



GRAMMAR

Elementary

Simple Past Tense

Explanation

1. The simple past tense is expressed with the past form of the verb and nothing else.

My grandfather died last year.
My grandfather was died last year.
My grandfather has died last year. (Correct)
(Incorrect)
(Incorrect)

2. The simple past tense refers to

- a. action which occurred at a specific time in the past
- b. completed action
- c. past status

Examples

Specific past action

I ate lunch at noon today.
He drove to work yesterday.
Completed action

She finally mailed the letter.
Jan finished her report on time.
Past status

John was still single in 1995.
Jane was a movie star.

Note the usage of the past tense in the following story.

Yesterday Mrs. Hubbard had a very rough day. In the morning, she went to the kitchen and looked in the cupboard for some food for her dog, but the cupboard was empty. Her poor dog stared up at her with its hungry eyes, and she knew she had to do something quickly. She hurried to the grocery store to buy some dog food, but unfortunately the store was out of her dog's favorite brand, so she had to catch a bus downtown. After buying the food, she waited for a half hour in the rain to get a taxi. When she finally got home, her dog was sound asleep on the living room sofa.
Common problems with the past tense

1. Using the present tense when the past tense is required.

Last week, Tonya fix her neighbor's car.
Last week, Tonya fixed her neighbor's car. (Incorrect)
(Correct)



2. Using "was" with verbs in the past tense.

It was happened one night in September.

It happened one night in September. (Incorrect)
(Correct)

Exercises

Change the verbs in the following sentence into past tense.

1. Yesterday, I go to the restaurant with a client.
2. We drive around the parking lot for 20 minutes in order to find a parking space.
3. When we arrive at the restaurant, the place is full.
4. The waitress asks us if we have reservations.
5. I say, "No, my secretary forgets to make them."
6. The waitress tells us to come back in two hours.
7. My client and I slowly walk back to the car.
8. Then we see a small grocery store.
9. We stop in the grocery store and buy some sandwiches.
10. That is better than waiting for two hours.

Correct the mistakes in the following sentences:

1. Last night, Samantha have pizza for supper.
2. My pet lizard was died last month.
3. Yesterday I spend two hours cleaning my living room.
4. This morning before coming to class, Jack eats two bowls of cereal.
5. What was happened to your leg?

Speaking Situations: Talking about Past Actions

Conversation Practice

1. Tell your partner or classmates what you did yesterday. Remember to use past tense.



Example,

Yesterday, I went to the mall.
I bought some shorts and a baseball cap.

I spent almost \$20.

2. Ask your partner what he/she did last weekend. Respond with related questions.

For example,

What did you last Saturday?
I stayed home and cleaned my room.
Did you do anything fun?
Not really.

3. Tell about a childhood experience.

One day, when I was about 7 years old, there was a knock on our door.
When I opened the door, I saw that nobody was there.
I felt something was wrong, so I called my mother. . .

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Intermediate

RELATIVE CLAUSES

We use relative clauses to give additional information about something without starting another sentence. By combining sentences with a relative clause, your text becomes more fluent and you can avoid repeating certain words.

Imagine, a girl is talking to Tom. You want to know who she is and ask a friend whether he knows her. You could say:

A girl is talking to Tom. Do you know the girl?

That sounds rather complicated, doesn't it? It would be easier with a relative clause: you put both pieces of information into one sentence. Start with the most important thing – you want to know who the girl is.

Do you know the girl ...

As your friend cannot know which girl you are talking about, you need to put in the additional information – the girl is talking to Tom. Use „the girl“ only in the first part of the sentence, in the second part replace it with the relative pronoun (for people, use the relative pronoun „who“). So the final sentence is:

Do you know the girl who is talking to Tom?



Relative Pronouns

- who: subject or object pronoun for people

I told you about the woman who lives next door.

- which: subject or object pronoun for animals and things

Do you see the cat which is lying on the roof?

- which: referring to a whole sentence

He couldn't read which surprised me.

- whose: possession for people animals and things

Do you know the boy whose mother is a nurse?

- whom: object pronoun for people, especially in non-defining relative clauses (in defining relative clauses we colloquially prefer who)

I was invited by the professor whom I met at the conference.

- that: subject or object pronoun for people, animals and things in defining relative clauses (who or which are also possible)

I don't like the table that stands in the kitchen.

Subject Pronoun or Object Pronoun?

Subject and object pronouns cannot be distinguished by their forms - who, which, that are used for subject and object pronouns. You can, however, distinguish them as follows:

If the relative pronoun is followed by a verb, the relative pronoun is a subject pronoun. Subject pronouns must always be used.

the apple which is lying on the table

If the relative pronoun is not followed by a verb (but by a noun or pronoun), the relative pronoun is an object pronoun. Object pronouns can be dropped in defining relative clauses, which are then called Contact Clauses.

the apple (which) George lay on the table

Relative Adverbs

A relative adverb can be used instead of a relative pronoun plus preposition. This often makes the sentence easier to understand.

This is the shop in which I bought my bike.
→ This is the shop where I bought my bike.



