

Lesson Plan: Past simple: regular verbs and -ed spelling rules

Level	Beginner / Intermediate (A1–A2)
Time	50–60 minutes
Skills	Grammar, speaking, writing
Focus	Forming regular past simple; four -ed spelling rules; /t/ /d/ /ɪd/ pronunciation

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Form the past simple of regular verbs correctly
- Apply the four -ed spelling rules consistently
- Pronounce -ed endings correctly: /t/, /d/, /ɪd/
- Use regular past simple in affirmative, negative, and question forms

TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

Rule 1: Most verbs — just add -ed

- work → worked, play → played, visit → visited, watch → watched

Rule 2: Verb ends in -e — add -d only

- like → liked, live → lived, dance → danced, use → used

Rule 3: One syllable, CVC pattern — double the consonant

- stop → stopped, plan → planned, drop → dropped, jog → jogged
- BUT: NOT if it ends in two consonants (want → wanted) or two vowels (need → needed)

Rule 4: Consonant + y — change y to ied

- study → studied, try → tried, carry → carried, cry → cried
- BUT: vowel + y → just add ed: play → played, enjoy → enjoyed

-ed pronunciation — three sounds

- /t/ after voiceless sounds (k, p, f, s, sh, ch): walked, cooked, laughed, washed
- /d/ after voiced sounds (b, g, v, z, m, n, vowels): called, played, moved, rained
- /ɪd/ after t or d sounds: wanted, needed, started, visited

Meaning & Nuance

Ending	Spelling rule	Examples
Most consonants	+ed	work → worked, help → helped, clean → cleaned
Silent -e	+d only	live → lived, use → used, dance → danced
CVC (1 syllable)	double + ed	stop → stopped, plan → planned, drop → dropped
CVC (stressed last syllable)	double + ed	prefer → preferred, admit → admitted

Consonant + y	y → ied	study → studied, try → tried, carry → carried
Vowel + y	+ed (no change)	play → played, enjoy → enjoyed, stay → stayed

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up: Spelling test — before teaching (5 min)

Task: Quick 8-verb test: students write the past tense. Collect but don't mark yet.

→ Reveals current knowledge and errors; creates motivation to learn the rules.

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Teach the four spelling rules with clear categories and examples.

- Then teach the three -ed pronunciations — best done with choral drilling.
- Group verbs: 'These end in /t/. Listen together: walked, cooked, helped...'
- Students categorise 10 new verbs into /t/, /d/, /■d/ groups.

3. Spelling practice (10 min)

Task: Write the past tense of 20 regular verbs, then mark the warm-up test using the rules.

- Self-correction is powerful — students see their own errors in context.

→ Compare: how many did they get right before vs. after the rules?

4. Controlled speaking: Last week (15 min)

Task: Students tell a partner 5 things they did last week using regular past verbs.

- 'On Monday I watched a film. On Tuesday I studied for an exam...'
- Partner asks follow-up questions: 'What film did you watch?'

TEACHER NOTES

- The CVC doubling rule causes problems — especially prefer (stress on 2nd syllable: preferred) vs. enter (stress on 1st: entered, no double).
- Pronunciation drilling of /t/, /d/, /■d/ is often skipped but hugely benefits both listening and production.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Write a paragraph about what you did last weekend using at least 10 regular past simple verbs.
2. Write the past tense of 20 verbs from memory, categorised by spelling rule.
3. Write 5 questions in past simple and answer them about your own life.