## English tenses

# Verb to be - past simple tense _____

The verb 'to be' has two past tense forms in English: *was* and *were*.

### Was - were affirmative

*I was quite sad.*
*You were kind to me.*
*He was in the garage.*
*She was a shop assistant.*
*It was a good idea.*

*We were at the hospital.*
*You were their big fans.*
*They were ready to go.*

### Was - were negative

We make negative forms of the verb to be in the past simple by adding 'not' after it.

*I was not scared anymore.*
*You were not so bad.*
*He was not surprised by that.*
*She was not at home last weekend.*
*It was not her bicycle.*

*We were not at the party.*
*You were not our supporters.*
*They were not so old.*

### Short forms in negative sentences

*I wasn't scared anymore.*
*You weren't so bad.*
*He wasn't surprised by that.*
*She wasn't at home last weekend.*
*It wasn't her bicycle.*

*We weren't at the party.*
*You weren't our supporters.*
*They weren't so old.*

You can use the negative forms of the verb to be in the past simple in full forms and short forms. But the use of these forms is not the same.

### Full forms and short forms

The full forms are used in formal English, especially in written texts, and sometimes in spoken English, too. The short forms are more common in speech. You should avoid short forms in formal emails, letters, essays or reports.

### Was - were questions

We simply change the word order of a statement to make a positive question with the verb to be in the past simple.

Positive questions:

*I was polite. - Was I polite?*
*You were there. - Were you there?*
*He was angry about it. - Was he angry about it?*
*She was sleepy. - Was she sleepy?*
*It was a mistake. - Was it a mistake?*

*We were invited. - Were we invited?*
*You were the best. - Were you the best?*
*They were in India. - Were they in India?*

Negative questions:

We normally use negative questions if we want to express a surprise. Full forms and short forms have different word orders.

*Was I not polite? - Wasn't I polite?*
*Were you not there? - Weren't you there?*
*Was he not angry about it? - Wasn't he angry about it?*
*Was she not sleepy? - Wasn't she sleepy?*
*Was it not a mistake? - Wasn't it a mistake?*

*Were we not invited? - Weren't we invited?*
*Were you not the best? - Weren't you the best?*
*Were they in India? - Weren't they in India?*

**Verb to be exercises (was, were):**

www.e-grammar.org/verb-to-be-past-simple/