Defining Relative Clauses

Defining relative clauses (also called identifying relative clauses or restrictive relative clauses) give detailed information defining a general term or expression. Defining relative clauses are not put in commas.

Imagine, Tom is in a room with five girls. One girl is talking to Tom and you ask somebody whether he knows this girl. Here the relative clause defines which of the five girls you mean.

Do you know the girl who is talking to Tom?

Defining relative clauses are often used in definitions.

A seaman is someone who works on a ship.

Object pronouns in defining relative clauses can be dropped. (Sentences with a relative clause without the relative pronoun are called Contact Clauses.)

The boy (who/whom) we met yesterday is very nice.

Non-Defining Relative Clauses

Non-defining relative clauses (also called non-identifying relative clauses or non-restrictive relative clauses) give additional information on something, but do not define it. Non-defining relative clauses are put in commas.

Imagine, Tom is in a room with only one girl. The two are talking to each other and you ask somebody whether he knows this girl. Here the relative clause is non-defining because in this situation it is obvious which girl you mean.

Do you know the girl, who is talking to Tom?

Note: In non-defining relative clauses, who/which may not be replaced with that.

Object pronouns in non-defining relative clauses must be used.

Jim, who/whom we met yesterday, is very nice.

How to Shorten Relative Clauses?

Relative clauses with who, which, that as subject pronoun can be replaced with a participle. This makes the sentence shorter and easier to understand.

I told you about the woman who lives next door. – I told you about the woman living next door.

Do you see the cat which is lying on the roof? – Do you see the cat lying on the roof?

Exercises:

1 Complete the sentences using a relative clause.

1. Catherine and Sue are two girls (like dancing) _____
2. My mobile phone is something (be very important to me) _____



3. Antony is a friend of mine (live in Boston) _____
4. West Side Story is a musical (be very famous) _____
5. An airport is a place (planes land) _____

2 Combine the sentences using relative clauses without relative pronouns (contact clauses).

1. We bought a car last week. The car is blue.
The car _____
2. The girl is a singer. We met her at the party.
The girl _____
3. The bananas are on the table. George bought them.
The bananas _____
4. We watched a film last night. It was really scary.
The film _____
5. I have to learn new words. They are very difficult.
The new words _____

3 Combine the sentences with relative clauses. (Decide whether to use commas or not.)

1. A monk is a man. The man has devoted his life to God.
A monk _____
2. I have one black cat. His name is Blacky.
I have _____
3. A herbivore is an animal. The animal feeds upon vegetation.
A herbivore _____
4. Carol plays the piano brilliantly. She is only 9 years old.
Carol _____
5. Sydney is the largest Australian city. It is not the capital of Australia.
Sydney _____

4 Combine the sentences with contact clauses.

1. We ordered a book. It was very expensive.

2. You are sitting on a bench. The paint on the bench is still wet.

3. The photographer could not develop the pictures. I had taken them in Australia.

4. One of the bins smells awful. You haven't emptied the bin for 3 weeks.

5. They are singing a song. I don't know the song.

5 Combine the sentences with relative clauses or contact clauses. Use contact clauses where possible. (Decide whether to use commas or not.)

1. The city seems to be abandoned. It is usually crowded with people.

2. You made an offer. We cannot accept it.
We _____



3. A midwife is a woman. She assists other women in childbirth.
A woman _____
4. Three youngsters were arrested by the police. They had committed criminal offences.
The police _____
5. The World Wide Web has become an essential part of our lives. It was invented by Tim Berners-Lee.
Tim Berners-Lee _____

Source: <http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/relative-clauses>

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Advanced

Various Questions I

1. As ____, he forgot to bring his notebook to school.
 - a. usual
 - b. usually
2. He speaks neither English __ French.
 - a. or
 - b. nor
3. ____ do you call that in English?
 - a. How
 - b. What
4. The teacher explained ____
 - a. the lesson to the student.
 - b. the student the lesson.
5. He was charged ____ murder.
 - a. with
 - b. for
6. The storm prevented ____ on a picnic.
 - a. us to go
 - b. us from going
7. The students have no difficulty ____ the exercise.
 - a. in doing
 - b. to do
8. The committee comprises ____ with widely different views.
 - a. men
 - b. of men



9. A man's concept of liberty is different from ____.
- a. a woman
 - b. a woman's
10. He objects ____ treated like a child.
- a. to be
 - b. to being
11. I ____ here for three years.
- a. am teaching
 - b. have been teaching
12. a. Can you give me ____ details, please?
- a. further
 - b. farther
13. Hijacking is considered a ____ serious crime than kidnapping.
- a. more
 - b. most
14. Does he ____ his mother or father?
- a. resemble to
 - b. resemble
15. The boy ____ father is a famous scientist has won the prize.
- a. whose
 - b. who's
16. ____ is a great virtue.
- a. The wisdom
 - b. Wisdom
17. He typed ____
- a. the report carefully.
 - b. carefully the report
18. ____ he didn't like her, he invited her out.
- a. However
 - b. Although
19. We ____ the pictures on the wall.
- a. hung
 - b. hanged

Source: <http://a4esl.org/q/h/vm/varques01.html>

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