

## Irregular Verbs

This is a more or less comprehensive list of irregular verbs (verbs whose past tense and past participle forms are not both formed by adding the suffix *-ed*) in contemporary American English. Some of these verbs are less commonly used than others, of course, but you may encounter all of them in your reading. I put this list together very carefully to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains, but please let me know if you find anything you think may be incorrect. Where multiple forms are acceptable, the most common form is listed first, with archaic, rarely used, or questionable forms in parentheses. (In some cases, more than one form is quite common, but when in doubt, use the first form listed.) Special attention should be paid to verbs marked with an asterisk, which are commonly used verbs that for various reasons tend to give students some difficulty.

Infinitive (add "to")	Simple Past Tense	Past Participle
alight	alighted (alit)	alighted (alit)
*arise	arose	arisen
awake <sup>1</sup>	awoke, awaked	awoken, awaked
*be	was/were <sup>2</sup>	been
*bear	bore	borne (born) <sup>3</sup>
*beat	beat	beaten (beat)
*become	became	become
beget	begot	begotten
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bereave	bereaved, bereft	bereaved, bereft
beseech	beseached (besought)	beseached (besought)
*bet	bet (betted)	bet (betted)
bid	bade, bid	bidden, bid (bade)
bide	bode, bided <sup>4</sup>	bided
bind	bound	bound
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
*bless	blessed (blest)	blessed (blest)
blow	blew	blown

---

<sup>1</sup> Don't confuse *to awake* with the regular verb *to awaken*.

<sup>2</sup> *To be* is the only verb in English with singular and plural past tense forms. It is also noteworthy in that it has three present tense forms: *is* (singular), *are* (plural), and *am* (with the subject "I.")

<sup>3</sup> When used in the passive voice to mean "given birth to," *born* is far more common: "She was *born* on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1971." This also holds true for its common use as an attributive adjective: "American-born," "born of experience," etc. In the active voice, however, as in other uses of the word, *borne* is far more common: "She has *borne* three children."

<sup>4</sup> In this verb's most common use, in the phrase "to *bide* one's time," *bided* is more widely used.

Infinitive (add "to")	Simple Past	Past Participle
break	broke	broken
breed	bred	bred
*bring	brought	brought
*broadcast	broadcast, broadcasted	broadcast, broadcasted
*build	built	built
burn	burned, burnt	burned, burnt
*burst	burst	burst
bust	busted (bust)	busted (bust)
buy	bought	bought
*can	could	NA
*cast	cast	cast
catch	caught	caught
*choose	chose	chosen
cleave (to adhere, stick)	cleaved, clove (clave)	cleaved
cleave (to split)	cleaved (cleft, clove)	cleaved (cleft, cloven)
cling	clung	clung
clothe	clothed, clad	clothed, clad
*come	came	come
*cost	cost	cost
*creep	crept	crept
crow	crowed (crew)	crowed (crew)
*cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
dive	dove, dived	dived (dove)
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
*dream	dreamed, dreamt	dreamed, dreamt
*drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
drown <sup>5</sup>	drowned	drowned
*dwell	dwelled, dwelt	dwelled, dwelt
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen

---

<sup>5</sup> Although *to drown* is a regular verb, its similarity to verbs like *known* and *drawn* may cause confusion.

<b>Infinitive (add “to”)</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fling	flung	flung
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbade (forbad)	forbidden
*forecast	forecast (forecasted)	forecast (forecasted)
forget	forgot	forgotten (forgot)
forgive	forgave	forgiven
forsake	forsook	forsaken
*found (to establish) <sup>6</sup>	founded	founded
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten, got
gild	gilded, gilt	gilded, gilt
give	gave	given
*go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung	hung
*hang (to kill by hanging)	hanged	hanged
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
heave	heaved (hove)	heaved (hove)
hew	hewed	hewed, hewn
hide	hid	hidden, hid
*hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
*hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt, kneeled	knelt, kneeled
knit	knitted, knit	knitted, knit
know	knew	known
*lay	laid	laid

---

<sup>6</sup> Although *to found* is a regular verb, it is sometimes confused with *to find*.

