# Basics about Irregular Verbs

Most English verbs are **regular**. That is, they form their past tense and past participle by adding *-ed* or *-d* to the basic form, as shown here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Form</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
<td>asked</td>
<td>asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raise</td>
<td>raised</td>
<td>raised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some English verbs are **irregular**. They do not form their past tense and past participle by adding *-ed* or *-d* to the basic form of the verb. Instead, their past tenses and past participles are formed in other ways. Here are some of the most common irregular verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Form</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>become</td>
<td>became</td>
<td>become</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begin</td>
<td>began</td>
<td>begun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>break</td>
<td>broke</td>
<td>broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring</td>
<td>brought</td>
<td>brought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catch</td>
<td>caught</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choose</td>
<td>chose</td>
<td>chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>came</td>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>drank</td>
<td>drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drive</td>
<td>drove</td>
<td>driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>ate</td>
<td>eaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel</td>
<td>felt</td>
<td>felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>find</td>
<td>found</td>
<td>found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forget</td>
<td>forgot</td>
<td>forgotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get</td>
<td>got</td>
<td>got, gotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>gave</td>
<td>given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>went</td>
<td>gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grow</td>
<td>grew</td>
<td>grown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hide</td>
<td>hid</td>
<td>hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>kept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>knew</td>
<td>known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leave</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shake</td>
<td>shook</td>
<td>shaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spend</td>
<td>spent</td>
<td>spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>took</td>
<td>taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell</td>
<td>told</td>
<td>told</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A word about helping verbs

Sometimes the verb of a sentence consists of more than one word. In these cases, the main verb will be joined by one or more **helping verbs**. Look at the following sentence:

> I **should have gone** to bed earlier last night.

In this sentence, the main verb is *gone*. The helping verbs are *should* and *have*. Other common helping verbs include *be, can, could, do, has, may, must, will, and would*.

When you use the above chart, keep these two points in mind:

1. If your sentence does **not** have a helping verb, choose the past tense form.
   - I **ate** a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich.

2. If the sentence **does have** a helping verb, choose the past participle.
   - I **had eaten** a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich.

### NOTE

If you think a verb is irregular, and it is not in the above list, look it up in your dictionary. If it is irregular, the principal parts will be listed. See “Dictionary Use,” page 223.
Irregular Verbs: PRACTICE

For each sentence below, fill in the correct form of the verb in the space provided.

broke, broken
1. When I ________________ my leg, my friends scribbled cheerful messages on the cast.

spended, spent
2. Nathan ________________ most of his teenage years dressed in black and alone in his bedroom.

catched, caught
3. The kindergarten teacher ________________ chicken pox from one of her students.

went, gone
4. The sign on the barbershop door said, “Closed. I have ________________ fishing.”

wrote, writed
5. Before he was famous, the horror author Stephen King taught high-school English and ________________ short stories and novels at night.

done, did
6. When my little sister broke the living-room lamp, she told my parents that I had ________________ it.

brigned, brought
7. Seven people ________________ potato salad to the church picnic, and only one person made a dessert.

chose, choosed
8. Although she was close to winning $100,000, the game-show contestant lost it all when she ________________ the wrong answer to the final question.

drove, drived
9. In the Fourth of July parade, the mayor ________________ an antique Model T car that was owned by the city.

eaten, ate
10. My friend stuck to his diet for six days. Then he ________________ an entire gallon of ice cream and a bag of Snickers in fifteen minutes.

A Note on Three Problem Verbs

Three common irregular verbs that confuse many writers are be, do, and have. Here are the correct present tense and past tense forms of these three verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am</td>
<td>I was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you are</td>
<td>you were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he, she, it is</td>
<td>he, she, it was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do</td>
<td>I did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you do</td>
<td>you did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he, she, it does</td>
<td>he, she, it did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have</td>
<td>I had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you have</td>
<td>you had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he, she, it has</td>
<td>he, she it had</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irregular Verbs: TEST 1

Each of the items below contains two errors in irregular verbs. Find the errors and cross them out. Then, in the spaces provided, write the correct forms of the verbs.

**NOTE** To help you master irregular verbs, explanations are given for five of the sentences.

1. Once I seen a hawk dive from the top of a tall tree to capture a field mouse. The bird catched the tiny creature in its claws and flew back to its perch.
   
   a. ____________
   
   b. ____________
   
   Use the past tense of the irregular verb *see* for the first correction needed.

2. Our neighbors have always gave their little children household chores. This month, their son sets the table, and their daughter does some dusting. Last month, they both done some weeding in the backyard.
   
   a. ____________
   
   b. ____________
   
   Use the past participle of the irregular verb *give* for the first correction needed.

