

Simple Past

Table of Contents

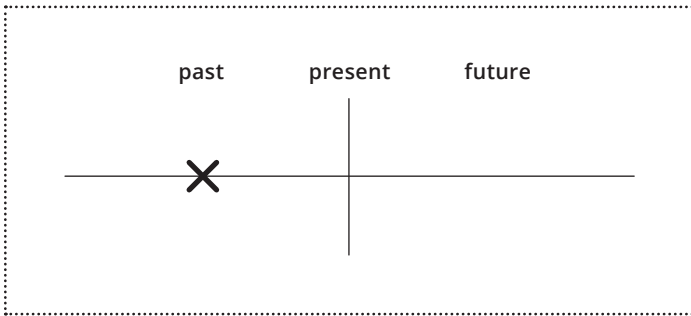
2	Grammar Notes Simple Past	16	Exercise 10 Irregular Verbs: Opposites
7	Exercise 1 Be: Fill in the Blanks	17	Exercise 11 Irregular Verbs: Time Markers
8	Exercise 2 Be: Complete the Sentences	18	Exercise 12 Irregular Verbs: Positive & Negative
9	Exercise 3 Be: Pair Work	19	Exercise 13 Irregular Verbs: Write the Questions
10	Exercise 4 Regular Verbs: Verb Chart	20	Exercise 14 Irregular Verbs: Find Someone Who
11	Exercise 5 Regular Verbs: Choose the Correct Verb	21	Exercise 15 All Past Verbs: Writing
12	Exercise 6 Regular Verbs: Questions & Answers	22	Exercise 16 All Past Verbs: Quiz
13	Exercise 7 Irregular Verbs: Verb Chart	23	Irregular Verb List
14	Exercise 8 Irregular Verbs: Choose the Correct Verb	24	Answer Key
15	Exercise 9 Irregular Verbs: Bingo		

Grammar Notes

SIMPLE PAST

A. Use

We use the **simple past** to talk about finished actions that happened in the past.



B. Time Markers

Words that show the time of an action are called "time markers."
Common time markers for the simple past are *yesterday*, *last*, *ago*, and *when*.

Time Marker	Examples
yesterday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I walked my dog yesterday. He called me yesterday morning.
last	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They went to the movies last night. Our company hired 20 new employees last year.
ago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She got a new job two months ago. Six weeks ago, we moved to New York.
when	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My brother learned to ride a bike when he was four years old. When I graduated from university, I applied for many jobs.

Grammar Notes cont.

C. Form

A common way to form the simple past is to add *-ed* to the end of a verb. These verbs are called “**regular** verbs.”

Other verbs have many kinds of changes. They are called “**irregular** verbs.”

The **Be** verb is a special kind of irregular verb. It has two forms (*was* and *were*). It also has different sentence patterns.

Let’s look at regular verbs, irregular verbs, and the *Be* verb in more detail.

D. Regular Verbs

To form the past tense of regular verbs, add *-ed* to the base verb.

Type of Sentence	Pattern	Examples
Positive	base verb + <i>-ed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I talked to my friends for hours yesterday. They worked until 7:00 pm last night. She tried to help me two weeks ago. My coworkers completed the project.
Negative	did not / didn't + base verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He did not study French at school. My classmates didn't like my speech.
Question	did + subject + base verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you call me last night? Did she go on a trip last year?
Wh- Question	Wh- word + did + subject + base verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When did you leave? How did they know about the test?



Grammar Notes cont.

D. Regular Verbs cont.

How do we spell regular past verbs? Follow these simple rules:

#	Rule	Examples
1	If a verb ends in <i>-e</i> , add <i>-d</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> like → liked arrive → arrived decide → decided
2	If a verb ends in consonant + <i>-y</i> , change <i>-y</i> to <i>-i</i> and add <i>-ed</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> carry → carried try → tried study → studied
3	If a verb ends in vowel + <i>-y</i> , add <i>-ed</i> .*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> play → played stay → stayed enjoy → enjoyed
4	If a verb ends in a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern, double the final consonant and add <i>-ed</i> **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hug → hugged plan → planned stop → stopped
5	For all other verbs, add <i>-ed</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> watch → watched ask → asked clean → cleaned

***Note:**

There are some exceptions to this rule:

- pay → paid
- lay → laid

****Note:**

For verbs with more than one syllable, this rule is only true if the stress is on the **last** syllable. Notice the difference below:

- prefer → preferred
- visit → visited

Grammar Notes cont.

