



Company growth

Getting started

How do you think these international companies began? Now match each company with a sentence. Then compare your answers with a partner.

a

Google

b

SAMSUNG

c

Ford

d

SONY

e

Virgin

f

TOYOTA

- 1 Samsung began as a food trading company near the South Korean city of Daegu.
- 2 began when a Japanese company that made weaving machines decided to set up an automobile department.
- 3 began as a research project by two students at Stanford University, California.
- 4 began just after World War II when two engineers came together and started Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo. Its first commercialised product was a 'power megaphone'.
- 5 began in 1901 as a reorganisation of the Detroit Automobile Company.
- 6 began when an entrepreneur started buying discounted records and selling them to stores in London.

Haier

Reading

- 1 Make sentences about a Chinese company called Haier by matching the beginning of a sentence(1-7) with the correct ending (a-g).

- 1 Haier is a Chinese company **c**
 - 2 It began in the 1920s
 - 3 In the 1950s it became
 - 4 For the next thirty years
 - 5 Then in 1984, the local government appointed
 - 6 Mr Zhang was a keen student
 - 7 He planned to turn the company around
- a of management theory and management techniques.
 - b it did not experience very high growth.
 - c** which manufactures electrical appliances.
 - d a new young manager, Mr Zhang Ruimin.
 - e as a simple refrigerator factory.
 - f and make it a success.
 - g a state-owned enterprise.

- 2 Now read the article, which is about what happened after Mr Zhang arrived at Haier.

Mr Zhang soon realised that one of the problems was the company did not pay enough attention to quality control. In 1985, on his orders, the manufacturing team carried 76 substandard fridges onto the factory floor. Mr Zhang then handed out hammers to the workers and told them to smash the fridges. Some workers did not want to because the fridges were so expensive, but Mr Zhang insisted. One of the hammers is still on display today to remind employees of the importance of maintaining quality.

Under Mr Zhang's leadership, the company grew rapidly and over the next fifteen years, they broadened their product range to include other electrical goods like air conditioners and televisions. It also acquired a number of other companies. In 2008, Haier overtook Whirlpool as the world's top producer of fridges.



- 3 Look at Exercises 1 and 2 and find words with the following meanings.

- 1 pieces of equipment for the home appliances
- 2 a company or business
- 3 very interested in something
- 4 not of acceptable quality
- 5 break into many pieces
- 6 increased, or included more things in
- 7 obtained something (often another company)

- 4 The following statements are false. Look at Exercise 2 again and correct them.

- 1 Quality control was good at Haier in the early 1980s. No, it wasn't very good / it was poor.
- 2 The manufacturing team decided to carry 76 fridges onto the factory floor.
- 3 The staff accidentally smashed the fridges.
- 4 In the 1990s, Haier only sold fridges.
- 5 In 2008, Whirlpool produced more fridges than Haier.

Grammar workshop 1

Past simple

Most of the verbs in the article are in the **past simple** tense.

- 1 Decide which **TWO** of the following statements about the past simple are correct. Look at the article again to help you if you are not sure.
 - 1 You use the past simple for a finished action in the past.
 - 2 You use the past simple for an action which is not yet finished.
 - 3 You use the past simple if you say when the action happened.
- 2 Regular verbs in the past simple are made by adding **-ed**, but the spelling of some regular past simple verbs can be a problem. Answer the following questions. Look back at the verbs in the text if you are not sure.
 - What happens if:
 - 1 the verb already ends in *e* (e.g. *realise*)?
 - 2 the verb ends in *consonant + y* (e.g. *carry*)?
 - 3 the verb has one syllable and ends in one vowel and one consonant (e.g. *plan*)?
 - 4 the verb ends in one vowel and one consonant, but has two or more syllables and the last syllable is not stressed (e.g. *broaden*)?

- 3 Look again at Exercises 1 and 2 and find five irregular verbs (apart from the verb *to be*).

- 4  Business English students often make mistakes with the spelling of irregular verbs in the past simple. Correct the mistakes in the following sentences.

- 1 They ~~spended~~ over 5 thousand pounds on that project. spent
- 2 I ~~heared~~ the news about the merger yesterday.
- 3 I think we ~~payed~~ too much for that new equipment.
- 4 He ~~red~~ business studies at university.
- 5 He ~~toke~~ a taxi across town to visit the factory.
- 6 He ~~choosed~~ not to go into the family business.

