THEME 3 HARD TIMES GRAMMAR

1. PAST SIMPLE TENSE

We use past simple tense

• to talk about states that happened and finished at a specific time in the past.

Last week we were in İstanbul and visited İstanbul Toy Museum with my grandmother.

• to list a series of completed actions in the past. These events follow each other.

First I finished my homework and then I went out to get some fresh air.

• to describe habits which stopped in the past.

She worked part-time after school when she was younger.

Affirmative

I / He / She / It   watched a film yesterday.

We / You / They heard a terrible noise last night.

Negative

I / He / She / It   didn't watch a film yesterday.

We / You / They didn't hear a terrible noise last night.

Interrogative

Did I / he / she / it watch a film yesterday?

Did we / you / they hear a terrible noise last night?

2. PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE

We use the past continuous

• to state an action happening at a particular time in the past.

We were watching an important match on TV at this time yesterday.

• to talk about two events in progress at the same time in the past.

While my mother was watching a soap opera on TV, I was trying to finish my school project.

• to express a past action in progress interrupted by another past action.

When the electricity went off, I was vacuuming the living room.

• to describe the atmosphere at a particular time in the past.

As I was passing through the park, the children were playing and their mothers were chatting.

Affirmative

Subject was / were Verb (+ing)

I / He / She / It was   watching a film when you called me.

We / You / They were   watching a film when you called me.

Negative

Subject was not (wasn't were not (weren't) Verb (+ing)

I / He / She / It wasn't   watching a film when you called me.

We / You / They weren't watching a film when you called me.

Interrogative

Was / Were Subject Verb (+ing)

Was I / he / she / it   watching a film when you called me?

Were we / you / they   watching a film when you called me.

3. PAST SIMPLE AND PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE

• We often use the simple past tense and the past continuous tense together in a sentence.

• We use the past continuous tense for the longer, unfinished action and the simple past tense for the shorter, interrupting action.

• We use **when, while, as, just as** to join the sentences.

when = at that time

while / as = during that time

While / as + past continuous, past simple

While I was trying to put my baby to sleep, the doorbell rang.

As I was walking along the street, it suddenly started to rain.

Someone knocked the door while the teacher was checking our exam papers.

When + past simple, past continuous

When I saw Sue, I was waiting for the bus.

• **We also use the past continuous with "*while*" to talk about two actions in progress at the same time in the past.**

My mother was chopping the meat while I was peeling the potatoes.

• **We use the simple past tense with "*when*" to say that one thing happened after another.**

When my father arrived, we had our dinner. (First my father arrived and then we started to have our dinner).

Attention: We don't use the past continuous tense with stative verbs (know, want, love etc…)

They were good friends. They knew each other well.

Attention: "*Just as*" has similar meaning with *while* and *as*, but if the interrupting, shorter event happens right after the longer one, we prefer *just as* instead of *as* or *while*.

Just as I was leaving home, I realised that I had forgotten my car key.

4. USED TO

We use "used to"

• **to talk about our past habits.**

Sharon used to spend a lot of money on clothes but these days she doesn't.

• **for things that were true in the past but are not true anymore.**

This building used to be a bookstore in the past but now it is a florist's.

Affirmative

Subject + Used to + Verb   I / He / She / It / We / You / They used to be shy in the past.

Negative

Subject + Did not use to + Verb   I / He / She / It / We / You / They didn't use to be shy in the past.

Interrogative

Did + Subject + Use to + Verb   Did I / he / she / it / we / you / they use to be shy in the past?