Infinitive (add “to”)	Simple Past	Past Participle
*lead	led	led
leap	leaped, leapt	leaped, leapt
*learn	learned (learnt)	learned (learnt)
leave	left	left
*lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie <sup>7</sup> (to tell an untruth)	lied	lied
*lie (to rest or recline)	lay	lain
light	lit, lighted	lit, lighted
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
*may	might	NA
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
mow	mowed	mowed, mown
pay	paid	paid
pen	penned	penned (pent) <sup>8</sup>
*plead	pleaded, pled (plead)	pled, pleaded (plead)
podcast <sup>9</sup>	podcast, podcasted	podcast, podcasted
prove	proved	proven, proved
*put	put	put
quit	quit (quitted) <sup>10</sup>	quit (quitted)
read	read	read
rid	rid (ridded)	rid (ridded)
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
saw (to cut with a saw)	sawed	sawn, sawed

<sup>7</sup> Although *lie* in this sense is conjugated regularly, it is included here to make the distinction between the different conjugation patterns clear.

<sup>8</sup> *Pent* is not normally used as a verb, but it is used quite commonly as an adjective in the expression “*pent up*.” According to some sources, it is not a form of *to pen* at all, but a form of the obsolete verb *to pend*.

<sup>9</sup> Although *podcast* may not yet be an officially recognized word, I think it soon will be, and its conjugation will follow that of all of the verbs that end in *-cast*.

<sup>10</sup> My experience suggests that although *quitted* is sometimes used to mean *left*, as in “*quitted the room*” (but *not “quitted my job”*), it is rarely used in other senses of the word.

Infinitive (add “to”)	Simple Past	Past Participle
say	said <sup>11</sup>	said
*see	saw	seen
*seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
*set	set	set
sew	sewed	sewn, sewed
shake	shook	shaken
shall	should	NA
shear	sheared	shorn, sheared
shed	shed	shed
*shine	shone, shined <sup>12</sup>	shone, shined
shoe	shod (shoed)	shod (shoed)
shoot	shot	shot
show	showed	shown, showed
*shrink	shrank (shrunk)	shrunk, shrunken
*shut	shut	shut
*sing	sang	sung
*sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
*slay	slew (slayed) <sup>13</sup>	slain
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid
sling	slung	slung
slink	slunk (slink)	slunk
slit	slit	slit
smell	smelled, smelt	smelled, smelt
smite	smote	smitten, smote
sow	sowed	sown, sowed
speak	spoke	spoken
speed	ped, speeded	ped, speeded

<sup>11</sup> Be sure to pronounce this as “sed,” not “sayed.”

<sup>12</sup> *Shone* is the correct form to use for all intransitive usages of the word: “the stars *shone* brightly,” “his face *shone* with excitement.” Strictly speaking, *shined* should only be used in the sense of *to polish*, as in “he *shined* my shoes,” although you may hear it commonly used in other senses, such as “*shined* the flashlight on me.”

<sup>13</sup> Normally, *slayed* only occurs in the more informal usage “to greatly amuse,” as in “the comedian *slayed* the audience.”

Infinitive (add "to")	Simple Past	Past Participle
spend	spent	spent
*spill	spilled (spilt)	spilled (spilt) <sup>14</sup>
spin	spun	spun
spit	spat	spat
*split	split	split
spoil	spoiled (spoilt)	spoiled (spoilt)
*spread	spread	spread
*spring	sprang, sprung	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
stink	stank, stunk	stunk
*stride	strode	stridden
strike	struck	struck (stricken) <sup>15</sup>
string	strung	strung
*strive	strove (strived)	striven, strived
swear	swore	sworn
*sweat	sweated, sweat	sweated, sweat
sweep	swept	swept
swell	swelled	swelled, swollen <sup>16</sup>
swim	swam	swum
*swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
*tear <sup>17</sup>	tore	torn
*telecast	telecast, telecasted	telecast, telecasted
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
*thrust	thrust	thrust
tread	trod (treaded)	trodden, trod

<sup>14</sup> *Spilt* is still quite common as an attributive adjective, as in "*spilt* milk."

<sup>15</sup> *Stricken* is common as an adjective: "guilt-*stricken* parents," "disease-*stricken* populace."

<sup>16</sup> As an adjective, *swollen* is much more common than *swelled*: "*swollen* gums."

<sup>17</sup> Don't confuse this verb with the regular verb that is pronounced /teer/ and means "to fill with tears."

<b>Infinitive (add “to”)</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>
understand	understood	understood
wake	woke, waked	woken, waked
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove, weaved	woven, weaved
webcast <sup>18</sup>	webcast, webcasted	webcast, webcasted
wed	wedded (wed)	wedded (wed)
weep	wept	wept
wet	wet, wetted	wet, wetted
win	won	won
wind (to coil)	wound (winded)	wound (winded)
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

---

<sup>18</sup> Although *webcast* may not yet be an officially recognized word, I think it soon will be, and its conjugation will follow that of all of the verbs that end in *-cast*.