3. My aunt be a big fan of Elvis Presley. Every time she hears “Love Me Tender,” she becomes misty-eyed. Last year, she and my uncle gone on a trip to Graceland, Elvis’s home. While there, she bought “Elvis Lives” bumper stickers for herself and all her friends.
   
   a. ____________
   
   b. ____________
   
   Use the past tense of the irregular verb *go* for the second correction needed.

4. It is dangerous to shake a baby. Many babies who have been shook have suffered brain injuries. The adults who done this seldom meant to cause such harm.
   
   a. ____________
   
   b. ____________
   
   Use the past tense of the irregular verb *do* for the second correction needed.

5. I was determined not to forget anything I needed at the store. I sat down and writed a long shopping list. Feeling proud of myself, I went to the store. Then I realized I had forgotton the list.
   
   a. ____________
   
   b. ____________
   
   Use the past participle of the irregular verb *forget* for the second correction needed.
Irregular Verbs: TEST 2

Each of the items below contains two errors in irregular verbs. Find the errors and cross them out. Then, in the spaces provided, write the correct forms of the verbs.

1. It really can be more fun to give than to receive. Yesterday I gived my sister a ring of mine that she has always loved. When she saw what I had gave her, her face lit up.
   a. ____________
   b. ____________

2. In the winter, I drink about a quart of orange juice a week. But last week when it was so hot, I drinked that much in a day. Once all the orange juice was drank, I started in on ice water and cold soda.
   a. ____________
   b. ____________

3. I was angry that my friend taked the money that was lying on the dresser. She didn’t know it was mine, but she knowed it wasn’t hers.
   a. ____________
   b. ____________

4. The teacher becomed impatient with the students who had forgotten their homework. “I thought you had growed up by now,” he complained.
   a. ____________
   b. ____________

5. Three people had saw the robbery take place, but no one be sure what the robber looked like.
   a. ____________
   b. ____________
Irregular Verbs: TEST 3

Read each sentence below. Then choose the correct verb, fill in the blank, and write the letter of your choice in the space provided in the margin.

_____ 1. Sandy has _____________ to a counselor every week since her parents’ divorce.
   a. went      c. go
   b. wented    d. gone

_____ 2. My grandmother has ______________ our family history.
   a. writed    c. written
   b. wrote     d. write

_____ 3. Our neighbors ______________ us crazy when they first moved in, but now we’re good friends.
   a. drived    c. driven
   b. drove     d. droved

_____ 4. How long have you and Stephanie ______________ each other?
   a. knew      c. knowed
   b. known     d. knewed

_____ 5. The lucky woman who ___________ the home run ball got it autographed by the famous baseball player.
   a. catched   c. caught
   b. catch     d. caughted

_____ 6. In the middle of dinner, Stacy gasped, “I ______________ I was supposed to baby-sit tonight!”
   a. forget    c. forgotten
   b. forgotten d. forgot

_____ 7. Trying to avoid catching a cold, everyone in the family ______________ extra vitamin C every day last winter.
   a. take      c. taked
   b. took      d. tooked

_____ 8. The kindergarten teacher was not thrilled when Keith ______________ a live worm to class.
   a. bring     c. brought
   b. brang     d. bringed

_____ 9. The boss ______________ everyone to plan to work late Thursday night.
   a. tell      c. told
   b. telled    d. tolded

_____ 10. Only the people who had ______________ the first movie understood the sequel.
   a. seen      c. seed
   b. saw       d. sawed
Irregular Verbs: TEST 4

Read each sentence below. Then choose the correct verb, fill in the blank and write the letter of your choice in the space provided in the margin.

_____ 1. Last July, Ivan ______________ an American citizen.
   a. become  c. became  
   b. becomed  d. becamed

_____ 2. The tiny, cute puppy has ______________ into a ninety-pound monster.
   a. grow  c. growed  
   b. grew  d. grown

_____ 3. Last night, Natalie ______________ nearly four hours on homework.
   a. spent  c. spended  
   b. spends  d. spend

_____ 4. Most people who traveled to Alaska during the Gold Rush ______________ little or no gold.
   a. finded  c. find  
   b. founded  d. found

_____ 5. My father has ______________ everything he can to keep our car in good shape.
   a. did  c. do  
   b. done  d. doned

_____ 6. I had ______________ to do the assignment.
   a. forget  c. forgot  
   b. forgotten  d. forgetted

_____ 7. My family had ______________ the whole pie before I got home.
   a. eat  c. eaten  
   b. ate  d. eated

_____ 8. The millionaire businessman ______________ all his money to charity.
   a. left  c. lefted  
   b. leave  d. leaved

_____ 9. Juanita has ______________ the color gray for her bridesmaids’ dresses.
   a. chose  c. choose  
   b. choosed  d. chosen

_____ 10. The story was about a man who foolishly ______________ some money in an old trash barrel.
   a. hide  c. hided  
   b. hid  d. hides