E. Irregular Verbs

To form the past tense of an irregular verb, we must make a change (in the middle or ending) to the verb.

Type of Sentence	Pattern	Examples
Positive	various changes*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She wrote me a long email this morning. • I ate an entire pizza on the weekend. • The staff members met with the boss. • They rode their bikes to school when they were young.
Negative	did not / didn't + base verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He did not read the newspaper yesterday. • My neighbors didn't pay their rent last month.
Question	did + subject + base verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you tell her about your accident? • Did they go shopping yesterday afternoon?
Wh- Question	Wh- word + did + subject + base verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you catch a cold? • Why did you sing that song?

***Note:**

For a complete list of irregular verbs, see page 23 in this lesson.

Grammar Notes cont.

F. Be Verb

To form the past tense of the Be verb, use the words *was* or *were*.

Type of Sentence	Pattern	Examples
Positive	I / he / she / it / singular count noun / non-count noun + was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was happy when I was in Hawaii. The teacher was in the classroom.
	you / we / they / plural count noun + were	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We were sick last month. The children were at the park.
Negative	was not / wasn't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was not at home last night.
	were not / weren't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We weren't at work yesterday.
Question	was / were + subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were you in trouble? Was your sister at school yesterday?
Wh- Question	Wh- word + was / were + subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who was that? Where were you?

Exercise 1

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Put the correct past tense form of *Be* in the blanks below.

Ex. Eva _____ *was* _____ sick yesterday.

1. We _____ in the same class last year.
2. I _____ tired after a long day at work.
3. The weather _____ beautiful yesterday.
4. My teachers _____ really good last semester.
5. The children _____ hungry after so much exercise.
6. The wind _____ very strong last night.
7. She _____ so happy last week.
8. They _____ nervous on the first day of school.
9. Luckily, the windows _____ closed during the rainstorm.
10. We _____ very happy to get your invitation last week.

Exercise 2

COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

Finish the following sentences using the negative form of *Be* in the past tense.

Ex. I am at work today, but *I wasn't at work yesterday.* _____

1. It is cold outside today, but _____

2. She is sick today, but _____

3. They are at school today, but _____

4. The TV show is good today, but _____

5. The peaches are sweet today, but _____

6. The class is interesting today, but _____

7. He is angry today, but _____

8. The door is locked today, but _____

9. The exercises are easy today, but _____

10. The children are tired today, but _____

Exercise 3

PAIR WORK

Write the questions using the prompt and the simple past tense.
Then interview your partner. Write down your **partner's answers**.

#	Prompt	Question	Answer
Ex	at home / last night	<i>Were you at home last night?</i>	<i>No, I wasn't.</i>
1	at school / yesterday		
2	at the movies / last weekend		
3	at the gym / last week		
4	at the mall / last month		
5	in another country / last year		
6	tired / last night		
7	angry / last week		
8	sick / last month		
9	excited / about your last birthday		
10	happy / during your last vacation		

Exercise 4

VERB CHART (REGULAR VERBS)

Review the spelling rules on page 4.
Then write the past forms of these regular verbs.

#	Base Form	Past Form
Ex	ask	<i>asked</i>
1	brush	
2	carry	
3	check	
4	clean	
5	cry	
6	dance	
7	decide	
8	hope	
9	hug	

#	Base Form	Past Form
10	laugh	
11	learn	
12	like	
13	listen	
14	plan	
15	play	
16	study	
17	talk	
18	walk	
19	wash	

Exercise 5

CHOOSE THE CORRECT VERB

Choose a verb from the list on the right to complete the following sentences. Write the verb in the past tense. Use each verb only once.

