

# The Past Indefinite (Simple)

**FORMATION AND USE**



# the use of the Past Indefinite

The Past Indefinite denotes an action performed within a period of time which is already over. The action is cut off from the present. The time of the action may be indicated by adverbials of past time, such as *yesterday, a week ago, last year, etc.*

The sun **came out** a moment ago.

The Past Indefinite can correspond to the Russian past perfective and past imperfective (совершенный и несовершенный вид)

He **smoked** a cigarette and left the room. (выкурил)

He **smoked** in the silence for a few minutes. (курил)

The Past Indefinite is used to denote

a) an action performed in the past.

We **entered** Farmer Ridley's meadow in silence.

# the use of the Past Indefinite

b) a succession of past actions.

He **threw down** his spade and **entered** the house.

c) repeated actions in the past.

He **made** an entry in his diary every night.

Repeated actions are often expressed by *used to+Infinitive* and *would+Infinitive*. *Used to* is more colloquial and *would* is more literary.

Every afternoon, when the children came from school, they **used to go** and play in the Giant's garden.

When fits of melancholy came upon him, he **would spend** all days locked in his room.

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