

Past Tense of Set: Set, Set, Set

Set has the same form in the present, past and past participle. Do not add -ed. A time word such as every day or yesterday, or a helper such as have, tells you which form is meant.

Base	set
Past	set
Past participle	set
3rd person / -ing	sets / setting

Examples

I set the table for dinner every evening. — Every evening marks a present routine.

We set two alarms every school day. — Every school day shows a regular habit.

My mother set the table before dinner yesterday. — Yesterday tells us set is in the past.

Tom set his alarm for seven o'clock last night. — Last night marks a finished past action.

I have set the table already. — Have set uses the past participle.

The teacher has set a test for Friday. — The participle after has is still set.

Notes

Set the table, set an alarm Set the table means put plates and forks on it. Set an alarm means choose the time it rings. Set also means put: She set the cup on the desk.

Time words matter Set, set, set look the same, so look for clues. Every day points to the present, yesterday to the past, and have or has to the participle.

Set or sit? Set needs an object: set the table. Sit does not: I sit down. Set and sit are different verbs.

Common mistakes

She setted the table. → She set the table. — The past of set is set, without -ed.

I have setted an alarm. → I have set an alarm. — After have, the participle is set, not setted.

Exercises

Choose the correct form

1. She ___ the table last night. (set / setted / sets)
2. I have ___ my alarm for six. (setted / set / setting)
3. We ___ the table every evening. (set / setted / sat)
4. He is ___ the table now. (seting / setting / setted)

Write the missing form

1. My dad ___ the alarm yesterday.
2. They have ___ the table for six people.
3. We are ___ an alarm for seven.

Correct the mistake

1. Yesterday I setted the alarm.

Answer key

Choose the correct form

1. set — Last night takes the past form set.
2. set — After have, the participle is set.
3. set — Every evening describes a present habit.
4. setting — The -ing form doubles the t: setting.

Write the missing form

1. set — Yesterday is finished; past set is spelled set.
2. set — The participle after have is set.
3. setting — Setting has two t's.

Correct the mistake

1. set — The past tense stays set.

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