

Past Simple: Question Sentences

Grammar Lesson, Examples & 30 Practice Questions

Past Simple: Question Sentences

Do you want to ask about things that happened in the past? For example, "Did you eat breakfast?" or "Where did she go?" We use **past simple question sentences** to ask about finished actions or events. These are things that started and finished in the past.

Look at these simple examples:

- **Did you sleep well?** (I want to know about last night.)
- **Did he go to school?** (I want to know about yesterday.)
- **Where did they eat?** (I want to know about a past meal.)

In this lesson, you will learn how to make **past simple question sentences** step by step. Do not worry — it is easier than you think!

A Quick Reminder: What Is the Past Simple?

The **past simple** is a verb form we use to talk about things that are finished. They happened before now — yesterday, last week, or a long time ago.

- I **walked** to school. (This happened before now. It is finished.)
- She **ate** a sandwich. (This happened before now. It is finished.)

A **verb** is an action word. For example: walk, eat, play, go, sleep, talk.

A **subject** is the person or thing doing the action. For example: I, you, he, she, we, they.

How to Make Past Simple Question Sentences

In English, to make a question in the past simple, we **do not** use the normal past form of the verb (like walked or ate). Instead, we use a special helper word: **DID**.

DID is the past form of the word "do". It is a **helper verb** — it helps us make questions.

Here is the rule:

Did + subject + base verb + ...?

The **base verb** is the simple, dictionary form of the verb — no -ed, no -s, no changes. For example:

- walk → base verb: **walk**
- eat → base verb: **eat**
- go → base verb: **go**

- play → base verb: **play**

Step-by-Step Example

Let's say you want to ask your friend about yesterday. Your friend's name is Tom.

Tom played football yesterday.

Now you want to make this a question. Follow these steps:

Step 1: Start with **Did**.

Step 2: Write the subject — **Tom**.

Step 3: Write the base verb — **play** (not "played").

Step 4: Add the rest — **football yesterday**.

Step 5: Add a question mark — **?**

Result: **Did Tom play football yesterday?**

Simple! The verb goes back to its base form because **did** already shows the past.

Past Simple Yes/No Question Sentences

A **Yes/No question** is a question that you can answer with "Yes" or "No".

The structure is:

Did + subject + base verb + ...?

Subject	Did	Base Verb	Full Question
I	Did	sleep	Did I sleep long?
you	Did	eat	Did you eat breakfast?
he	Did	go	Did he go to school?
she	Did	watch	Did she watch TV?
it	Did	rain	Did it rain yesterday?
we	Did	walk	Did we walk to the park?
they	Did	play	Did they play games?

Notice that **did** is the same for every subject. You do not change it. You use **did** with I, you, he, she, it, we, and they.

Short Answers to Yes/No Questions

When someone asks a yes/no question in the past simple, you can give a short answer:

Yes, + subject + did.

No, + subject + did not. / didn't.

did not = didn't (this is a **contraction** — two words joined together with an apostrophe ')

Question	Yes Answer	No Answer
Did you eat lunch?	Yes, I did.	No, I did not. / No, I didn't.
Did she go to work?	Yes, she did.	No, she did not. / No, she didn't.
Did they play football?	Yes, they did.	No, they did not. / No, they didn't.
Did he sleep well?	Yes, he did.	No, he did not. / No, he didn't.

Past Simple Wh- Question Sentences

Sometimes you want more information, not just "yes" or "no". For this, we use **Wh- questions**. These questions start with a question word.

Common question words:

- **What** — for things: What did you eat?
- **Where** — for places: Where did she go?
- **When** — for time: When did they arrive?
- **Who** — for people: Who did you see?
- **Why** — for reasons: Why did he leave?
- **How** — for the way something happened: How did you feel?

The structure is:

Question word + did + subject + base verb + ...?

Question Word	Did	Subject	Base Verb	Full Question
What	did	you	eat	What did you eat?
Where	did	she	go	Where did she go?
When	did	they	arrive	When did they arrive?
Who	did	he	see	Who did he see?
Why	did	you	leave	Why did you leave?
How	did	it	happen	How did it happen?

Mini Story: Let's Ask Questions!

Read this short story:

Yesterday, Anna woke up at 7 o'clock. She ate toast for breakfast. Then she walked to the park. She saw her friend Maria. They talked for one hour. Then Anna went home.

Now let's ask questions about the story:

- **What time did Anna wake up?** — She woke up at 7 o'clock.
- **What did she eat?** — She ate toast.
- **Where did she walk?** — She walked to the park.
- **Who did she see?** — She saw Maria.
- **How long did they talk?** — They talked for one hour.

Important Differences and Special Cases

Did or Was/Were?

We use **did** to make questions with action verbs (eat, go, play, walk, sleep).

But we use **was** or **were** with the verb **to be** (am, is, are). We do NOT use "did" with "be".

Look at the difference:

With Action Verbs (use DID)	With "Be" (use WAS/WERE)
Did you eat pizza?	Were you hungry?
Did she go to school?	Was she at school?
Did they play football?	Were they happy?
Did he work yesterday?	Was he tired?

