

-아/어 버리다

go and do it — finished, and you have feelings about it

Marks an action as completely done, with nothing left over. What it really adds is the speaker's reaction: relief that it's over, or regret that it happened.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Last vowel ㅣ or ㅓ	-아 버리다	가다 → 가 버렸어요
Any other vowel	-어 버리다	먹다 → 먹어 버렸어요
하다 verbs	해 버리다	해 버렸어요
Relief	burden gone	다 해 버렸어요
Regret	something lost	기회를 놓쳐 버렸어요
Intransitive too	allowed	친구가 가 버렸어요

WHEN TO USE IT

The vowel follows the -아요/어요 rule: 먹어 버리다, 가 버리다, 해 버리다. In speech it contracts to 먹어 버렸어 or even 먹어버렸어.

The action is finished and irreversible. Beyond that, the ending carries emotion, and which emotion depends on the situation. Relief: 숙제를 다 해 버렸어요 (I got the homework out of the way). Regret: 동생이 케이크를 다 먹어 버렸어요.

Because the emotion is the point, a neutral fact sounds odd with it. 어제 학교에 가 버렸어요 as a plain report is strange; it would only work if going was somehow a loss or a release.

Unlike -아/어 놓다, it works with intransitive verbs too: 친구가 가 버렸어요.

IN USE

- 숙제를 다 해 버렸어요.
I've got all the homework out of the way.
- 동생이 케이크를 다 먹어 버렸어요.
My brother went and ate the whole cake.
- 화가 나서 편지를 찢어 버렸어요.
I was angry, so I tore the letter up.
- 친구가 인사도 없이 가 버렸어요.
My friend just left without saying goodbye.
- 고민하다가 그냥 사 버렸어요.
I agonised over it and then just bought it.

6 기차가 벌써 떠나 버렸어요.

The train had already gone.

COMPARED WITH

-고 말다

Both mark completion with feeling, but -고 말다 almost always means the outcome was unintended and unwelcome. -아/어 버리다 can just as easily mean relief.

다 해 버렸어요. (glad it's done) / 울고 말았어요. (I ended up crying)

-았/었-

The plain past reports; 버리다 adds that you feel something about it. Dropping 버리다 makes the sentence factual and flat.

케이크를 다 먹었어요. (he ate it all) / 다 먹어 버렸어요. (he went and ate the lot)

-아/어 놓다

놓다 leaves a result for later use; 버리다 clears something away for good. Opposite attitudes to the same finished action.

만들어 놓았어요. (made it, ready to use) / 다 써 버렸어요. (used it all up)

WATCH OUT

X 숙제를 다 하어 버렸어요.

O 숙제를 다 해 버렸어요.

하다 becomes 해 before 버리다, as it does before 놓다 and 두다.

X 어제 학교에 가 버렸어요. — as a plain report

O 어제 학교에 갔어요.

버리다 requires that you feel something about the completion. For a neutral fact, use the plain past.

X 표를 미리 사 버렸어요. — meaning "bought in advance, ready"

O 표를 미리 사 뒀어요.

버리다 suggests finality or impulse. To say you bought them so they'd be ready, use 놓다 or 두다.