

Verb Usage Handout

Topics Covered:

- Principal Forms of Verbs
- Past and Past Participle Forms of Verbs
 - Regular Verbs
 - Irregular Verbs
- Confusing Irregular Verbs
- More Confusing Verbs
- Review Exercises

Principal Forms of Verbs

English has two kinds of verbs: **regular** and **irregular**. Different forms of these verbs exist in order to express different times (or tenses), for example, present, past, and future.

Most verbs have four forms: the base form (the form found in the dictionary), the **-s** form, the **-ing** (present participle) form, and the **-ed** (past/past participle) form:

<u>Base form</u>	<u>-s form</u>	<u>-ing form</u> (Present <u>Participle</u>)	<u>-ed form</u> (Past Form or Past <u>Participle</u>)
jump work	jumps works	jumping working	jumped worked

Regardless of whether a verb is regular or irregular, the **-s form** of a verb is formed simply by adding **-s** (or sometimes **-es**) to the end of the verb. The **present participle** of both kinds of verbs is formed by adding **-ing** and using an auxiliary (or helping) verb (e.g., a form of *be* or *have*). The **past participle** of both kinds of verbs also requires the use of a helping verb; however, regular and irregular verbs differ in how they form their **past** and **past participle** forms (discussed in the next section).

Past and Past Participle Forms of Verbs

The primary difference between **regular** and **irregular verbs** is how they form their **past** and **past participle** forms. **Regular verbs** follow the pattern described above -- they just add a **-d** or **-ed**. However, **irregular verbs** are unpredictable. When describing past actions, they might (1) stay the same, (2) change just a part of the word, or (3) change the whole word. Some **irregular verbs** follow a pattern, and others follow no pattern.

<u>Base form</u>	<u>Past form</u>	<u>Past Participle form</u>
drive	drove	driven
cut	cut	cut
be (am, are)	was, were	been

For both **regular** and **irregular verbs**, words or expressions like *yesterday*, *earlier*, *last year*, and *formerly* which indicate past time are a clue that you need to use the **past tense** or **past participle** form of a verb. Another clue may be a **past tense** or **past participle** form of a verb elsewhere in the sentence in a clause beginning with a word such as *after*, *although*, *because*, *since*, or *when*. The important point to remember is that when such a clue appears, the **past tense** or **past participle** is needed. Note the clues in the following sentences:

Yesterday it **snowed** at three o'clock.
Because he **stayed** late, we **waited** for the call.

Another point to remember is that when different tense forms are used in a single sentence, the tense forms should appear in logical sequences.

After I **had dashed** outside, I **stopped** at the curb.

Past and Past Participle Forms of Regular Verbs

A **regular verb** forms the past and past participle by adding **-ed** or **-d** to the base form. All forms of the past tense and past participle are alike in **regular verbs**, regardless of the subject. The verb form is also the same regardless of whether the subject is singular or plural.

In the past tense, the past tense verb is the only verb in the sentence: “Frank **jumped** for the ball.” When a past participle is used, a helping verb (*have*, *has*, or *had* or *are*, *was*, or *were*) precedes the past participle: “Frank **had jumped** for the ball.”

When do we use the past tense or past participle form?

Use the simple past to talk about actions that began and ended in the past.	Simple Past Tense		
		Singular	Plural
	First Person (I, we) Second Person (you) Third Person (she, he, it, they)	I jumped You jumped He/she/it jumped	We jumped You jumped They jumped
Use the present perfect for (1) an action that started in the past but is now completed or (2) for an action that started in the past but is ongoing.	Present Perfect Tense		
		Singular	Plural
	First Person (I, we) Second Person (you) Third Person (she, he, it, they)	I have jumped You have jumped He/she/it has jumped	We have jumped You have jumped They have jumped
Use the past perfect for actions completed by a specific time in the past or before another past action.	Past Perfect Tense		
		Singular	Plural
	First Person (I, we) Second Person (you) Third Person (she, he, it, they)	I had jumped You had jumped He, she, it had jumped	We had jumped You had jumped They had jumped

Exercise 1 – Using Past Tense or Past Participle Forms of Regular Verbs

Directions: In the following sentences (1) underline any clue which hints that the verb in parentheses will need a past or past participle form. (2) Write the correct form of the verb (and helping verb if needed) in the blank. (Note: Not all sentences will have clues.)

Example: realized After Mark had answered the ad yesterday, he (realize) that he had misread it.

