ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Past Tenses MCQ Test With Answers + PDF Exercise 3

English Grammar Tests · 17 questions · Online test and questions PDF: https://englishtestsonline.com/past-tenses-test-6/

1	C	2	A	3	C	4	D	5	A	6	E	7	B	8	C	9	D	10	D
11	C	12	C	13	E	14	B	15	B	16	C	17	D						

Explanations

1. I _____ to do it but I _____ no time. I was very busy.
✔ **C) wanted / had**
Both actions are finished and in the past, so we use the past simple: **wanted** and **had**. Not **had have**: after **I** we just say **had**.

2. - What luck! I haven't seen you for ages.

- When _____ we _____ last time?
✔ **A) did / meet**
Last time points to a finished time in the past, so we use the past simple question: **When did we meet?** After **did**, use the base form **meet**, not **met**.

3. In the summer of 1868, Melville Bell _____ on a lecture tour in the USA and Canada.
✔ **C) went**
In the summer of 1868 is a finished time in the past, so we use the past simple: **went**. Not **has gone**: the present perfect is not used with a past date.

4. He _____ his work by the time you came.
✔ **D) had finished**
By the time you came shows an action completed before another past action, so we use the past perfect: **had finished**. Not **finished**: with **by the time**, the earlier, completed action takes the past perfect.

5. Why _____ he go to Great Britain last month?
✔ **A) did**
Last month is finished past time, and the main verb **go** is in the base form, so we need the past simple helper **did**: **Why did he go...?**

6. Did you _____ or _____ the potatoes?
✔ **E) mince / peel**
After **did** in a question, both verbs take the base form: **Did you mince or peel the potatoes?** Not **minced** or **peeled**.

7. When she _____, they _____ and he left the house.
✔ **B) came / quarreled**
The actions happen one after another in the past, so we use the past simple for each: **came**, **quarreled**, **left**. Not **had came**: after **had**, we need the past participle **come**, not **came**.

8. - Who had left the room by the time I came yesterday?
✔ **C) Tom had**
A short answer repeats the helping verb of the question. The question uses **had left**, so the answer is **Tom had**. Not **Tom did**: the question doesn't use **did**.

9. Neither your parents nor I _____ very glad of the fact that you failed your Math exam.
✔ **D) was**
With **neither ... nor**, the verb agrees with the subject closest to it, here **I**. The fact is in the past (**you failed**), so we say **I was**. Not **were**: it agrees with **parents**, which is not the nearest subject.

10. What _____ you _____ at 5 p.m. yesterday?
✔ **D) were / doing**
At 5 p.m. yesterday is a moment in the past, and we ask about an action in progress at that moment. So we use the past continuous: **What were you doing?**

11. Who _____ to see me last week?
✔ **C) came**
Who is the subject here, so we don't use **did**. **Last week** is finished past time, so the past simple **came** is correct.

12. They didn't believe him and _____ to laugh.
✔ **C) began**
The story is in the past (**didn't believe**), and the next action follows it, so we use the past simple: **began**.

13. The children didn't _____ to school because it _____ Sunday.
✔ **E) go / was**
After **didn't**, use the base form **go**. **It** takes the singular **was**: **it was Sunday**. Not **went**: after **didn't**, we never use the past form.

14. The train _____ at 8.30 p.m. today, but as a rule it _____ at 8.00 p.m. sharp.
✔ **B) left / starts**
At 8.30 p.m. today is a finished moment, so we use the past simple: **left**. **As a rule** describes a regular habit, so we use the present simple: **starts**. Not **has left**: the present perfect isn't used with an exact past time.

15. The moon _____ and it _____ surprisingly light at night yesterday.
✔ **B) rose / was**
Yesterday is finished past time, so we use the past simple for both verbs: **rose** and **was**. Not **has risen**: the present perfect is not used with **yesterday**.

16. Who _____ him yesterday?
✔ **C) saw**
Who is the subject of the question, so we don't use **did**: **Who saw him yesterday?** Not **did see**, and not the present perfect, because of **yesterday**.

17. He _____ nobody about his secret that day.
✔ **D) told**
That day is in the past, so we use the past simple **told**. **Nobody** is already negative, so **didn't tell nobody** would be a double negative, which is wrong.