



Past Simple Questions

Asking questions in the past simple tense can be tricky and this is because there are two different structures we can use. The first structure uses the auxiliary verb “do” (did) and the second structure uses the auxiliary verb “be” (was/were).

Structure 1

Verb To Do	Subject	Infinitive Verb
Did	I	dance?
Did	you	sing?
Did	he	walk?
Did	she	read?
Did	It	watch TV?
Did	Hannah	run?
Did	we	speak English?
Did	they	talk to?
Did	the students	do homework?

We must use structure 1 when we have a main verb. This verb must be in the infinitive form. You can see lots of examples above (dance, sing, walk, read).

Remember, you can insert a question word before all of this structure too.

Question Word	Verb To Do	Subject	Infinitive Verb
Where	did	I	dance?
Why	did	you	sing?
When	did	he	walk?
What	did	she	read?
How	did	It	watch TV?
How quickly	did	Hannah	run?
When	did	we	speak English?
Who	did	they	talk to?
How long	did	the students	do homework?

Structure 2

Verb To Be	Subject	...
Was	I	happy?
Were	you	sad?
Was	he	a teacher?
Was	she	excited?
Was	it	interesting?
Was	Hannah	bored?
Were	we	in a house?
Were	they	at work?
Were	the students	the best?

We must use structure 2 when we don't have a main verb. The verb to be is quite selfish and must be the only verb in the question in the past simple. After the subject, you could have a noun, a noun phrase or an adjective.

Remember, you can insert a question word before all of this structure too.

Question Word	Verb To Be	Subject	...
Why	was	I	happy?
When	were	you	sad?
How	was	he	a teacher?
When	was	she	excited?
How long	was	it	interesting?
Where	was	Hannah	bored?
Why	were	we	in a house?
How long	were	they	at work?
When	were	the students	the best?

Putting It Together

Let's take an example...

1) Where _____ you go yesterday?

We can see an infinitive verb here (go), so we know we must use structure 1

Where **did** you go yesterday?

2) Why _____ she in the park?

We can't see any verbs here, so we know we must use structure 2

Why **was** she in the park?