

9 STANDARD VERB FORMS

The twelve verb tenses explain when the action of a verb takes place. Verbs show time by changing form. Example of three of the most common tense changes follow:



Present Tense: Today, I love you.
 Past Tense: Yesterday, I loved you.
 Present Perfect Tense: For many years, I have loved you.

When you look up a verb in the dictionary, you will find only one form (present tense) of the verb listed if it is a regular verb.

Ex: talk
 fool
 jump

The past tense and past participles of regular verbs are formed by adding -d or -ed. The present participle is formed by adding -ing.

Present	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
talk	talked	talked	talking
promise	promised	promised	promising

I talk to my sister daily.
 I talked to her just last week.
 I have talked to her recently.
 I am talking to her right now.

If the verb is irregular, you will find four forms listed: the present tense, past tense, and the present and past participles; the forms will all be spelled differently.

Present	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
write	wrote	written	writing
swim	swam	swum	swimming
rise	rose	risen	rising

I write for the *Daily Journal*.
 I wrote for the *Sun* for many years.
 I have written thousands of restaurant reviews.
 I am writing about the new seafood joint on Washington St.

Note: Some irregular verbs do not change forms.

Present	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
burst	burst	burst	bursting
cut	cut	cut	cutting

I often cut up potatoes to put in soup.
 Yesterday, I cut my finger.
 I am cutting up the broccoli right now.
 I have cut the onions already.

If you are not sure whether a verb is regular or irregular, look it up in a dictionary and see which form is presented.

IMPORTANT: Using a participial form of a verb requires that you use a helping verb such as *has, have, had, is, was, or were*. Do not use a helping verb with the past tense.

- Yes: Many times I **have written** you letters.
- No: Many times I **have wrote** you letters.
- Yes: The child **has swum** the length of the pool.
- No: The child **has swam** the length of the pool.

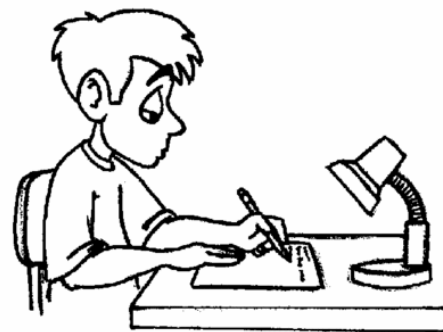
NOTE: Never say "I seen..." It's always either "I saw..." or "I have seen..."

SOME IRREGULAR VERBS

This list is far from comprehensive. Always consult a dictionary if you have questions

infinitive	past	past participle	present participle
to be	was, were	been	being
to beat	beat	beaten	beating
to become	became	become	becoming
to begin	began	begun	beginning
to bend	bent	bent	bending
to bite	bit	bitten	biting
to blow	blew	blown	blowing
to break	broke	broken	breaking
to bring	brought	brought	bringing
to burn	burned or burnt	burned or burnt	burning
to buy	bought	bought	buying
to catch	caught	caught	catching
to choose	chose	chosen	choosing
to come	came	come	coming
to cut	cut	cut	cutting
to dig	dug	dug	digging
to do	did	done	doing
to draw	drew	drawn	drawing
to dream	dreamed or dreamt	dreamed or dreamt	dreaming
to drive	drove	driven	driving
to drink	drank	drunk	drinking
to eat	ate	eaten	eating
to fall	fell	fallen	falling
to feel	felt	felt	feeling
to fight	fought	fought	fighting
to find	found	found	finding
to fly	flew	flown	flying
to forget	forgot	forgotten	forgetting
to get	got	got (or gotten)	getting
to give	gave	given	giving
to go	went	gone	going
to grow	grew	grown	growing
to hang	hung	hung	hanging
to have	had	had	having
to hear	heard	heard	hearing
to hide	hid	hidden	hiding
to hit	hit	hit	hitting
to hold	held	held	holding
to hurt	hurt	hurt	hurting
to keep	kept	kept	keeping
to know	knew	known	knowing
to lead	led	led	leading
to learn	learned	learned	learning
to leave	left	left	leaving

