

1. Mrs. Khan **lays** an eraser on her desk as soon as she enters the room.

Teaching Tip: This sentence is fairly straightforward. Mrs. Khan is the agent (the one who does the action). She “places,” “sets,” or “puts” an eraser on the desk. Let students know that if they can substitute “places,” “sets,” or “puts” then they should use lays, which is transitive.

2. When Kieran saw the beach, he thought he had **laid** his eyes on paradise.

Teaching Tip: This sentence requires the past participle of the verb lay. It is similar to a student “raising” (not “rising”) his hand. Even though Kieran’s eyes are part of him, he “laid” them (metaphorically) on the beach.

3. Lester likes to **lie** in his room for about an hour after he wakes up.

Teaching Tip: Lester is doing nothing. He rests in his room. If students can substitute the word “rests” then they should use lie.

4. The dog **lays** her paws all over the furniture when we go out.

Teaching Tip: This sentence is similar to number 2. The dog “places” or “puts” its paws on the furniture. The word paws is the direct object of the verb lays.

5. This clay pot has **lain** in the underground cave for thousands of years.

Teaching Tip: The pot has done nothing for thousands of years. No one has done anything to the pot either. It has merely “lain” there in the cave. Ask students to consider “The pot has rested in the cave for thousands of years.” The word lain is the past participle of the verb lie.

6. Uday, please **lie** down before you faint from exhaustion!

Teaching Tip: This is perhaps the most common error that involves the verbs lie and lay. The speaker is giving someone an order (imperative mood), not to place anything anywhere, but to rest, that is to lie down.

7. The factory will dismiss employees if they **lie** down on the job.

Teaching Tip: Again, the employees are not doing anything to anyone or anything. They will be dismissed if they “rest” (lie down) on the job.

8. The factory will dismiss employees if they **lay** down their tools.

Teaching Tip: Even though the word “down” occurs after the verb in question, the correct form is still lay because the workers “set” or “place” their tools down. The noun tools is the direct object of the verb lay.

9. When farmers harvest mangoes, they must **lay** mulch so that the harvest trucks have proper traction.

Teaching Tip: The farmers must “place” mulch. They are doing something (laying) to something (the mulch). The word mulch is the direct object of the verb lay.

10. EMX has **laid** aside its prejudices and will consider all applicants, regardless of background.

Teaching Tip: The word prejudices is the direct object (the thing that something was done to). Even though prejudices is abstract, it is still something (a noun). EMX “placed” or “set” its prejudices aside.

11. The goat enjoys **lying** on the haystack in the afternoon.

Teaching Tip: The goat is not doing anything to anyone or anything. It merely “lies” on the haystack. So lying (note the spelling, which students sometimes spell “lieing”) is the correct form.

Worksheet 2, 17 Exercises, Answers and Tips

Important: Remind students that they are presented the base form (lie, lay) in the worksheet, but that they must rewrite the sentence using the correct form using the present, past, or past participle forms.

Some sentences are deceptive. For example, exercise 17 must be rewritten as “Jim stared at the caged python as it **lay** in its cage quietly....” However, students must circle the correct form (lie) because lay is the past tense of lie.

1. Jenny (lie, lay) **had lain** in the lounge chair for two hours before she finally fell asleep.

Teaching Tip: Jenny isn't doing anything to anyone or anything, she simply IS. Thus, she lies in the lounge chair. The past perfect form (uses past participle) of lie is lain.

2. Because Alvin forgot his wristwatch, he (lie, lay) **laid** his cell phone next to his notebook during the test to keep track of time.

Teaching Tip: Alvin placed his cell phone next to his notebook. “Cell phone” is the direct object of the verb “lay,” which required an object.

3. Throughout her troubled pregnancy, Jenny was (lie, lay) **lying** on her bed most of the time.

Teaching Tip: Jenny simply rested, thus lie. The present participle of lie is lying.

4. Throughout her troubled pregnancy, Jenny (lie, lay) **lay** on her bed most of the time.

Teaching Tip: Jenny simply rested, thus lie. The past tense of lie is lay.

5. My dog Marley likes to (lie, lay) **lie** under the mango tree during hot summer days.

Teaching Tip: Marley likes to rest under the mango tree, thus lie.

6. “Be careful not to get the sink dirty when you (lie, lay) **lay** the flowerpot on the windowsill,” Grandma shouted.

Teaching Tip: The word flowerpot is the direct object of lay. Someone is doing something (placing) the flowerpot on the table, thus lay.

7. Ines's parents felt confident when she left for college because they had (lie, lay) **laid** a strong moral foundation for her to build on.

Teaching Tip: One “lays” a foundation. The word foundation is the object of the verb lay, and because of the past perfect (had) we use laid.

8. The workers were (lie, lay) **laying** concrete on the driveway when it started to rain.

Teaching Tip: The workers were “placing” or “pouring” concrete, thus lay.

9. During yesterday’s storm, Emmett was (lie, lay) **lying** under the expressway overpass.

Teaching Tip: Emmett wasn’t doing anything to anyone. He simply rested under the expressway overpass, thus lie.

10. During yesterday’s storm, Emmett (lie, lay) **lay** under the expressway overpass.

Teaching Tip: Same as above, but instead of using the present participle (lying) we use the simple past tense, lay.

11. Every weekday afternoon Virginia (lie, lay) **lies** on the couch to watch Tyra.

Teaching Tip: Virginia simply rests. She doesn’t do anything to anyone or anything, thus lie.

12. Jacinto (lie, lay) **lays** his backpack on the kitchen table as soon as he gets home.

Teaching Tip: Jacinto places or puts his backpack on the table, thus lay.

13. Sister O’Loughlin (lie, lay) **laid** down the rules about appropriate behavior in the dorms.

Teaching Tip: Rules are always “laid down,” in idiomatic English. Rules is the direct object, thus lay.

14. While James (lie, lay) **lay** asleep on the couch, the burglar stole his camera and jumped out the window.

Teaching Tip: James is just resting, thus lie. However, note that lay is the past tense of lie. So students must circle lie, but write the correct form of lie – lay.

15. The congregation (lie, lay) **laid** the offering at the foot of the altar.

Teaching Tip: The congregation places something, the offering, thus lay, and laid is the past tense of lay.

16. Johan told me that he had (lie, lay) **laid** the box outside Ms. Farquar’s office.

Teaching Tip: Johan placed the box, thus lay.

17. Jim stared at the caged python as it (lie, lay) **lay** in its cage quietly digesting the mouse for over two hours.

Teaching Tip: The snake simply rested, thus lie. However, lay is the past tense of lie.