

BILINGUAL LANGUAGE ARTS IN ACTION ACTIVITY KITS

“PAST TENSE VERBS”

Children’s Literature Sources:

1. “Where the Wild Things Are” by Maurice Sendak
2. “Pussycats Everywhere” by Sheila McGraw
3. “Sneakers, the Seaside Cat” by Margaret Wise Brown (illustrated by Anne Mortimer)
4. “Diary of a Wombat” by Jackie French (illustrated by Bruce Whatley)
5. “The Strongest Man This Side of Cremona” by Georgia Graham

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GENERAL TEACHING PRINCIPLES:

- The basic principle behind these activities is to use **children's literature** to teach the grammatical structures of written language (English).
- Children learn best when they **discover** the rule themselves, rather than being told the rule and then practicing it in meaningless drills.
- Our role as teachers is to make sure children have lots of **exposure** to the target structure in different contexts, and to **direct** their attention to how it is used.
- We also need to make sure students have lots of opportunities to try to **use the structure** in their own writing – this means **accepting approximations** and gradually **shaping** them into correct productions.
- **Repetition** is important for learning – reading and writing must be done over and over – but it is also important to keep it **fun** and **interesting**.
- It is not enough to simply read the books in this activity kit to children during story time – the books must be the focus of **extended and repeated study** and this difference should be emphasized and made clear to both teachers and students right from the outset.

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TEACHING “PAST TENSE VERBS”

1. We use **past tense** to talk about actions that are “**finished**” or to refer to a “**finished time**” (“yesterday”, “last week”, “three years ago”, etc.)
2. Past tense has a **regular** marker – “ed” (jumped, talked, looked), but many common verbs have an **irregular** past tense form (see – saw; find – found; run – ran).
3. We use the **past progressive** to say that something was going on around a particular past time. E.g., “I **was watching** TV last night at 10:00”.
4. **Progressive** forms are used mostly for **temporary** actions and situations. For longer, more **permanent** situation we use **simple past**. E.g., “The water was running down the walls” and “They believed that the river ran into the ocean”.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE” (SENDAK)

Irregular past tense verbs: wore, made, said, sent, grew, became, came, gave, found

Regular past tense verbs: called, tumbled, sailed, roared, gnashed, rolled, showed, tamed, wanted, loved, smelled, stepped

1. Since there is no rule about irregular past tense verbs, children will need to learn each one individually – lots of repeated exposure is needed for this.
2. Take time to look at the drawings and have students create their own “wild things” with paint, pastels, or chalk – take turns describing all the things that they can do.
3. Develop the concept of using your imagination and creating imaginary lands – write about ways to get there and things to do there.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “PUSSYCATS EVERYWHERE” (MCGRAW)

Regular past tense verbs: searched, squeaked, called, tippy-toed, hurried, posted, waited, jumped, bounded, turned, answered, hopped, stopped, realized, exclaimed, looked, patted, scratched, showed, stroked, rubbed, cuddled, helped, rescued, invented, scampered, pranced, dashed, finished, relaxed, named, remembered, grabbed, noticed, collected, rassled, apologized, hugged, kissed, missed, opened, scooped

Irregular past tense verbs: shook, made, ran, rang, swung, had, woke up, came, saw, grew, said, brought, knew, went, kept, thought, slid, bought, took, told, sat

1. Focus on teaching the verbs that describe the actions of cats to make the list more manageable.
2. Have fun adding your own list of “cat names” to the ones in the book.
3. Use each of the cat’s names in a sentence with a past tense verb. For example, “Oreo rolled on his back” or “Drifter licked her belly”, and so on.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “SNEAKERS, THE SEASIDE CAT” (WISE BROWN & MORTIMER)

Regular past tense verbs: lived, delighted, dipped, decided, chased, wondered, jumped, ruffed, lifted, walked, peeked, listened, scuttled, grabbed, pinched, snatched, licked, looked, smelled, pointed, crawled, watched

Irregular past tense verbs: had, went, came, thought, heard, caught, saw, crept, hit, hung on, swam, clung, drove

1. Providing background information about sea creatures will be needed to understand the story.
2. There are also several references to “sounds” that will need to be explained.
3. Have the students take turns playing the role of Sneakers and acting out her actions. Describe or write these actions in past tense – pounced, chased, pinched, licked.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “DIARY OF A WOMBAT” (FRENCH & WHATLEY)

Regular past tense verbs: scratched, decided, discovered, demanded, chewed, tried, bashed, appeared, filled, worked, moved, rained, finished, offered, failed, flapped, trained

Irregular past tense verbs: slept, ate, found, fought, won, went, began, dug, knew, got, felt

1. Introduce and explain the concept of a diary (or journal). Have the students keep their own diaries and encourage use of past tense verbs.
2. Connect this story with information about Australia and Australian animals.
3. Build on the repetition in the story and have them write about the repetitive things they do each day.
4. Discuss the idea of writing stories from the perspective of animals – they can each write a diary of a different animal.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “THE STRONGEST MAN THIS SIDE OF CREMONA” (GRAHAM)

Regular past tense verbs: smiled, nodded, waved, shouted, jumped, scolded, reached, watched, blinked, looked, flattened, lined, thrashed, welled, throbbed, churned, stirred, swirled, blurted, tugged, hovered, scooped, hurdled, chased, panted, pulled, charged, inched, wobbled, stared, uprooted, littered, embedded, walked, bolted, stumbled, wandered, lifted, pulverized, gasped, flapped, smashed, hurled, buried, heaped, helped, stacked, nailed, stopped,

Irregular past tense verbs: heard, stood up, grew, ate, flung, tore, ran, shook, held, wove, stole, came, felt, kept, rode, brought, sat

1. Understanding this story will involve some background information about funnel clouds and tornados.
2. Have the students look for “destruction” verbs (in past tense) and link these with other natural disasters.
3. Connect the events in the story with newspaper articles about tornados or other storms - look for the verbs used.