

GRAMMAR

THE FUTURE IN THE PAST

When we talk about the future from a time in the past we use:

- would as the past tense of will:

-He *thought* he *would* buy one the next day.

-Everyone *was* excited. The party *would* be fun.



- was/were going to:

-John *was going to* drive and Mary *was going to* follow on her bicycle.

-It was Friday. We *were going to* set off the next day.



- the past continuous:

-It *was* September. Mary *was starting* school the next week.

-We *were* very busy. The shop *was opening* in two weeks time.



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Future in the past

Future in the Past has two different forms in English:

"would" and "was going to."

Although the two forms can sometimes be used interchangeably, they often express two different meanings.

Use

Future in the Past is used to express the idea that in the past you thought something would happen in the future.

It does not matter if you are correct or not.

"Would" is used to volunteer or promise and "was going to" is used to plan.

Moreover, both forms can be used to make predictions about the future.

Examples:

- I told you he **was going to come** to the party. (*plan*)
- I knew Julie **would make** dinner. (*voluntary action*)
- Jane said Sam **was going to bring** his sister with him, but he came alone. (*plan*)
- I had a feeling that the vacation **was going to be** a disaster. (*prediction*)
- He promised he **would send** a postcard from Egypt. (*promise*)

FORM Would

[would + verb infinitive]

- I knew you **would help** him.

FORM Was/Were Going To

[was/were + going to + VERB]

- I knew you **were going to go** to the party.



Fill in with the most appropriate form to refer to the future in the past to complete the sentences below.

1. Henry. Good Lord. I forgot you _____ (come) for supper.
2. The police _____ (charge) me with robbery.
3. The start of the film was wonderful. I hoped it _____ (get) better, but in fact it got worse as it went on.
4. I went to bed early as I _____ (leave) for New York the next day.
5. He was a sensible boy, and she knew he _____ (take) care of him.
6. You _____ (show) me the photos, but we were interrupted.
7. I _____ (buy) the car, but I thought I didn't really need it so I decided not to in the end.
8. I told him not to call me that evening because I _____ (study) for my finals all night.
9. He asked whether I _____ (help) him but there was nothing I could do.
10. Sorry, I _____ (call) you today, but I forgot.
11. I saw he had a gun, but I didn't think he _____ (shoot).
12. She promised she _____ (put) an end to the situation, but failed to do so.
13. That night I was very excited because the next morning I _____ (travel) back home on the first train.
14. The party _____ (mean /be) a surprise for Janet, but unfortunately Tim told her.
15. We _____ (suppose/meet) last week but we couldn't find time.