**.
- Form negatives with **wasn't** and **weren't**.
- Ask questions by inverting the subject and the verb.
- Give correct short answers.
- Use **there was** and **there were**.
- Recognise the past time expressions that signal this tense.

Meaning and usage

Use	Example
Past identity or job	<i>She was a teacher for ten years.</i>
Past description	<i>The film was excellent.</i>
Past age	<i>I was seven when we moved.</i>
Past location	<i>We were at the beach yesterday.</i>
Past feelings and states	<i>They were very tired after the trip.</i>
Past weather and time	<i>It was cold last night.</i>
Background in a story	<i>It was late and the streets were empty.</i>

The affirmative form

Subject	Form	Example
---------	------	---------

I	was	<i>I was at home.</i>
you	were	<i>You were right.</i>
he	was	<i>He was late.</i>
she	was	<i>She was happy.</i>
it	was	<i>It was cold.</i>
we	were	<i>We were ready.</i>
they	were	<i>They were at work.</i>

The rule in one line: **I, he, she, it → was; you, we, they → were.** Note that *you* takes *were* even when it refers to one person.

The negative form

Subject	Full form	Contraction	Example
I / he / she / it	was not	wasn't	<i>She wasn't at school.</i>
you / we / they	were not	weren't	<i>They weren't ready.</i>

There are no other contractions here: unlike the present, you cannot write *I'd not* or similar. Only **wasn't** and **weren't** exist.

Questions and short answers

Question	Positive answer	Negative answer
<i>Were you at the party?</i>	Yes, I was.	No, I wasn't.
<i>Was she your teacher?</i>	Yes, she was.	No, she wasn't.
<i>Was it expensive?</i>	Yes, it was.	No, it wasn't.
<i>Were they at home?</i>	Yes, they were.	No, they weren't.

Wh- questions follow the same inversion: **Where were you last night? Why was he late? How old were you then?**

There was and there were

Form	Used with	Example
There was	singular and uncountable	There was a small shop on the corner.
There were	plural	There were hundreds of people.
There wasn't / weren't	negatives	There wasn't any milk. There weren't any tickets left.
Was there ...? / Were there ...?	questions	Was there a problem? Were there many guests?

Signal words and time expressions

These expressions point clearly to the past simple: **yesterday, last night / week / month / year, two days ago, in 2019, when I was young, at that time, then, this morning** (if the morning has finished).

Be or do in the past?

	With be	With another verb
Positive	She was tired.	She worked late.
Negative	She wasn't tired.	She didn't work late.
Question	Was she tired?	Did she work late?
Short answer	Yes, she was .	Yes, she did .

A comparison with the present

Present	Past
I am a student.	I was a student.
He isn't here.	He wasn't here.
Are they ready?	Were they ready?
There are two chairs.	There were two chairs.

Formal and informal usage

- **Wasn't** and **weren't** are normal in speech and informal writing; formal writing prefers *was not* and *were not*.
- In unreal or hypothetical sentences, formal English uses **were** for every subject: *If I **were** you, I would apologise*. In everyday speech *If I was you* is very common, but *were* is safer in exams and formal writing.

Common mistakes

Mistake	Correct	Why
<i>Did you were at home?</i>	Were you at home?	<i>be</i> never takes <i>did</i>
<i>She didn't was here.</i>	She wasn't here.	same reason
<i>You was late.</i>	You were late.	<i>you</i> always takes <i>were</i>
<i>There were a problem.</i>	There was a problem.	singular noun
<i>I was born in 1998</i> written as <i>I born in 1998</i>	I was born in 1998.	<i>be born</i> always needs <i>be</i>
<i>Yes, I was not.</i>	No, I wasn't.	a negative answer starts with <i>No</i>

Learning tips

1. Learn the split as a pair: *was* goes with the three singular pronouns plus *I*; *were* goes with the rest.

2. Describe a photograph from your childhood out loud. It forces you to use *was*, *were*, *there was*, *there were* naturally.
3. Whenever you write *did* next to *was* or *were*, delete the *did*.