Remember:

- Use **Was** with: I, he, she, it
- Use **Were** with: you, we, they

The Base Verb Does Not Change

This is very important! When you use **did** in a question, the main verb **always** stays in the base form. Do not add -ed or change the verb.

For example:

- He **played** tennis. → **Did he play tennis?** ✅ (not "Did he played tennis?")
- She **ate** lunch. → **Did she eat lunch?** ✅ (not "Did she ate lunch?")
- They **went** home. → **Did they go home?** ✅ (not "Did they went home?")

Did already shows the past. The main verb does not need to show the past again.

Common Mistakes

Here are mistakes that many beginners make with **past simple question sentences**. Read carefully!

✗ Did she *went* to school?

✓ **Did she go to school?** (Use the base verb — not the past form.)

✗ Did *played* you football?

✓ **Did you play football?** (The subject comes before the base verb.)

✗ *Do* you eat breakfast yesterday?

✓ **Did you eat breakfast yesterday?** (Use *did* for the past, not *do*.)

✗ Did she *was* tired?

✓ **Was she tired?** (Use *was/were* with the verb "be" — not "did".)

✗ Did he *eated* lunch?

✓ **Did he eat lunch?** (Use the base verb — do not add -ed.)

✗ Where *went* she?

✓ **Where did she go?** (Use did + subject + base verb.)

Contractions: Did Not and Didn't

In spoken English and informal writing, we often join words together. This is called a **contraction**. We use an apostrophe ' to show that letters are missing.

did not → didn't

Both forms are correct. **Didn't** is more common in everyday speech.

Full Form	Contraction	Example
did not	didn't	I didn't go to school.
did not	didn't	She didn't eat breakfast.
did not	didn't	They didn't play tennis.

Note: We use **didn't** in negative sentences, not in questions. In questions, we use **Did** at the start. For example: **Did you go?** (not "Didn't you go?" — this is a different kind of question for higher levels.)

Past Simple Question Sentences: Quick Summary

Here is everything you learned in this lesson:

- We use **past simple question sentences** to ask about finished actions in the past.
- For **yes/no questions**, use: **Did + subject + base verb + ...?**
- For **wh- questions**, use: **Question word + did + subject + base verb + ...?**
- **Did** is the same for all subjects: I, you, he, she, it, we, they.
- Always use the **base verb** after did — never add -ed or change the verb.
- Use **was/were** — NOT did — when asking questions with the verb **to be**.

- Short answers: **Yes, I did.** / **No, I didn't.**
- **Did not = didn't** (a contraction).

Question Type	Structure	Example
Yes/No Question	Did + subject + base verb?	Did you eat lunch?
Wh- Question	Wh- word + did + subject + base verb?	What did you eat?
Short Yes Answer	Yes, + subject + did.	Yes, I did.
Short No Answer	No, + subject + didn't.	No, I didn't.

Now practise **past simple question sentences** in the exercises below.

Past Simple: Question Sentences – Practice Test

A1 | 30 Questions: Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the-Gap & Fill-in-the-Blank

Part 1: Multiple Choice (Questions 1–10)

1 Choose the correct Past Simple question: '___ you go to school yesterday?'

- ☐ A Do
- ☐ B Did
- ☐ C Was
- ☐ D Were

2 Choose the correct Past Simple question: '___ she happy at the party?'

- ☐ A Did
- ☐ B Do
- ☐ C Was
- ☐ D Were

3 Which question is correct?

- ☐ A Did he played football?
- ☐ B Did he plays football?
- ☐ C Did he play football?
- ☐ D Did he playing football?

4 Choose the correct Past Simple question: '___ they at home last night?'

- ☐ A Did
- ☐ B Was
- ☐ C Do
- ☐ D Were

5 Which question is correct?

- ☐ A Where did she went?
- ☐ B Where did she go?
- ☐ C Where she did go?
- ☐ D Where she went?

6 Choose the correct Past Simple question: '___ your parents work yesterday?'

- A** Were
- B** Was
- C** Did
- D** Does

7 Which question is correct?

- A** Was you tired?
- B** Were you tired?
- C** Did you tired?
- D** Do you tired?

8 Choose the correct Past Simple question: '___ she eat breakfast this morning?'

- A** Was
- B** Is
- C** Did
- D** Does

9 Which question is correct?

- A** Did he was at school?
- B** Was he at school?
- C** Were he at school?
- D** Did he be at school?

10 Choose the correct Past Simple question: 'What ___ you do last weekend?'

- A** were
- B** was
- C** did
- D** do

Part 2: Fill in the Gap (Questions 11–20)

11 ___ you go to school yesterday?

- A** Did
- B** Was
- C** Were

12 ____ she happy at the party?

- A** Was
- B** Did
- C** Were

13 ____ they at home last night?

- A** Were
- B** Was
- C** Did

14 Did he ____ his homework yesterday?

- A** do
- B** did
- C** does

15 Where ____ you go last weekend?

- A** did
- B** were
- C** was

16 What ____ she eat for breakfast this morning?

- A** did
- B** was
- C** does

17 ____ he at school on Monday?

