



# Verb Tenses

- **Why do verb tenses matter?** Verbs are words that indicate action. A sentence must have a verb in order to be complete.
- **Verb tense** is a change in the form of verbs; it expresses the time at which the action described by the verb takes place. The major tenses are past, present, and future.
- **Verb Conjugation:** Verb conjugation refers to how a verb changes to show a different person, tense, number or mood.
- Take the verb “to jump.” Conjugations depend on who or what is doing the action and include the following: **I jump. We jump. You jump. All of you jump. He/she/it jumps. They jump.**

There are twelve verb tenses in English. Here are some examples for regular and irregular verbs in the twelve tenses.

**Regular verbs:** the past tense and past participle forms end in *-ed*.

WALK	Simple	Progressive	Perfect	Perfect Progressive
<b>Present</b>	I walk.	I am walking.	I have walked.	I have been walking.
<b>Past</b>	I walked.	I was walking.	I had walked.	I had been walking.
<b>Future</b>	I will walk.	I will be walking.	I will have walked.	I will have been walking.

**Irregular verbs** are common verbs in the English language that do not follow the simple system of adding “d” or “ed” to the end of the word to form the past tense. That means the spellings can be a little tricky. Some irregular verbs follow patterns, such as drink–drank, spring–sprang, know–knew, and blow–blew but you can’t use those patterns with predictability.

## List of Irregular Verbs

- awake–awoke–awoken
- begin–began–begun
- break–broke–broken
- build–built–built
- buy–bought–bought
- catch–caught–caught
- come–came–come
- do–did–done
- drink–drank–drunk
- eat–ate–eaten
- fall–fell–fallen
- fly–flew–flown
- forget–forgot–forgotten
- mistake–mistook–mistaken
- rise–rose–risen
- see–saw–seen
- sink–sank–sunk
- swim–swam–swum
- tear–tore–torn
- go–went–gone/been
- freeze–froze–frozen
- know–knew–known
- draw–drew–drawn
- give–gave–given



**Irregular verbs:** the past tense and past participle forms do not end in *-ed*.

RUN	Simple	Progressive	Perfect	Perfect Progressive
<b>Present</b>	He runs.	He is running.	He has ran.	He has been running.
<b>Past</b>	He ran.	He was running.	He had ran.	He had been running.
<b>Future</b>	He will run.	He will be running.	He will have ran.	He will have been running.

Conjugating verbs in the correct tense can be a difficult part of English. Writers may need some practice before they begin to easily recall which verbs follow regular conjugation patterns and which are irregular.

**For more assistance with verb tenses** schedule an appointment with one of our ELL/ESL specialists, today!

**Further Assistance:** For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library, or call 815-836-5427.

Consulted: *Clear Grammar 4* by Keith S. Folse, Grammarly.com, ESLabout.com