Ex. I _____ *visited* _____ my friend in the hospital last night.

1. The boys _____ baseball in the field behind the school.
2. Robert _____ his wife wash the dishes.
3. We _____ our living room a soft blue color.
4. Susan _____ TV for two hours last night.
5. We _____ planes on the way to New York.
6. She _____ for him for 20 minutes at the coffee shop.
7. He _____ how to swim when he was a child.
8. They _____ all around the country three years ago.
9. The students _____ late for class.
10. We _____ to the radio until midnight.

Verb List:

- change
- ~~visit~~
- paint
- travel
- listen
- help
- arrive
- learn
- watch
- play
- wait

Exercise 6

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

A. Write the Answers

Answer the questions using the simple past tense and the prompt.

#	Question	Prompt	Answer
Ex	Did Anna bake a cake last weekend?	no	<i>No, she didn't.</i>
1	Did the boys play soccer yesterday?	yes	
2	Did she call her mother last night?	no	
3	Did you fix your TV yesterday?	no	
4	Did they play in a band together?	yes	
5	Did he study history at university?	yes	

B. Interview Your Partner

Now write five questions using any regular verbs from the list on page 10. Then ask your partner the questions and write his or her answers.

#	Question	Answer
Ex	<i>Did you watch TV last night?</i>	<i>Yes, she did.</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Exercise 7

VERB CHART (IRREGULAR VERBS)

Write the past forms of these irregular verbs.
Refer to the list on page 23 if you need help.

#	Base Form	Past Form
Ex	be	<i>was, were</i>
1	begin	
2	bring	
3	catch	
4	choose	
5	do	
6	fall	
7	go	
8	have	
9	know	

#	Base Form	Past Form
10	make	
11	read	
12	run	
13	see	
14	sing	
15	sleep	
16	take	
17	teach	
18	think	
19	write	

Exercise 8

CHOOSE THE CORRECT VERB

Choose a verb(s) from the list on the right to complete the following sentences. Write the verb(s) in the past tense. Use each verb only once.

Ex. She _____ *broke* _____ a plate when she was washing the dishes.

1. They _____ to Paris in a jumbo jet last week.

2. I _____ the alarm clock for 7:00 yesterday morning, but I _____ up an hour before the alarm clock _____.

3. I _____ an email to my friend back home.

4. He _____ a five-page essay last night.

5. His mother _____ care of him when he _____ sick.

6. The teacher _____ the mathematics class and then _____ the students three exercises to do for homework.

7. Matthew _____ his wallet on the way to work yesterday.

He _____ very upset.

8. Angie _____ a bad cold last week. She _____ in bed for three days.

9. The children _____ in the lake behind their house last summer.

10. We _____ a wonderful time at your party last night.

11. I _____ groceries on my way home yesterday and I _____ cash.

12. I _____ three friends at the cafe and we _____ several cups of coffee together.

Verb List:

- buy
- ring
- lie
- ~~break~~
- teach
- fly
- set
- send
- wake
- swim
- feel
- pay
- meet
- have
- write
- drink
- give
- get
- take
- catch
- lose

Exercise 9

IRREGULAR VERB BINGO

Choose any 24 verbs from the Irregular Verb List on page 23 and write the past tense forms in the squares. Then play Bingo! Draw an ✕ when you hear your teacher call out a matching verb.

		Free Space		

Exercise 10

OPPOSITES

Write the opposite of each verb below. Make sure to use the past tense. There may be more than one possible opposite, but try to think of one that has an irregular past form.

#	Verb	Opposite
Ex	gave	<i>took</i>
1	remembered	
2	bought	
3	found	
4	sat	
5	arrived	
6	opened	
7	rose (the sun)	
8	learned	
9	floated	
10	saved (money)	

Exercise 11

TIME MARKERS

Complete the following sentences using *yesterday*, *last*, or *ago*.

