

An Overview of English Verb Forms

Every verb in English can have a base form, an -ing form, a past simple form, an infinitive form, and a past participle.

We use the base form for:

the present simple tense. For example “*They **live** in Rome.*”

the infinitive. For example, “*I want **to learn** English.*”

We use the -ing form (or the gerund) for:

continuous tenses, like the present continuous. For example. “*He’s **working***”

verbs as nouns. For example, “***Swimming** is good for you.*”

And we use the past participle for:

perfect tenses, like the present perfect. For example, “*I’ve **finished***”

the passive form. For example, “*It **was made** in Japan*”

adjectives. For example. “*The chair is **broken***”

What are Regular Verbs?

Regular verbs in English create the past simple and past participle by adding -ed to the base form.

For example:

BASE FORM	PAST SIMPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
arrive	arrived	arrived
call	called	called
wait	waited	waited

If the verb ends in a consonant and -y, we change the -y to -i and added -ed. For example:

BASE FORM	PAST SIMPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
marry	married	married
study	studied	studied

If a verb ends in -e we simply add -d, For example:

BASE FORM	PAST SIMPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
hate	hated	hated
like	liked	liked

Here are some examples of regular verbs:

*“Yesterday Jack **studied** all day.”*

*“Raul has **accepted** the job offer.”*

*“Have you **finished** yet?”*

*“We really **liked** the film we watched last night.”*

There are three ways to pronounce -ed, depending on the last letter of the verb.

/t/	/ɪd/	/d/
verbs ending in -f, -k, -ss, -ch, -sh, -x e.g. watched, fixed, kicked	verbs ending in -d or -t e.g. needed, wanted	verbs ending with all other letters e.g. listened, played

What are Irregular Verbs?

There are about 200 irregular verbs in English. We can divide these into four types:

- 1 Verbs which have the **same base form, past simple and past participle**
- 2 Verbs which have the **same past simple and past participle**
- 3 Verbs which have the **same base form and past participle**
- 4 Verbs which have a **different base form, past simple and past participle**

A good way to learn irregular verbs is to study them in these groups because as they are similar they're easier to remember. Here are the most common irregular verbs in these groups.

Group 1

BASE FORM	PAST SIMPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
cost	cost	cost
cut	cut	cut
hurt	hurt	hurt
let	let	let
put	put	put

For example:

*"Our car **cost** a lot of money but it's always breaking down."*

*"Pasha **hurt** himself in a soccer match last weekend."*

*"My parents have **let** me stay out late tonight."*

*"They **put** on their jackets because it was very cold."*

Group 2

BASE FORM	PAST SIMPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
bring	brought	brought
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
feel	felt	felt
find	found	found
get	got	got
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
keep	kept	kept
leave	left	left
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
read /ri:d/	read /'red/	read /'red/
say	said	said
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
teach	taught	taught
think	thought	thought
win	won	won

For example:

*"They **had** lunch at a Thai restaurant on Monday."*

*"Have you **heard** the news about the train strike?"*

*"Tim has **sent** an email to all the suppliers."*

*"Who **won** the match?" – "The Giants."*

Group 3

BASE FORM	PAST SIMPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
come	came	come
become	became	become
run	ran	run

For example:

*“He **came** back home at 4 a.m. on Saturday.”*

*“Suzi has **become** the Managing Director.”*

*“The dog **ran** into the garden after Lee opened the door.”*

*“Has Mrs. O’Connor **come** back from lunch yet?”*

Group 4

BASE FORM	PAST SIMPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
be	was/were	been
begin	began	begun
break	broke	broken
choose	chose	chosen
do	did	done
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
know	knew	known
see	saw	seen
speak	spoke	spoken
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
wake	woke	woken
write	wrote	written

For example:

*"The kids **ate** a lot of cakes at the party."*

*"They **drove** to the airport and left their car there."*

*"Has she **taken** her tickets yet?"*

*"I've **written** a letter of application for the manager's job."*