

5.5 Grammar

Past Simple: was/were, could

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

1 Complete the sentences with the correct positive or negative form of the verb be or can.

- 0 My brother ^{is} only three years old but he ^{can} swim quite well.
- 1 It ^{was} three o'clock in the morning. I ^{was} in bed but I ^{couldn't} sleep.
- 2 Hey, Jackie? ^{can} you swim? ^{are} you interested in a job? The swimming pool wants summer workers.
- 3 Louis ^{was} very good at Spanish. He ^{couldn't} say 'Hello', he ^{couldn't} count to ten and he doesn't know what 'Gracias' means! He ^{was} the worst student in the class!
- 4 My mum and dad ^{were} angry with me because of my Maths test result. I work hard but I ^{can't} understand the Maths we are doing at the moment.

2 ★ Complete the text with the past forms of the verbs in brackets.

AMAZING CHILDREN

William Sidis ^{was} (be) born in New York in 1898. He ^{could} (can) speak more than ten languages and when he ^{was} (be) eleven, he ^{was} (be) already a student at Harvard University. He ^{was} (be) a professor when he ^{was} (be) twenty. He ^{was} (be) amazing but, unfortunately, he ^{wasn't} (not/be) a happy child.

3 ★ ★ Complete the conversation between Elaine and her grandma with the correct past forms of the verb be or can.

- E: Hi, Grandma. What are those photos?
- G: They're my old photos from when I ^{was} a teenager like you.
- E: Wow. Is that your motorbike?
- G: No, it ^{was} my brother's.
- E: ^{can} you drive?
- G: Not then. Driving lessons ^{was} expensive and my parents ^{had} to pay for them.
- E: Oh, I like this one. Where ^{was} you?
- G: We ^{were} in Wales on a school trip. The weather ^{was} very good - there ^{was} lots of rain - but we ^{were} very happy in the mountains. Every day ^{was} the same - breakfast at 8 a.m., a 20-km walk and back to the hostel in the evening. We ^{were} so tired, we ^{had} to move in the evenings. There ^{weren't} any discos or parties - we ^{had} to be in bed before 9 p.m.!
- E: ^{did} you with grandfather then?
- G: No, I ^{wasn't}. He ^{was} at the same school as me. Just a minute, ah, here's one of your grandfather and me. We ^{were} twenty-one or twenty-two then ...

4 ★ ★ ★ Use the cues in brackets to make full questions and answers.

Conversation 1: Marcus and Sam

M: Hi, Sam. ^{Where were you yesterday?} (where/you/ yesterday)?

S: Hi. Sorry. ^{Were you tired?} (I/tired). ^{Why did you call me?} (I/not/phone) you because ^{Was I at school?} (my phone/in) my bag at school.

Conversation 2: Jenny and Beverley

J: ^{Was it horrible?} (David/really horrible) to me yesterday.

B: Really? Why?

J: ^{Were you with Ellen and Mark?} (We/with) Ellen and Mark at the Sports Centre for a game of tennis. You know I can't play any ball sports. ^{Did you hit the ball?} (I/not/hit) the ball! ^{Was David happy?} (David/not/happy) with me! He hates losing.

Conversation 3: Mr Smith and Kate

S: ^{Why were you late?} (Why/you late) to school this morning?

K: ^{Did you find his keys?} (My dad/not/find) his car keys.

S: ^{Where were they?} (Where/they)?

K: ^{Were they on the cupboard?} (They/on) the bathroom cupboard!

SHOW WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

5 Put the words in the correct order to make sentences.

- 0 were / yesterday? / why / sad / you
Why were you sad yesterday?
- 1 ten / swim? / when / could / were / you / you

- 2 night? / angry / why / was / Carole / last

- 3 homework. / Simon / with / couldn't / my / help / me

- 4 the guitar / when / Nikki / play / primary / could / she / in / school. / was

- 5 home / friends / the weekend. / my / at / weren't / at

- 6 couldn't / wallet / I / anywhere. / find / my

