

## Regular Verbs vs. Irregular Verbs

**Regular verbs** adhere to standard English conjugation. Most English verbs are regular, and we form the Past Simple Tense and the Past Participle of regular verbs by adding the suffix “-ed” to the end of the verb, e.g. *jump* becomes *jumped*, *laugh* becomes *laughed*, and *play* becomes *played*.

In contrast, **irregular verbs** follow alternative conjugations in the Past Simple Tense and when used as a Past Participle. For example, irregular verbs often end in “-en”, “-n”, “-t”, and “-ne”.

Alternatively, they often alter the vowel in the middle of the verb, e.g. *shine* becomes *shone*; *win* becomes *won*; *sink* becomes *sunk*. This is demonstrated in the tables on pp. 2-6 of this handout.

For further information on verbs and tenses, please see the following handouts from the UCD Writing Centre: 1) ***Introduction to Verbs and Tenses***; 2) ***Regular Verbs vs. Irregular Verbs***; and 3) ***Conjugating Regular Verbs***.

## Irregular Verb Forms

In order to understand how and when to use the Past Simple Tense or the Past Participle of irregular verbs, it is essential to understand what these forms mean:

Verb Form	Function	Example
<b>Verb Infinitive</b>	The basic form of a verb before it is conjugated to suit a particular subject or tense. Verb infinitives always include the preposition “to” before the action word.	<b><i>The student wanted <u>to write</u>, but he did not know how <u>to begin</u>.</i></b>  Here, <i>to write</i> and <i>to begin</i> are both in their basic form. They have not been conjugated to a subject or tense (e.g. <i>wrote</i> , <i>writes</i> , <i>began</i> , <i>begins</i> ), and they are both preceded by the preposition “to”.
<b>Past Simple Tense</b>	Describes an action that has happened in the past.	<b><i>The researcher <u>delivered</u> her results to the conference.</i></b>  Here, <i>delivered</i> is the action of the sentence, and the verb has been conjugated to the past by adding “-ed” to the end.
<b>Past Participle</b>	Indicates completed actions in the past, present, or future when paired with (conjugated) verbs like “to have”. Can be used as an adjective to describe nouns when paired with (conjugated) verbs like “to be”. Can also be used for the passive voice when paired with (conjugated) verbs like “to be”.	<b><i>I was <u>awoken</u> by a strange sound.</i></b> <b><i>The scientists had <u>begun</u> their experiments.</i></b>  Here, the sentences combine the past participles <i>awoken</i> and <i>begun</i> with the verbs “to be” (conjugated to “was”) and “to have” (conjugated to “had”).

### Common Irregular Verbs

Verb Infinitive	Past Simple Tense	Past Participle
<b>Function:</b> The basic form of a verb before it is conjugated to suit a particular subject or tense.	<b>Function:</b> Describes an action that has happened in the past.	<b>Function:</b> Indicates completed actions in the past, present, or future when paired with (conjugated) verbs like “to have”, and can be used in the passive voice or as an adjective when paired with (conjugated) verbs like “to be”.
to arise	arose	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> arisen
to awake	awoke	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> awoken
to be	was/were	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> been
to bear	bore	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> born/borne
to beat	beat	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> beaten
to become	became	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> become
to begin	began	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> begun
to bend	bent	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> bent
to bet	bet	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> bet
to bind	bound	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> bound
to bite	bit	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> bitten
to blow	blew	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> blown
to break	broke	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> broken
to breed	bred	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> bred
to bring	brought	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> brought
to build	built	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> built
to burst	burst	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> burst
to buy	bought	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> bought
to catch	caught	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> caught
to choose	chose	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> chosen
to cling	clung	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> clung
to come	came	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> come
to creep	crept	<b>(to have/to be +)</b> crept

