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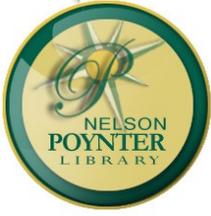
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### Underfunded Schools Forced To Cut Past Tense From Language Programs

The Onion, November 30, 2007 | Issue 43•48

Faced with ongoing budget crises, underfunded schools nationwide are increasingly left with no option but to cut the past tense—a grammatical construction traditionally used to relate all actions, and states that have transpired at an earlier point in time—from their English and language arts programs.

The past tense was deemed by school administrators to be too expensive to keep in primary and secondary education. "This was by no means an easy decision, but teaching our students how to conjugate verbs in a way that would allow them to describe events that have already occurred is a luxury that we can no longer afford," Phoenix-area high-school principal Sam Pennock said. "With our current budget, the past tense must unfortunately become a thing of the past."

In the most dramatic display of the new trend, the Tennessee Dept. of Education decided Monday to remove "-ed" endings from all of the state's English classrooms, saving schools an estimated \$3 million a year. "Our tax dollars should be spent preparing our children for the future, not for what has already happened," Hatch said at a recent press conference. "It's about time we stopped wasting everyone's time with who 'did' what or 'went' where. The past tense is, by definition, outdated."

Regardless of the recent upheaval, students throughout the country are learning to accept, and even embrace, the change to their curriculum. "At first I think the decision to drop the past tense from class is ridiculous, and I feel very upset by it," said David Keller, a seventh-grade student at Hampstead School in Fort Meyers, FL. "But now, it's almost like it never happens."