

17 Verbs Often Confused

1. 'Been' and 'gone'

The past participle of *go* is *gone*, but when we want to imply that somebody or something has not only gone to a place but left it as well, we use *been* as a past participle.

He has *gone* to New York. (= He is there now.)

He has *been* to New York. (= He was there but is there no longer.)

Similarly with the Past Perfect:

He had already *gone* to the cinema when I called on him. (= He was at the cinema, or on his way there, when I called at his house.)

He had already *been* to the cinema when I called on him. (= He had returned from the cinema when I called on him.)

2. 'Borrow' and 'lend'

Although these two words are opposites, they are often confused. *Borrow* means *receive on loan*; *lend* means *give on loan*.

He *borrowed* some money from his friend.

The opposite process:

He *lent* some money to his friend.

(Note that we cannot say *I borrowed him some money*.)

3. 'Do' and 'make'

These two verbs have almost the same meaning and it is difficult to devise a rule to enable one to distinguish between them. Rather than rely on any rule it is wiser to learn the following expressions by heart:

do one's duty	make a mistake
do an exercise	make a request
do harm	make money
do one's best	make a living
do a favour	make the bed
do homework	make trouble
do business with	make a speech
do the housework	make a good impression
do good	make plans

do the right thing
do without
do away with
(get rid of)

make a statement
make arrangements
make fun of (mock)
make one's way
make away with (steal)
make a nuisance of oneself
make progress

Note the construction *make somebody do something*. A common mistake is to use *make* with the infinitive including *to*:

The police *made* him *to confess*. WRONG

The police *made* him *confess*. RIGHT

With the passive, however, we do use *to*:

He *was made to confess* by the police.

4. 'Lie' and 'lay'

Lie (with the meanings *be in a horizontal position* or *be situated*) is intransitive and therefore has no object:

He *lies* in bed every morning till nine.

The church *lies* in a valley.

Lay is a transitive verb and therefore has an object:

That hen *lays* a lot of eggs.

The servant always *lays* the table for dinner.

Lie (with the meaning *tell an untruth*) is quite regular:

He often *lies* to his parents.

He *lied* to the headmaster.

The principal parts of these verbs are:

	Present Simple	Past Simple	Present Participle	Past Participle
<i>lie</i> (intr.)	<i>lie</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>lying</i>	<i>lain</i>
<i>lay</i> (tr.)	<i>lay</i>	<i>laid</i>	<i>laying</i>	<i>laid</i>
<i>lie</i> (tell an untruth)	<i>lie</i>	<i>lied</i>	<i>lying</i>	<i>lied</i>

5. 'Lose' and 'loose'

Lose is a verb meaning the opposite of *find*:

She is afraid she might *lose* her ring.

Loose is an adjective meaning the opposite of *tight* and is connected with the verb *loosen*:

His watch was *loose* and fell off.
There is also a verb *to loose* meaning to set free (the opposite of bind)

6. 'Reach' and 'arrive'

Reach is a transitive verb and therefore must have an object:

We *reached* London in the morning.

Arrive is intransitive and cannot have an object:

We *arrived* in the morning.

Of course, where we arrived can be shown by using the preposition *at* or *in*:

We *arrived in London* in the morning.

The word *there* can be used with *reach* and *arrive*:

We *reached there* in the morning.

We *arrived there* in the morning.

7. 'Salute' and 'greet'

Salute describes the action of raising the hand to the head in the way soldiers do when they meet a superior. (In some countries a salute is the raising of the hand in some other way.) *Greet* simply means *give greetings to* by saying *Hullo* or something similar.

The captain *saluted* the general.

John *greeted* his friend when he saw him in the street.

8. 'Say' and 'tell'

Rather than attempt to learn difficult and unreliable rules for the use of these two verbs, it is better to commit the following sentences to memory.

Say He *said* nothing.

He *said* a few words to me.

He *said* to me, "Pass me the book."

Tell He *told* the truth to the judge.

He *told* him the truth.

He *told* the judge the truth.

He *told* me about the battle.

He *told* me to pass the book to him.

9. 'Steal' and 'rob'

Steal is followed by the thing stolen, *rob* by a person or place. When we wish to indicate what was stolen as well as the person or place affected we use the construction *rob somebody of something*:

He *stole* my watch.

He *robbed* the house.

He *robbed* me of my wallet.

10. 'Wear', 'put on' and 'dress'

Wear describes a state, *put on* an action. We *wear* our clothes for some hours; it takes us a short time to *put them on*. Both verbs are transitive and require articles of clothing, etc. as objects:

I shall *wear* my new suit to the party.

I shall *put on* a jacket when it's cooler.

Dress usually describes an action but it cannot take an article of clothing as an object:

He *is dressing* at the moment. (= He *is putting* his clothes *on*.)

It can take a person as an object:

She *is dressing* her small sister.

In a special sense it can describe the state:

She *dresses* very well. (= She wears smart clothes.)

11. 'Win' and 'beat'

Unlike *beat* *win* can be used intransitively:

Our team *won*.

