

Narrative Tenses

Past Simple

Past Continuous

Past Perfect

Past Perfect Continuous

USED TO/WOULD

COULD/WAS ABLE

TO/SUCCEEDED IN/MANAGED TO

PAST MODALS

Past Simple

- An action in the past in the specific time (last month, 6 months ago and etc.)
- For a single repeated action in the past: **I went to work by bus every day.**
- Use when you tell about main event or sequence of events happened one after another

Ex.: I **picked up** the children from the school and **drove** to the supermarket. Later we altogether **made** the wonderful dinner..

Past Continuous

- To describe the scene or a background to a story (use words: when, while)
- Ex. I **was having** the shower when suddenly somebody **knocked** the door.
- activities or situations that were in progress when another action took place
We **were discussing** the final question when my computer **broke down**.

Past Perfect Simple

- Past actions that took place before the main past events in a story

Ex. I **arrived** at the office and I **realized** that I **had left** the stove turned on.

Ex. He **looked** everywhere but he couldn't find the book he **had promised** to lend to his friend.

Past Perfect Continuous

- Past actions in progress that took place before the main past events in a story
- Ex. He **didn't hear** the phone, because **he had been reading**.
- Ex. He **was tired** in the evening because he **had been working** all day in the garden.

Cris's car **crashed** because
he **was driving** too fast and
he **had drunk** a lot of wine
before the accident.

Used to + verb

- Habits and states that took place in the past but do not happen or exist now
- Use when time is not specified: when I was younger, in my childhood, many years ago...
- Ex. I used to have very long hair. (Now I have short hair)
- Ex. He used to live in USA when he was 10. (Now he lives in Spain)
- Ex. I used to have problems with my computer. (repeated actions)

STATES:

USE ONLY WITH USED TO + verb

State verbs generally fall into 4 groups:

Emotion: love, hate, want, need

Possession: have, own, want, belong

Sense: see, hear, smell, seem

Thought: know, believe, remember

Examples:

- + **I used to** travel when I was younger.
- - **I didn't use to** travel when I was younger.
- **Did you use to** travel ...?

Would + verb

- Habits that took place in the past but do not happen now. (nostalgia)
- Ex. When I was young, I would sit in the park drinking a cup of coffee.

DO NOT USE WOULD with a state!

I **used to** like Madonna. NOT ~~I would like~~ Madonna

! If you describe a sequence of habitual events, use **used to + verb** for the first verb, and then **would** to subsequent verb.

COULD or WAS/WERE ABLE TO

- the possibility of doing something in the past
- the ability or inability (not succeeding in something) in the past

Ex. I **could** swim when I was younger. (ability, NOT ~~success~~)

I **was able to** ride a horse.

He **couldn't** remember her name.

They **weren't able to** finish their work by that time.

USE ONLY! WAS/WERE ABLE TO

- to talk about success in achieving something at a specific time in the past.

Ex. I **was able to** reach him by phone.

I **couldn't** reach him by phone.

(NOT I ~~could~~ reach him)

We **were able to** get to the top of the mountain.

MANAGE TO/SUCCEED IN

- ability or success in achieving (or not achieving) something at a specific time in the past

I **managed to do** everything which was planned.

I **succeeded in contacting** him at once.

I didn't manage to + infinitive

I didn't succeed in + gerund

MUST/HAVE TO

MUST in the past -> **HAD TO**

use when there is a necessity to do something at a specific time in the past

Ex. I **had to** leave the meeting earlier.

Did you **have to** leave the meeting earlier?

could/may/might have + V3/ed

- use **could have/may have/might have** to talk about possible actions of imagined past events.
- If you hadn't told me the direction, I **could have been/might have been** lost.
- use **couldn't have** to talk about impossible things.
- His car wasn't outside. He **couldn't have been** at home.

must have + V3/ed

- use **must have + past participle** to express a deduction/speculation about something in the past
- Ex. He didn't answer to me. He **must have been** very busy.

should have + V3/ed

- use should have/shouldn't have to talk about regrets, or criticize past actions.
- I told you not do that. You **should have listened** to me.
- They **shouldn't have invested** so much in one area of the business.

INVERSION WITH ADVERBIAL PHRASES

- **No sooner... than**
- **Not only..., (but) also**
- **Not until...**
- **Such... that...**
- **So + adjective... that**
- **Only when (+subject + verb), (inverted verb form)**
- **Only + clause**
- **Only by (+ing)...**
- **Hardly... when...**
- **Never...**
- **Little...**

- Ex. **No sooner had I arrived** at the station **than** the train came. (=I arrived and then the train came right after me) **note!** **did I arrive** also possible to use.
- Ex. **Not only did he forget** about my birthday, **but** he also didn't apologize for that.
- Ex. **Not until** I got home **did I realize** that my wallet was missing.
- Ex. **Such was a beautiful day that** we couldn't stay at home. / **So beautiful was the day that** we couldn't stay at home.
- Ex. **Only when** I filled my glass **did I realize** that it was broken.

- Ex. **Only by working** hard we can succeed.
- Ex. **Hardly had I got into bed** when the telephone rang.
- Ex. **Never had she seen** such a beautiful place before.
- Ex. **Little did he know** about what happened.

TEST YOURSELF: