Past Simple in 40 Minutes

Five games, one rule, nothing to prepare. A board, your voice and the class you already have.

Before the bell

Write these three lines in the corner of the board and leave them there for the whole lesson. Students look at them far more often than they admit.

I went.	I didn't go.	Did you go?

The forty minutes

Min	Game	You	The class
0–8	**Wrong on purpose**	Say a sentence with one past-simple mistake in it.	First to name the mistake writes the next sentence.
8–16	**The chain**	Count three seconds on your fingers for every turn.	Build one past-simple sentence, one word per student.
16–24	**Silent order**	Scramble a sentence on the board and number the words.	On your signal, all hands show the number of the next word.
24–32	**Question ping-pong**	Give a statement. Take their statement back.	Turn it into a question with *did*, then give you one.
32–40	**Beat the teacher**	Answer with the class. Keep the score on the board.	A point every time they are right before you are.

Six mistakes to start with

Say them as if you meant them. Keep your mistakes small — a silly sentence is spotted by sound, not by grammar.

- Last night I watch a film with my sister.
- Did you went home after the lesson?
- We didn't saw him on Monday.
- I forgetted my notebook again.
- They buyed the tickets last week.
- When you arrived at the station?

When to stop

Three wrong answers in a row	Stop the game. Reteach the rule.
One student answering everything	Move to pairs.
Laughter but no English	Your example sentences are too silly.
Correct answers but no speed	The form is known, the habit is not. Raise the pace.

> Stopping a game early costs nothing. Finishing a game that has stopped teaching costs the eight minutes you had left.

Make It Your Own

The same five games work for any rule. Fill one row a week and by the end of term you have ten lessons that need no preparation.

Your rules

Rule	Game that fits it	Mistakes I heard

Four things worth copying

- One grammar point per game. Two points teach neither.
- Say the time limit out loud before you begin.
- Keep the score on the board whenever a game has a winner.
- Three rules a term, drilled to the point of boredom, beat thirty rules met once.

Tomorrow's question

End the lesson with one question the class writes for you, using today's rule. Answer it at the start of the next lesson. It costs two minutes and buys the rule a second meeting — and the second meeting is where it starts to stay.

This sheet is free. Download it, print it, copy it for your colleagues. No sign-up, no email, no licence to read.

Soon you will make these yourself. We are building a page on yakki.app where you choose the rule and the games and get a sheet like this one as a PDF, in your own language.

Need one before then? Write to admin@yakki.app with the rule and the level, and we will make the sheet for you.