

ENGLISH IRREGULAR VERB PATTERNS

sing

sang

sung

keep

kept

kept

come

came

come

Memory Workbook

62 irregular verbs organised by pattern, with meanings, examples, active recall and exercises.

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How to Use This Workbook

This workbook turns a long list into smaller groups that are easier to remember. Instead of studying the verbs alphabetically, you will notice recurring sound and spelling changes.

1. Notice

Read one family and compare all three forms. Focus on the vowel or ending that changes.

2. Retrieve

Cover the Past Simple and Past Participle. Then produce the forms before checking the table.

3. Use

Create one Past Simple sentence and another with have, has or had. Give each form a real purpose.

Understanding the Pattern Codes

Code	Meaning	Example
AAA	All three forms are identical.	cut > cut > cut
ABB	Past Simple and Past Participle match.	keep > kept > kept
ABA	Base Verb and Past Participle match.	come > came > come
ABC	All three forms are different.	sing > sang > sung
Special	The verb has a high-frequency unique form.	go > went > gone

A Simple Seven-Day Plan

Day	Groups	Review task
1	AAA and -eep > -ept	Read, repeat and write one sentence with each verb.
2	-d > -t and -ought / -aught	Cover the answers and retrieve the forms.
3	Other ABB families	Create sound pairs and personal sentences.
4	I, A, U and -oke / -oken	Repeat the sequences aloud.
5	I, O, I with -en and -ew / -own	Contrast Past Simple and Past Participle.
6	ABA and special forms	Practise the most frequent verbs.
7	Mixed review	Complete the exercises without using the tables.

The 62 Verbs Organised for Memorisation

The groups below are study tools. They organise correct forms, but they should not be used to invent the conjugation of an unfamiliar verb.

1. Same form in all three positions

AAA: Base Verb = Past Simple = Past Participle

The verb does not change in writing. In this case, context and time expressions show whether the action is present or past.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
cut	cut	cut	to cut	She cut the paper yesterday.
hit	hit	hit	to hit or strike	The ball hit the window.
let	let	let	to allow	They let us enter early.
put	put	put	to place	I put the keys on the table.
set	set	set	to set or adjust	We set the alarm before bed.
shut	shut	shut	to close	He shut the gate quietly.

Memory tip: Repeat each form three times with the same rhythm: cut, cut, cut. Then create a past-tense sentence with yesterday or last night.

2. The -eep to -ept family

ABB: Past Simple and Past Participle match

The vowel changes and the ending takes the -ept sound. Since the two past forms match, you only need to memorise one new form for each verb.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
keep	kept	kept	to keep	She kept the receipt.
sleep	slept	slept	to sleep	I slept for eight hours.
sweep	swept	swept	to sweep	He swept the kitchen floor.
weep	wept	wept	to cry	She wept after hearing the news.

Memory tip: Say keep, kept, kept and then sleep, slept, slept. The similar sound connects the verbs inside the same family.

3. A final -d changes to -t

ABB: send > sent > sent

In this group, the final consonant changes and the two past forms remain identical. Notice the small vowel changes in some verbs as well.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
bend	bent	bent	to bend	He bent the wire carefully.
build	built	built	to build	They built the bridge in 2010.
lend	lent	lent	to lend	My friend lent me a book.
send	sent	sent	to send	I sent the email this morning.
spend	spent	spent	to spend	We spent the weekend at home.

Memory tip: Connect send with spend, then bend with lend. Study the pairs before mixing all the verbs together.

4. The -ought and -aught families

ABB: one shared form for both past forms

The spelling of these forms may look difficult. Therefore, memorise them as complete sound units and always attach them to a short sentence.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
bring	brought	brought	to bring	She brought her laptop to class.
buy	bought	bought	to buy	They bought a new computer.
fight	fought	fought	to fight	The team fought until the end.
seek	sought	sought	to seek or look for	She sought professional advice.
think	thought	thought	to think	I thought the lesson was useful.
catch	caught	caught	to catch	He caught the last bus.
teach	taught	taught	to teach	She taught English for ten years.

Memory tip: Create two sequences: bring, brought, brought; buy, bought, bought. Then practise catch, caught, caught and teach, taught, taught.

5. Other common ABB families

ABB: different base, matching past forms

These verbs do not form one spelling family, but they share the ABB structure. Because they are frequent, they deserve early attention.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
feel	felt	felt	to feel	I felt much better yesterday.
find	found	found	to find	We found the missing key.
hear	heard	heard	to hear	I heard a strange noise.
leave	left	left	to leave	They left before lunchtime.
lose	lost	lost	to lose	He lost his wallet on the train.
sell	sold	sold	to sell	They sold the old car.
tell	told	told	to tell	She told me the truth.
win	won	won	to win	Our team won the match.

Memory tip: Create sound pairs such as sell, sold, sold and tell, told, told. Then use each verb in a sentence about your own life.

6. The I, A, U vowel change

ABC: sing > sang > sung

All three forms are different, but the vowel sequence repeats across several verbs. This sound relationship is a powerful memory tool.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
begin	began	begun	to begin	The meeting began at nine.
drink	drank	drunk	to drink	She drank a glass of water.
ring	rang	rung	to ring	The phone rang during class.
sing	sang	sung	to sing	They sang my favourite song.
sink	sank	sunk	to sink	The boat sank near the coast.
swim	swam	swum	to swim	We swam across the pool.

