

1 Complete these sentences with the correct imperfect form of the verb(s) in brackets.

- a Letztes Jahr _____ Alice in Freiburg, weil sie dort ein Praktikum _____. (*wohnen, machen*)
- b Wo _____ du für dein Praktikum? _____ es viel zu tun? (*sein, geben*)
- c Ich _____ nichts über die Firma, aber ich _____. schnell ziemlich viel. (*wissen, lernen*)
- d Am letzten Tag _____ zwei Kolleginnen einen Marmorkuchen mit. (*bringen*)

2 Rewrite these sentences in the imperfect tense.

- a Meine Schwester hört ziemlich viel Musik und sie spielt auch Gitarre in einer Band.

Meine Schwester _____

- b Sie trinken jeden Morgen um 9 Uhr eine Tasse Kaffee, bevor sie zur Arbeit gehen.

Sie _____

- c Im Sommer fahren wir nach Berlin und besuchen viele Sehenswürdigkeiten. Wir bleiben eine Woche.

Letzten Sommer _____

- d Er denkt nicht an seine Zukunft und interessiert sich für nichts.

Er _____

Tipp

Like the present and perfect tense, the imperfect tense in German can convey different types of expression. *Ich machte* can mean 'I was doing' or 'I did'. It can also mean 'I used to', especially if the context implies a habitual action in the past at a certain time.

3 Translate these sentences using the imperfect tense.

- a I was very tired on Monday morning.

- b She was reading an article about the new film.

- c My brother always needed a lot of time for his homework.

- d They used to drive to London in an old car every weekend.

Grammatik

The imperfect tense, sometimes called simple past, can be used in spoken and written language to describe an event in the past. However, it tends to be used more commonly in formal writing such as essays or newspaper articles. The difference between imperfect and perfect tense therefore depends largely on style and context.

Modal verbs as well as the following verbs tend always to be used in the imperfect rather than the perfect tense.

haben → *ich hatte*

sein → *du warst*

geben → *es gab*

Other verbs which are often used in the imperfect are *denken, glauben, wissen* and *brauchen*.

Grammatik

To form the imperfect of **regular verbs**, take the stem and add the following endings:

lachen

ich lachte *wir lachten*

du lachtest *ihr lachtet*

er/sie/es lachte *Sie/sie lachten*

Remember: verbs with a stem ending in a consonant like *t* or *d* add an *e* before the ending

arbeiten → *ich arbeitete*

regnen → *es regnete*

Irregular verbs usually have a vowel change and the imperfect form needs to be learnt. It is followed by these endings:

schreiben

ich schrieb *wir schrieben*

du schreibst *ihr schreibt*

er/sie/es schrieb *Sie/sie schrieben*

Tipp

When you come across a new verb always check whether it is regular or irregular and learn the imperfect form as well as the past participle form of the irregular verbs. See page 81 for a list of irregular verbs.