After versus *After That* or *Afterwards*

These are important words to understand and use in speaking and writing. You can use them with any tense. Make sure you know the difference!

After comes before the first event.

Examples

- I cried after I heard the news. After I heard the news, I cried.
  First event: I heard the news. Second event: I cried.

- After he cleans the kitchen, he takes out the garbage.
  First event: He cleans the kitchen. Second event: He takes out the garbage.

- They will become Canadian citizens after they take the test.
  First event: They will take the test.
  Second event: They will become Canadian citizens.

After that or afterwards (afterward in U.S.) comes after the first event.

Examples

- I have breakfast and after that I go to school.
  First event: I have breakfast. Second event: I go to school.

- He became the party leader and afterwards he won the election.
  First event: He became the party leader.
  Second event: He won the election.

- You must complete Level 4 English. After that you will receive a certificate.
  First event: You must complete Level 4.
  Second event: You will receive a certificate.

Exercise

Write logical sentences with these words using after, after that, or afterwards. Use simple past, simple present, or future tenses. It's your choice.

Visit my sick friend | feel sick | after
After I visited my sick friend, I felt sick. OR I felt sick after I visited my sick friend.

Wash dishes | Eat supper | After
1. _____

Go shopping | Put the groceries away | After that
2. _____

Get dressed/go to bed | Have a shower | Afterwards
3. _____

Come to Canada | Become a Canadian citizen | After
4. _____

Plant some seeds | Have beautiful flowers | After that
5. _____

Attend citizenship ceremony | Take citizenship test | Afterwards
6. _____

Get sick | Have blood tests | After
7. _____

Pass the reading test | Study hard | After that
8. _____

Visit my family in Michigan | Get a U.S. visa | Afterwards
9. _____

Save a lot of money | Buy a house | After
10. _____

Pay the bill | Order food at a restaurant | After that
11. _____

Feel better | Take medicine | Afterwards
12. _____