



# Verbs: Past Tense

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In understanding the past tense of verbs, a writer must be aware that verbs

are divided into **two categories**:

**regular verbs and irregular verbs.**

**PART A: Regular verbs in the past tense take an -ed or -d ending.**

## EXAMPLES:

1. The man ***purchased*** some groceries.
2. They ***hoisted*** the flag.
3. The police officers ***cornered*** the suspect.
4. The students ***studied*** for the test.
5. Those doors ***closed*** too quickly.
6. The nurse ***massaged*** the muscle.

## PRACTICE ONE

Choose the correct past tense form of the provided verbs.

1. One day, Father \_\_\_\_\_ (**decide**) to take a trip.
2. The family \_\_\_\_\_ (**travel**) from Florida to Canada to visit Grandpa.
3. When they \_\_\_\_\_ (**arrive**), Grandpa wasn't home.
4. At this point, Father \_\_\_\_\_ (**remember**) that grandpa no longer lived in Canada.
5. From that day on, the family always \_\_\_\_\_ (**consider**) Father to be an idiot.
6. When the police arrived, the onlookers \_\_\_\_\_ (**scatter**) to allow more room.
7. One officer even \_\_\_\_\_ (**park**) his car on the lawn.
8. The police \_\_\_\_\_ (**worry**) that the onlookers might become injured.
9. The neighbors \_\_\_\_\_ (**shout**) to everyone to move back.
10. Finally, the police \_\_\_\_\_ (**apprehend**) two suspects and drove away.

## PART B:

Irregular verbs in the past tense do not take an -ed or -ed ending. They **change internally on the vowels**.

(See irregular verbs list on answer key page)

### EXAMPLES:

1. The husband **saw** the cat on the roof.
2. The husband **fell** off the roof while trying to retrieve the cat.
3. The grieving widow **shot** the cat off the roof.

### PRACTICE TWO

Choose the correct past tense form of the provided verbs.

Eight men \_\_\_\_\_ 1. (run) to the end of the field to inspect the object that \_\_\_\_\_ 2. (have) crashed before their eyes. Upon reaching the object, they \_\_\_\_\_ 3. (see) that it was a UFO. The object was about the size of a Cadillac. The men \_\_\_\_\_ 4. (talk) about taking the object home with them. They \_\_\_\_\_ 5. (discuss) contacting the authorities, but were not sure whom to contact. They \_\_\_\_\_ 6. (think) about calling the police, but \_\_\_\_\_ 7. (consider) this a bad idea since all eight men were wanted felons. Suddenly, another, much larger object \_\_\_\_\_ 8. (fall) from the sky, landing on all eight of the men, killing them instantly, which only goes to show that crime doesn't pay.

## PART C:

### TROUBLESOME VERBS IN THE PAST TENSE: TO BE

The verb *to be* is the only verb that in the past tense has different forms for different persons. Be careful of subject-verb agreement.

		present singular	past singular		past plural
1st person:	I	am	was	we	were
2nd person:	you	are	were	you	were
3rd person:	he/she/it	is	was	they	were

### PRACTICE THREE

Choose the correct form of the verb.

1. Edward (**was, were**) very curious about how bees communicate.
2. These biology books (**were, was**) expensive, but I needed them for my research.
3. Camping and sports cars (**was, were**) his passions.
4. The play (**was, were**) well acted, but the staging and the choreography (**were, was**) weak.
5. Why (**weren't, wasn't**) you at the restaurant when I was there.
6. He (**was, were**) the first of seven people to win.
7. The family (**were, was**) the strangest in the neighborhood.
8. Bacon and eggs (**was, were**) my favorite meal.
9. The captain of the team of seven men (**was, were**) a nice guy.
10. I wish I had known you when you (**was, were**) a child.

