

# RULES

## For Using Irregular Verbs

### Understand the problem.

All verbs, whether regular or irregular, have five forms [often called *principal parts*]. These forms are the infinitive, simple present, simple past, past participle, and present participle.

The difference between a regular and an irregular verb is the formation of the simple past and past participle. Regular verbs are dependably consistent—the simple past ends in *ed* as does the past participle. Check out this chart:

Infinitive	Simple Present	Simple Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
to laugh	laugh(s)	laughed	laughed	laughing
to start	start(s)	started	started	starting
to wash	wash(es)	washed	washed	washing
to wink	wink(s)	winked	winked	winking

In contrast, the simple past and past participle of irregular verbs can end in a variety of ways, with absolutely no consistent pattern. Here are some examples:

Infinitive	Simple Present	Simple Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
to drive	drive(s)	drove	driven	driving
to feel	feel(s)	felt	felt	feeling
to put	put(s)	put	put	putting
to swim	swim(s)	swam	swum	swimming

Writers make two frequent errors with irregular verbs. They either add an incorrect *ed* to the end of an irregular verb or accidentally interchange the simple past and past participle. Read this sentence:

Olivia **feeled** like exercising yesterday, so she **putted** on her bathing suit and **drived** to the YMCA, where she **swum** so far that only an extra large pepperoni pizza would satisfy her hunger.

What are the problems with this sentence? First, **feeled** should be **felt**. Next, **putted** needs to be **put**. The correct past tense of **drive** is **drove**. And we must change **swum** to **swam**.

### Know the solution.

To avoid making mistakes with irregular verbs, learn the very long chart below.

Infinitive	Simple Present	Simple Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
to arise	arise(s)	arose	arisen	arising
to awake	awake(s)	awoke or awaked	awaked or awoken	awaking
to be	am, is, are	was, were	been	being
to bear	bear(s)	bore	borne or born	bearing
to beat	beat(s)	beat	beaten	beating
to become	become(s)	became	become	becoming
to begin	begin(s)	began	begun	beginning
to bend	bend(s)	bent	bent	bending
to bet	bet(s)	bet	bet	betting
to bid [to offer]	bid(s)	bid	bid	bidding

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<b>to bid</b> [ <i>to command</i> ]	bid(s)	bade	bidden	bidding
<b>to bind</b>	bind(s)	bound	bound	binding
<b>to bite</b>	bite(s)	bit	bitten <i>or</i> bit	biting
<b>to blow</b>	blow(s)	blew	blown	blowing
<b>to break</b>	break(s)	broke	broken	breaking
<b>to bring</b>	bring(s)	brought	brought	bringing
<b>to build</b>	build(s)	built	built	building
<b>to burst</b>	burst(s)	burst	burst	bursting
<b>to buy</b>	buy(s)	bought	bought	buying
<b>to cast</b>	cast(s)	cast	cast	casting
<b>to catch</b>	catch(es)	caught	caught	catching
<b>to choose</b>	choose(s)	chose	chosen	choosing
<b>to cling</b>	cling(s)	clung	clung	clinging
<b>to come</b>	come(s)	came	come	coming
<b>to cost</b>	cost(s)	cost	cost	costing
<b>to creep</b>	creep(s)	crept	crept	creeping
<b>to cut</b>	cut(s)	cut	cut	cutting

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<b>to deal</b>	deal(s)	dealt	dealt	dealing
<b>to dig</b>	dig(s)	dug	dug	digging
<b>to dive</b>	dive(s)	dived <i>or</i> dove	dived	diving
<b>to do</b>	do(es)	did	done	doing
<b>to draw</b>	draw(s)	drew	drawn	drawing
<b>to dream</b>	dream(s)	dreamed <i>or</i> dreamt	dreamed <i>or</i> dreamt	dreaming
<b>to drink</b>	drink(s)	drank	drunk	drinking
<b>to drive</b>	drive(s)	drove	driven	driving
<b>to eat</b>	eat(s)	ate	eaten	eating
<b>to fall</b>	fall(s)	fell	fallen	falling
<b>to feed</b>	feed(s)	fed	fed	feeding
<b>to feel</b>	feel(s)	felt	felt	feeling
<b>to fight</b>	fight(s)	fought	fought	fighting
<b>to find</b>	find(s)	found	found	finding
<b>to flee</b>	flee(s)	fled	fled	fleeing
<b>to fling</b>	fling(s)	flung	flung	flinging
<b>to fly</b>	flies, fly	flew	flown	flying