Past simple questions

We form questions in the past simple with *did* plus the base form.

When **did** the company **begin**?

It **began** in the 1920s.

We form past simple questions with *was/were* by inverting the verb and subject.

Why **was** the company **a success**?

The company **was** a success because ...

page 27 Past simple and past continuous

- 5 Read the statements about another Chinese company. Write questions for statements (1–6).

- 1 Midea started up in 1968.
When did Midea start up?
- 2 It made plastic tops for bottles.
What?
- 3 The founder only had 5,000 renmimbi at the time.
How much?
- 4 It employed just 28 people at first.
How many?
- 5 Their first electrical products were fans.
What?
- 6 They acquired an air conditioning company in 1998.
When?

Growing pains

Listening

- 1 ① 05 You will hear an interview with a business consultant about a chain of sandwich bars called *Spectrum*. Listen to the first part of the interview and choose the correct newspaper headline (A–C).

- A SANDWICH BAR CHAIN
FACES COLLAPSE
- B RECORD PROFITS AT SPECTRUM
- C SANDWICH BAR CHAIN
OPENS NEW BRANCH

Task tip

In a business situation, you often don't have time to look up all the words you don't know. If you are not sure of your answer to Exercise 1, choose one word in the headlines to look up in your dictionary before you listen.

- 2 Work with a partner and think of some possible reasons for the current situation at Spectrum. Work with another pair. Did you think of the same reasons?

- 3 ① 06 Now listen to the whole interview and decide if the following statements (1–6) are true or false. Write T or F.

- 1 Profits at Spectrum began to fall one year ago. **F**
- 2 Spectrum need to find a buyer quickly.
- 3 One of their main selling points was their cheap prices.
- 4 Spectrum have a total of twenty branches.
- 5 They tried to enter a very competitive market.
- 6 They never used frozen ingredients in their products.

- 4 ① 07 Listen to the last part of the interview again and complete Adrian's advice.

- 1 It's best for a company to expand
slowly and carefully.
- 2 Don't try to enter a new market without doing
.....
- 3 Don't open a new branch before the existing ones
are
- 4 Remember what makes your company
.....

- 5 Which of Adrian's advice in Exercise 4 do you think is the most important?

Speaking

- 1 Work in pairs. You are going to read about a food company called Baja Fresh.

Student A: look at the information below.

Student B: look at the information on page 118.

Ask your partner questions in the past simple, using the question words in brackets, to complete the missing information.

BAJA FRESH BAJA FRESH

Student A

Baja Fresh is a chain of restaurants which serves fresh food with a Mexican theme. The company began in 1990 when a husband and wife team opened the first restaurant in (where?). They paid for it by taking out a mortgage on their house.

Their selling point was (what?) and they refused to use microwaves and freezers in their kitchens. The restaurant was very successful and they gradually opened more. In 1997, they had outlets (how many?).

Then in 2002 Wendy's, the international fast food restaurant, acquired Baja Fresh. They paid (how much?) for it. They wanted to make Baja Fresh into a big international chain but unfortunately this didn't work out. They tried to expand very quickly but they didn't pay enough attention to the original business model. (when?) sales began to decline and in 2004, they fell by 6.4 %. Faced with these figures, in (when?) Wendy's sold Baja Fresh for just \$31 million to a group of private investors.

After the sale, Baja Fresh (what?) and tried to recreate the original brand. Now the restaurant is doing well again. In 2010, they opened a new branch in (where?) and in 2011, David Kim, the Chief Executive, appeared on the TV programme Undercover Boss.

- 2 What is the main message of this case study? Discuss with a partner and choose the best sentence: A, B or C.

- A Private investors often understand their companies better than big corporations.
- B It's more important to look after your brand than to expand quickly.
- C Large international companies have different priorities from smaller, local ones.

Business ideas

Reading

- 1 Read the article about how to come up with good business ideas. Skim it quickly to get a general idea of the content.

HOW TO FIND A GREAT IDEA

Every successful business starts with a good idea. But how can you think of one? We can all learn to think more creatively. Here are three tips to increase the chance of coming up with that great money-making idea.

