

Past Tense of Keep: Kept and Kept

Keep is an irregular verb. Its past tense and past participle are both kept. Use kept for a finished action in the past and have kept after have or has.

Base	keep
Past	kept
Past participle	kept
3rd person / -ing	keeps / keeping

Examples

I keep my keys in my bag. — Keep means to have something and not lose it.

Please keep the door closed. — Keep plus an adjective means stay in that state.

He kept his old phone for two years. — A finished period in the past uses kept.

She kept calm during the meeting yesterday. — Yesterday marks a finished time.

I have kept all your letters. — Have kept uses the participle.

We have kept the receipt, so we can take it back. — The participle is kept, the same as the past.

Notes

Keep plus -ing Keep plus an -ing verb means to continue doing something: She keeps asking questions. It rained, but we kept walking.

Keep plus adjective Keep plus an adjective means stay that way: keep calm, keep warm, keep cool. In the past, say She kept calm.

Common mistakes

She kepted the letter. → She kept the letter. — Keep is irregular, so the past is kept, not kepted.

I have kepted the photo. → I have kept the photo. — After have, use the participle kept.

He keeps to ask me. → He keeps asking me. — After keep, use the -ing form to mean continue.

Exercises

Choose the correct form

1. She ___ the old photo last year. (keep / kept / kepted)
2. We have ___ the photos on the phone. (kepted / keep / kept)
3. I always ___ my money in a box. (keep / kept / kepted)
4. He keeps ___ to music all day. (listen / listening / to listen)

Write the missing form

1. Last year my brother ___ his old bike in the garage.
2. I have ___ your book safe.
3. She is ___ the window closed.

Correct the mistake

1. He kepted the money.

Answer key

Choose the correct form

1. kept — Last year is finished, so use kept.
2. kept — After have, the participle is kept.
3. keep — Always describes a present habit.
4. listening — Keep is followed by the -ing form.

Write the missing form

1. kept — Last year is finished, so the past is kept.
2. kept — Have takes the participle kept.
3. keeping — After is, use the -ing form keeping.

Correct the mistake

1. kept — The past of keep is kept.

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