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<b>to forbid</b>	forbid(s)	forbade <i>or</i> forbad	forbidden	forbidding
<b>to forget</b>	forget(s)	forgot	forgotten <i>or</i> forgot	forgetting
<b>to forgive</b>	forgive(s)	forgave	forgiven	forgiving
<b>to forsake</b>	forsake(s)	forsook	forsaken	forsaking
<b>to freeze</b>	freeze(s)	froze	frozen	freezing
<b>to get</b>	get(s)	got	got <i>or</i> gotten	getting
<b>to give</b>	give(s)	gave	given	giving
<b>to go</b>	go(es)	went	gone	going
<b>to grow</b>	grow(s)	grew	grown	growing
<b>to hang</b> [ <i>to suspend</i> ]	hang(s)	hung	hung	hanging
<b>to have</b>	has, have	had	had	having
<b>to hear</b>	hear(s)	heard	heard	hearing
<b>to hide</b>	hide(s)	hid	hidden	hiding
<b>to hit</b>	hit(s)	hit	hit	hitting
<b>to hurt</b>	hurt(s)	hurt	hurt	hurting

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<b>to keep</b>	keep(s)	kept	kept	keeping
<b>to know</b>	know(s)	knew	known	knowing
<b>to lay</b>	lay(s)	laid	laid	laying
<b>to lead</b>	lead(s)	led	led	leading
<b>to leap</b>	leap(s)	leaped <i>or</i> leapt	leaped <i>or</i> leapt	leaping
<b>to leave</b>	leave(s)	left	left	leaving
<b>to lend</b>	lend(s)	lent	lent	lending
<b>to let</b>	let(s)	let	let	letting
<b>to lie [to rest or recline]</b>	lie(s)	lay	lain	lying
<b>to light</b>	light(s)	lighted <i>or</i> lit	lighted <i>or</i> lit	lighting
<b>to lose</b>	lose(s)	lost	lost	losing
<b>to make</b>	make(s)	made	made	making
<b>to mean</b>	mean(s)	meant	meant	meaning
<b>to pay</b>	pay(s)	paid	paid	paying
<b>to prove</b>	prove(s)	proved	proved <i>or</i> proven	proving
<b>to quit</b>	quit(s)	quit	quit	quitting

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<b>to read</b>	read(s)	read	read	reading
<b>to rid</b>	rid(s)	rid	rid	ridding
<b>to ride</b>	ride(s)	rode	ridden	riding
<b>to ring</b>	ring(s)	rang	rung	ringing
<b>to rise</b>	rise(s)	rose	risen	rising
<b>to run</b>	run(s)	ran	run	running
<b>to say</b>	say(s)	said	said	saying
<b>to see</b>	see(s)	saw	seen	seeing
<b>to seek</b>	seek(s)	sought	sought	seeking
<b>to send</b>	send(s)	sent	sent	sending
<b>to set</b>	set(s)	set	set	setting
<b>to shake</b>	shake(s)	shook	shaken	shaking
<b>to shine</b> <i>[to glow]</i>	shine(s)	shone	shone	shining
<b>to shoot</b>	shoot(s)	shot	shot	shooting
<b>to show</b>	show(s)	showed	shown <i>or</i> showed	showing
<b>to shrink</b>	shrink(s)	shrank	shrunk	shrinking
<b>to sing</b>	sing(s)	sang	sung	singing

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<b>to sink</b>	sink(s)	sank <i>or</i> sunk	sunk	sinking
<b>to sit</b>	sit(s)	sat	sat	sitting
<b>to slay</b>	slay(s)	slew	slain	slaying
<b>to sleep</b>	sleep(s)	slept	slept	sleeping
<b>to sling</b>	sling(s)	slung	slung	slinging
<b>to sneak</b>	sneak(s)	sneaked <i>or</i> snuck	sneaked <i>or</i> snuck	sneaking
<b>to speak</b>	speak(s)	spoke	spoken	speaking
<b>to spend</b>	spend(s)	spent	spent	spending
<b>to spin</b>	spin(s)	spun	spun	spinning
<b>to spring</b>	spring(s)	sprang <i>or</i> sprung	sprung	springing
<b>to stand</b>	stand(s)	stood	stood	standing
<b>to steal</b>	steal(s)	stole	stolen	stealing
<b>to sting</b>	sting(s)	stung	stung	stinging
<b>to stink</b>	stink(s)	stank <i>or</i> stunk	stunk	stinking
<b>to stride</b>	stride(s)	strode	stridden	striding
<b>to strike</b>	strike(s)	struck	struck	striking

