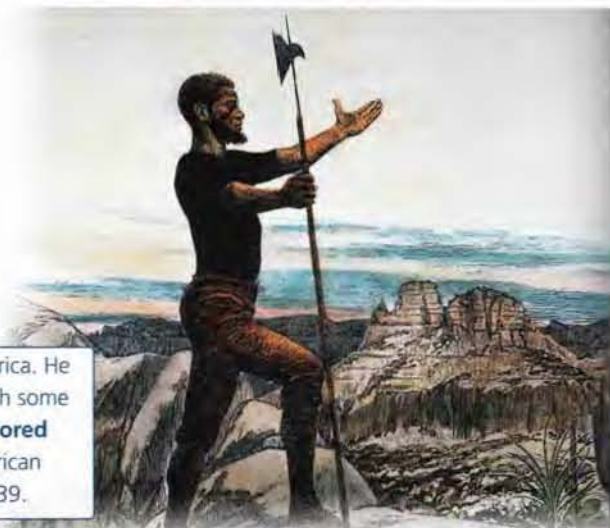


30 Past simple



Estevanico **was** the first black explorer to reach North America. He **lived** in the sixteenth century. He **travelled** to America with some Spanish explorers, as a slave. **When** they arrived, they **explored** Texas and New Mexico and he **learned** several native American languages. He **became** a free man in 1536 and **died** in 1539.

1 Regular and irregular verbs

Most verbs add *-ed* to the infinitive to form the past simple: *stay* → *stayed*, *learn* → *learned*

POSITIVE	<i>I stayed with my friend last night. He learned native American languages. They failed the exam.</i>
NEGATIVE	<i>I did not (didn't) stay with her last night. She did not (didn't) learn any languages. We did not (didn't) fail the exam.</i>
QUESTIONS	<i>Did you stay with her? (Yes, I did.) Did she learn any languages? (No, she didn't.) Which exam did they fail?</i>

Many common verbs are irregular, e.g. *be* → *was/were*, *do* → *did*, *go* → *went*, *have* → *had*, *make* → *made*, *put* → *put*, *say* → *said*, *see* → *saw*, *take* → *took*, *tell* → *told*

Spelling rules for regular verbs ▶ page 350 Irregular verbs ▶ page 348

! The pronunciation of the *-ed* ending depends on the sound that comes before it, for example

- /ɪd/ after /t/ and /d/: *started, waited, added, ended*
- /t/ after the sounds /p/, /f/, /k/, /s/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/: *worked, stopped, passed, finished*
- /d/ after all the other sounds: *tried, planned, lived, listened*

🔊 Pronunciation ▶ 1.11

2 Past simple for past actions and situations

We use the past simple for

- a single completed action in the past: *He died in 1539. Did you see the film last night?*
- repeated actions in the past: *He learned several native American languages. Caroline phoned her family every day when she was on holiday.*
- a series of actions (when one thing happens after another) in the past: *We arrived in Rome at eleven o'clock and took a taxi to Franco's apartment. Then we went to the square and looked round the shops, but we didn't buy anything.*
- situations that finished in the past: *He lived from 1500 to 1539. Children didn't have so many electronic toys when I was young.*

3 Past simple + adverbs of time; *when, after*

We often use adverbs of time to say when a past action happened, for example

- *ago*: *We arrived at the airport ten minutes ago.* (ten minutes before now)
- *for* (with periods of time): *The economic crisis lasted for two years.*
- *last week/month/year*: *Mariela started college last month. We had a general election last year.*

We can also use *when/after* + past simple:

When they arrived, they explored Texas and New Mexico ...
After Rory left home that morning, he went to work as usual ...