- Ex. We went skiing a lot last winter.
1. She came to this country three years _____ .
 2. The teacher canceled the class _____ Monday.
 3. I spoke to him for ten minutes _____ .
 4. We went dancing _____ night.
 5. The boss was away _____ morning.
 6. We began this class _____ fall.
 7. The children ran around outside _____ afternoon.
 8. She got married five years _____ .
 9. We went shopping _____ .
 10. He left five minutes _____ .

Exercise 12

POSITIVE & NEGATIVE

Read the example. Then complete the sentences below using the past tense. Make the first sentence negative and the second one positive.

Ex. Ben usually eats cereal for breakfast.

He didn't eat cereal yesterday.

He ate toast.

1. Ben usually gets up at 7:00.
He _____ at 7:00 yesterday.
He _____ at 8:00.
2. Ben usually takes a shower.
He _____ a shower yesterday.
He _____ a bath.
3. Ben usually reads the *Times* newspaper.
He _____ the *Times* yesterday.
He _____ the *Post*.
4. Ben usually leaves the house at 8:00.
He _____ the house at 8:00.
He _____ at 9:00.
5. Ben usually takes a bus to work.
He _____ a bus yesterday.
He _____ a taxi.
6. Ben usually meets his boss in the morning.
He _____ his boss in the morning.
He _____ him in the afternoon.
7. Ben usually writes ten emails in the morning.
He _____ ten emails yesterday.
He _____ five letters.
8. Ben usually eats lunch in the office.
He _____ lunch in the office today.
He _____ lunch in a restaurant.
9. Ben usually has a lot of appointments every day.
He _____ a lot of appointments yesterday.
He only _____ a few.
10. Ben usually gets home at 6:00.
He _____ home at 6:00 yesterday.
He _____ home at 7:00.

Exercise 13

WRITE THE QUESTIONS

Use the correct question word (*who, what, where, when, why, how many*) to make Wh- questions in the simple past tense. The **bold** words are the answers to the questions.

Ex. Where did she buy that toy?

She bought that toy **at Walmart**.

1. _____

They left the office **at 6:00**.

2. _____

She didn't go to work **because she was sick**.

3. _____

I spent **\$80.00** on groceries.

4. _____

Rosa spoke **to the boss**.*

5. _____

Rosa spoke to the boss.*

6. _____

She said "**hello**" to me.

7. _____

I felt **sick** yesterday.

8. _____

The sun rose **at 6:45 am** yesterday.

9. _____

She wore **a beautiful dress** to the party.

10. _____

The meeting took place in **Room 29**.

***Note:**

There is a difference between questions 4 and 5.
Can you explain the grammar rule?

Exercise 14

FIND SOMEONE WHO

Walk around the classroom and ask your classmates questions. Write the questions in the spaces provided below, and write your classmate's name on the right if he/she answers "yes."

#	Find someone...	Question	Classmate
1	who woke up late this morning.	<i>Did you wake up late this morning?</i>	
2	who didn't take the bus to school this morning.		
3	who ate an egg for breakfast this morning.		
4	who saw a good movie on TV last night.		
5	who bought something expensive yesterday.		
6	who had a bad cold last week.		
7	who won something last year.		
8	who read a great book last month.		
9	who heard some interesting gossip last week.		
10	who went on vacation to another country last year.		

Exercise 16

QUIZ

Circle the correct answer.

- Two weeks ago, I _____ a new car.
a) bought
b) buyed
- Juan _____ at the store on his way home.
a) stoped
b) stopped
- I was very tired _____ week.
a) ago
b) last
- It _____ us two days to write the report.
a) taked
b) took
- How _____ the weather last weekend?
a) was
b) were
- Alyssa _____ to go to Spain.
a) decideed
b) decided
- They left the city a month _____ .
a) ago
b) last
- She _____ a cold last week.
a) cought
b) caught
- _____ your homework?
a) Did you finish
b) Did you finished
- Maya and Louise _____ late for class.
a) was
b) were
- They _____ to sell their house.
a) tryed
b) tried
- Chang _____ to the party last night.
a) didn't go
b) didn't went

