English grammar help for English learners.

English irregular verbs (exercise 4)

Use one word in the list below to fill in the gaps. You may need to change an infinitive to a past simple or past participle form. Use each word only once.

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tell | stand | steal | understand | speak | take | spend | think | spend | sleep | sit | asleep
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1) Are you going out with Mary this evening? I don't know. I haven't _______ to her yet.

2) Everyone _______ the art exhibition was very good. There were lots of quality paintings.

3) He _______ at the bus stop all morning. But no bus came.

4) I feel absolutely exhausted. I haven't _______ down all day.

5) It was a terrible thing to happen and we all _______ how he felt.

6) I've been to the police station this morning. I _______ them all I know.

7) Oh, no! John's gone to work and he's _______ my car keys. What a stupid thing to do!

8) Please can you speak more quietly. The baby's _______ upstairs.

9) Somebody robbed the office last night. The thieves _______ all the computers.

10) The beds were really uncomfortable in that hotel. We _______ very badly.

11) There's no money in my wallet. Where is it? You've _______ it all!

12) We _______ the whole day in Paris sightseeing. We've had a lovely time.
Teacher’s notes.

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(Time for activity: 25 mins approx. Level: elementary to lower intermediate.)

This exercise may be done with students who have studied the past simple but haven’t formerly studied the present perfect. Usually, by the time students get to the post past simple stage, they will have encountered the form of the present perfect even though they can’t use it accurately at all times. Students only need to select the correct form of the verb: infinitive, past simple or past participle (There is, in fact, an adjective here “asleep”, which is used like a verb, “sleeping”.)

They don’t even need to choose between past simple and present perfect because the “have” auxiliary is already in place. Students just need to know that after the “have” auxiliary the past participle (third column verb forms) should be inserted. The objective of the exercise is to focus on meaning and awareness of sentence structure with these two tenses and the use of the infinitive.

Answers to cloze test:

1. spoken 7. taken
2. thought 8. asleep
3. stood 9. stole
4. sat 10. slept
5. understood 11. spent
6. told 12. spent

Follow up:
After the written exercise, you may like to practise these sentences orally. Write the verb “spend” on the board. Ask what the difference in meaning is. Also discuss: “sleep” and “asleep”, “tell” and (not in this exercise) “say”.

Choose lists of, say, three verbs from the above exercise. Write the lists on the board: spend x 2, see / take, steal, think / etc.

Divide the class into groups and get each group to have a conversation. Ask the students to employ the three uses of a group of verbs into the same conversation. When they have practised this, a group can repeat their conversation for the rest of the class.