

## IRREGULAR VERBS

Irregular English verbs do not simply add *-d* or *-ed* for the past. Instead, they use some other change in form: *see-saw*, *buy-bought*, *break-broke*. And many of them have an *additional* separate form for use after the auxiliaries *have* (*has*, *had*) and *be* (*am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*): *have seen*, *was broken*. We call the combined forms using *have* or *had* the **perfect** forms of a verb. Often the perfect tells us about something recently completed. (*Seen* and *broken* are **past participles**.)

**Present:** Jean *grows* her own flowers. They *go* to church regularly.

**Past:** The Indians *grew* corn. We all *went* together.

**Perfect:** Manuel *has grown* a beard. They *have gone* home for the day.

(1) Study the standard forms for the following irregular verbs. Pay special attention to verbs like *grow*, *know*, *throw*, *run*, *eat*.

begin began have begun fly flew have flown  
bend bent have bent freeze froze have frozen  
blow blew have blown go went have gone  
break broke have broken grow grew have grown  
bring brought have brought know knew have known  
burst burst have burst lead led have led  
choose chose have chosen run ran have run  
come came have come see saw have seen  
deal dealt have dealt send sent have sent  
dig dug have dug sing sang have sung  
do did have done speak spoke have spoken  
draw drew have drawn swim swam have swum  
drink drank have drunk take took have taken  
drive drove have driven throw threw have thrown  
eat ate have eaten wear wore have worn  
fall fell have fallen write wrote have written

(2) The most irregular English verb is *be* (*am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *been*). Use *is* only for third person singular: he *is*, she *is*, it *is*. Use *was* only after *I* and for third person singular in the past.

**Present:** I *am* your friend.

He *is* ill. She *is* here. It *is* cold. Your friend *is* right.

You *are* right. We *are* wrong. They *are* out. Your friends *are* right.

**Past:** I *was* your friend. He *was* right. She *was* wrong. The prices *was* right.

You *were* wrong. We *were* right. They *were* angry. The prices *were* high.

(3) A few verbs have doubles that are just close enough to be confusing. *Lie-lay-lain* shows that somebody or something is situated somewhere, usually reclining or stretched out.

The same forms are used in the combination *lie* down.

**Present:** On hot days, the animals *lie* in the shade. (S—V) It's too early to *lie* down.

**Past:** A letter *lay* on the floor. The dog *lay* down on the rug.

**Perfect:** Someone has *lain* on my bed. You should have *lain* down earlier.  
Not to be confused with *lie—lay—lain* is *lay—laid—laid*. It shows that somebody is placing something somewhere. Use it when you can substitute *place* or *put*.

**Present:** I *lay* (or *place*) my cards on the table. (S—V—O)

**Past:** The plumber *laid* (or *put*) down his tools.

**Perfect:** I have *laid* (or *put*) aside some books for you.

*Sit—sat—sat* shows that someone is seated. *Sit down* follows the same scheme. *Set—set—set* belongs with *lay—laid—laid* as a possible substitute for *place* or *put*. You, yourself, *sit* or *sit down*. You *set*, or *set down*, something else. (Exception: The sun *sets*.)

**Sit:** He still *sits* where he *sat* down. He has *sat* there for hours. (S—V)

**Set:** When you have *set* the alarm, *set* it down by the cot I *set* up. (S—V—O)

### EXERCISE

For each of the following verbs, fill in *three* missing forms in the following order: the *-s* form for third person, present; the past form that goes after *have* or *be*.

1. Things really *grow* out here. My uncle \_\_\_\_\_ flowers. Last year, he \_\_\_\_\_ zinnias and other annuals. He had \_\_\_\_\_ mostly tulips the year before.

2. Mechanics *know* cars. Uncle Time \_\_\_\_\_ everything. Stone Age tribes \_\_\_\_\_ fire. I have \_\_\_\_\_ for years.

3. The lights *go* out. Jim \_\_\_\_\_ to school. Last spring, he \_\_\_\_\_ to Mexico. She had \_\_\_\_\_ upstairs.

4. Brides *wear* white. The groom \_\_\_\_\_ black. The Romans \_\_\_\_\_ togas. He has \_\_\_\_\_ a tuxedo only once.

5. Rocks *break* glass. Glass \_\_\_\_\_ easily. The story \_\_\_\_\_ my heart. They have \_\_\_\_\_ the contract.

6. Boys *throw* rocks. A bouncer \_\_\_\_\_ out drunks. Last winter, we \_\_\_\_\_ snowballs. She has \_\_\_\_\_ him out.

7. Authors *write* books. A columnist \_\_\_\_\_ a column. Shakespeare \_\_\_\_\_ plays. His plays were \_\_\_\_\_ in England.

8. Rabbits *run*. His uncle \_\_\_\_\_ a casino. The *Titanic* \_\_\_\_\_ into trouble. Nobody had

yet \_\_\_\_\_ a four-minute mile.

9. Austrians *speak* German. Herman \_\_\_\_\_ Portuguese. The Romans \_\_\_\_\_ Latin. The oracle had \_\_\_\_\_.

10. (Fill in the appropriate forms of *be*.) The train will *be* on time. He \_\_\_\_\_ unemployed at the present, but they \_\_\_\_\_ working. Kennedy \_\_\_\_\_ killed, and several other people \_\_\_\_\_ wounded. The trip has \_\_\_\_\_ a pleasure.