Irregular Verb List

Base Form	Past Form
be	was, were
become	became
begin	began
break	broke
bring	brought
buy	bought
catch	caught
choose	chose
come	came
cost	cost
cut	cut
do	did
draw	drew
drink	drank
drive	drove
eat	ate
fall	fell
feel	felt
find	found
forget	forgot
freeze	froze

Base Form	Past Form
get	got
give	gave
go	went
grow	grew
have	had
hear	heard
hide	hid
hit	hit
hold	held
keep	kept
know	knew
lay	laid
lead	led
leave	left
let	let
lie	lay
lose	lost
make	made
meet	met
pay	paid
put	put

Base Form	Past Form
read	read
ring	rang
run	ran
say	said
see	saw
sell	sold
send	sent
shut	shut
sing	sang
sleep	slept
speak	spoke
spend	spent
stand	stood
take	took
teach	taught
tell	told
throw	threw
understand	understood
wake	woke
wear	wore
write	wrote

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

This lesson covers the past tense of the *Be* verb, regular verbs, and irregular verbs. Through various individual and group activities, students will get plenty of written and oral practice with the affirmative, negative, and question forms of simple past verbs.

LEVEL: Beg – Low Int

TIME: 3–4 hours

TAGS: simple past, past, past tense, verbs, verb tenses, regular verbs, irregular verbs, Be, spelling, pronunciation, grammar

Exercise 1

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1. were | 6. was |
| 2. was | 7. was |
| 3. was | 8. were |
| 4. were | 9. were |
| 5. were | 10. were |

Exercise 2

- ...it wasn't cold yesterday.
- ...she wasn't sick yesterday.
- ...they weren't at school yesterday.
- ...it wasn't good yesterday.
- ...they weren't sweet yesterday.
- ...it wasn't interesting yesterday.
- ...he wasn't angry yesterday.
- ...it wasn't locked yesterday.
- ...they weren't easy yesterday.
- ...they weren't tired yesterday.

Exercise 3

Partners' answers will vary. Make sure students write down their partner's answers and not their own. You can have them copy exactly what their partners say (*Yes, I was/No, I wasn't*) or have them report their partner's answers (*Yes, he/she was/No, he/she wasn't*).

- Were you at school yesterday?
- Were you at the movies last weekend?
- Were you at the gym last week?
- Were you at the mall last month?
- Were you in another country last year?
- Were you tired last night?
- Were you angry last week?
- Were you sick last month?
- Were you excited about your last birthday?
- Were you happy during your last vacation?

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 4

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. brushed | 8. hoped | 15. played |
| 2. carried | 9. hugged | 16. studied |
| 3. checked | 10. laughed | 17. talked |
| 4. cleaned | 11. learned | 18. walked |
| 5. cried | 12. liked | 19. washed |
| 6. danced | 13. listened | |
| 7. decided | 14. planned | |

Review the spelling rules on page 4 before starting this exercise. For further spelling practice when forming regular past verbs, try the worksheet in our Grammar & Usage Resource.

For pronunciation practice, have students read the past forms out loud. Before that, you may want to hand out our pronunciation rules guide and exercise (with audio) in our Grammar & Usage Resources.

Exercise 5

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. played | 6. waited |
| 2. helped | 7. learned |
| 3. painted | 8. traveled |
| 4. watched | 9. arrived |
| 5. changed | 10. listened |

Exercise 6

A. WRITE THE ANSWERS

- Yes, they did.
- No, she didn't.
- No, I didn't.
- Yes, they did.
- Yes, he did.

B. INTERVIEW YOUR PARTNER?

Questions and answers will vary.

