The Proper Use of Go, Went, and Gone

The verbs go, went, and gone are frequently misused. Here is a detailed explanation of the proper way to use them.

Go – The present tense form of the verb (the action of “going” is happening NOW)
- Everyday I go to school.  
- I feel better about myself when I go to church.
- My sister and I go to the same doctor.  
- My son goes to John A. Logan College.

Went – The past tense of this verb (the action of “going” is finished and over with)
- Last year Joe went to New York City for the first time in his life.
- Mary went to visit her sister yesterday but has not returned yet.
- When those three boys went for a hike last weekend, they took plenty of food with them.

Gone – The past tense form of this verb which must be used only after the words have, has, had, is, or any form of the word be.
- had gone  
- has gone  
- is gone  
- have gone  
- will be gone  
- are gone
- were gone  
- am gone
- I had gone three miles down the road before I realized that I was driving in the wrong direction.
- My parents were gone by the time I arrived home.
- Our mayor has gone to many different foreign countries.
- Everyone thought that the snow would be gone by early March.
- While I am gone to the store, keep a careful eye on the children.

Note: Never ever use went after has, had, is, have, will be, are, or were. It is VERY incorrect!

Wrong: No one could figure out where the little boy had went.

Correct: No one could figure out where the little boy had gone.