

# R U L E S

## 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
<i>to laugh</i>	laugh(s)	laughed	laughed	laughing
<i>to start</i>	start(s)	started	started	starting
<i>to wash</i>	wash(es)	washed	washed	washing
<i>to wink</i>	wink(s)	winked	winked	winking

Irregular verbs, on the other hand, 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
<i>to drive</i>	drive(s)	drove	driven	driving
<i>to feel</i>	feel(s)	felt	felt	feeling
<i>to put</i>	put(s)	put	put	putting
<i>to swim</i>	swim(s)	swam	swum	swimming

Writers make two frequent errors with irregular verbs: either adding an incorrect **ed** to the end of an irregular verb or accidentally interchanging 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 form 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.

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<i>to arise</i>	arise(s)	arose	arisen	arising
<i>to awake</i>	awake(s)	awoke <b>or</b> awaked	awaked <b>or</b> awoken	awaking
<i>to be</i>	am, is, are	was, were	been	being
<i>to bear</i>	bear(s)	bore	borne <b>or</b> born	bearing
<i>to beat</i>	beat(s)	beat	beaten	beating
<i>to become</i>	become(s)	became	become	becoming
<i>to begin</i>	begin(s)	began	begun	beginning
<i>to bend</i>	bend(s)	bent	bent	bending
<i>to bet</i>	bet(s)	bet	bet	betting
<i>to bid (to offer)</i>	bid(s)	bid	bid	bidding
<i>to bid (to command)</i>	bid(s)	bade	bidden	bidding
<i>to bind</i>	bind(s)	bound	bound	binding
<i>to bite</i>	bite(s)	bit	bitten <b>or</b> bit	biting
<i>to blow</i>	blow(s)	blew	blown	blowing
<i>to break</i>	break(s)	broke	broken	breaking
<i>to bring</i>	bring(s)	brought	brought	bringing
<i>to build</i>	build(s)	built	built	building
<i>to burst</i>	burst(s)	burst	burst	bursting
<i>to buy</i>	buy(s)	bought	bought	buying
<i>to cast</i>	cast(s)	cast	cast	casting
<i>to catch</i>	catch(es)	caught	caught	catching
<i>to choose</i>	choose(s)	chose	chosen	choosing
<i>to cling</i>	cling(s)	clung	clung	clinging
<i>to come</i>	come(s)	came	come	coming
<i>to cost</i>	cost(s)	cost	cost	costing
<i>to creep</i>	creep(s)	crept	crept	creeping
<i>to cut</i>	cut(s)	cut	cut	cutting
<i>to deal</i>	deal(s)	dealt	dealt	dealing
<i>to dig</i>	dig(s)	dug	dug	digging
<i>to dive</i>	dive(s)	dived <b>or</b> dove	dived	diving
<i>to do</i>	do(es)	did	done	doing
<i>to draw</i>	draw(s)	drew	drawn	drawing
<i>to drink</i>	drink(s)	drank	drunk	drinking
<i>to drive</i>	drive(s)	drove	driven	driving
<i>to eat</i>	eat(s)	ate	eaten	eating
<i>to fall</i>	fall(s)	fell	fallen	falling
<i>to feed</i>	feed(s)	fed	fed	feeding
<i>to feel</i>	feel(s)	felt	felt	feeling
<i>to fight</i>	fight(s)	fought	fought	fighting
<i>to find</i>	find(s)	found	found	finding
<i>to flee</i>	flee(s)	fled	fled	fleeing