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<b>to strive</b>	strive(s)	strove	striven	striving
<b>to swear</b>	swear(s)	swore	sworn	swearing
<b>to sweep</b>	sweep(s)	swept	swept	sweeping
<b>to swim</b>	swim(s)	swam	swum	swimming
<b>to swing</b>	swing(s)	swung	swung	swinging
<b>to take</b>	take(s)	took	taken	taking
<b>to teach</b>	teach(es)	taught	taught	teaching
<b>to tear</b>	tear(s)	tore	torn	tearing
<b>to tell</b>	tell(s)	told	told	telling
<b>to think</b>	think(s)	thought	thought	thinking
<b>to throw</b>	throw(s)	threw	thrown	throwing
<b>to understand</b>	understand(s)	understood	understood	understanding
<b>to wake</b>	wake(s)	woke <i>or</i> waked	waked <i>or</i> woken	waking
<b>to wear</b>	wear(s)	wore	worn	wearing
<b>to weave</b>	weave(s)	wove <i>or</i> weaved	woven <i>or</i> wove	weaving
<b>to weep</b>	weep(s)	wept	wept	weeping
<b>to wring</b>	wring(s)	wrung	wrung	wringing

Infinitive	Simple Present	Simple Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
to write	write(s)	wrote	written	writing

In addition to learning the chart above, you must also understand the difference between the simple past and past participle.

A simple past tense verb always has *just one part*. You need no auxiliary verb to form this tense. Look at these examples:

Because dinner time was near, my dog Oreo **bit** the spine of *Moby-Dick* and pulled the novel off my lap.

Since Denise had ignored bills for so long, she **wrote** out checks for an hour straight.

Despite the noise, jolts, and jerks, Alex **slept** so soundly on the city bus that he missed his stop.

Many multipart verbs, however, require the past participle after one or more auxiliary verbs. Read these sentences:

Raymond **had bitten** into the muffin before Charise mentioned that it was her infamous chocolate-broccoli variety.

**had** = auxiliary verb; **bitten** = past participle

Once Woody **has written** his essay for Mr. Stover, he plans to reward himself with a packet of Twinkies.

**has** = auxiliary verb; **written** = past participle

Cynthia **might have slept** better if she hadn't watched *The Nightmare on Elm Street* marathon on HBO.

**might, have** = auxiliary verbs; **slept** = past participle

For regular verbs, knowing the distinction between the simple past and past participle is unnecessary because both are identical. Check out these two sentences:

Diane **giggled** as her beagle Reliable pushed his cold wet nose into her stomach, searching for cookie crumbs.

**giggled** = simple past

Until the disapproving Mrs. Whitman elbowed Latoya in the ribs, the young girl **had giggled** without stop at the toilet paper streamer attached to Principal Clemens's shoe.

**had** = auxiliary verb; **giggled** = past participle

When you choose an irregular verb for a sentence, however, the simple past and past participle are often different, so you must know the distinction. Here are two examples:

Essie **drove** so cautiously that traffic piled up behind her, causing angry drivers to honk their horns and shout obscenities.

**drove** = simple past

Essie **might have driven** faster if she hadn't forgotten her glasses and saw more than big colored blurs through the windshield.

**might, have** = auxiliary verbs; **driven** = past participle

In addition, past participles can function as adjectives in sentences, describing other words. When you use a past participle in this manner, you must choose the correct form. Read these sentences:

The calculus exams **given** by Dr. Ribley are so difficult that his students believe their brains will burst.

Delores discovered the **stolen** bologna under the sofa, guarded fiercely by Max, her Chihuahua.

The **written** reprimand so shamed poor Pablo that he promised his boss never again to throw a scoop of ice cream at a customer.

Remember that you can always consult a dictionary when you have a question about the correct form of an irregular verb.



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