1. _____ Last week I (skate) passionately.
2. _____ The government (change) its policy on illegal immigration.
3. _____ She (change) many household products with her inventions.
4. _____ Motorcycle helmets (improve) over the years resulting in fewer head injuries.
5. _____ When Joanne went shopping last Saturday, the sales (excite) her.
6. _____ During yesterday's lunch, we (chat) about health care.
7. _____ My mother used to enjoy soap operas; in fact, that was all she (watch).
8. _____ The girls skipped when Ronda (start) to swing the jump rope.
9. _____ Last night I (jump) at the thought of going to work.
10. _____ The other night one boxer (smack) the other.
11. _____ Through research, scientists (discover) many ways to strengthen plants and animals.
12. _____ Last November, I (pass) my comprehensive final exam.
13. _____ When the speaker (finish), everyone (applaud).
14. _____ He was satisfied with the results he (receive) yesterday.
15. _____ Over the years, the NCAA (impose) sanctions against universities caught cheating.
16. _____ Although many use their products daily, few women inventors (achieve) superstardom.
17. _____ Coffee prices (drop) lately.
18. _____ Sometimes men (grab) the credit for inventions made by women.
19. _____ When I was younger, I (play) the saxophone.
20. _____ Before 1900, he (work) in a shoe factory.

Past and Past Participle Forms of Irregular Verbs

The past and past participle forms of **irregular verbs** do not follow one pattern. They may have anywhere from three to eight forms depending upon the verb. Some **irregular verbs** may have two or more past and past participle forms. For other **irregular verbs**, the base form is also the past and participle form. Other **irregular verbs** follow no pattern.

Similar to **regular verbs**, there is no difference between the singular and plural forms for most **irregular verbs**. In addition, similar to **regular verbs**, a helping verb (*have, has, or had* or *are, was, or were*) is used with the past participle.

When do we use the past tense or the past participle forms?

Use the simple past to talk about actions that began and ended in the past.	Simple Past Tense		
		Singular	Plural
	First Person	I drove/cut/was	We drove/cut/were
	Second Person	You drove/cut/were	You drove/cut/were
	Third Person	He/she/ it drove/cut/was	They drove/cut/were
Use the present perfect for (1) an action that started in the past but is now completed or (2) for an action that started in the past but is ongoing.	Present Perfect Tense		
		Singular	Plural
	First Person	I have driven/cut/been	We have driven/cut/been
	Second Person	You have driven/cut/been	You have driven/cut/been
	Third Person	He/she/it has driven/cut/been	They have driven/cut/been
Use the past perfect for actions completed by a specific time in the past or before another past action.	Past Perfect Tense		
		Singular	Plural
	First Person	I had driven/cut/been	We had driven/cut/been
	Second Person	You had driven/cut/been	You had driven/cut/been
	Third Person	He/she/it had driven/cut/been	They had driven/cut/been

Remember:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I	we
Second Person	you	you
Third Person	he, she, it	they

Here is a list of commonly used **irregular verbs** and their past and past participle forms:

Base Form	Past Form	Past Participle Form
arise	arose	arisen
awake	awoke/awaked	awaked/awoke
be/am/is/are	was/were	been
beat	beat	beaten
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bite	bit	bitten
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought

Base Form	Past Form	Past Participle Form
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie (recline)	lay	lain
lose	lost	lost
pay	paid	paid
put	put	put
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung

Base Form	Past Form	Past Participle Form
choose	chose	chosen
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
cut	cut	cut
dive	dived/dove	dived
do	did	done
drag	dragged	dragged
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
fight	fought	fought
fling	flung	flung
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten/forgot
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got/gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung	hung
hang (death)	hanged	hanged
hear	heard	heard
hit	hit	hit
hurt	hurt	hurt
know	knew	known

Base Form	Past Form	Past Participle Form
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
set	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
show	showed	shown
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank/sunk	sunk
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
speak	spoke	spoken
spring	sprang/sprung	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
strike	struck	struck
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
wake	woke/waked	waked/woken
wear	wore	worn
wet	wet	wet
write	wrote	written

Exercise 2 – Using Past Tense or Past Participle Forms of Irregular Verbs

Directions: In the following sentences (1) underline any clue which hints that the verb in parentheses will need a past or past participle form. (2) Write the correct form of the verb (and the helping verb if needed) in the blank.

Example: awoke I (awake) early yesterday morning.

- _____ Although I have camped several times in the desert, I (forget) how chilly the mornings were.
- _____ When I (awake) last night, I heard a noise.
- _____ The birds (fly) away yesterday.
- _____ He (run) all the way home after he received the news.
- _____ She (forget) why she had asked him to stop by.
- _____ He asked us for directions because we (drive) that route before.

