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Grammar Reference

Review of past forms

We use the **simple past** to talk about completed actions in the past.

Example: I **saw** a movie yesterday.
Last year, I **didn't travel** to Korea.

We use the **past continuous** to talk about actions in progress at a particular time in the past.

Form: **was / were + present participle**

Example: I **was listening** to my iPod, so I **didn't hear** the fire alarm.
While John **was sleeping** last night, someone **stole** his car.

We use the **past perfect** to talk about completed actions that happened before another action in the past.

Form: **had + past participle**

Example: She only **understood** the movie because she **had read** the book.
Kristine **had never been** to an opera before last night.

We use the **past perfect continuous** to talk about actions or situations which continued up to the past moment being talked about.

Form: **had + been + present participle**

Example: They **had been talking** for over an hour before Tony **arrived**.
Mike **wanted** to sit down because he **had been standing** all day at work.

Articles: a / an / the / Ø

We use the definite article **the**:

1. with inventions and species of animals.

Example: **The** white whale is an endangered species.

2. with national groups.

Example: **the** United Arab Emirates, **the** Society of Friends

3. when there is only one of something.

Example: **the** moon, **the** sun

4. with rivers, oceans, and seas.

Example: **the** Mediterranean Sea, **the** Atlantic Ocean

5. with superlatives.

Example: Cambodia is **the** most amazing place I have visited.
Thailand is **the** most popular tourist destination in Asia.

6. with particular nouns when it is clear what is being referred to.

Example: **The** umbrella was invented around 450 AD to protect people from sun and rain.
Can you shut down **the** computer?

7. with previously mentioned nouns.

Example: Would you like an orange or a mango? **The** mango is very ripe.
I have a red cap and a black one. I prefer **the** red one.

We use the indefinite article **a / an**:

1. with jobs.

Example: **a** doctor, **a** lawyer

2. with singular count nouns (mentioned for the first time or when it doesn't matter which one).

Example: She would like **a** mango.

We use no article (**Ø**):

1. with most streets, villages, towns, cities, countries, lakes, and mountains.

Example: Cap Town, Vietnam

2. But for countries and groups of islands / mountains in the plural, use "**the**."

Example: **the** Himalayas, *the* United States

3. with non-count, plural, and abstract nouns used in their general sense.

Example: Accommodation is difficult to find.
Religion is an important issue.

Adjectives and adverbs

1. Adjectives are used to describe nouns. They usually come directly before the noun.

Example: That's a *pretty* hat you're wearing.
He's an *ugly* bruise - I wouldn't like to meet him down a dark alley!

2. Adverbs (and adverbial phrases) are used to modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

3. Many adverbs end in *-y*, but some words ending in *-y* are adjectives, not adverbs (*friendly, lively, lonely, and silly*).

Example: It's a very *friendly* bar with a nice relaxed atmosphere.

4. There are also many adverbs which do not end in *-y* (*late, fast, fine, hard, high, and well*).

Example: The police car was going so *fast*, it must have been chasing someone.

5. Sometimes the adjective and adverb have the same form (*fast, hard, fine, early, daily, and late*).

Example: It was *late* at night.
We talked *late* into the night.

Position of adverbs

The position of adverbs in a sentence can vary.

At the beginning of a sentence: Connecting and time adverbs (the adverb is not the main focus)

1. Connecting adverbs (which join a clause to what came before): nevertheless, then, however, etc.

2. Time adverbs (if the adverb is not the main focus of the message): tomorrow, last year, in the past, etc.

In the middle of a sentence (before the main verb): Adverbs of certainty and completeness, of indefinite frequency, of comment, and some adverbs of manner (the adverbs is not the main focus)

1. Adverbs of certainty and completeness: probably, nearly, and fully
2. Adverbs of indefinite frequency: often, sometimes, and usually
3. Adverbs of comment: stupidly, ignorantly, and wildly
4. Some adverbs of manner: quickly, rudely, and strongly

At the end of a sentence: Adverbs of manner, place, and time

1. Adverbs of manner: slowly, well
2. Adverbs of place: upstairs, in the corner, around the world, globally, in Thailand, back home
3. Adverbs of time: this morning, a while ago, today, the old days