infinitive	past	past participle	present participle
to lend	lent	lent	lending
to let	let	let	letting
to lose	lost	lost	losing
to make	made	made	making
to mean	meant	meant	meaning
to meet	met	met	meeting
to pay	paid	paid	paying
to put	put	put	putting
to read	read	read	reading
to ride	rode	ridden	riding
to ring	rang	rung	ringing
to run	ran	run	running
to say	said	said	saying
to see	saw	seen	seeing
to sell	sold	sold	selling
to send	sent	sent	sending
to show	showed	showed or shown	showing
to shut	shut	shut	shutting
to sing	sang	sung	singing
to sleep	slept	slept	sleeping
to speak	spoke	spoken	speaking
to spend	spent	spent	spending
to stand	stood	stood	standing
to swim	swam	swum	swimming
to take	took	taken	taking
to teach	taught	taught	teaching
to tear	tore	torn	tearing
to tell	told	told	telling
to think	thought	thought	thinking
to throw	threw	thrown	throwing
to wake	woke	woken	waking
to wear	wore	worn	wearing
to win	won	won	winning
to write	wrote	written	writing



EASILY CONFUSED VERBS

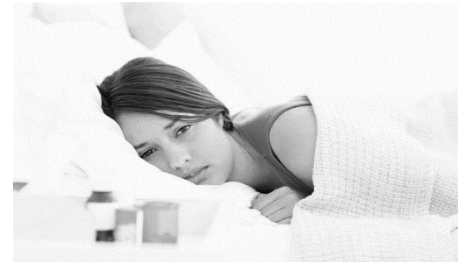
Three irregular verbs pose special problems to students who are accustomed to hearing them used incorrectly. You may want to memorize the following principal parts and to learn the difference in usage between *lie/lay*, *sit/set*, and *rise/raise*.

LIE-LAY

LIE—to rest or recline. You lie with your own body. Lie does not take an object.

Present	past	past participle	present participle
lie	lay	lain	lying

I often lie down when my head hurts. (*present*)
She lay on the couch all day yesterday with a headache. (*past*)



LAY—to put or place. You lay something else. Lay always takes an object.

Present	past	past participle	present participle
lay	laid	laid	laying

Go lay this coat on the guest room bed. (*present*)
She laid the papers out in the correct order. (*past*)

SIT-SET

SIT—to be seated. You sit with your own body. Sit does not take an object.

Present	past	past participle	present participle
sit	sat	sat	sitting

Our dogs sit in the sunny spot by the window. (*present*)
We sat in the lobby of the doctor's office for two hours before giving up. (*past*)

SET—to put or place. You set something else. Set always takes an object.



Present	past	past participle	present participle
set	set	set	setting

Please set the table with the good dishes. (*present*)
I know I set my keys right here! (*past*)

RISE-RAISE

Rise—to stand or come up. You rise with your own body. Rise does not take an object.

Present	past	past participle	present participle
rise	rose	risen	rising

Doctors recommend that you rise at the same time every day. (present)
The sun rose at 7:13am yesterday. (past)

Raise—to elevate or grow. You raise something else. Raise always takes an object.

Present	past	past participle	present participle
raise	raised	raised	raising

Please raise the window shade about half way. (present)
He raised three kids by himself back in the 1970s. (past)

SPECIAL VERB FORMS

Sometimes writers fail to include the final -d of the verb in phrases such as *used to*, *supposed to*, and *accustomed to*.

Ex: I used to hate asparagus until I had it fresh instead of from a can.

Ex: I've grown accustomed to her face.

Ex: You were supposed to pick up the tickets at the front window.

Avoid non-standard verb usage.

Yes: I could have danced all night.

No: I could of danced all night.

Yes: I ought to study for my finals.

No: I had ought to study for my finals.

