

From *The American Heritage® Book of English Usage* (1996)

Verbs are words that express an action or a state of being. All English verbs that are not auxiliary verbs have four principal parts: a base form (the infinitive without to), a present participle, a past tense, and a past participle. The principal parts are used to form tenses. All present participles are formed by the addition of -ing to the base form: making, breaking, crying. Grammars usually classify verbs as regular and irregular. Regular verbs form their **past tense** and **past participle** by adding the suffix -ed to the base form. Thus we say: I **walked**, I have **walked**; They **plodded**, They have **plodded**; She **tried**, We had **tried**, and so on. As these examples show, the spelling of these forms sometimes involves modification of the base form.

Irregular verbs do not follow the -ed pattern of regular verbs. Most change their base form — and often its vowel — to make the past tense and past participle.

REGULAR VERBS

<i>Base Form</i>	<i>Present Participle</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
cook	cooking	cooked	cooked
talk	talking	talked	talked
offer	offering	offered	offered

IRREGULAR VERBS

<i>Base Form</i>	<i>Present Participle</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
do	doing	did	done
give	giving	gave	given
see	seeing	saw	seen
speak	speaking	spoke	spoken
grow	growing	grew	grown
eat	eating	ate	eaten
tear	tearing	tore	torn
begin	beginning	began	begun
bend	bending	bent	bent
stand	standing	stood	stood

***DO NOT CONFUSE:

<i>Base Form</i>	<i>Present Participle</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
1. Lay	Laying	Laid	Laid
2. Lie	Lying	Lay	Lain

1. = Put [TRANSITIVE]

2. = RECLINE [INTRANSITIVE]