



Talking About the Past in Welsh

Welsh Lesson

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Video transcript

Hey there and welcome to Ablas! In this video, we'll learn how to talk about the past in Welsh, including how to ask questions, with an example story and quiz to test your knowledge at the end. You can download a PDF of today's lesson from the link in the description!

Regular past tense form

Let's start off simple with the regular past tense form.

If you wanted to say you walked to the park in the past tense, you'd take the verb *cerdded*, and conjugate it like this: "Cerddais i i'r parc."

Let's look at another example, and notice the pattern here: "Gwelais i aderyn ddoe." This means, "I saw a bird yesterday." The verb *gwelais* has a similar ending to *cerddais*.

This verb ending changes depending on who you're talking about. If we were talking to one person directly using the singular informal you, we'd say: "cerddaist ti, gwelaist ti." And if we used the third person singular... "cerddodd, gwelodd."

If we're referring to multiple people and wanted to say "we walked, we saw": "cerddon ni, gwelon ni." And lastly the plural or polite you, "cerddoch chi, gweloch chi," and the third person plural: "cerddon nhw, gwelon nhw."

	walked	saw
I...	cerddais i	gwelais i
You... (singular)	cerddaist ti	gwelaist ti
He/she...	cerddodd o/e/hi	gwelodd o/e/hi
We...	cerddon ni	gwelon ni
You... (plural)	cerddoch chi	gweloch chi
They...	cerddon nhw	gwelon nhw

Irregular forms

We've covered the regular form, so let's look at the verbs that don't fit this pattern.

There are four main irregular verbs. Dod, Mynd, Cael, Gwneud. Take a moment to look at how each of these verbs differ in their conjugation.

Dod	Mynd	Cael	Gwneud
Des	Es	Ces	Gwnes
Dest	Est	Cest	Gwnest
Daeth	Aeth	Cafodd	Gwnaeth
Daethon	Aethon	Cawson	Gwnaethon
Daethoch	Aethoch	Cawsoch	Gwnaethoch
Daethon	Aethon	Cawson	Gwnaethon

Before we go any further, let's look at some examples of other conjugated verbs that don't follow the regular pattern.

- "Arhosais i wrth y safle bws." (I waited at the bus stop.)
- "Cyrhaeddais i neithiwr." (I arrived last night.)
- "Mwynheuais i'r parti." (I enjoyed the party.)

Questions and negatives

Now we'll cover how to ask questions and make negative statements about the past.

To ask a question about the past, we need to use the soft mutation to change the spelling of the word at the start of the question. To find out more about mutations, check out the video on the channel covering this.

But let's look at an example now: "Gwyliaist ti'r teledu?" becomes... "Wyliaist ti'r teledu?"

And when we answer a yes or no question like this, we use do and naddo. For example: "Do, gwyliais i'r teledu." (Yes, I watched TV). "Naddo, darllenais lyfr." (No, I read a book).

But how do we write negative statements in the past tense? We simply add ddim after the verb.

But it's not always that straightforward. If the verb starts with T, C or P, it triggers the aspirate mutation. Notice the difference here: "Canais i gân." (I sang a song.) "Chanais i ddim gân." (I didn't sing a song.)

And when the verb starts with D, G, B, M, LL or RH, we use the soft mutation. "Gwelais i ffilm dda." (I watched a good film.) "Welais i ddim ffilm dda." (I didn't watch a good film.)

Other past tenses

Let's finish off with a couple of other ways to talk about the past.

If you wanted to say you have done something that has now been completed, you can use wedi. "Dw i wedi gorffen." (I have finished.) "Rydyn ni wedi penderfynu." (We have decided.)

And if you wanted to say you had done something in the past, you can use roedd with wedi. "Roeddwn i wedi gorffen." (I had finished.) "Roedden ni wedi penderfynu." (We had decided.)

Story

Now that we've learnt all you need to know about the past tense, let's put it into practice with a short story.

English	Welsh
Roedd hi'n ddiwrnod heulog ar y traeth tywodlyd.	It was a sunny day on the sandy beach.

English	Welsh
Aeth Siân a Marc yno am un ar ddeg o'r gloch.	Siân and Marc went there at eleven o'clock.
Cyrhaeddwn nhw a dechreuon nhw fwyta picnic blasus.	They arrived and started to eat a delicious picnic.
Bwyton nhw frechdanau, ond fwyton nhw ddim salad.	They ate sandwiches, but they didn't eat salad.
Roedden nhw wedi gorffen y bwyd erbyn dau o'r gloch.	They had finished the food by two o'clock.
"Fwynheast ti'r picnic, Siân?" gofynnodd Marc.	"Did you enjoy the picnic, Siân?" asked Marc.
"Do, roedd e'n wych!" dywedodd Siân.	"Yes, it was great!" said Siân.
Cerddon nhw ar y tywod, ond nofion nhw ddim yn y môr achos roedd hi'n rhy oer.	They walked on the sand, but they didn't swim in the sea because it was too cold.
Ar ôl y daith, roedden nhw'n flinedig ond yn hapus iawn.	After the trip, they were tired but very happy.

It's quiz time!

Don't worry if you missed some of the past tense examples in that story – you can download the PDF of today's lesson which will include the full translation. But now it's quiz time!

How do you say "I went"?

- A. Es i
- B. Des i
- C. Ces i

The correct answer is... Es i.

Which sentence is correct?

- A. Chanais i ddim gân.
- B. Chanais i gân.

The correct answer is... Chanais i ddim gân. We only need the soft mutation with the negative sentence here.

How do you say "we enjoyed"?

- A. Mwynhon ni
- B. Mwynheuon ni
- C. Mwynheuon nhw

The correct answer is... Mwynheuon ni. This was one of the irregular verbs we covered.

Your task

Well done for getting this far!

Now your task is to write a short diary entry about your last weekend in Welsh. Try to include where you went, what you ate, and a description using the roedd tense.

Be sure to leave a like if you enjoyed this lesson and hit the subscribe button so you don't miss out on future videos. Our website is full of fun games across 7 languages, so head on over and put your skills to the test! Until next time, thanks for watching!