

Unit 11

Past simple (I did)

a Study this example:

Tom: Look! It's raining again.

Ann: Oh no, not again. It **rained** all day yesterday too.

Rained is the *past simple* tense. We use the past simple to talk about actions or situations in the past.

- I very much **enjoyed** the party.
- Mr Edwards **died** ten years ago.
- When I **lived** in Manchester, I **worked** in a bank.

b Very often the past simple ends in **-ed**:

- We **invited** them to our party but they **decided** not to come.
- The police **stopped** me on my way home last night.
- She **passed** her examination because she **studied** very hard.

For spelling rules see **Appendix 3**.

But many important verbs are *irregular*. This means that the past simple does *not* end in **-ed**.

For example:

leave - **left** We all **left** the party at 11 o'clock.
go - **went** Yesterday I **went** to London to see a friend of mine.
cost - **cost** This house **cost** £35,000 in 1980.

The past of the verb **be** (am/is/are) is **was/were**:

I/he/she/it **was** we/you/they **were**
I **was** angry because Tom and Ann **were** late.

For a list of irregular verbs see **Appendix 2**.

c In past simple questions and negatives we use **did/didn't** + the infinitive (**do/open/rain** etc.):

it **rained** **did it rain?** it **didn't rain**

- Ann: **Did** you **go** out last night, Tom?
- Tom: Yes, I went to the cinema. But I **didn't enjoy** the film.
- **When did** Mr Edwards **die**?
- What did** you **do** at the week end?
- We **didn't invite** her to the party, so she **didn't come**.
- **Why didn't** you **phone** me on Tuesday?

Note that we normally use **did/didn't** with **have**:

- Did** you **have** time to write the letter?
- I **didn't have** enough money to buy anything to eat.

~~But~~ we *do not* use **did** with the verb **be** (**was/were**):

- **Why were** you so angry?
- They **weren't** able to come because they were very busy.
- **Was** Tom at work yesterday?

For the past simple see also **Units 12, 20, 21**.

