

Mingling activity: Irregular pasts by Jill Hadfield

Level: Elementary

Target age: Secondary / Adult

Time needed: 20–30 minutes

Grammar objective: to practise using irregular pasts

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; one copy of the diary per student

Summary: an individual and mingling activity to practise the irregular past simple

Procedure

1. Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Working individually, they should write the past simple form of each verb next to its infinitive. Then, they should match each verb with the correct word/s or phrase/s. There may be a number of combinations, not necessarily all noted in the Key below.
2. Go through to check accuracy before students do the speaking activity.

Key:

In the morning: *woke up; began work / began breakfast; went shopping / swimming / running; bought a jacket / a dress / some food / bought a coffee; did the shopping / the housework; drank coffee / tea; ate breakfast; caught a bus / a train; got a coffee / got breakfast; met friends*

In the afternoon: *rode my bike; came home from work; read a book; ran ten kilometres; went on Facebook; swam one kilometre; ate a cake / ate lunch; took photos; made lunch / made a cake; wrote some emails*

In the evening: *met some friends; gave a party; had dinner in a restaurant / had some food; went to see a film / to a party / to a restaurant / home; saw a film / saw some friends*

3. Now, hand out the diary and ask students to complete it with four activities per section (12 in total), which they should choose, or adapt, from the worksheet. E.g.:

In the morning, at 9am, I got up. At 10am, I went shopping. I bought a new jacket. I met my friends for coffee.

Point out that students don't have to specify the time for every activity, only when it's appropriate. Students could also be encouraged to be creative with the provided text.

4. Draw your students' attention to the questions at the bottom of the diary sheet. Ask students to circulate, asking other students about their day, using the questions provided and responding about their day. E.g.:

A: What did you do yesterday morning?

B: I got up at 9, ate breakfast and then I went shopping. What about you?

A: I got up at 9 and went shopping, too. Did you buy anything?

B: I bought a new jacket and then met some friends and drank coffee. What about you?

A: No, I didn't buy anything but I met some friends for lunch.

5. Ask students to find the person who had the day most similar to their own. They can determine this by counting the number of activities that were the same. For example, in the above exchange, the two characters could each count three: getting up at 9, going shopping and meeting friends. Set a time limit for this activity.
6. Seat students in new pairs and ask them to tell each other about the most similar days. E.g.:

Marine and I both got up at 9 and went shopping. I bought a jacket but she didn't buy anything. We both met friends but I drank coffee with my friends and she had lunch.

7. Round off the activity by finding out which two students counted the most similar activities. Ask those students to recount the similarities, making sure they use the correct past simple forms.

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Put the verbs in the past simple. Then, match each verb with the correct word/s or phrase/s.

1. In the morning

wake	a jacket / a dress / some food
begin	up
go	friends
buy	shopping / swimming / running
do	breakfast
drink	work
eat	the shopping / the housework
catch	coffee / tea
get	a bus / a train
meet	a coffee

2. In the afternoon

ride	on Facebook
come	one kilometre
read	my bike
run	photos
go	ten kilometres
swim	home from work
eat	some emails
take	a cake
make	a book
write	lunch

3. In the evening

meet	a party
give	some friends
have	to see a film / to a party / to a restaurant / home
go	a film
see	dinner in a restaurant

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Choose times and activities and write in your diary about yesterday.

My Diary

8am	10am	<i>In the morning, at</i>	, I
9am	11am		
12pm	3pm	<i>In the afternoon, at</i>	, I
1pm	4pm		
2pm	5pm		
6pm	9pm	<i>In the evening, at</i>	, I
7pm	10pm		
8pm	11pm		

Asking someone about their day – possible questions

- What did you do yesterday morning / afternoon / evening?
- What about you?
- And then what did you do?
- And how about in the afternoon / evening?
- Did you meet up with your friends?
- Did you drink coffee or did you go shopping?