- A** Was
- B** Did
- C** Were

18 Did they ____ a good time at the park?

- A** have
- B** had
- C** has

19 When ____ you wake up this morning?

- A** did
- B** were
- C** was

20 ____ your parents at the cinema last night?

- A** Were
- B** Was
- C** Did

Part 3: Fill in the Blank (Questions 21–30)

21 _____ you go to school yesterday?

22 Where _____ she live when she was young?

23 Did they _____ pizza for dinner last night?

24 What _____ you do on the weekend?

25 Did he _____ football yesterday?

26 When _____ your parents get married?

27 Did you _____ a movie last weekend?

28 Who _____ you talk to at the party?

29 Did she _____ to school this morning?

30 How _____ you travel to the city last summer?

Answer Key & Explanations

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Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. **B** Correct Answer: Did ☒ Explanation: We use Did to make Past Simple questions with action verbs. Did you go to school yesterday? We do NOT use do or does for the past.
2. **C** Correct Answer: Was ☒ Explanation: We use was with she in the past. Was she happy? We use was for I, he, she, it.
3. **C** Correct Answer: Did he play football? ☒ Explanation: After did, we always use the base form of the verb. Did he play? NOT played or plays.
4. **D** Correct Answer: Were ☒ Explanation: We use were with they in the past. Were they at home? We use were for you, we, they.
5. **B** Correct Answer: Where did she go? ☒ Explanation: We use did + base verb in questions. Where did she go? NOT went. After did, use go, not went.
6. **C** Correct Answer: Did ☒ Explanation: We use Did to make questions with action verbs in the past. Did your parents work yesterday?
7. **B** Correct Answer: Were you tired? ☒ Explanation: We use were with you in the past. Were you tired? We do NOT use did with adjectives like tired.
8. **C** Correct Answer: Did ☒ Explanation: We use Did to ask about past actions. Did she eat breakfast? The verb eat stays in the base form after did.
9. **B** Correct Answer: Was he at school? ☒ Explanation: We use was with he in the past. Was he at school? We do NOT use did with was or were.
10. **C** Correct Answer: did ☒ Explanation: We use did to make Past Simple questions with action verbs. What did you do last weekend? The verb do stays in the base form after did.

Part 2: Fill in the Gap

11. **A** Correct Answer: Did ☒ Explanation: We use did to make Past Simple questions with action verbs. Did you go to school yesterday?
12. **A** Correct Answer: Was ☒ Explanation: We use was for Past Simple questions with he / she / it and the verb be. Was she happy at the party?
13. **A** Correct Answer: Were ☒ Explanation: We use were for Past Simple questions with they / you / we and the verb be. Were they at home last night?

14. **A** Correct Answer: do ✓ Explanation: After did, we always use the base form of the verb. Did he do his homework yesterday?
15. **A** Correct Answer: did ✓ Explanation: We use did to ask Past Simple questions with action verbs. Where did you go last weekend?
16. **A** Correct Answer: did ✓ Explanation: We use did + subject + base verb to ask about past actions. What did she eat for breakfast?
17. **A** Correct Answer: Was ✓ Explanation: We use was for past questions with he / she / it and the verb be. Was he at school on Monday?
18. **A** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: After did, we use the base form of the verb, not the past form. Did they have a good time at the park?
19. **A** Correct Answer: did ✓ Explanation: We use did to form Past Simple questions with action verbs like wake up. When did you wake up this morning?
20. **A** Correct Answer: Were ✓ Explanation: We use were for Past Simple questions with plural subjects and the verb be. Were your parents at the cinema last night?

Part 3: Fill in the Blank

21. **Did** Correct Answer: Did ✓ Explanation: We use Did to start a Past Simple question. Did you go to school yesterday?
22. **did** Correct Answer: did ✓ Explanation: We use did after a question word like where to make a Past Simple question. Where did she live?
23. **eat** Correct Answer: eat ✓ Explanation: After did, we always use the base form of the verb. Did they eat pizza? — not ate.
24. **did** Correct Answer: did ✓ Explanation: We use did after question words like what in Past Simple questions. What did you do?
25. **play** Correct Answer: play ✓ Explanation: After did, the verb stays in the base form. Did he play football? — not played.
26. **did** Correct Answer: did ✓ Explanation: We use did after the question word when in Past Simple questions. When did your parents get married?
27. **see** Correct Answer: see ✓ Explanation: After did, we use the base form of the verb. Did you see a movie? — not saw.
28. **did** Correct Answer: did ✓ Explanation: We use did after the question word who in Past Simple questions. Who did you talk to?

29. **walk|go** Correct Answer: walk / go  Explanation: After did, we use the base form of the verb. Both walk and go are base forms. Did she walk to school?

30. **did** Correct Answer: did  Explanation: We use did after the question word how in Past Simple questions. How did you travel to the city?

Score Guide

27–30 Correct	Excellent! You have mastered this topic.
23–26 Correct	Very good! Review the rules you missed.
18–22 Correct	Good start. Re-read the lesson and examples.
0–17 Correct	Study the lesson again before retaking the test.