



## Talking about the simple past

The tense of a verb tells us **when** the action was done. The action can be done in the past, present or future.

### When to use the past tense

There are many ways of talking about the past in English, but the two main ones are: the simple past and the continuous past. The simple past is explained here.\*

Use the simple past form of a verb when you are talking about an action that took place at a specific point in the past and that is now finished. For example:

*I **kicked** the ball and **scored** a goal.*  
*I **walked** the dog yesterday.*  
*I **went** to Florida last year.*

NOTE: The simple past is formed in different ways for regular and irregular verbs. For regular verbs there is a rule, but irregular verbs just have to be learned.

To make the past tense of **regular** verbs we add 'ed' or 'd'

verb	past tense
love	loved
walk	walked
listen	listened

The verb changes in the past tense of **irregular verbs**

verb	past tense
go	went
have	had
make	made

For example:

*I live in London now but I **lived** in France for five years = regular simple past tense.*  
*I normally go to work by bus but yesterday I **went** in the car = irregular simple past tense.*

\*For more information about the continuous past, see the factsheet 'Talking about the continuous past'.