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to deal	dealt	(to have/to be +) dealt
to dig	dug	(to have/to be +) dug
to do	did	(to have/to be +) done
to draw	drew	(to have/to be +) drawn
to drink	drank	(to have/to be +) drunk
to drive	drove	(to have/to be +) driven
to eat	ate	(to have/to be +) eaten
to fall	fell	(to have/to be +) fallen
to feed	fed	(to have/to be +) fed
to feel	felt	(to have/to be +) felt
to fight	fought	(to have/to be +) fought
to find	found	(to have/to be +) found
to flee	fled	(to have/to be +) fled
to fling	flung	(to have/to be +) flung
to fly	flew	(to have/to be +) flown
to forbid	forbade	(to have/to be +) forbidden
to forget	forgot	(to have/to be +) forgotten
to forgive	forgave	(to have/to be +) forgiven
to freeze	froze	(to have/to be +) frozen
to get	got	(to have/to be +) got
to give	gave	(to have/to be +) given
to go	went	(to have/to be +) gone
to grind	ground	(to have/to be +) ground

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to grow	grew	(to have/to be +) grown
to hang	hung	(to have/to be +) hung
to have	had	(to have/to be +) had
to hear	heard	(to have/to be +) heard
to hide	hid	(to have/to be +) hidden
to hold	held	(to have/to be +) held
to keep	kept	(to have/to be +) kept
to know	knew	(to have/to be +) known
to lay	laid	(to have/to be +) laid
to lead	led	(to have/to be +) led
to lean	leant/ leaneded	(to have/to be +) leant/ leaneded
to leave	left	(to have/to be +) left
to lend	lent	(to have/to be +) lent
to light	lit/ lighted	(to have/to be +) lit/ lighted
to lose	lost	(to have/to be +) lost
to make	made	(to have/to be +) made
to mean	meant	(to have/to be +) meant
to meet	met	(to have/to be +) met
to mislead	misled	(to have/to be +) misled
to overtake	overtook	(to have/to be +) overtaken
to pay	paid	(to have/to be +) paid
to ride	rode	(to have/to be +) ridden
to ring	rang	(to have/to be +) rung

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to rise	rose	(to have/to be +) risen
to run	ran	(to have/to be +) run
to saw	sawed	(to have/to be +) sawn
to say	said	(to have/to be +) said
to see	saw	(to have/to be +) seen
to seek	sought	(to have/to be +) sought
to sell	sold	(to have/to be +) sold
to send	sent	(to have/to be +) sent
to sew	sewed	(to have/to be +) sewn
to shake	shook	(to have/to be +) shaken
to shine	shone	(to have/to be +) shone
to shoot	shot	(to have/to be +) shot
to show	showed	(to have/to be +) shown
to shrink	shrank	(to have/to be +) shrunk
to sing	sang	(to have/to be +) sung
to sink	sank	(to have/to be +) sunk
to sit	sat	(to have/to be +) sat
to sleep	slept	(to have/to be +) slept
to slide	slid	(to have/to be +) slid
to speak	spoke	(to have/to be +) spoken
to spend	spent	(to have/to be +) spent
to spin	spun	(to have/to be +) spun
to spring	sprang	(to have/to be +) sprung

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to stand	stood	(to have/to be +) stood
to steal	stole	(to have/to be +) stolen
to stick	stuck	(to have/to be +) stuck
to sting	stung	(to have/to be +) stung
to stink	stank	(to have/to be +) stunk
to stride	strode	(to have/to be +) stridden
to strike	struck	(to have/to be +) struck
to swear	swore	(to have/to be +) sworn
to sweep	swept	(to have/to be +) swept
to swim	swam	(to have/to be +) swum
to swing	swung	(to have/to be +) swung
to take	took	(to have/to be +) taken
to teach	taught	(to have/to be +) taught
to tear	tore	(to have/to be +) torn
to tell	told	(to have/to be +) told
to think	thought	(to have/to be +) thought
to throw	threw	(to have/to be +) thrown
to tread	trod	(to have/to be +) trodden
to understand	understood	(to have/to be +) understood
to wake	woke	(to have/to be +) woken
to wear	wore	(to have/to be +) worn
to wind	wound	(to have/to be +) wound
to write	wrote	(to have/to be +) written