

Past Tense of Begin: Began and Begun

Begin is an irregular verb. Use began for a finished action in the past. Use begun after have or has, as in The lesson has begun.

Base	begin
Past	began
Past participle	begun
3rd person / -ing	begins / beginning

Examples

The film will begin at eight o'clock. — After will, use the base form begin.

We begin class with a short game. — A regular habit in the present uses begin.

The lesson began ten minutes ago. — Ago points to a finished past time, so use began.

She began to cry when she heard the news. — Began can be followed by to and a verb.

It has begun to rain. — After has, the participle is begun.

The game has already begun. — Has begun means it started and is happening now.

Notes

Began or begun? Began stands alone: The class began. Begun needs have, has or had: The class has begun. The vowels follow the same pattern as swim, swam, swum and drink, drank, drunk.

Begin or start? Begin and start usually mean the same. Start is more common in everyday speech, and begin sounds a little more formal. Only start works for a car or a machine: start the car. British English uses the same forms.

Common mistakes

The class has began. → The class has begun. — After has, use the past participle begun, not the past form began.

The show began at six. → The show began at six. — Begin is irregular; its past form is began, never begun.

Exercises

Choose the right form

1. The meeting ___ at nine yesterday. (begin / began / begun)
2. The rain has ___ again. (began / begun / begun)
3. School ___ at eight every morning. (begins / began / begun)
4. We ___ to learn English two years ago. (begun / begin / began)

Write the missing form

1. The lesson has just ___.
2. My brother ___ his new job last Monday.
3. We always ___ the lesson with a song.

Correct the mistake

1. The film has began.

Answer key

Choose the right form

1. began — Yesterday is a finished past time, so use began.
2. begun — Has takes the past participle begun.
3. begins — Every morning is a routine, and a singular subject like school takes begins.
4. began — Two years ago is finished, so use began; begun needs have or has.

Write the missing form

1. begun — Has plus the past participle is has begun.
2. began — Last Monday is finished, so use the past simple began.
3. begin — A regular habit with we uses the base form begin.

Correct the mistake

1. begun — After has, use begun, not began.

<https://www.fluencyroad.com/irregular-verbs/begin>