Memory tip: Mark three steady beats and say sing, sang, sung; ring, rang, rung; drink, drank, drunk.

7. The -oke and -oken family

ABC: speak > spoke > spoken

The Past Simple often contains -oke or -ose, while the Past Participle ends in -en. Look at the forms and repeat the complete sequence.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
break	broke	broken	to break	She broke her glasses yesterday.
choose	chose	chosen	to choose	They chose the blue design.
freeze	froze	frozen	to freeze	The lake froze overnight.
speak	spoke	spoken	to speak	I spoke to the manager.
steal	stole	stolen	to steal	Someone stole his bicycle.
wake	woke	woken	to wake up	I woke before the alarm.

Memory tip: Contrast spoke with spoken. Then apply the same technique to broke versus broken and chose versus chosen.

8. The I, O, I change with an -en ending

ABC: write > wrote > written

The Past Simple changes the vowel, while the Past Participle returns to a sound closer to the Base Verb and adds -en or -n.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
drive	drove	driven	to drive	She drove to work yesterday.
ride	rode	ridden	to ride	He rode his bike to school.
rise	rose	risen	to rise or increase	Prices rose again last month.
write	wrote	written	to write	She wrote a detailed report.

Memory tip: Practise with two sentences: I wrote an email yesterday. I have written three emails today.

9. The -ew to -own or -awn family

ABC: know > knew > known

The Past Simple often ends in -ew, while the Past Participle contains -own or -awn. Pronunciation is more helpful than spelling alone.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
blow	blew	blown	to blow	The wind blew all night.
draw	drew	drawn	to draw	The child drew a picture.
fly	flew	flown	to fly	We flew to London last year.
grow	grew	grown	to grow	The company grew very quickly.
know	knew	known	to know	I knew the answer immediately.
throw	threw	thrown	to throw	He threw the ball to me.

Memory tip: Build a sound chain: know, knew, known; grow, grew, grown; throw, threw, thrown.

10. Base Verb and Past Participle match

ABA: come > came > come

In this small group, only the Past Simple is different. The Past Participle returns to the same form as the Base Verb.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
become	became	become	to become	She became a teacher in 2015.
come	came	come	to come	They came home late.
run	ran	run	to run	He ran five kilometres yesterday.

Memory tip: Compare She came yesterday with She has come early several times. The sentence structure tells you which form to use.

11. High-frequency verbs with unique forms

Special forms learned as complete units

These verbs appear constantly in conversation, reading and writing. Therefore, learn all three forms and practise them in real sentences.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Meaning	Example
be	was / were	been	to be	They were at home last night.
do	did	done	to do	I did my homework after dinner.
go	went	gone	to go	We went to the museum.
have	had	had	to have	She had a meeting at ten.
make	made	made	to make or create	He made a serious mistake.
see	saw	seen	to see	I saw her at the station.
take	took	taken	to take	They took the earlier train.

Memory tip: Begin with be, do, go and have. Then add make, see and take. Their high frequency will give you repeated exposure.

Active Recall

Complete the spaces without using the tables. Do not guess from the appearance of the verb. First retrieve the sequence you studied, and only then check the answer key.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Pattern
cut	_____	_____	AAA
sleep	slept	_____	ABB
send	_____	sent	ABB
think	_____	_____	ABB
teach	taught	_____	ABB
find	_____	found	ABB
leave	_____	_____	ABB
sing	sang	_____	ABC
drink	_____	drunk	ABC
swim	_____	_____	ABC
speak	spoke	_____	ABC
choose	_____	chosen	ABC
write	_____	_____	ABC
drive	drove	_____	ABC
know	_____	known	ABC
fly	_____	_____	ABC
come	came	_____	ABA
run	_____	run	ABA
go	_____	_____	Special
be	was / were	_____	Special
do	_____	done	Special
see	_____	_____	Special
take	took	_____	Special
make	_____	made	ABB

Complete the Sentences

1.	Yesterday, she _____ a song. (sing)
2.	I have _____ this book before. (read)
3.	They _____ the message yesterday. (send)
4.	He has _____ to London twice. (fly)
5.	We _____ the last train home. (take)
6.	She has _____ three emails today. (write)
7.	The lesson _____ at nine o'clock. (begin)
8.	I _____ the answer immediately. (know)
9.	The child has _____ a beautiful picture. (draw)
10.	Our team _____ the match last Saturday. (win)

Answer Key

Check your answers only after completing the exercises.

Base Verb	Past Simple	Past Participle	Pattern
cut	cut	cut	AAA
sleep	slept	slept	ABB
send	sent	sent	ABB
think	thought	thought	ABB
teach	taught	taught	ABB
find	found	found	ABB
leave	left	left	ABB
sing	sang	sung	ABC
drink	drank	drunk	ABC
swim	swam	swum	ABC
speak	spoke	spoken	ABC
choose	chose	chosen	ABC
write	wrote	written	ABC
drive	drove	driven	ABC
know	knew	known	ABC
fly	flew	flown	ABC
come	came	come	ABA
run	ran	run	ABA
go	went	gone	Special
be	was / were	been	Special
do	did	done	Special
see	saw	seen	Special
take	took	taken	Special
make	made	made	ABB

Sentence Answers

1. sang	6. written
2. read	7. began
3. sent	8. knew
4. flown	9. drawn
5. took	10. won

Next review: Write the date when you plan to test these forms again. Spaced retrieval works best when you try to answer before looking at the table.

Date: _____

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