

GERMAN SIMPLE PAST TENSE (a.k.a. PRÄTERITUM, IMPERFEKT)

WEAK VERBS:

INFINITIVE STEM	+	(e)te	+	personal endings:		
		-(e)te		-(e)ten	spielte	spielten
		-(e)test		-(e)t	spieltest	spieltet
		-(e)te		-(e)ten	spielte	spielten

MIXED VERBS:

CHANGED STEM	+	(e)te	+	personal endings		
		-(e)te		-(e)ten	dachte	dachten
		-(e)test		-(e)t	dachtest	dachtet
		-(e)te		-(e)ten	dachte	dachten

STRONG VERBS :

CHANGED STEM		+	personal endings		
	-		-en	ging	gingen
	-st		-t	gingst	gingt
	-		-en	ging	gingen

Notes

The SIMPLE PAST TENSE is a narrative past tense (vs. the PERFECT, which is a conversational past tense). However, the SIMPLE PAST forms of *sein*, *haben*, *werden*, *wissen*, and the modal verbs are frequently used alongside the PERFECT in conversation. With the exception of these 10 common verbs, the second-person forms (*du/ihr*) of the SIMPLE PAST are rarely used.

The SIMPLE PAST refers to completed past action only vs. the PERFECT tense, which can convey varied aspect with respect to time:

Ich ging.	=	I went.	Ich bin gegangen.	=	I went.
					I have gone.
					I did go.
					I was going.

The simple past form in the principle parts is given in the third person singular (**er/sie/es**) form.

As Germanic languages, German and English have many parallels. Similarities can be seen in the principle parts of verbs. Compare the forms above with these ENGLISH EXAMPLES. Which are weak verbs? Strong verbs? Mixed verbs?

clean, cleaned, have cleaned
say, said, have said
hear, heard, have heard
cook, cooked, have cooked
study, studied, have studied
wash, washed, have washed

eat, ate, have eaten
go, went, have gone
write, wrote, have written
take, took, have taken
fly, flew, have flown
see, saw, have seen

think, thought, have thought
catch, caught, have caught
bring, brought, have brought