7. _____ They just (go) downstairs to watch television.
8. _____ She (choose) that college because of its mathematics program.
9. _____ He (speak) Chinese since he was a child.
10. _____ I (eat) Thai food only once before.

Confusing Irregular Verbs: *Lie* and *Lay*

In addition to being irregular verbs, these verbs are frequently confused with one another because the present tense of *lay* and the past test of *lie* are spelled the same way. (Note: *Lie* can also be a noun. It means *falsehood*. Example: George Washington could not tell a *lie*.)

Base Form	Meaning	-s Form	-ing Form	Past Form	Past Participle
lie	To recline	lies	lying	lay	lain
lie	To tell a falsehood	lies	lying	lied	lied
lay	To put or place	lays	laying	laid	laid

Exercise 4 – Lie and Lay

Directions: Write the correct form of the verb *lie* or *lay* in the blank.

1. The boy is (_____) on the couch.
2. Your clothes will (_____) on the floor until you pick them up.
3. Terry (_____) his books on the counter yesterday.
4. She always (_____) the towel on the rack.
5. The cat is (_____) under the porch.
6. The baby is (_____) quietly in the crib.
7. Mary (_____) the baby on my lap.
8. Did you (_____) the newspaper on the table?
9. He always (_____) when I ask him if he was late for class.
10. The snow is (_____) on the ground.
11. (_____) down your gun!
12. Where are the directions he (_____) here yesterday?
13. The leaves have (_____) in the yard for days.
14. The basket (_____) out there for months.
15. He must have (_____) in the bed all day.
16. When I get the urge to exercise, I (_____) down until it passes.
17. They are (_____) the carpet today.
18. The new test is (_____) on the desk.
19. She was (_____) if she told you I broke the vase.
20. Father is (_____) silverware on the table.

More Confusing Verbs

These verbs are also frequently confused with one another. (Note: Both *affect* and *effect* can also be nouns. Example: Her *affect* (*disposition, feeling*) is always sour in the morning. One *effect* (*a result*) of lunar gravity is tides. However, most often *affect* is used as a verb and *effect* is used as a noun.)

Base Form	Meaning	Past Form	Past Participle
rise	To get up or move up	rose	risen
raise	To lift up or increase in amount	raised	raised
sit	To take a seat	sat	sat
set	To place	set	set
affect	To have an effect on or influence	affected	affected
effect	To make happen or bring about	effected	effected
hang	To fasten from above	hung	hung
hang	To execute by suspending by the neck	hanged	hanged

Exercise 6 – Confusing Words

Directions: In the following sentences, write the correct form of the verb in parentheses in the blank.

1. My family (*raised, rose*) ten acres of corn last summer. _____
2. We cannot let these changes (*affect, effect*) our decision. _____
3. Prices will (*rise, raise, risen*) during the next quarter. _____
4. They (*hanged, hung*) the witch on the scaffold. _____
5. According to economists, the new strategies will surely (*affect, effect*) a change. _____
6. John was (*sitting, setting*) in his favorite chair during the home invasion. _____
7. She has been (*sitting, setting*) out flowers all afternoon. _____
8. The new law (*affected, effected*) changes in the current tax regulations. _____
9. I thought her tantrum would (*raise, rise*) the roof. _____
10. I (*hanged, hung*) the picture on the wall. _____
11. (*Raise, Rise*) from your seat! _____
12. His sprained ankle (*affects, effects*) his athletic performance. _____
13. Lisa (*sit, set*) the paper clips in the desk drawer. _____
14. The president (*effected, affected*) a new policy in international trade. _____
15. The pictures have (*hanged, hung*) on that wall for years. _____

Review Exercises

Review Exercise 1: After each sentence, a helping verb is in parentheses. If you added this word at the point indicated by the asterisk (*), write the form of the italicized verb that you would use on the blank line.

1. Five inches of rain * *fell*. (have) _____
2. Ted * *ate* too much pie. (had) _____
3. They * *drove* to town before. (have) _____
4. Tim * *drank* too much soda. (has) _____
5. She * *rode* back in six hours. (has) _____
6. The storm * *raged* all afternoon. (had) _____
7. The sound * *gave* me a headache. (had) _____
8. The dog * *came* back. (has) _____
9. The Johnsons * *went* to Texas. (have) _____
10. Jim * *spoke* to the new students. (had) _____

Review Exercise 2: Write on the blank line the correct **past** or **past participle** form of each verb in parentheses. Watch for the helping verbs **have** and **be**, which must be followed by the participle form of the main verb.