- The frozen food industry began when its founder, Clarence Birdseye, was working on a government project in the Arctic. One day he went fishing with some Inuits. He noticed that when they pulled a fish out of the water, it froze almost immediately. Later, when the time came to eat the fish, he also noticed it tasted almost the same as a fresh one. His observations led to the invention of the process for freezing food, and in time to the whole Birds Eye frozen food empire.
- The most famous example of this is the story of Archimedes, the ancient Greek mathematician who needed to find out whether the king's crown was pure gold or not. The answer came to him while he was taking a bath. Many successful business people will also tell you that their best idea came to them as they were doing something unrelated to their work. So, if you are stuck on a problem, leave it and do something completely different. Your unconscious mind will continue to search for a solution and eventually you may get that flash of insight.
- Think about successful ideas and how you could improve them or combine them with something else. For example, a fax machine was a telephone line combined with a photocopier, and YouTube a combination of a website and videos.



- 2 Match each paragraph in the text to the correct advice.
- Most good ideas develop out of one or more things that existed before.
 - Good ideas often come from looking carefully at the world around you.
 - The best ideas often come to people when they are not expecting it.

- 3 Find words and phrases with the following meanings in the article.

- pieces of advice *tips*
- someone who starts a business
- a group of businesses controlled by one person or organisation
- unable to progress with
- join to something else

Grammar workshop 2

Past continuous

The text contains verbs in the past simple tense and the **past continuous**. (*was/were + -ing* form)

- 1 Match the past simple and past continuous rules with the correct example from the text, A, B or C.
- We use the past simple when one event happened after another in the past.
 - We use the past simple and past continuous together to show an action that happened in the middle of another activity.
 - We use the past continuous to describe the background and the past simple for the events of a story.
- The answer came to him while he was taking a bath.
 - When they pulled a fish out of the water, it froze almost immediately.
 - He was working on a government project in the Arctic. One day he went fishing with some Inuits.
- 2 We can use words like **as** to join an action in the past simple with an action in the past continuous. Find two similar words in sentences A–C.
- 3 Read the story and put the verbs in brackets in the correct form, past simple or past continuous.

ANNA DICKSON: MUMMY MITTS

Anna Dickson 1 *came* (come) up with the idea of Mummy Mitts while she 2 (push) her daughter's pram. It was a cold day and so she 3 (wear) gloves. Every time her mobile 4 (ring) or she 5 (need) to attend to her daughter, she 6 (have) to take off the gloves and find somewhere to put them. Then the idea 7 (hit) her. Why not attach the gloves to the handle of the pram? That was the beginning of Mummy Mitts. She 8 (launch) the product in 2006 and now they are on sale across Europe.

Past simple

Form

statement

I/you/he/she/it/we/they
played ...

negative

I/you/he/she/it/we/they
did not (didn't) play ...

question

Did I/you/he/she/it/we/they
play ...?

Use

Completed actions

Example

I **saw** the new James Bond film yesterday.

Repeated actions in the past

I **went** to the theatre four times last month.

General truths about the past

Fifty years ago, people **didn't spend** as
much on entertainment as they do today.

Main events in a story

Josh **pushed** the door open and **looked**
inside the room.

Helpful hints

The past simple is often used
with the following words and
phrases:

- yesterday
- last week/summer/year/etc
- in January/2001/etc
- an hour/a week/a year ago



Some verbs have irregular past simple forms. See page 182.

Past continuous

Form

statement

I/he/she/it **was playing ...**
You/we/they **were playing ...**

negative

I/he/she/it **was not (wasn't) playing ...**
You/we/they **were not (weren't) playing ...**

question

Was I/he/she/it **playing?**
Were you/we/they **playing?**

Use

Actions happening at a
moment in the past

Example

At nine o'clock last night, I **was watching** TV.Two actions in progress
at the same timeI **was reading** a book while you **were doing**
the washing-up.Background information
in a storyIt **was raining** so Wendy decided to go to the
cinema.

