

Irregular verbs: Simple past tense exercises

Exercise 1. Review the first 10 irregular verbs (be – can). Then try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|
| be | beat | become | begin | bite |
| break | bring | build | buy | can |

1. Yesterday Jill fell down and _____ her arm.
2. Tom went to the store and _____ some screws.
3. “Ouch! I _____ my tongue!”
4. Where _____ you yesterday? I missed you at the party!
5. The weather changed last week. It _____ hot.
6. Jeff is a brutal man. He _____ his wife. She finally left him a few weeks ago.
7. Two years ago Jörg _____ not speak any English. Then he took some intensive English courses and now he can.
8. We _____ our house 10 years ago.
9. I _____ a sandwich to work this morning, but somebody ate it.
10. I _____ this exercise 5 minutes ago.

Exercise 2. Review the second 10 irregular verbs (catch – eat). Then try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
| catch | choose | come | cost | cut |
| do | draw | drink | drive | eat |

1. “I’m not hungry or thirsty. I _____ and _____ a lot at the party.”
2. Pam feels terrible. She _____ home early yesterday because she _____ a bad cold.
3. Jim _____ a lot of work at home last weekend.
4. Ron _____ his finger on the sharp blade of this machine.
5. Sue _____ a rough draft of the machine she wants to design.
6. Greg didn’t ride his bike to work yesterday. Instead he _____ his car.
7. We had the choice between red and black for this product’s packaging. We _____ black. It _____ less than the red design.

Exercise 3. Review the third 10 irregular verbs (fall – give). Then try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|------|------|
| fall | feel | fight | find | fly |
| forbid | forget | freeze | get | give |

1. Wendy _____ to New York for the conference yesterday.
2. It was so cold yesterday that the water in the puddles _____ over. We didn't wear warm enough coats and _____ very cold.
3. Tom _____ \$10 on the ground yesterday. He's a lucky guy.
4. At the trade fair, Sue _____ her business card to a lot of potential customers.
5. It was raining hard and Jim _____ wet because he _____ his umbrella.
6. Tom _____ down the stairs and hurt his ankle last night.
7. Bill _____ hard with his boss about the project, but in the end he had to give in to his boss.
8. The foreman _____ his new apprentices to use the machine tools without protective clothing.

Exercise 4. Review the fourth 10 irregular verbs (go – keep) and try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| go | grow | hang | have | hear |
| hide | hit | hold | hurt | keep |

1. Jim was a very bad boy. He _____ from his mother behind some large bins at a store and _____ quiet. She was extremely worried until she finally found him. Then she _____ him tightly in her arms.
2. Last summer we _____ lots of vegetables in our garden. Then we _____ to the farmer's market and sold some of them.
3. When the apprentice's hair got caught in the machine, a skilled worker quickly _____ the emergency button. Fortunately, the apprentice was not badly _____. Nonetheless, he _____ to go to the doctor's to get his minor injury checked.
4. Greg fell out the window and almost fell down three floors. Luckily, he caught the windowsill and _____ on for dear life. He yelled loudly until someone finally _____ him and helped him back in through the window.

Exercise 5. Review the fifth 10 irregular verbs (know – meet) and try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|------|------|-------|------|------|
| know | lead | leave | lend | let |
| lie | lose | make | mean | meet |

1. Mr. Jones was a good CEO. He _____ the company well.
2. Beth felt very dizzy, so she _____ down on the couch. She _____ she had to rest until she felt better.
3. Unfortunately, my colleague _____ his wallet on the way to work yesterday and needed some money to buy lunch, so I _____ him \$10.
4. Yesterday I _____ home a half an hour earlier than usual because I _____ a client for breakfast.
5. Our firm _____ a lot of money last year – more than we expected. That _____ we were able to invest more money in research and development.
6. Work was slow, so the manager _____ some workers go home early.

Exercise 6. Review the sixth 10 irregular verbs (pay – sell) and try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|------|-----|------|------|------|
| pay | put | read | ride | ring |
| rise | run | say | see | sell |

1. Brad hadn't seen his grandmother in a long time. He _____ her doorbell, and after she buzzed him in, he _____ upstairs to her apartment quickly and _____ his arms around her. Then he _____, "I love you, grandma."
2. Bill _____ his bike to work last week because he _____ his car and didn't have a new one yet.
3. I _____ in the newspaper that the company _____ the CEO \$500,000 last year. It made me extremely mad to see how much he earned.
4. The sun _____ this morning at 5:00 am. I was awake and _____ the gorgeous sunrise.

Exercise 7. Review the next 12 irregular verbs (send – steal) and try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| send | shoot | show | shut | sing |
| sink | sit | sleep | speak | spend |
| stand | steal | | | |

1. The manager _____ \$500 from the company. He got caught in the act, and they _____ him to jail. He _____ in jail for six months.
2. The Titanic hit an iceberg and _____ to the bottom of the ocean.
3. The police officer wanted to see Sally’s ID, so she _____ him her driver’s licence.
4. Our colleague from Japan _____ German with a heavy accent until he had been here about a year.
5. Jack’s neighbour was an opera singer. One evening she _____ so loudly that Jack got out his gun and _____ her. That _____ the opera singer up permanently and it was much quieter. Then Jack _____ peacefully for about 9 hours. When he woke up, he called the police and told them what he had done. Unfortunately for Jack, he _____ the rest of his life in prison.
6. We _____ in line a long time before we could buy tickets for the concert. Then the concert was cancelled because the lead opera singer had been brutally murdered.

Exercise 8. Review the last 12 irregular verbs (swim – write) and try this exercise. Fill in the blanks with the correct verbs from the box. Use the simple past tense.

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|------------|------|------|
| swim | take | teach | tear | tell |
| think | throw | understand | wake | wear |
| win | write | | | |

1. The math teacher had such good explanations that we always _____ everything. She _____ us well.
2. Kim _____ up this morning with a migraine. She called up work and _____ her boss that she wasn’t coming in to work today.
3. Frank was dissatisfied with the report from his assistant. He _____ it up into little pieces in front of his assistant and _____ it away in his wastepaper basket. Then his assistant _____ a new report.
4. Bill was a welder. He always _____ a welding hood, goggles, a welder’s leather jacket, welding gloves, welder’s chaps and steel toe work boots.
5. Our basketball team _____ the game yesterday. We were happy about our success, but also extremely hot. So the whole team _____ together afterwards in a nearby pool.
6. Diane’s firm had a big problem. Diana _____ about some solutions to the problem and then _____ them to her manager.

Answer key:

Exercise 1:

1. broke
2. bought
3. bit
4. were
5. became
6. beat
7. could
8. built (*or*: bought)
9. brought
10. began

Exercise 2:

1. ate ... drank
2. came (*or*: drove) ... caught
3. did
4. cut
5. drew
6. drove
7. chose ... cost

Exercise 3:

1. flew
2. froze ... felt
3. found
4. gave
5. got ... forgot
6. fell
7. fought
8. forbade

Exercise 4:

1. hid ... kept ... held
2. grew ... went
3. hit ... hurt ... had
4. hung ... heard

Exercise 5:

1. led
2. lay ... knew
3. lost ... lent
4. left ... met
5. made ... meant
6. let

Exercise 6:

1. rang ... ran ... put ... said
2. rode ... sold
3. read ... paid
4. rose ... saw

Exercise 7:

1. stole ... sent ... sat
2. sank
3. showed
4. spoke
5. sang ... shot ... shut ... slept ...
spent
6. stood

Exercise 8:

1. understood ... taught
2. woke ... told
3. tore ... threw ... wrote
4. wore
5. won ... swam
6. thought ... took