11. The waitress has (*give*) us good service. _____
12. Pete had (*swim*) the night before. _____
13. Someone has (*take*) the car from that spot. _____
14. He had (*tear*) his shirt in the game. _____
15. The engine (*run*) out of fuel. _____
16. He had (*write*) that letter. _____
17. She (*begin*) to look dizzy. _____
18. Johnny had (*break*) his leg. _____
19. Our relatives have (*eat*) the food. _____
20. They just (*sing*) our favorite song. _____
21. Ernie (*drive*) the car into the wall. _____
22. The men have (*fly*) from the other facility. _____
23. The girl had (*grow*) weary of his antics. _____
24. Tony (*drink*) the tall glass of water. _____
25. I (*go*) to the concert. _____

- 26. What have you (*do*) to your ankle? _____
- 27. Sara (*speak*) far too long. _____
- 28. The show had already (*begin*). _____
- 29. He (*wear*) his suit only for special events. _____
- 30. You (*see*) how your son acted. _____
- 31. Make sure that the bat is not (*break*). _____
- 32. Hank (*do*) a good job of goofing off. _____
- 33. A cat had (*fall*) asleep in the tree. _____
- 34. Tommy (*buy*) the farm last week. _____
- 35. We have (*knew*) about the ailment for years. _____

Review Exercise 3: Write the correct verb in the space to the right.

- 36. I told him to (*lay, lie*) down. _____
- 37. We (*lay, laid*) a napkin on every plate. _____
- 38. The boy (*lay, laid*) down his head. _____
- 39. George had (*laid, lain*) his books down. _____
- 40. He (*laid, lied*) if he said I took the cookie. _____
- 41. (*Set, Sit*) the cards down. _____
- 42. We (*sat, set*) and watched the stars. _____
- 43. We all expect prices to (*raise, rise*) soon. _____
- 44. The weather (*raised, rose*) our waning hope. _____
- 45. Our taxes have (*rose, risen*) this year. _____

Review Exercise 4: Write the correct **past/past participle** form of each of the verbs in parentheses.

- 46. Lee (*bring*) items that he had (*tear*) out of a magazine. _____
- 47. Although he (*wear*) his mittens, his hands still (*freeze*). _____
- 48. She (*fall*) down and (*break*) her hip. _____
- 49. I (*give*) my brother the shirt that had (*sbrink*). _____
- 50. The janitor (*do*) better work after we (*speak*) to him. _____
- 51. The ship (*run*) into a rock and (*sink*). _____
- 52. Myrna (*see*) the robber run after he had (*hit*) the elderly woman. _____

82. Have they (*chose, chosen*) the store they want to visit?
83. The president's executive order (*effected, affected*) a change in policy.
84. Fred has (*drew, drawn*) the best logo.
85. Has Eddie (*ate, eaten*) breakfast?
86. It (*hasn't, haven't*) snowed this winter.
87. The class has (*began, begun*) studying Shakespeare.
88. Tom, have you (*began, begun*) changing the tire?
89. Have you (*saw, seen*) the new teacher?
90. The shortstop has (*broke, broken*) his collarbone.
91. Has the bell (*rang, rung*)?
92. The dogs have (*came, come*) to bark at the cats.
93. Have all the men (*went, gone*)?
94. (*Wasn't, Weren't*) those grades rather low?
95. Many apples have (*fell, fallen*) from the tree.
96. The women have (*went, gone*) to the ballroom dance.
97. How many glasses of tea has he (*drank, drunk*)?
98. The rust on my truck (*gone, went*) away.
99. The shy girl (*knew, known*) the answer.
100. Has Lolita (*broke, broken*) her fingernail?
101. The musician has (*done, did*) well in his studies.
102. All the representatives have (*chosen, chose*) their seats.
103. The dinner guests (*has, have*) arrived.
104. The wind (*came, come*) sweeping through the hollow.
105. I just (*wrote, written*) a letter to my aunt.
106. I (*seen, saw*) the movie last night at the plaza.
107. My distant relative (*driven, drove*) the car home.
108. I have (*came, come*) to buy a stereo, sir.
109. The basketball player has (*grew, grown*) an inch or two.
110. He (*hanged, hung*) the pictures for me yesterday.
111. You were (*gave, given*) permission by the principal.
112. Who (*rang, rung*) the dinner bell?

113. Sherry (*taken, took*) many pictures.
114. The employees were (*gave, given*) an early retirement.
115. Were those spices (*grewed, grown*) in your garden?
116. The problems concerning crime have (*lead, led*) to many studies on violence.
117. He (*took, taken*) his reputation for granted.
118. She has (*wrote, written*) many articles about government waste and unnecessary expenditures.
119. The committee has not (*began, begun*) to discuss the matter at hand.
120. It is not (*knew, known*) whether or not she will return for her final year of the contract.