

Memories of the past by Simon Mumford

Age: Young adults / adults
Level: Pre-intermediate +
Time: 45 mins
Aim: To help students remember irregular past tense forms and to practise using them
Key skills: Reading, pronunciation
Materials: One copy of Worksheets 1 and 2 per student

Introduction

This lesson uses a rhyme as a mnemonic (a technique to remember specific information) for irregular past tense forms. It is assumed that students are familiar with the more common irregular past forms.

Procedure

- Write the following joke on the board.

When Mary got married, she got a new name and a dress (address).

Explain that words that sound the same can have different meanings (*a dress / address*). Point out that in English the same word form can have more than one meaning, e.g. *trip* has different meanings as a noun and a verb. Also, two different word forms can have exactly the same sound, e.g. *there* and *their*.

- Give out Worksheet 1. In Activity 1, students match words and definitions. Tell them to do the easier ones first, then guess the more difficult ones. Check the answers and give any necessary explanations.

Key: a. 4; b. 6; c. 12; d. 8; e. 11; f. 7; g. 1; h. 5; i. 3; j. 9; k. 10; l. 2

- Students do Activity 2 in pairs. Check students know the words and explain unknown words, e.g. *rise* (= go up). When they have finished, check the answers and emphasize that the past tense forms sound exactly the same as the words in Activity 1. Point out the silent *a* in past tense *read* and the silent *k* in *know* and *knew*. Quickly drill the past tense forms.

Key:

<i>fight – fought</i>	<i>fort</i>
<i>read – read</i>	<i>red</i>
<i>win – won</i>	<i>one</i>
<i>sit – sat</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<i>rise – rose</i>	<i>rose</i>
<i>know – knew</i>	<i>new</i>
<i>ride – rode</i>	<i>road</i>
<i>catch – caught</i>	<i>court</i>
<i>leave – left</i>	<i>left</i>
<i>throw – threw</i>	<i>through</i>
<i>feel – felt</i>	<i>felt</i>
<i>eat – ate</i>	<i>eight</i>

- Focus attention on Activity 3 (a rhyme = a short, informal poem). Remind students about the words/sounds with different meanings in Activity 2. Give them a few minutes to underline all the words that have the same form and/or sound as the irregular past tense forms. Then let them compare answers before you check them.

Key: *One; Sat; Rose; drove; red; fort; went; court; took; left; road; through; bought; eight; new; felt*

There are 16 irregular verbs: four actual past tenses (drove, went, took, bought), and the 12 words that have the same form/sound as the irregular past tense forms from Activity 2.

- Tell the students that the rhyme will help them remember irregular past tense forms. Ask the class to read aloud after you, line by line. Then tell the students to memorize the rhyme silently while you write it on the board. Take back Worksheet 1. Get the class to repeat the rhyme with you, reading from the board. Read several times, erasing two or three past tense forms at random after each reading, leaving the first letter only. When all the irregular forms have been erased, let them practise the rhyme in groups.

Clean the board and give out Worksheet 2. In Activity 4, students underline all the irregular past tense forms in the story. Tell them to ignore the blanks, and *caught*, which is an example for Activity 6. Check the answers.

Key: *won; rose; read; rode; bought; went; knew; took*

Note: *Ignore the blanks, was, and caught because it is an example for Activity 6.*

In Activities 5 and 6, students fill in the blanks in each text with words from the other text. In Activity 5, they put one of the words they underlined in Activity 4 into each blank to complete the original rhyme. Emphasize that they may need to make changes in spelling, e.g. *won* becomes *one*. The process is reversed in Activity 6: students fill in the blanks in the story with words from the rhyme, again making necessary spelling changes, e.g. *court* becomes *caught* in the story. Check answers for both activities and finally explain words in the story as necessary, e.g. *fountain, luck, battle*.

Key (Activity 5): *Rose; red (read); went; took; road (rode); bought; new (knew)*

Key (Activity 6): *caught (court); drove; felt; sat; ate (eight); fought (fort); threw (through); left*

Note: *The form in brackets shows the word as it appears in the other text.*

Follow-up activity

Ask the students to learn the rhyme by heart for homework and be prepared to recite it at a later date.

Activity 1

Match the words and definitions..

- | | |
|------------|---|
| a. Sat | 1. go in one side and out the other |
| b. rose | 2. $2 \times 4 =$ |
| c. fort | 3. the opposite of <i>old</i> |
| d. red | 4. the short form of <i>Saturday</i> |
| e. court | 5. a kind of cloth for making hats and toys |
| f. left | 6. a woman's name / a flower |
| g. through | 7. the opposite of <i>right</i> |
| h. felt | 8. a colour |
| i. new | 9. a street |
| j. road | 10. the first number |
| k. one | 11. a place where you play tennis |
| l. eight | 12. a small castle |

Activity 2

Match the words in Activity 1 with the irregular past tense forms that have the same sound.

present form – past form	sounds the same as ...	present form – past form	sounds the same as ...
fight – fought	fort	ride – rode	
read – read		catch – caught	
win – won		leave – left	
sit – sat		throw – threw	
rise – rose		feel – felt	
know – knew		eat – ate	

Activity 3

Look at the rhyme below. Underline the irregular past tense forms. Then underline the words that sound like irregular past tense forms. An example is given (*one* sounds like *won*).

One Sat, Rose drove to the Red Fort,
Then she went around the tennis court.
She took the left road through the flats,
And then bought eight new felt hats.

Activity 4

Read the story and underline all the irregular past tense forms (don't worry about the blanks or *was* or *caught*).

Story

Last year I won a prize in a competition: a holiday to Italy. I caught a plane to Rome, then a taxi driver _____ me to the hotel. It was a wonderful place! Every morning, when the sun rose over the city, I _____ like I was in a dream. Sometimes I _____ in the beautiful hotel garden with my coffee and read the newspapers. In the evenings, I _____ wonderful Italian food. I rode in a horse-drawn carriage around the city and after that I bought some presents for my friends. One day, I went to a historical place where the Roman army _____ a big battle a long time ago. Then I _____ some coins into the fountain for good luck. After a week, it was time to go home so I took some lovely photos before I _____.

Activity 5

Complete the rhyme with words that you underlined in Activity 4. You may need to change the spelling, e.g. *won-one*.

Rhyme

One Sat, _____ drove to the _____ Fort,
Then she _____ around the tennis court.
She _____ the left _____ through the flats,
And then _____ eight _____ felt hats.

Activity 6

Fill in the blanks in the story in Activity 4 with words from the rhyme. You may need to change the spelling, e.g. *court-caught*.