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Tenses L6 – The Simple Past Tense In German (Präteritum)

What is the Simple Past Tense (Präteritum)?	406
Conjugation: Regular Verbs	406
Special Characteristics:	406
Conjugation: Irregular Verbs	407



Video Lesson:

<https://easy-deutsch.com/yt/tensesL6/>

WHAT IS THE SIMPLE PAST TENSE (PRÄTERITUM)?

The simple past tense expresses facts about the past and actions that occurred in the past. In German, it's called the "Präteritum".

- „Das Wetter **war** schlecht.“
- „Er **machte** Urlaub.“
- „Wir **hatten** Glück.“

CONJUGATION: REGULAR VERBS

Person	kaufen	Ending
ich	kauf-	-te
du	kauf-	-test
er/sie/es/man	kauf-	-te
wir	kauf-	-ten
ihr	kauf-	-tet
sie/Sie	kauf-	-ten

Special Characteristics:

If the **verb stem** ends in **"-d" oder "-t"**, add **an "e"** in front of the ending

arbeiten: "ich arbeit**e**te",

"du arbeit**e**test",

"er arbeit**e**te" ...

CONJUGATION: IRREGULAR VERBS

For irregular verbs, there is a **vowel change**. Additionally, they often use the Präsens-ending (Simple Present ending) for the plural and no ending for the 1st and 3rd person singular.

Good News: 1st and 3rd person singular are ALWAYS identical for all verbs!

Irregular or not! No exceptions!

	sein	haben	schlafen
ich	war	hatte	schief
du	warst	hattest	schliefst
er/sie/es/man	war	hatte	schief
wir	waren	hatten	schliefen
ihr	wart	hattet	schlieft
sie/Sie	waren	hatten	schliefen

Bad News:

About 50% of all verbs are irregular!

Most Germans don't know the conjugations of all verbs in the simple past.

We try to avoid using them if possible.

Check out the next page for my guide on when to use Perfekt and Präteritum in modern spoken and written language.



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