

## On the Cards: Irregular verbs in the past

**Objective:** To practise irregular past forms

**Skills:** Speaking, listening, writing

**Method:** Individual and group work

**Level:** Elementary (for adapted activities: elementary to intermediate)

**Time:** 20 - 40 minutes

**Materials and equipment:** 1 set of cards per group  
1 checklist per supervisor  
1 dice and board per group

### Aims

*All activities are meant to practise irregular past forms in an entertaining way. Young learners find 'use the correct past form of the verbs in brackets' type of exercises very monotonous after a while. These activities may help to prove to them that grammar can be fun.*

### Activity 1: Odd Man Out Card Game

#### Materials needed:

- A set of cards containing pairs of the infinitive and past tense form of irregular verbs plus an additional card - the Odd Man Out. There should be 33 cards in each set (16 pairs and the extra card).
1. Organize students into groups of four. The dealer (any student) deals out 5 cards for each player and puts the remaining cards face down in a pile in the center of the table.
  2. Students look at their cards and if they already have any pairs (that is the infinitive and the past tense form of a certain verb), they put them down on the table in front of them.
  3. If there are no pairs or when students have finished putting down the pairs that they have found, they can then start taking cards from the stack placed in the middle of the table.
  4. If new pairs are found, these should also be put down on the table in front of the respective student.
  5. When all of the cards from the pile have been picked up, the students then start drawing cards in the following way: the first student who did not have the chance to pick up a card when the pile in the center ran out, draws one card from the remaining cards of the student to their left.
  6. The game continues in this way until all but one of the pairs has been put down on the table. At this point there will be two students left, one with a verb and the Odd Man Out and another student with the matching verb card.
  7. The student who is left with the Odd Man Out card at the end of the game can be given an extra question on the past form of an irregular verb to enable them to rid themselves of this card.
  8. The activity ends with the students writing sentences of their own with the past tense forms of the verbs that they paired.

**Variant:** Try making cards using antonyms or phrasal verbs + explanation for more advanced students.

### Cards

GO	WENT	COME	CAME	EAT	ATE	DRINK	DRANK
SPEAK	SPOKE	BUY	BOUGHT	SIT	SAT	BRING	BROUGHT
WRITE	WROTE	TAKE	TOOK	TELL	TOLD	SEE	SAW
GIVE	GAVE	RUN	RAN	SLEEP	SLEPT	READ	READ



ODD MAN OUT

### Activity 2: Board Game

#### Materials needed:

- A board game with the infinitive forms of irregular verbs in selected squares, a dice for each group of four students and enough counters (or objects that could be used as counters) for each student.

1. Students choose their counters and then roll the dice to determine who will start - the student who throws the highest number can go first.
2. Whenever a student lands on a square with a verb, they must then give the correct past form of that verb. If they are unable to do so then they must move backwards three squares.
3. The winner is the student to land on FINISH first.

4. After the game each student has to make up sentences of their own with the past forms of the verbs in the squares that they landed during the game.

**Variante:** To make the game more interesting by covering more verbs, each student can play with four counters and the winner must have all four counters land in the FINISH square.

A **supervisor** can be appointed to each team with the list of past forms of the verbs in the squares. The supervisor checks if the players have given the correct past forms.

### The Board

START	BREAK	SPEAK	SLEEP	GIVE	GO	WRITE
						TELL
PUT	DO	SAY	DRINK	CUT	SING	COME
BUY						
BRING	TAKE	EAT	STAND	RUN	DIG	SIT
						TEAR
FINISH	FORGET	MEET	FIND	SPEND	WEAR	SIT

### Activity Three: Past chain

This activity involves the whole class.

1. The teacher starts the game by giving both the infinitive and the past tense form of a verb.
2. The teacher then selects a student who has to give the infinitive and then the past tense form of another verb beginning with the letter that the verb given by the teacher ends with.
3. The next student has to continue the chain with a new verb and past tense form starting with the last letter of the previous past form.
4. If the student whose turn it is to continue the chain cannot think of a verb which has not been used so far then they drop out of the chain. A new chain is started, but this time verbs previously used can be repeated.
5. The game goes on until there is only one student left or until the teacher thinks that the activity has become monotonous.

**Example:** *sing – sang* ----- *go – went* ----- *take – took* ----- . . .