Irregular Past Tense Verbs

The most important consideration in teaching any grammatical concept, including irregular past tense verbs, is a deep understanding of language development. This includes the ability to compare your client’s performance to expected developmental norms.

* + - According to Owens (2014), development of irregular past tense verbs begins with words such as, “hit” and “hurt,” between 3 and 3.5 years of age.
    - The development of irregular past tense verbs continues steadily through 8 years 11 months of age. Along the continuum of development, irregular past tense words include, “sent,” “shook,” and, “built” (Owens, 2014).
    - *Figure 1* outlines this developmental process; clinicians can use this chart to determine their client’s performance in regard to developmental norms.
    - Understanding when irregular past tense verbs appear in a child’s language repertoire, provides the clinician with knowledge to support the child’s therapeutic process.
  + The clinician can use this information to determine the preceding concepts and skills in order to develop adequate scaffolding and supports.



Ideas for

Intervention

Here you will find resource materials for intervention. These are not programs or recommended methods but are meant to aid you by providing myriad resources and techniques for intervention. We’ve taken the time to research available resources and to offer them for you to consider.

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Figure 1 (Owens, 2014)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AGE | VERB |
| 3-3 ½ | Hit, hurt |
| 3 ½- 4 | Went |
| 4- 4 ½ | Saw |
| 4 1/2 - 5 | Gave, ate |
| 5- 5.5 (months) | Took, fell, broke, found |
| 5.6- 5.11 | Came, made, threw, sat |
| 6.0- 6.5 | Ran, flew, wore, wrote, cut, fed, drove, bit |
| 6.6-6.11 | Blew, read, shot, rode |
| 7.0-7.5 | Drank |
| 7.6-7.11 | Hid, rang, slept, drew, dug, swam |
| 8.0-8.6 | Left, caught, slid, hung |
| 8.6-8.11 | Sent, shook, built |

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* With ample knowledge of child language development, it is valuable to consider common errors in the developmental process of acquiring irregular past tense verbs.

Early in language development, as children begin to learn irregular past tense verbs, they frequently overgeneralize the rules related to regular past tense verbs by adding an “ed” (Owens, 2014).

For example, if a child produces, “goed” for, ‘went.”

* Overgeneralization should occur prior to the development of a particular past tense.
  + This process is considered “typical”, and usually begins around age three.
* Difficulty with mastery of irregular past tense verbs is particularly prevalent in students who are new to learning the English Language (ELL).

Successful application of irregular past tense verbs is challenging for ELLs because grammar rules in their native languages tend to be different than English.

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* In the English language, understanding irregular past tense verbs requires the skill of memorization rather than rule following; for many students having to memorize individual irregular past tense verbs can be laborious.
* Overall, consideration of the client’s native language is valuable in their acquisition of English irregular past tense verbs.
* Difficulty with application of verbs, specifically verb endings, may be an indicator of specific language impairment (SLI).

One consideration for clients who present with difficulty with proper verb tensing and endings is to rule out a specific language disorder (ASHA, 1993).

Once a specific language disorder is identified, the clinician will have the ability to identify successful modifications required for the client’s specific needs (ASHA, 1993).

* Finally, clinicians and teachers must consider the impact of key grammatical concepts in relation to the client's current and future, educational and linguistic development.

According to the New York State Common Core initiative (2018): During second grade, a client (student) should be able to “form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs (e.g., sat, hid, told) ([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.1.D](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/1/d/))”.

Methods



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Irregular Past Tense Verbs

* Due to the inconsistent rules regardingirregular past tense verbs, the primary method for teaching these concepts is related to memorization. Research suggests teaching memorization of these concepts (Proctor-Williams & Fey, 2007).

One study investigated *repeated exposure* in the form of sentence recasts as a teaching method for memorization, specifically of irregular past tense verbs.

The researchers stated, “as predicted, at conversation-like densities, children with [typical language] more accurately produced the target verbs they heard in recasts than in non-recast models, children with SLI showed no differences, and children with [typical language] produced the verbs more accurately than did children with SLI, contrary to expectations” (Proctor-Williams & Fey, 2007).