## ANSWER KEYS PAST VERB TENSE

### PRACTICE ONE (Past Tense)

1. decided
2. traveled
3. arrived
4. remembered
5. considered
6. scattered
7. parked
8. worried
9. shouted
10. apprehended

### PRACTICE TWO: (Irregular Verbs)

1. ran
2. had
3. saw
4. talked
5. discussed
6. thought
7. considered
8. fell

### PRACTICE THREE: (past tense: "to be")

1. was
2. were
3. were
4. was -- were
5. weren't
6. was
7. was
8. was
9. was
10. were

# Commonly Used Irregular Verbs

SIMPLE PRESENT	SIMPLE PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE	PRESENT PARTICIPLE
be	was, were	been	being
begin	began	begun	beginning
blow	blew	blown	blowing
bring	brought	brought	bring
build	built	built	building
choose	chose	chosen	choosing
deal	dealt	dealt	dealing
dig	dug	dug	digging
dive	dove	dove	diving
do	did	done	doing
go	went	gone	go
grow	grew	grown	growing
hide	hid	hidden	hiding
hold	held	held	holding
keep	kept	kept	keeping
know	knew	known	knowing
lay	laid	laid	laying
lead	led	led	leading
leave	left	left	leaving
let	let	let	letting
lie	lay	lain	lying
lose	lost	lost	losing
make	made	made	making
mean	meant	meant	meaning
meet	met	met	meeting
pay	paid	paid	paying
quit	quit	quit	quitting
rise	rose	risen	rising
run	ran	run	running
see	saw	seen	seeing
swim	swam	swum	swimming
write	wrote	written	writing

# Troublesome Verbs in the Past Tense

## can/could, will/would

Use could as the past tense of can.

### EXAMPLES:

1. Maria is extraordinary because she can remember what happened to her when she was three years old.
2. As a child of three, Maria was extraordinary because she could remember what had happened to her in the womb.

Use would as the past tense of will.

### EXAMPLES:

1. Robert says that he *will* arrive with his camera in ten minutes.
2. Robert said that he *would* arrive with his camera in ten minutes.

### PRACTICE ONE

Fill in either present tense can or past tense could.

1. Tom is so talented that he \_\_\_\_\_ play most music on the piano by ear.
2. Bill was so weird that he \_\_\_\_\_ play most music on the piano with his ear.
3. The economy \_\_\_\_\_ improve only when we reduce the deficit.
4. The government \_\_\_\_\_ improve only when most politicians learn to spell the word deficit.
5. Nobody \_\_\_\_\_ find the manager yesterday after the robbery.
6. Nobody \_\_\_\_\_ ever find the guard during a robbery, either.
7. The child asked if he \_\_\_\_\_ go to the bathroom, but the evil teacher said "No."
8. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_ go home.
9. If I \_\_\_\_\_, I would, but I can't, so I won't.
10. The weak \_\_\_\_\_ never seem to crush a beer can.

## PRACTICE TWO

Fill in either present tense will or past tense would.

1. He hoped that he \_\_\_\_\_ succeed in his new career.
2. His wife and three kids thought that he \_\_\_\_\_ succeed in his new career.
3. His parents hope he \_\_\_\_\_ succeed in his new career and move out of their house.
4. The customer stood by the door, but she \_\_\_\_\_ not leave.
5. Robert thinks that he \_\_\_\_\_ enroll in a swimming course next semester.
6. As Robert sank, he thought that taking the swimming lessons earlier in life \_\_\_\_\_ have been beneficial.
7. If you build it, he \_\_\_\_\_ come.
8. If you had built it, he \_\_\_\_\_ have come.
9. If I knew you were coming, I \_\_\_\_\_ have baked a cake.
10. We wished he \_\_\_\_\_ leave.

## ANSWER KEY

### **PRACTICE ONE (can/could)**

1. can
2. could
3. can
4. can
5. could
6. could
7. could
8. could
9. could
10. can

### **PRACTICE TWO (will/would)**

1. would
2. would
3. will
4. would
5. will
6. would
7. will
8. would
9. would
10. would