Objects of *win* are words like *match*, *game*, *war*:

Our team *won the match*.

Beat, used in this way, has the meaning of *defeat*; it must be followed by the noun for who was beaten:

Our team *beat the champions* last week.

12. 'Wound', 'injure', 'hurt' and 'damage'

These four verbs are used in these ways:

Wound for injuries received from weapons in war and fighting

Injure for injuries received in accidents

Hurt for any injury to the body, usually minor

Damage only for objects and not for persons

Over a thousand troops were *wounded* in the battle.

Two cars collided and the passengers were *injured*.

The goal-keeper *hurt* his leg in the match.

The explosion *damaged* many shops and houses.

EXERCISE 56

Write out the following sentences using the correct words from the alternatives given:

- 1 If you are not more careful, you will *loose/lose* your purse.
- 2 When I saw him in church, he was *wearing/putting on* a blue suit.
- 3 The teacher told the pupil to *make/do* his homework regularly if he wanted to *make/do* progress.

- 4 The servant *lay/laid/lain/lie* the table.
- 5 The teacher *greeted/saluted* the headmaster.
- 6 The train *reached at/arrived at* Lagos at seven o'clock.
- 7 I *told/said* him to come early.
- 8 Our teacher always *puts on/wears* smart clothes.
- 9 We *laid/lie/lain* the wounded man on the table.
- 10 We *won/beat* that school at football last week.
- 11 The servant was told to *make/do* the housework this morning and not forget to *do/make* the beds.
- 12 When the train crashed only two passengers were *wounded/injured*.
- 13 He *told/said* to me, "We cannot leave tomorrow."
- 14 We returned from our holidays to find that all our clothes had been *robbed/stolen*.
- 15 I saw the boy *make/do* away with the kitten by drowning it.
- 16 Although I speak English fluently, I have never *gone/been* to England.
- 17 Poor people are not able to *wear/put on clothes/dress* well.
- 18 I was *robbed of/stolen* my wallet when I was in the cinema.
- 19 Even though he had little money to spare he *lent/borrowed* me some.
- 20 He didn't know what to *tell/say*.
- 21 The dead man had been *laying/lying* by the side of the road for an hour.
- 22 In the fight both men were *injured/damaged* and some furniture was *injured/damaged/hurt*.
- 23 The knob on this radio set has worked *lose/loose*.
- 24 I think he will *make/do* a good impression at the interview.
- 25 Our chickens have *lie/lain/laid/lay* plenty eggs this week.
- 26 One of the boys in this class has *stolen/robbed* my pen.
- 27 Please *say/tell* me why you are late.
- 28 When it started to rain, he *wore/put on/dressed* his overcoat.
- 29 The prisoner *lay/laid/lie* to the judge.
- 30 All the soldiers *greeted/saluted* when the king arrived.
- 31 Beware of that man: he is always asking to *lend/borrow* money.
- 32 We are going to *do/make* all the arrangements for our holidays this week.
- 33 By *winning/beating* that team we came second in the league.
- 34 He has been *dressing/wearing/putting on* that shirt for a week.
- 35 This notice *says/tells* there will be no bus service tomorrow.
- 36 The doctor told him to *lose/lose* weight.
- 37 His father was *injured/wounded/hurt* in the war and could no longer work.
- 38 He doesn't *make/do* a good living repairing shoes.
- 39 She has been *laying/lieing/lying* in bed all morning.
- 40 She *lent/borrowed* more than she could return.
- 41 I don't think my friend saw me because he didn't *salute/greet* me.
- 42 The bus *arrived/reached* my village at two in the morning.

- 43 I *lent/borrowed* him some money last month and he hasn't returned it yet.
- 44 We often *do/make* business with a Lebanese merchant.
- 45 I have *been/gone* to the market four times this week.
- 46 There is a danger that we will *lose/loose* the championship this year.
- 47 After lunch I will *lie/lay* down for half an hour.
- 48 I asked him to *do/make* me a favour.
- 49 I *said/told* him to give me some note-paper.
- 50 He *arrived/reached* earlier than I did.
- 51 The thieves *stole/robbed* all the jewellery.
- 52 He looks guilty and I think he is *lying/laying*.
- 53 His foolish behaviour could *make/do* him a lot of harm.
- 54 I *borrowed/lent* a lot of money in order to start my own business.
- 55 The young lady *wore/put on* a hat before entering the church.
- 56 We *arrived/reached* our destination at ten o'clock.
- 57 Did you *say/tell* that you were going to America?
- 58 As he was tired he *lay/lie/laid* in bed until nine o'clock.
- 59 Have you ever *gone/been* to America?
- 60 As the school has little money, we shall have to *make/do* without new exercise books this term.
- 61 The enemy *lay/lie/laid* down their arms last night.
- 62 She *said/told* she would phone in the morning.
- 63 Our friends *arrived/reached* in London two days ago.
- 64 Our headmaster always *puts on/wears* a dark tie.
- 65 As I have had a lot of expenses lately I have had to *lend/borrow* money.