

Exercises for Tutorial 7. Special Tense Verbs

Principle I: Even if the sentence does not say when, the simple past tense shows that an action (or a state of being or having) began and ended at a single, specific time in the past.

Principle II: The present perfect shows that an action began at a specific time in the past and continues in the present. The present perfect is sometimes called the “past to present” verb tense.

Exercise 1

Instructions: Using Principles I and II, choose the correct tense: simple past or present perfect. If you are uncertain about the past participle of a verb, look up the verb in the dictionary. The first sentence has been done for you. *Type or write in the answer spaces.*

1. In 2010, some students (PROTEST) protested at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, but since that time, many others (demonstrate) have demonstrated at other meetings held in cities all over the world.
(Some students began and finished protesting at the Seattle meeting in the past. But other students are still demonstrating in the present, at meetings held in other cities.)
2. Mario Vargas Llosa (WRITE) _____ about politics in Peru during the 1980s, but Gabriel Garcia Marquez (WRITE) _____ about politics in Colombia for a much longer time, beginning in the 1970s).
3. Since kindergarten, I (TAKE) _____ piano lessons.
4. During the 1980s, Congress (ATTEMPT) _____ to balance the budget.
5. Before the police arrested him on Thursday, Gilberto, a stockbroker, (DESTROY) _____ all of the evidence of illegal trading.
6. Every year since she was sixteen, the Jones family of Beverly Hills (GIVE) _____ a new car to their daughter Belinda for her birthday.

Principle III: The present perfect can also show that an action began at an unspecified time in the past.

Exercise 2

Instructions: Using Principles I, II and III, choose either the simple past or the present perfect to complete the sentence. The first sentence has been done for you. *Type or write in the answer spaces.*

1. The San Francisco Giants almost (WIN) won the World Series in 2011.
2. Victor Chan (VISIT) _____ China several times.
3. Ricky (CRY) _____ a little when he saw his father eat the last of the pizza.
4. Since the invention of duct tape, American women (DISCOVER) _____ hundreds of ways to fix everyday objects.
5. Outsourcing, or the use of overseas labor by American companies, (CREATE) _____ a huge controversy among various political groups.
6. During the past several years, Oleg (DRIVE) _____ his 1983 Volvo 140,000 miles.
7. Michele (BELIEVE) _____ in Santa Claus until she was ten.
8. The author Jane Jacobs (WRITE) _____ several great books on city planning, and Jermaine (READ) _____ them all.

Exercise 3

Instructions: Using Principles I, II and III, change any incorrect verbs to simple past or present perfect. The first two sentences have been done for you. *Type, write, or copy-paste the passage into the answer box. Then underline the incorrect verbs; make any corrections in **bold**.*

As she grew up in the 1880s, Laura Ingalls Wilder has lived **lived** with her family first in a log cabin built deep in a Wisconsin forest and then in a sod hut carved out of a hill, which was part of the Nebraska prairie. In the 1950s she began to publish books about her childhood, and since that time, Wilder's books inspired **have inspired** many young readers, particularly imaginative girls. For many years, these readers learned a great deal about social history from Wilder's books. For example, Wilder described the way that her mother made soap, preserved fruits, and salted and dried meat. She also wrote about the evenings by the fire when her father played the fiddle, and her mother darned or knitted socks. Turning the pages of Wilder's books, generations of readers experienced many emotions, too. In one book, Wilder wrote about the bears and wolves that roamed outside the family dwelling, and in another book, she described the scarlet fever epidemic that caused her older sister, Mary, to become blind. While there was no medicine to prevent Mary's blindness, doctors now have antibiotics to treat scarlet fever. Since Wilder was a little girl, everything certainly changed.

Principle IV: The past perfect shows that an action (or a state of being or having) took place before the past tense of the sentence. The past perfect is sometimes called the “past before the past” verb tense.

Exercise 4

Instructions: Using Principles I and IV, write the verb in the correct tense: simple past or past perfect. If you are uncertain about the past participle of a verb, look up the verb in the dictionary. The first sentence has been done for you. *Fill in the blanks.*

1. By the mid-eighteenth century, English (BECOME) had become one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.
2. The Golden State Warriors (LOST) _____ seven games in a row, but they (WIN) _____ last night.
3. Donny (EAT) _____ seven Big Macs and then (ATTEMPT) _____ to roller skate down the freeway.
4. Venus (CRY) _____ about the dent in her new car because she (DRIVE) _____ it only a few times.
5. The Puritans (ATTEMPT) _____ to escape religious persecution in several countries but finally (ARRIVE) _____ in the New World.
6. We (LAUGH) _____ at all the gross jokes in The Hangover Part III even though we (SEE) _____ the movie many times.
7. Most of the senior officers (SOLD) _____ all their stock by the time it suddenly (BECOME) _____ worthless.
8. Uncle Walter (WORK) _____ as a bellman for forty years until the hotel finally (PROMOTE) _____ him to be a doorman.

Exercise 5

Instructions: Read the following paragraph carefully, and using Principles I and IV, correct any verbs that are written in the wrong tense. If you are uncertain about the past participle of a verb, look up the verb in the dictionary. The first sentence has been done for you. *Type, write, or copy-paste the passage into the answer box. Then underline the incorrect verbs; make any corrections in bold.*

Before he graduated from high school, Juan wrecked **had wrecked** two new cars. He crashed the first car after his girlfriend Valentina ended their relationship because she fell in love with a handsome football player. Juan drove wildly through several stop signs and traffic lights until he realized that he rear-ended a parked police car. No one was hurt, and Juan managed to escape without losing his license. His second crash was even more dramatic than the first. Juan was happy with his second girlfriend, Mary Kate, until one day he saw her walking across campus with the same football player who stole Juan's first girlfriend. This time, with a smile on his face, Juan climbed into his new Audi and smashed into the football player's Hummer.