

FUTURE IN THE PAST

B2 | Teens / Adults | Grammar Practice | 35-45 minutes

Learn and practise | Report plans and expectations viewed from a past moment.

1. READ: A plan that changed

Read the conversation. Notice the bold grammar and how the speakers use it.

Nia: I thought you were spending the weekend in Bristol.

Sam: I **was going to visit** my cousin, but she got ill.

Nia: That's a shame. Did you lose the train fare?

Sam: No. The company said it **would refund** the ticket.

Nia: At least that worked out.

Sam: Yes. I thought I **would have** a quiet weekend instead, but then my brother turned up with his kids.

2. GRAMMAR: Later than a past reference point

Use would for a future viewed from the past; was/were going to often describes a past intention.

Use / form	Pattern	Example
Past intention	was/were going to + verb	I was going to visit her.
Expected later event	would + base verb	They said they would refund it.
Negative intention	wasn't/weren't going to	I wasn't going to stay long.

A past plan may happen or change: We were going to leave at six, but we left at seven.

Reported future: 'I'll call.' -> She said she would call.

Would here means later than a past point, not an imagined conditional result.

A. CHOOSE

Circle the correct option. Use would for expectations reported from a past viewpoint.

1. I was / am going to go, but I changed my mind.
2. She said she will / would call later.
3. We were going to leave / leaving at six.
4. I knew it would be / was be difficult.
5. They weren't / wasn't going to stay.
6. He thought he would / will enjoy the trip.
7. Was / Were you going to book that room?
8. She was going to visit / visited, but she got ill.

Read each answer aloud. Explain which meaning or time clue helped you.

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Use it | Complete a context, write sentences and speak with a partner.

B. COMPLETE: Past plans and expectations

Use was/were going to for the intentions and would for the reported expectations.

1. I _____ (be going to / visit) my cousin, but she got ill.
2. The company said it _____ (will / refund) my ticket.
3. We _____ (be going to / leave) at six, but the taxi was late.
4. I thought the journey _____ (will / take) two hours.
5. Jo _____ (not / be going to / stay) overnight, but she missed the train.
6. _____ (you / be going to / call) me before your plans changed?

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1-2: Rewrite as a past plan.

Example: My plan was to leave. **I was going to leave.**

1. Our plan was to walk, but it rained.
2. Her plan was to call, but she forgot.

3-4: Report the future using would. Example: Jo said: "I'll help." **Jo said she would help.**

3. Ben said: "I'll pay."
4. I thought: "It will be easy."

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU

Write about a past intention, a changed plan and an expectation you had at that time.

Example: **I was going to study abroad. I thought I would enjoy it, but my plans changed.**

E. SPEAK WITH A PARTNER

Describe plans that changed. Explain what you were going to do and why you didn't.

Your partner asks what you expected would happen.

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Answer key | Keep this page separate during student practice.

1. READ: A plan that changed

Sample target language from the conversation:

Sam: I **was going to visit** my cousin, but she got ill.

Sam: No. The company said it **would refund** the ticket.

Sam: Yes. I thought I **would have** a quiet weekend instead, but then my brother turned up with his kids.

A. CHOOSE

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. was | 2. would |
| 3. leave | 4. would be |
| 5. weren't | 6. would |
| 7. Were | 8. visit |

B. COMPLETE: Past plans and expectations

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. was going to visit | 2. would refund |
| 3. were going to leave | 4. would take |
| 5. wasn't going to stay / was not going to stay | 6. Were you going to call |

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1. We were going to walk, but it rained.
2. She was going to call, but she forgot.
3. Ben said he would pay.
4. I thought it would be easy.

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU / E. SPEAK

Personal answers will vary. Check the target grammar.

Sample: I was going to take the train. I thought it would be quicker. The train was cancelled, so I drove.

Teacher note: Future in the past does not imply that an event never happened. Encourage students to state the outcome rather than assume cancellation.