

Where or Were?

**Where** is an adverb, conjunction, and pronoun.

**Were** is a verb (past tense of “be”) and is used for plural subjects and in imaginary conditional statements

1. **When to Use WHERE**

The word **where** refers to a place, location, stage, or situation. It often asks a question.

It is:

* An interrogative adverb – It is used to ask a question about a place; for example: **Where** is the library?
* A relative adverb – It is used as a point of reference; for example: I saw him in Marks and Spencer’s, **where** I am a regular customer.
* A conjunction – “Where” means “in the place that” or “in situations that”; for example: **Where** you find the flowers, you also find the bees.
* A relative pronoun – It introduces a relative clause; for example: The house **where** Julie grew up was recently sold for £500,000.

**TIP! A good way remembering to use where is that it is only one letter apart from there. Both words have to do with directions. Where is this? It’s over there. If you can remember where is closely related to there, this will help you to choose the correct spelling.**

**Examples in your text:**

According to Ahmad (2019), Dubai is a city “made from gold, **where** dreams can come true”.

Harris (1996) recalled how many of the men were buried in the fields **where** they were shot.

1. **When to Use WERE**

**Were** is the past tense of the verb “be.” It is used together with a plural subject.

For example:

The whole group **were** sent to the Library to study.

The teacher asked ‘what **were** you reading last night?’

**Were** is also used when talking about an imaginary or unrealistic situation in conditional statements even with a singular subject.

For example:

In her speech yesterday, Ms Marshall stated that she would give free meals to all homeless people if she **were** Prime Minister.

**TIP! To test whether *were* is the correct word to use in a sentence, see if you can use *are* in its place, putting the sentence into the present tense. Does it still make sense?**

**Examples in your text:**

“Backstage was a full production of maybe a dozen women who **were** toiling over huge vats of stews and soups” (Adjonyoh, 2019).

According to Jones (2015), many of the wards reviewed **were** not of the standard required.

**Recap: When to Use Where or Were**

Let’s recap how and when to use which word:

Use **where** to indicate a place, location, stage, or situation.

For example:

* The tour guide advised the group ***where*** to have lunch.
* The pharmacy is ***where*** patients are directed in the first instance.

Use **were** as the past tense of the verb “be”. It is used together with a plural subject.

For example:

* The prisoners ***were*** held in poor conditions.

**Were** is also used in imaginary conditional statements.

For example:

* ***Were*** he to succeed, he would be British champion.