Summary checklist

- Did I use **was** for *I, he, she, it* and **were** for *you, we, they*?
- Did I avoid *did* completely?
- Is my question formed by inversion?
- Does **there was** / **there were** agree with the noun?
- Is there a past time expression that justifies the tense?

Shpjegim në gjuhën shqipe

Rregulli i anglishtes, i shpjeguar në shqip

Në kohën e shkuar folja **be** ka vetëm **dy forma**: *was* për *I, he, she, it* dhe *were* për *you, we, they*. Vini re se *you* merr gjithmonë *were*, edhe kur i drejtohet një personi të vetëm.

Mohimi bëhet me *was not* dhe *were not*, të shkurtuara në **wasn't** dhe **weren't**. Nuk ka forma të tjera të shkurtuara. **Pyetja** ndërtohet me përmbyesje: *Were you at home?* Folja *be* nuk merr kurrë *did*.

Kjo kohë përdoret për gjendje, përshkrime, moshë, vendndodhje dhe rrethana në një çast të mbyllur të së shkuarës. Ajo shërben shpesh si sfond i një rrëfimi: *It was late and the streets were empty*.

Ndërtimi **there was** / **there were** tregon se diçka ekzistonte. Folja përshtatet me emrin që vjen pas saj, jo me fjalën *there*: *There was a shop*, por *There were many people*.

Ekuivalenti në gjuhën shqipe

Format angleze **was** dhe **were** mbulojnë dy kohë të ndryshme të shqipes: **të pakryerën** (*isha, ishte, ishte*) dhe **të kryerën e thjeshtë** (*qeshë, qe*). Prandaj një formë e vetme angleze mund të përkthehet në dy mënyra, sipas kuptimit.

Ekuivalenti i formave

Anglisht	Shqip	Shembull
I was	unë isha	<i>I was at home.</i> — Isha në shtëpi.
you were	ti ishte	<i>You were right.</i> — Ti kishe të drejtë.
he / she / it was	ai / ajo ishte	<i>She was tired.</i> — Ajo ishte e lodhur.
we were	ne ishim	<i>We were ready.</i> — Ne ishim gati.
they were	ata / ato ishin	<i>They were late.</i> — Ata ishin vonë.
there was	kishte	<i>There was a shop.</i> — Kishte një dyqan.
there were	kishte	<i>There were many people.</i> — Kishte shumë njerëz.

Vini re: te *there was* dhe *there were* shqipja përdor gjithmonë **kishte**, pa e ndryshuar sipas numrit. Anglishtja e ndryshon.

Përshtatja e kohëve

Anglisht	Shqip	Kuptimi
<i>I was ill yesterday.</i>	Dje isha i sëmurë.	gjendje e vazhduar
<i>He was born in 1998.</i>	Ai lindi në vitin 1998.	ngjarje e vetme; shqipja përdor foljen <i>lind</i>
<i>It was cold last night.</i>	Mbrëmë ishte ftohtë.	përshkrim rrethanash

Ku ndryshojnë dy gjuhët

- **Një formë kundrejt dyve.** Anglishtja ka *was/were*; shqipja zgjedh midis së pakryerës dhe së kryerës së thjeshtë sipas kuptimit.
- **I lindur.** Anglishtja e ndërton me *be*: *I was born*. Shqipja përdor foljen e plotë: **Unë linda**. Ky është një përkthim që gabohet shpesh.
- **Mohimi.** *She wasn't here* = **Ajo nuk ishte këtu** — *nuk* para foljes.
- **Pyetja.** Anglishtja e përmbys rendin (*Were you ...?*); shqipja shton pjesëzën **a** ose ndryshon vetëm intonacionin: **A ishte ...?**

Gabime të zakonshme të folësve të shqipes

Gabimi	E saktë	Pse
<i>I born in 1998.</i>	I was born in 1998.	anglishtja e kërkon <i>be</i>
<i>You was late.</i>	You were late.	<i>you</i> merr gjithmonë <i>were</i>
<i>Did you were at home?</i>	Were you at home?	<i>be</i> nuk merr <i>did</i>
<i>There were a problem.</i>	There was a problem.	emri është në njëjës
<i>Yesterday I have been ill.</i>	Yesterday I was ill.	koha e mbyllur kërkon të shkuarën e thjeshtë