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<i>to fling</i>	fling(s)	flung	flung	flinging
<i>to fly</i>	flies, fly	flew	flown	flying
<i>to forbid</i>	forbid(s)	forbade <b>or</b> forbad	forbidden	forbidding
<i>to forget</i>	forget(s)	forgot	forgotten <b>or</b> forgot	forgetting
<i>to forgive</i>	forgive(s)	forgave	forgiven	forgiving
<i>to forsake</i>	forsake(s)	forsook	forsaken	forsaking
<i>to freeze</i>	freeze(s)	froze	frozen	freezing
<i>to get</i>	get(s)	got	got <b>or</b> gotten	getting
<i>to give</i>	give(s)	gave	given	giving
<i>to go</i>	go(es)	went	gone	going
<i>to grow</i>	grow(s)	grew	grown	growing
<i>to hang (to suspend)</i>	hang(s)	hung	hung	hanging
<i>to have</i>	has, have	had	had	having
<i>to hear</i>	hear(s)	heard	heard	hearing
<i>to hide</i>	hide(s)	hid	hidden	hiding
<i>to hit</i>	hit(s)	hit	hit	hitting
<i>to hurt</i>	hurt(s)	hurt	hurt	hurting
<i>to keep</i>	keep(s)	kept	kept	keeping
<i>to know</i>	know(s)	knew	known	knowing
<i>to lay</i>	lay(s)	laid	laid	laying
<i>to lead</i>	lead(s)	led	led	leading
<i>to leap</i>	leap(s)	leaped <b>or</b> leapt	leaped <b>or</b> leapt	leaping
<i>to leave</i>	leave(s)	left	left	leaving
<i>to lend</i>	lend(s)	lent	lent	lending
<i>to let</i>	let(s)	let	let	letting
<i>to lie (to rest or recline)</i>	lie(s)	lay	lain	lying
<i>to light</i>	light(s)	lighted <b>or</b> lit	lighted <b>or</b> lit	lighting
<i>to lose</i>	lose(s)	lost	lost	losing
<i>to make</i>	make(s)	made	made	making
<i>to mean</i>	mean(s)	meant	meant	meaning
<i>to pay</i>	pay(s)	paid	paid	paying
<i>to prove</i>	prove(s)	proved	proved <b>or</b> proven	proving
<i>to quit</i>	quit(s)	quit	quit	quitting
<i>to read</i>	read(s)	read	read	reading
<i>to rid</i>	rid(s)	rid	rid	ridding
<i>to ride</i>	ride(s)	rode	ridden	riding
<i>to ring</i>	ring(s)	rang	rung	ringing
<i>to rise</i>	rise(s)	rose	risen	rising
<i>to run</i>	run(s)	ran	run	running

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Present</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>	<b>Present Participle</b>
<i>to say</i>	say(s)	said	said	saying
<i>to see</i>	see(s)	saw	seen	seeing
<i>to seek</i>	seek(s)	sought	sought	seeking
<i>to send</i>	send(s)	sent	sent	sending
<i>to set</i>	set(s)	set	set	setting
<i>to shake</i>	shake(s)	shook	shaken	shaking
<i>to shine (to glow)</i>	shine(s)	shone	shone	shining
<i>to shoot</i>	shoot(s)	shot	shot	shooting
<i>to show</i>	show(s)	showed	shown <b>or</b> showed	showing
<i>to shrink</i>	shrink(s)	shrank	shrunk	shrinking
<i>to sing</i>	sing(s)	sang	sung	singing
<i>to sink</i>	sink(s)	sank <b>or</b> sunk	sunk	sinking
<i>to sit</i>	sit(s)	sat	sat	sitting
<i>to slay</i>	slay(s)	slew	slain	slaying
<i>to sleep</i>	sleep(s)	slept	slept	sleeping
<i>to sling</i>	sling(s)	slung	slung	slinging
<i>to sneak</i>	sneak(s)	sneaked <b>or</b> snuck	sneaked <b>or</b> snuck	sneaking
<i>to speak</i>	speak(s)	spoke	spoken	speaking
<i>to spend</i>	spend(s)	spent	spent	spending
<i>to spin</i>	spin(s)	spun	spun	spinning
<i>to spring</i>	spring(s)	sprang <b>or</b> sprung	sprung	springing
<i>to stand</i>	stand(s)	stood	stood	standing
<i>to steal</i>	steal(s)	stole	stolen	stealing
<i>to sting</i>	sting(s)	stung	stung	stinging
<i>to stink</i>	stink(s)	stank <b>or</b> stunk	stunk	stinking
<i>to stride</i>	stride(s)	strode	stridden	striding
<i>to strike</i>	strike(s)	struck	struck	striking
<i>to strive</i>	strive(s)	strove	striven	striving
<i>to swear</i>	swear(s)	swore	sworn	swearing
<i>to sweep</i>	sweep(s)	swept	swept	sweeping
<i>to swim</i>	swim(s)	swam	swum	swimming
<i>to swing</i>	swing(s)	swung	swung	swinging
<i>to take</i>	take(s)	took	taken	taking
<i>to teach</i>	teach(es)	taught	taught	teaching
<i>to tear</i>	tear(s)	tore	torn	tearing
<i>to tell</i>	tell(s)	told	told	telling
<i>to think</i>	think(s)	thought	thought	thinking
<i>to throw</i>	throw(s)	threw	thrown	throwing
<i>to understand</i>	understand(s)	understood	understood	understanding
<i>to wake</i>	wake(s)	woke <b>or</b> waked	waked <b>or</b> woken	waking

Infinitive	Simple Present	Simple Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
<i>to wear</i>	wear(s)	wore	worn	wearing
<i>to wring</i>	wring(s)	wrung	wrung	wringing
<i>to write</i>	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 of my lap.

Because 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. Wittman 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 to throw another scoop of ice cream at a customer again.

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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