

THE VANISHING TRAIN – ESCAPE ROOM

Past Simple practice - verb forms in context

The whole escape room is designed to give students extra practice of many irregular verb forms in Past Simple. The set gives students the context for practice and shows them how they can be used. The set includes a lot of activities for students to complete as well as background story that students have to deal with while solving the mystery. When students have completed the activity, ask them to report back or write a short summary of the story in order to reinforce the use of the verbs.

The story and the scenario

Your friend group was on an old steam train, traveling through the countryside for a relaxing weekend trip. Everything seemed normal—until the train suddenly stopped in the middle of the forest. When you looked around, all the other passengers had vanished! Now, you must solve the mystery, collect key items, and restart the train before it's too late.

Introduction: The train moved smoothly along the tracks. Emma looked out the window, watching the trees pass by. The conductor came and took the tickets. Everything felt calm. Then, the lights flickered. A loud screech filled the air, and the train stopped suddenly. She looked around. The other passengers were gone. The train was completely empty.

Only a note lay on a nearby seat, written in shaky handwriting: "Find the missing pieces, or you will never leave." Emma picked up the note. "What does this mean? Where is everyone?" she asked, her voice shaking. Lucas looked around. "I don't know, but we need to figure it out. Let's search the train for clues." Sarah frowned. "I feel like someone is watching us... but I don't see anyone." "You must work together to solve the mystery and escape before time runs out!"

Only a note lay on a nearby seat, written in shaky handwriting: "Find the missing pieces, or you will never leave."

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Task 1: The Broken Pocket Watch

Come on guys! We need to find some clues that will help us open the next door. Let's see if any of these things work. Move everything around and click to collect the clues.

Clue: The friends _____ (look) around the place in search of some clues. Finally they _____ (find) an old pocket watch on the floor. The glass was cracked, and the hands _____ (be) stuck at midnight. Something was scratched into the back: "Follow the clock's shadow."

Emma _____ (bend) down and picked up the watch. "Look at this. It's _____ (break), and the time is stuck at midnight."

Lucas turned it over. "There's something written here. 'Follow the clock's shadow.' What did that mean?" Sarah sighed. "I don't know, but I feel like we need to take this with us. "They _____ (search) the train car and _____ (find) a torn ticket stub under a seat. The ticket _____ (have) a map drawn on the back, showing a locked compartment in the luggage area. Sarah held up the ticket. "This must be important. We need to find that compartment. "Lucas rubbed his head. "I _____ (think) I _____ (hear) something just now."

Task 2: The Conductor's Secret

The kids get into the locked compartment with the luggage. The locked compartment needed a code. You found the conductor's hat on a hook. Inside, there was a folded note: "The past holds the key. "Lucas grabbed the hat. "Why would this be left here? "Emma reached inside and pulled out a small paper. "It says, 'The past holds the key.' What did that mean?" The kids were checking the luggage area, opening the suitcases. Suddenly, in one of them, they saw an old diary. Sarah started reading. She turned page after page and finally said. Listen guys, "This is about a train that vanished 50 years ago! Is it connected to us? "Lucas frowned. "Someone must have written this a long time ago. But why did they leave it here?" Sarah whispered, "What if... the people who were on that train never left? "Emma shivered. "Let's not think about that. We need to keep moving."

Help them find the diary and collect the next clue!

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Task 3: The Hidden Passage Clue

The kids looked around the next compartment and saw a lot of old things that were left by the people. Lucas said, "Look, maybe this will help." He lifted an old, rusted key. "Maybe it opens the locked door," Emma said.

Look around the compartment. Help them find the key and collect the next clue!

Look around and find the hidden door. Use the key to open it and follow the clues.

It's so dark in here. Look, here is a lantern. Use it to find a hidden door to the next compartment. Then follow the clues.

Task 4: The Engineer's Journal

Clue: Behind the hidden door, you found the train's control room. A dusty book lay open on the desk. It was the engineer's journal.

Lucas brushed off the cover. "This must have belonged to the train's engineer."

Emma read the open page aloud. "'The lever must be returned before the train can move again.' What lever?"

"When the lever was removed, the train _____ (stop) moving. The wheels _____ (freeze), and the engine shut down. I _____ (try) to start it again, but nothing worked. The lever must be put back in the engine room. When it is placed in the correct spot and _____ (push) down, the train will start again, and time will return to normal. But once the lever is back, there will be no way to stop what happens next. "Emma _____ (read) the open page aloud. "'The lever must be returned before the train can move again.' What lever?"

The kids were confused. Where can they find it? Searching the shelves, they went through old rusty tools. Sarah pointed to a dusty corner. "There! That must be it!" Lucas lifted the heavy metal lever. "Let's take this to the engine room." Emma looked down. "Wait—someone wrote something else here: 'Once the lever is placed, time will return.'" Lucas blinked. "That didn't make sense... unless—" Sarah interrupted. "Let's try it."

Sarah pointed to a dusty corner. "There! That must be it!"

Lucas lifted the heavy metal lever. "Let's take this to the engine room."

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Task 5: Restarting the train

Put the words back into the context:

again, caught, unfamiliar, rushed, gripped, gasped, midnight, shook, roared, nodded

The kids _____ to the engine room with the lever. The controls were old and _____. Lucas _____ the lever and pushed it into place. "It's in, but nothing's happening!" Emma _____. "Wait! The pocket watch—set it to _____!" Setting the clock's hands to midnight, you heard a click—the engine _____ to life! As soon as the hands moved to twelve, a deep rumbling _____ the train. A soft whisper echoed around them. "You have set us free." Lucas ran to the window. "We're moving again!" Sarah _____ her breath. "Did you hear that? Someone spoke just now." Emma _____ "And I don't think we were supposed to." The train was moving _____.

Conclusion

The train slowly _____ (return) to normal, and the missing passengers reappeared, looking confused but unharmed. As we _____ (step) onto the platform, we _____ (see) the note from earlier fade away. _____ (be) it a ghostly warning or just a trick of the mind? One thing was certain — we would never forget this journey. Emma _____ (sigh). "We _____ (do) it. The train is moving again."
Mission Complete!

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Items to collect:

- 1. the pocket watch** - move the objects and collect it from under the book - opens the next door
 - 2. ticket stub with a note about the luggage compartment** - collect it after completing the text correctly - opens the next door
 - 3. engineer's diary** - look through the luggage compartment, it's hidden in one of the suitcases - opens the next door
 - 4. the rusted key** - the items appear when you hover the mouse over - it's on the floor - opens the next door, use it to open the door to a hidden passage.
 - 5. the lever** - click the tools in the compartment and collect the lever - opens the next door.
- Control room** - put the lever in place and later the watch - they open the next part of the story. SS complete it to finish the game.



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