**December 2018
Linguistic Moment**

**Passed or Past ?**

If you are referring to a distance or a period of time before now, use “past”:

“The police car drove past the suspect’s house.” (distance) or “The team performed well in the past.” (time)

If you are describing the action of *passing,* however, you need to use “passed”:

“When John passed the gravy, he spilled it on his lap.”

 “The teacher was astonished that none of the students had passed the test.”

 “After a brief illness, he passed away.”

Remember that no matter however you have ”passed the time” you have **never** “*past* the time,” not even in the distant past.

“Past” can be an adjective, a noun, a preposition, or an adverb, but **never** a verb. If you need to write the past tense of the verb “to pass,” use “passed.”