

# THE PAST AND PERFECT TENSES: EXERCISES

## 1) THE PAST SIMPLE VS. THE PAST PROGRESSIVE.

- 1.- I lit the fire at 6.00 and it (burn) brightly when Tom came in at 7.00.
- 2.- I (make) a cake when the light went out. I had to finish it in the dark.
- 3.- I didn't want to meet Paul so when he entered the room I (leave)
- 4.- He (watch) TV when the phone rang. He (turn) down the sound and (go) to answer it.
- 5.- He always (wear) a raincoat and (carry) his umbrella when he walked to the office.
- 6.- He (play) the guitar outside her house when someone opened the window and (throw) out a bucket of water.
- 7.- I just (open) the letter when the wind (blow) it out of my hand.
- 8.-The burglar (open) the safe when he (hear) foot-steps. He immediately (put) out his torch and (crawl) under the bed.
- 9.- When I (look) for my passport I (find) this old photograph.
- 10.- He (clean) his gun when it accidentally (go) off and (kill) him.
- 11.- As I (cross) the road I (step) on a banana skin and (fall) heavily.
- 12.- I (call) Paul at 7.00 but it wasn't necessary because he already (get) up.
- 13.- While the guests (dance) thieves (break) into the house and (steal) a lot of fur coats.
- 14.- The murderer (carry) the corpse down the stairs when he (hear) a knock on the door.
- 15.- While I (cook) breakfast he (read) the newspaper.

## 2) THE PAST SIMPLE: irregular verbs (affirmative).

- leave buy catch think sell say cost lose put keep*
- 1.- In the 14th century millions of people in England ..... the plague and died.
  - 2.- General Custer ..... the battle of Little Big Horn: he and all his men died.
  - 3.- In 1803 the United States ..... Louisiana from Napoleon for 15 million dollars.
  - 4.- Young George Washington .....: 'I cannot tell a lie'.
  - 5.- Many Indians ..... the first white men in America were gods.
  - 6.- Columbus ..... Spain in August 1492 and discovered America on October 12th.
  - 7.- Russia ..... Alaska to the United States in 1867.
  - 8.- This deal ..... the American Government \$7,200,000.
  - 9.- For centuries the Incas ..... llamas and domestic animals.
  - 10.-In the old days a person ..... his or her seal on important letters.

## 3) THE PAST SIMPLE: irregular verbs (affirmative and interrogative)

- stand shake grow meet fall fly hold write lead speak*  
(2) win run
- 1.- Which plane ..... Lindbergh ..... across the Atlantic in 1927? 'The Spirit of St Louis'.
  - 2.- How many plays ..... Shakespeare .....? About 36.
  - 3.- ..... Napoleon ..... the French Army or the Russian army? The French Army.
  - 4.- The lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the wonders of the ancient world ..... at the mouth of the city's harbour.
  - 5.- Thousands of years ago, farmers ..... crops on what is now the Sahara desert.
  - 6.- ..... the Romans ..... Greek fluently? I'm not sure. Some of them ..... Greek to their slaves.
  - 7.- The explorers Stanley and Livingstone ..... hands when they ..... in the African jungle in 1871.
  - 8.- A pilot once ..... 6,000 metres from a plane without a parachute -and survived.
  - 9.- The ancient Britons ..... religious ceremonies at Stonehenge, a circle of huge stones.
  - 10.- When the Greeks ..... the battle of Marathon in 490 BC, a messenger ..... all the way back to Athens with the news.

## 4) THE PAST SIMPLE: irregular verbs (aff., int. and neg.): *eat see (2) be (2) ring sing speak drink come take go*

- Hello, Jane ..... you ..... to the party for the choir last night? -Yes. I did. I ..... Tom with me. -What ..... it like? -Oh, very quiet indeed. We ..... anything except coffee and orange juice. And we ..... any songs, even though it was a choir party! -How strange! ..... you ..... Nigel there? -Yes, I ..... him and I waved to him but I ..... to him. -Why not? -Well, he and his girl friend ..... too far away and just then the front door bell ..... and a policeman ..... in. The people next door said we were making too much noise!

## 5) THE PAST SIMPLE: irregular verbs (affirmative):

- shine stand give get meet sit dig forget begin read*
- 1.- When we were leaving the house, it suddenly ..... to rain.
  - 2.- Johnny ..... his homework, so he had to go back home to get it.
  - 3.- The Smiths ..... a big hole at the end of the garden and buried the rubbish in it.
  - 4.- I ..... a lot of books at university, but now I read very little.
  - 5.- Diana ..... a new bicycle for her last birthday.
  - 6.- Clive ..... in a queue at the corner of the street with his hands in his pockets for half an hour waiting for a bus.
  - 7.- Last Saturday the sun ..... all day, for a change.
  - 8.- He ..... his first wife on a flight to New

York, and they were married only two days later.  
 9.- Sally ..... her mother a lovely Colombian shawl for Christmas.  
 10.- Instead of going out, they ..... at home by the fire all evening watching TV.