Exercise 7

- | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------|
| 1. began | 8. had | 15. slept |
| 2. brought | 9. knew | 16. took |
| 3. caught | 10. made | 17. taught |
| 4. chose | 11. read | 18. thought |
| 5. did | 12. ran | 19. wrote |
| 6. fell | 13. saw | |
| 7. went | 14. sang | |

Exercise 8

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. flew | 7. lost, felt/got |
| 2. set, woke, rang | 8. caught, lay |
| 3. sent | 9. swam |
| 4. wrote | 10. had |
| 5. took, got/felt | 11. bought, paid |
| 6. taught, gave | 12. met, drank |

Exercise 9

Make sure your students mix up the order of the verbs they copy down so that they all have a different card. Tell them you will call out the base/present verb and that they should draw an ✕ over the corresponding past form if they have it on their card. The first student to complete a line (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) should shout "Bingo!" To make the game last longer, tell students they can only yell "Bingo!" when they have two completed lines instead of one.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 10

Answers may vary. If this task is too difficult for your students, you could write the base forms of the following suggested answers on the board (in a random order).

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| 1. forgot | 6. closed/shut |
| 2. sold | 7. set/went down |
| 3. lost | 8. taught/forgot |
| 4. stood | 9. sank |
| 5. left | 10. spent |

Exercise 11

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. ago | 6. last |
| 2. last | 7. yesterday |
| 3. yesterday | 8. ago |
| 4. last | 9. yesterday |
| 5. yesterday | 10. ago |

Exercise 12

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. didn't get up / got up | 6. didn't meet / met |
| 2. didn't take / took | 7. didn't write / wrote |
| 3. didn't read / read | 8. didn't eat / ate |
| 4. didn't leave / left | 9. didn't have / had |
| 5. didn't take / took | 10. didn't get / got |

Exercise 13

- When did they leave the office?
- Why didn't she go to work?
- How much did you spend on groceries?
- Who did Rosa speak to?
- Who spoke to the boss?
- What did she say to you?
- How did you feel yesterday?
- When/What time did the sun rise yesterday?
- What did she wear to the party?
- Where did the meeting take place?

Note Answer: Question 4 is asking about the indirect object (who someone spoke to) and question 5 is asking about the subject (who spoke to someone).

Exercise 14

Classmates' answers will vary.

- Did you wake up late this morning?
- Did you take the bus to school this morning?
- Did you eat an egg for breakfast this morning?
- Did you see a good movie on TV last night?
- Did you buy something expensive yesterday?
- Did you have a bad cold last week?
- Did you win something/anything last year?
- Did you read a great book last month?
- Did you hear some/any interesting gossip last week?
- Did you go on vacation to another country last year?

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 15

Answers will vary. Encourage your students to use both positive and negative, regular and irregular past verbs.

Exercise 16

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. a | 3. b | 5. a | 7. a | 9. a | 11. b |
| 2. b | 4. b | 6. b | 8. b | 10. b | 12. a |

SPELLING NOTES:

- This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Color, Neighbors, Canceled, and Traveled*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Colour, Neighbours, Cancelled, and Travelled*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.
- Note that in the American spelling of words ending with the CVC pattern of **consonant + e + l**, the final l will usually not double in the most commonly accepted form (e.g., *travel* → *traveled*, *cancel* → *canceled*). Most other English-speaking countries prefer to double the final l (e.g., *travel* → *travelled*, *cancel* → *cancelled*).

EDITOR'S NOTES:

- In our Verb Cards: Present, Past & Past Participle resource (available in our Grammar & Usage Resources section) you'll find cards on pages 1–4 that you can use in a variety of ways. Page 7 contains a blank card template so that you or your students can make your own. <https://ellii.com/resources/grammar-usage/2247-verb-cards-present-past-past-participle>

You could use these verb cards with some of the activities suggested in our 5 Fun Activities for Irregular Verbs blog post: <https://ellii.com/blog/5-fun-activities-for-irregular-verbs>

- See our spelling rules and pronunciation guide for regular past verbs in our Grammar & Usage Resources section:
 - Spelling Rules: <https://ellii.com/resources/grammar-usage/2732-spelling-rules-for-regular-past-verbs>
 - Pronunciation Rules: <https://ellii.com/resources/grammar-usage/2733-pronunciation-rules-regular-past-verbs>