There was / There were:
Mixed Practice: Quantifiers, There was vs It was & Tense Contrast

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. There ___ some cheese in the fridge, but we ate it all.
   a) is   b) were
   c) was   d) are

2. There ___ any good films at the cinema last week.
   a) wasn't   b) isn't
   c) weren't   d) aren't

3. ___ was raining all day yesterday, so we stayed at home.
   a) There   b) It
   c) That   d) This

4. There ___ a lot of snow last winter.
   a) were   b) was
   c) is   d) are

5. There ___ many tourists here now — it's the summer season.
   a) were   b) was
   c) is   d) are

6. ___ was difficult to understand the instructions.
   a) It   b) There
   c) That   d) This

7. There ___ any students absent from class yesterday.
   a) wasn't   b) aren't
   c) weren't   d) isn't

8. There ___ a lot of food at the party. Everyone enjoyed it.
   a) were   b) is
   c) are   d) was

9. There ___ much time left. We need to hurry now.
   a) wasn't   b) weren't
   c) isn't   d) aren't

10. ___ was my birthday yesterday, and there ___ a surprise party for me!
    a) It … was   b) There … was
    c) It … were   d) There … were

11. There ___ some letters on your desk when I came in.
    a) was   b) is
    c) were   d) are

12. There ___ much noise in the library. It was very quiet.
    a) weren't   b) wasn't
    c) isn't   d) aren't

13. There ___ a few mistakes in yesterday's report, but nothing serious.
    a) was   b) is
    c) are   d) were

14. ___ was about ten o'clock when we arrived at the station.
    a) There   b) It
    c) That   d) This

15. There ___ any coffee left this morning, so I bought some.
    a) weren't   b) isn't
    c) aren't   d) wasn't

16. There ___ several reasons for the delay, but nobody explained them.
    a) was   b) were
    c) is   d) are

17. There ___ a hospital in this town now, but there ___ one ten years ago.
    a) is … wasn't   b) was … isn't
    c) are … weren't   d) were … aren't

18. There ___ a little milk in the bottle, but it wasn't enough for two cups.
    a) were   b) is
    c) are   d) was

19. There ___ many shops in this area before, but now there ___ a big shopping centre.
    a) weren't … is   b) wasn't … is
    c) weren't … was   d) wasn't … was

20. ___ was getting late. There ___ still a lot of work to do.
    a) It … was   b) There … was
    c) It … were   d) There … were

Answers

1. c) was

2. c) weren't

3. b) It

4. b) was

5. d) are

6. a) It

7. c) weren't

8. d) was

9. c) isn't

10. a) It … was

11. c) were

12. b) wasn't

13. d) were

14. b) It

15. d) wasn't

16. b) were

17. a) is … wasn't

18. d) was

19. a) weren't … is

20. a) It … was

Explanations

1. "was" (c)
'Cheese' is uncountable, so we use 'was'. The clause 'we ate it all' confirms it's past tense.

2. "weren't" (c)
'Films' is plural, so the negative form is 'weren't'. There weren't any good films at the cinema last week.

3. "It" (b)
We use 'It' with weather expressions: 'It was raining', 'It was cold', etc. 'There was' doesn't work with weather verbs. It was raining all day yesterday.

4. "was" (b)
'Snow' is uncountable, so we use 'was' even with 'a lot of'. There was a lot of snow last winter.

5. "are" (d)
'Now' and 'it's' tell us this is present tense. 'Many tourists' is plural, so we use 'are'.

6. "It" (a)
We use 'It was + adjective + to do something' to describe difficulty. 'There was' doesn't fit this pattern.

7. "weren't" (c)
'Students' is plural, so we need 'weren't'. There weren't any students absent from class yesterday.

8. "was" (d)
'Food' is uncountable, so we use 'was'. There was a lot of food at the party.

9. "isn't" (c)
'Now' tells us this is present tense. 'Time' is uncountable, so we use 'isn't'. There isn't much time left.

10. "It … was" (a)
We say 'It was my birthday' (specific identification) and 'there was a party' (existence). It was my birthday, and there was a surprise party for me!

11. "were" (c)
'Letters' is plural, so we use 'were'. There were some letters on your desk when I came in.

12. "wasn't" (b)
'Noise' is uncountable, so we use 'wasn't'. 'It was very quiet' confirms the negative. There wasn't much noise in the library.

13. "were" (d)
'A few mistakes' is plural (a few + plural noun), so we use 'were'. 'Yesterday's report' confirms past tense. There were a few mistakes in yesterday's report.

14. "It" (b)
We use 'It was' to tell the time: 'It was ten o'clock', 'It is half past three', etc. 'There was' doesn't work for telling time.

15. "wasn't" (d)
'Coffee' is uncountable, so we use 'wasn't'. There wasn't any coffee left this morning.

16. "were" (b)
'Several reasons' is plural, so we use 'were'. There were several reasons for the delay.

17. "is … wasn't" (a)

'Now' needs present tense 'is'; 'ten years ago' needs past tense negative 'wasn't'. A hospital is singular.

18. "was" (d)

'Milk' is uncountable, so we use 'was'. 'A little' goes with uncountable nouns. 'It wasn't enough' confirms past tense.

19. "weren't … is" (a)

'Shops' is plural, so we need 'weren't' for the past. 'Now' signals present tense, and 'a shopping centre' is singular, so we use 'is'.

20. "It … was" (a)

We use 'It was getting late' to talk about time (not 'There was'). 'Work' is uncountable, so we use 'was'. It was getting late. There was still a lot of work to do.