### 6) THE PAST SIMPLE: irregular verbs (affirmative)

*do choose swim go (2) hold know wake find understand*

- 1.- The children ..... a cash register in the stream near out house, so I phoned the police and told them about it.
- 2.- Brian Hoare ..... many different jobs in his short life: he was a barman, a racing driver, a teacher and many other things.
- 3.- We all ..... to the pictures last night, but the film was awful.
- 4.- The children ..... their breath while they ..... under water.
- 5.- I ..... Jim at seven this morning, but he ..... back to sleep again, as usual.
- 6.- Only three of the boys ..... the question, and only one of them ..... the right answer to it.
- 7.- He ..... the length of the pool in 24 seconds.
- 8.- The director ..... the best-looking man from among the candidates to be her assistant.

### 7) THE PRESENT PERFECT AND THE SIMPLE PAST

- 1.- How long you (live) in England? For about eleven years now.
- 2.- Our Christmas holidays (finish) last week.
- 3.- I (not see) Tom this week, but I (meet) him a couple of times last week.
- 4.- Unemployment (go) down in Spain last year.
- 5.- You (not bring) your sister with you?
- 6.- He (not work) a single day since he finished his studies.
- 7.- Tom (study) medicine from 1981 to 1985.
- 8.- This year we (not have) holidays, but two years ago we (go) to Morocco.
- 9.- I never (understand) why she gets angry so often.
- 10.- Sorry, I (forget) your book again. I (leave) it at the office this morning.
- 11.- He (smoke) forty cigarettes a day for some years, but last month the doctor (tell) him to stop and he (not smoke) a single cigarette since then.
- 12.- I (buy) a new house last year, but I (not sell) my old house yet, so at the moment I have two houses.
- 13.- 'This is my house.' 'How long you (live) here?' 'I (live) here since 1970.'
- 14.- He (live) in London for two years and then he (go) to Edinburgh.
- 15.- Tom (meet) Paul at lunch time and (say), 'I (not see) you at the bus stop this morning. You (miss) the bus?'
- 16.- Ann (go) to Canada six months ago. She (works) in Canada for a while and then (go) to the United States.
- 17.- 'Mary (be) in Japan for two years. She is working there and likes it very much.' 'How she (go)?' 'She (go) by air.'
- 18.- I (not see) him for three weeks. I wonder where

- he is.
- 19.- Bill usually has breakfast at 8.00. Yesterday at 8.30 Peter (meet) Bill and (offer) him an apple. 'No, thanks', (say) Bill. 'I just (have) breakfast.'
  - 20.- I can't go out because I (not finish) my work.
  - 21.- Peter (try) to come in quietly but his mother (hear) him and (call) out, 'Where you (be)? Your supper (be) in the oven for an hour.'
  - 22.- 'You (be) to the theatre lately?' 'Yes, I (go) to Othello last week.' 'You (like) it?' 'Yes, but I (not see) very well. I (be) right at the back.'
  - 23.- Shakespeare (write) a lot of plays.
  - 24.- 'You (be) to Cambridge?' 'Yes, I (be) there last month.' 'How you (get) there?' 'My brother (take) me in his car.'
  - 25.- My brother (write) several plays. He just (finish) his second comedy.
  - 26.- How long you (be) in your present job?' 'I (be) there for six months.' 'And what you (do) before that?' 'Before that I (work) for Jones & Co.' 'How long you (work) for Jones & Co.? 'I (work) for them for two years.' 'You (like) working for them?' 'No, I (not like) it at all.' 'Then why you (stay) so long?'
  - 27.- 'We usually go out on Saturday evenings, but last Saturday we (stay) in and (play) cards.' 'What you (play)?' 'We (play) poker. I (lose) fifty pence.'
  - 28.- 'When you (begin) school?' 'I (begin) school when I (be) five. I (go) to a primary school first. I (stay) there for eight years and then I (go) to a secondary school.'
  - 29.- 'When I (be) seventeen I (start) my university course.' 'When you (get) your degree?' 'Oh, I (not get) my degree yet; I'm still at the university. I only (be) there for two years.'

### 8) THE PRESENT PERFECT WITH FOR AND SINCE.

Rephrase the following sentences, using the present perfect tense with *for* or *since*.

e.g.

*I last read a newspaper in June. =  
 I haven't read a newspaper since June*

*It is two years since I saw Tom. =  
 I haven't seen Tom for two years.*

- 1.- It's two years since I had a puncture.
- 2.- It's two months since he earned any money.
- 3.- He last shaved the day before yesterday.
- 4.- I last drank champagne at my brother's wedding.
- 5.- It's two years since I was last in Rome.
- 6.- I saw Tom last on his wedding day.
- 7.- I last ate raw fish when I was in Japan.
- 8.- It's years since Mary last spoke French.
- 9.- It's ten weeks since I last had a good night's sleep.
- 10.- He last paid taxes in 1960.
- 11.- I last ate meat five years ago (Omit *ago*.)
- 12.- It's three months since the windows were cleaned.
- 13.- It's years since I took any photographs.
- 14.- I last watched TV on New Year's Day.
- 15.- It's three months since he wrote to me.
- 16.- I was last paid six months ago.
- 17.- The last time I was abroad was in the summer of 1978.
- 18.- It's ten years since that house was lived in.