This research suggests that the method of sentence recasting is a valid memory teaching method for this grammatical concept.

Within session recast dose maybe more important to treatment effectiveness than session length, as Plante et al. (2019) implemented Proctor-Williams & Fey (2007) recast protocol but at an increased dosage, reporting a significant increase in children’s performance at the end of treatment and follow-up performance (Frizelle et al., 2021).

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* A blog developed by, “Busy Teacher,” primarily focuses on ESL and provides a revised order in which teachers should present this material to ELL.

The author takes typical developmental order as well as building on previous knowledge, examples, and resources, into consideration.

Teaching irregular past tense verbs are described in the following eight steps (Pesce, n.d):

1. Introduce the Past Simple of regular verbs

2. Practice Past Simple of regular verbs

3. Introduce the Past Simple of irregular verbs

4. Practice the Past Simple of irregular verbs

5. Introduce the Past Simple

6. Introduce the Past Simple – Interrogative forms

7. Introduce the Past Simple - Short answers

8. Provide extended practice

Resources



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Irregular Past Tense Verbs

Books and Articles

* Blom, E. & Paradis, J. (2013). Past Tense Production by English Second Language Learners With and Without Language Impairment. *J Speech Lang Hear Res*, 56(1), 281-294.

This study investigated whether use of “past tense” elements could differentiate children with language impairment from their typically developing peers when English is child’s second language.

* For a list of suggested children’s books, check out the following links:

[Children’s Literature Sources](file:///C:\Users\jenke\Desktop\Dr%20Bob%20GA\Intervention%20Sugar%20Website\%09https:\charlottejenns.weebly.com\uploads\3\0\7\7\30778141\lakit-pasttenseverbs.pdf)

[Language focused Books](http://www.mnsu.edu/comdis/kuster2/languagefocusbooks.pdf)

Games and Activities

[100 Irregular Verbs in Sentences](https://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=FD147#.XDunkS3MzjA), by Super Duper.

[Irregular Verbs](https://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=FD136&s=208-irregular-verbs-playing-cards#.XDunpi3MzjA) - Playing Cards, by Super Duper.

[Teachers Pay Teachers](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/Search:irregular%20past%20tense%20verbs%20games) has numerous activities available for a low cost.

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Websites and Apps

[*Brain Pop Lesson Plan*](https://educators.brainpop.com/lesson-plan/1-6-2-past-simple-irregular-verbs-lesson-plan/)

[*5 Fun Activities for Irregular Verbs (ENL Focus)*](http://blog.esllibrary.com/2015/02/26/5-fun-activities-for-irregular-verbs/)

[*Video/Song for memorizing irregular past tense verbs (for older clients)*](http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2012/12/04/the-best-web-tools-for-teaching-irregular-verbs-verb-tenses-contribute-your-suggestions/)

[Speech and Language Kids: How to Teach Irregular Past Tense Verbs to Children.](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/teach-irregular-past-tense-verbs-children/)

[*Irregular Verbs - Fun Deck [app].*](https://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?stid=633&s=irregular-verbs-fun-deck-app#.XDunvi3MzjA)

[*iPractice Verbs [app].*](https://www.smartyearsapps.com/ipractice-verbs/)

[*Tense Builder [app].*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tensebuilder/id427577382?mt=8)

Please visit [our Pinterest page](https://www.pinterest.com/sugarlanguage/_saved/) for additional resources and activities:

Pinterest Q&A:

What is Pinterest? Pinterest is a social media platform that serves as an electronic bulletin board. Many SLPs use it as a way to electronically “bookmark” (i.e., save) activities for future sessions.

How much does it cost? It’s free! However, you must create an account in order to access the SUGAR Language boards or use the website in general.

How do I use it? Please check-out the following link for an in-depth explanation of all things [Pinterest.](https://www.lifewire.com/how-to-use-pinterest-3486578)

**References**

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National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State

School Officers (2018). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org

Owens, R. E. (2014). *Language disorders: A functional approach to assessment and*

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