

6.1 Past simple of *to be*: *was* and *were*

GR6.1)))

- 1 We **were** in Lisbon last weekend.
- 2 She **wasn't** in class yesterday morning.
- 3 When **were** they born?
- 4 A **Was** it on the table last night?
B No, it **wasn't**.
- 5 A **Were** they teachers in 2010?
B Yes, they **were**.

Was and *wasn't* (*was not*) are the past forms of *is* and *isn't*.

Were and *weren't* (*were not*) are the past forms of *are* and *aren't*.

Positive (+)		Negative (-)			
I	was	I	wasn't	at home.	
He		He			
She		She			
It		It			
We	were	We	weren't		
You		You			
They		They			

Yes/No questions and short answers

Yes/No questions (?)		Short answers				
Was	I	at home?	Yes, I	was.	No, I	wasn't.
	he		Yes, he		No, he	
	she		Yes, she		No, she	
	it		Yes, it		No, it	
Were	we	Yes, we	No, we			
	you	Yes, you	No, you			
	they	Yes, they	No, they			

- We often use *was/were* with past time expressions, e.g. *last week*, *in 2003*, *500 years ago*, *yesterday*.

I was at work two hours ago.

It wasn't very hot yesterday.

We use was/were with born.

I was born in 1990.

Wh- questions

To make a *Wh-* question we use a *Wh-* question word before *was/were*.

The word order is the same as for *yes/no* questions.

What was your last job?

Why was she in Spain last week?

When were they born?

- 1 Complete the sentences and short answers with the past simple form of the verb *to be*.

1 We are in Venice now.

We were in Rome last month.

2 They are in the office today.

_____ they in the office last night? No, they _____.

3 I'm on the bus now.

I _____ on the train two hours ago.

4 She's in class now.

_____ she in class at 9 a.m. this morning?

Yes, she _____.

5 We are at the post office now.

We _____ at the police station at 3.30 p.m. yesterday.

6 It is cold today.

_____ it cold yesterday? No, it _____.

7 They are at the cinema now.

_____ they at the cinema last Friday? Yes, they _____.

8 My glasses are in my bag.

My glasses _____ on my head five minutes ago.

- 2 Complete the past simple questions 1–10 using the words in (brackets).

1 Where were you and your wife last week? (Where)

2 _____ your first boss? (Who)

3 _____ your father born? (When)

4 _____ your favourite toy when you were five? (What)

5 _____ you quiet in the meeting yesterday? (Why)

6 _____ good last night? (the film)

7 _____ on holiday last week? (they)

8 _____ our colleagues two hours ago? (Where)

9 _____ your desk messy yesterday? (Why)

10 _____ the hotel cheap? (Why)

- 3 Match answers a–j to questions 1–10 in exercise 2.

a No, it wasn't.

f In Paris.

b Mr Chen.

g Yes, they were.

c It wasn't close to the beach.

h I was very busy.

d I was tired.

i In a meeting.

e In 1966.

j My toy car.

- 4 Complete the text. Use *was/were* or *wasn't/weren't*.

This year I'm unemployed and unhappy. Last year was different. Last year the sky ¹ was blue all summer and I ² _____ happy. I ³ _____ an engineer. My house ⁴ _____ full of flowers and music. My children ⁵ _____ at an expensive school. There ⁶ _____ lots of interesting books on my desk. In my living room there ⁷ _____ two computers and a big TV. I ⁸ _____ very rich. My life ⁹ _____ easy and we ¹⁰ _____ worried about the future.