

Past Tense of Break: Broke and Broken

Break is an irregular verb. Use broke for a finished action in the past. Use broken after have or has, and as an adjective for something that does not work.

Base	break
Past	broke
Past participle	broken
3rd person / -ing	breaks / breaking

Examples

Please do not break the glass. — After do not, use the base form break.

Eggs break easily. — A general fact in the present uses break.

I broke my phone last week. — Last week is finished, so use broke.

The dog broke the window. — Broke is the past simple; it does not need have.

She has broken her glasses again. — Has broken connects the past with now.

The old chair was broken. — Here broken describes the chair; it does not work.

Notes

Broken as an adjective Broken also describes things that do not work or are in pieces: a broken window, a broken phone. The printer is broken means it does not work now.

Broke can mean no money In informal English, broke is also an adjective: I am broke means I have no money. Compare: I broke my phone (the verb) and I am broke (the adjective).

Common mistakes

He brokeed the window. → He broke the window. — Break is irregular. The past is broke, not brokeed.

I have broke my phone. → I have broken my phone. — After have, use the past participle broken, not broke.

My watch is broke. → My watch is broken. — To say that an object does not work, use broken. Broke describes a person with no money.

Exercises

Choose the right form

1. My brother ___ his arm last year. (break / broke / broken)
2. Someone has ___ the door. (broke / brokeed / broken)
3. Glass can ___ if you drop it. (break / broke / broken)
4. The TV is ___ again. (break / broke / broken)

Write the missing form

1. She has ___ her phone.
2. Yesterday, I ___ a cup in the kitchen.
3. Children sometimes ___ toys.

Correct the mistake

1. We have broke the window.

Answer key

Choose the right form

1. broke — Last year is finished, so use broke.
2. broken — Has takes the past participle broken.
3. break — After can, use the base form break.
4. broken — Broken is the adjective for something that does not work.

Write the missing form

1. broken — Has plus the past participle is has broken.
2. broke — Yesterday takes the past simple broke.
3. break — A general habit with children (they) uses break.

Correct the mistake

1. broken — After have, use broken, not broke.

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