

The verb “To be” (Past tense) - Form

The Simple Past Tense of the verb *To be*:

Affirmative form

Subject	To be
I	was
You	were
He / She /It	was
We	were
You	were
They	were

EXAMPLES

- I **was** in Hawaii in 2015.
- You **were** sick.
- He **was** in the park.
- She **was** my girlfriend.
- It **was** cloudy.
- We **were** friends.
- You **were** married.
- They **were** tired this morning.

Negative form

The negative form of simple past tense with “To be” can be made by adding **not** after the verb (was or were). There’s no contraction of the **subject** and **verb** (e.g. I was).

Subject	To be	Contraction
I	was not	I wasn’t
You	were not	You weren’t
He	was not	He wasn’t
She	was not	She wasn’t
It	was not	It wasn’t
We	were not	We weren’t
You	were not	You weren’t
They	were not	They weren’t

EXAMPLES

- I **wasn’t** invited.
- Mary **was not** at home.
- That **wasn’t** right.
- Susan and Leo **weren’t** married.

Questions form and answers

The question form of simple past tense with “To be” can be made by putting the verb (was or were) before the subject.

To be	Subject	
Was	I	happy?
Were	you	happy?
Was	he / she / it	happy?
Were	we	happy?
Were	you	happy?
Were	they	happy?

EXAMPLES

- **Was** I late? Yes, you were. / No, you were not.
- **Were** you happy? Yes, I was. / No, I wasn't.
- **Was** he sick? Yes, he was. / No, was not.
- **Was** she from France? Yes, she was. / No, she wasn't.
- **Was** it a small house? Yes, it was. / No, it was not.
- **Were** we ready? Yes, we were. / No, we were not.
- **Were** you together? Yes, we were. / No, we weren't.
- **Were** they angry? Yes, they were. / No they weren't.

You can add a **question word** (why, where, when, who, how, etc.) before **was** or **were** to ask for more information.

EXAMPLES

- **Why** was I hungry?
- **Where** were you?
- **When** was he sick?
- **Who** was she?
- **How** was the trip?
- **Where** were we?
- **How long** were you together before you were engaged?
- **Why** were they abandoned?