Helpful hints

The past continuous is often
used with the following words
and phrases:

- at that moment
- at one/two/etc o'clock
- while



- When one action in the past happens in the middle of another, we use the past simple and the past continuous together.
✓ The phone **rang** while I **was watching** a DVD.
- We do not use the past continuous for regular or repeated actions in the past.
✗ Last year, I **was going** to the cinema every weekend.

used to

Form

used to + bare infinitive

statement

I/you/he/she/it/we/they
used to ...

negative

I/you/he/she/it/we/they **never used to ...**I/you/he/she/it/we/they **didn't use to ...**

question

Did I/you/he/she/it/we/they
use to ...?

Use

Distant past habits and states

Example

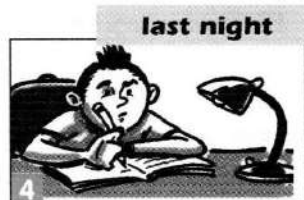
When I was four, I **used to** eat ice cream every day.

- A** Complete using the correct past simple form of the verbs in the box. You may have to use some negative forms.

come • give • go • have • know • make • send • take

- I got to the post office just before it closed and the letter.
- We invited Stephanie to the party, but she
- Jack lost his job because he too many mistakes.
- Everyone that it was Bill's fault, but nobody said anything.
- Karen the keys from the kitchen table and ran out the door.
- I was bored, so Mum me some money to go shopping.
- Do you remember the time we to India on holiday?
- It started raining, but luckily I an umbrella in my bag.

- B** Look at the pictures and complete the sentences. Use the correct form of the past simple.



- I don't want to go and see the film because I saw it last week
- I don't need a football because
- I know a lot about Paris because
- I don't need to worry about my homework because
- I haven't got a PlayStation any more because
- Mum is angry with me because

- C** Complete using the correct past continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

- Ted (**play**) his guitar at half past seven.
- At midnight, I (**sleep**), but Jane (**listen**) to music.
- Luke (**stand**) outside the bank when suddenly two robbers ran past him.
- I know Doug (**work**) late at the office because I saw him when I (**leave**).
- you (**have**) a shower when the earthquake happened?
- Penny (**run**) to catch the bus when she slipped and fell.
- When you saw Eugene he (**go**) home?
- At midnight? Erm ... we (**watch**) a DVD, I think.

D Circle the correct word or phrase.

- 1 When we were in Canada, we **went** / **were going** skiing almost every day.
- 2 About four years ago, I **decided** / **was deciding** to become a chef.
- 3 Georgia **had** / **was having** a shower when someone knocked at the door.
- 4 Holly and I ran from the house to the taxi because it **rained** / **was raining** heavily.
- 5 Two men **argued** / **were arguing** outside, so I went to see what was happening.
- 6 Daniel **called** / **was calling** you at one o'clock yesterday, but you were here with me.
- 7 We **ate** / **were eating** breakfast when a letter came through the letter box.
- 8 As I walked past the window, I saw that Paula **made** / **was making** a cake.
- 9 I **dreamt** / **was dreaming** about my favourite band when the alarm clock went off.
- 10 While I **practised** / **was practising** the trumpet late last night, a neighbour came to complain.

E Complete using the correct past simple or past continuous form of the verbs in the box.

answer • be • continue • get • go • have • open • practise • put
ring • say • shine • sing • wake

Amber's Big Match

One morning, Amber (1) up early. The sun (2) and the birds (3) Amber (4) very excited because it was the day of the big tennis match.

Amber (5) downstairs and into the kitchen, where her father (6) breakfast.

'Morning, Amber. Today's the day!' he (7) Amber smiled nervously. 'Don't worry!' he (8) 'You'll be fine.'

Amber (9) some toast into the toaster and (10) the fridge. Just as she (11) the butter out, the phone (12) Her father (13) it. After a few minutes, he put the phone down.

'Bad news, I'm afraid. The other player (14) yesterday when she had an accident. The match is off.'

Amber ate her toast slowly. She was surprised she didn't feel disappointed.

F Complete using the correct form of *used to*. You may have to use some negative forms.

- 1 When I was younger, I eat pizza almost every day!
- 2 there be a supermarket on the corner?
- 3 Bradley is a teacher, but he want to be a train driver.
- 4 I like eating cabbage, but now I love it!
- 5 Rick have blond hair when he was a little boy?
- 6 I know Lily cook much, but now I think she makes dinner every day.