ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Past Tenses MCQ Test With Answers + PDF Exercise 1

English Grammar Tests · 20 questions · Online test and questions PDF: https://englishtestsonline.com/past-tenses-test-1/

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Explanations

1. She never _____ to eat soup.
✔ **E) liked**
Never already makes the sentence negative, so the verb must be positive. We use the past simple **liked** for a habit in the past. Not **didn't like**, because **never didn't** is a double negative.

2. “I’ll drink tea from this tin mug.”

“Where _____ you _____ it?”
✔ **A) did / find**
Finding the mug happened in the past, so the question uses the past simple: **did** + base form. **Where did you find it?** Not **did / found**: after **did**, the verb stays in the base form.

3. It was dark and cold. At one moment he thought that he _____ his way.
✔ **C) had lost**
Losing his way happened before the moment he **thought**, so we use the past perfect **had lost**. Not **was lost**: we can say **he was lost**, but not **he was lost his way**.

4. I didn’t know anyone in the city where I _____ to get.
✔ **B) was trying**
Didn't know tells us the sentence is about the past. The past continuous **was trying** shows an action in progress at that time: I was still trying to get to the city. Not **have tried**, because the present perfect doesn't fit a past story.

5. - Why _____ you go to the plant?

- I _____ no time.
✔ **E) didn’t / had**
The question is in the past simple negative: **Why didn't you go…?** The answer uses **had no time**, because **no** already makes it negative. Not **hadn't no time**, which is a double negative.

6. A policeman _____ me crossing the street yesterday.
✔ **B) saw**
Yesterday is a finished past time, so we use the past simple **saw**. Not **has seen**: the present perfect is not used with **yesterday**.

7. Arthur _____ all his exams by 5 o’clock yesterday.
✔ **E) had passed**
By 5 o'clock yesterday marks a point in the past. The action was finished before that point, so we use the past perfect **had passed**. Not **was passing**: the past continuous shows an unfinished action, but **by** + a time shows that something was already completed.

8. He evidently _____ his shoes for a very long time. They were worn-out.
✔ **C) had been wearing**
The past perfect continuous **had been wearing** shows an action that went on for a long time before a past moment and explains a past result (**They were worn-out**). Not **had been worn**, which is passive: he did the wearing.

9. So, the invisible man _____ into the shop and _____ down.
✔ **C) came / walked**
This is a story about the past, so both actions use the past simple: **came** and **walked**. Both verbs in the sequence should be in the same tense.

10. - We were at the theatre 2 days ago. The performance was excellent.

- Who _____ the leading part?
✔ **C) played**
The performance was two days ago, so we use the past simple. When **who** is the subject, we don't use **did**: **Who played the leading part?** Not **did play**, which is only used for emphasis.

11. One day the boys found a man in the forest. He _____.
✔ **D) was dying**
The past continuous **was dying** describes what was happening at the moment the boys found him. Not **had died**: then he would already be dead before they found him.

12. His father _____ a doctor and he _____ to make his son a doctor, too.
✔ **D) was / wanted**
Both parts are about the past, so we use the past simple: **was** (with **his father**, singular) and **wanted**. Not **were**, because **father** is singular.

13. During his school years Cronin _____ great interest in literature.
✔ **B) took**
During his school years is a finished period in the past, so we use the past simple **took**. **Take an interest in** means to become interested in something.

14. He _____ the box yesterday, because he had to do it.
✔ **E) opened**
Yesterday shows a finished past time, so we use the past simple **opened**. Not **have opened**, because the present perfect is not used with **yesterday**.

15. While the gentlemen _____ the recent events, the ladies _____ about the weather.
✔ **D) were discussing / were talking**
While links two actions happening at the same time in the past, so both use the past continuous: **were discussing** and **were talking**. **Gentlemen** and **ladies** are plural, so we need **were**.

16. She _____ you a letter three weeks ago.
✔ **C) sent**
Three weeks ago is a finished past time, so we use the past simple **sent**. Not **has sent**, because **ago** is not used with the present perfect.

17. When he _____ home I _____ him the book.
✔ **D) came / showed**
Both actions happened in the past, one after the other, so both use the past simple: **came** and **showed**. Not **came / shall show**: we can't mix a past action with a future one here.

18. They _____ breakfast at 7 and _____ home at eight.
✔ **B) had / left**
Two finished actions in the past, one after another, so both use the past simple: **had breakfast** and **left**. Not **had / had left**: leaving happened after breakfast, not before it.

19. Long ago people _____ little about those minerals.
✔ **D) knew**
Long ago shows the past, so we use the past simple. **Know** is irregular: its past form is **knew**, not **knowed**.

20. The dentist _____ two of his teeth. One of them _____ quite good.
✔ **C) pulled out / was**
The story is in the past, so we use **pulled out** (past simple). **One of them** is singular, so the verb is **was**. Not **were**, because the subject is **one**, not **teeth**.

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