



Module: English

Branch: International Trade

Level: Third year Bachelor

Lecture 04: IRREGULAR VERBS

1-Irregular verbs are less consistent in their past and past participle forms. Although English has fewer irregular verbs than regular, there are hundreds of them. Many are among the most commonly used verbs in English.

2- Here are a small number:

present *past* *past participle*

| | | |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| I begin | I began | I have begun |
| I break | I broke | I have broken |
| I bring | I brought | I have brought |
| I drink | I drank | I have drunk |
| I drive | I drove | I have driven |
| I fy | I few | I have fown |
| I freeze | I froze | I have frozen |
| I know | I knew | I have known |
| I ride | I rode | I have ridden |
| I ring | I rang | I have rung |
| I see | I saw | I have seen |
| I sink | I sank | I have sunk |
| I speak | I spoke | I have spoken |
| I swim | I swam | I have swum |
| I swing | I swung | I have swung |
| I take | I took | I have taken |
| I write | I wrote | I have written |

All of us make errors now and then with some of the irregular verbs, and it's a good idea to identify those that give you the most trouble and study them. The table above gives you some of the most common irregulars, and you can find complete lists in many grammar books and on the Internet. A dictionary can always help you with specific verbs.

One way to study irregulars is to group the verbs that are similar in their past and past participle forms, like this:

present *past* *past participle*

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------------|
| I begin | I began | I have begun |
| I drink | I drank | I have drunk |
| I ring | I rang | I have rung |
| I sink | I sank | I have sunk |
| I swim | I swam | I have swum |
| I break | I broke | I have broken |

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------------|
| I freeze | I froze | I have frozen |
| I speak | I spoke | I have spoken |
| I drive | I drove | I have driven |
| I ride | I rode | I have ridden |
| I write | I wrote | I have written |
| I fly | I flew | I have flown |
| I know | I knew | I have known |

The following are verbs that you may also want to study.

The verb *dive* is in fact regular:

I dive I dived I have dived

But *dove*, as a past and past participle, has become so common that it is now widely accepted.

We might call the verb *burst* “super-regular”. It doesn’t change at all:

Today I burst Yesterday I burst I have burst

Other super-regular verbs include *hit*, *set*, and *split*.

Shine is a peculiar case. Used as a **transitive verb** (which we’ll study soon), it’s regular: *They have shined their trophies every month.*

They shine They shined They have shined As an **intransitive verb** (another term that’s coming up), it’s irregular: *The sun has shone all day.*

It shines It shone It had shone

The verb *hang* is also peculiar, taking different forms depending on its meaning. Imagine you’re in a dusty little town in the Old West, and you ask a gnarled old-timer, “Whatever happened to that grammar teacher?” And the old-timer answers,

We’ve *hanged* that danged grammar teacher. He was all the time correctin’ us!

But if you’re proudly displaying your framed diploma on the wall, you could say,

I’ve finally *hung* my diploma.

There are six verbs (grouped in pairs below) that confuse us all at some point:

I sit down. I set the books down.

I lay the books down. I lie down.

I rise up. I raise the books up

In the left column, the verbs indicate the way you are positioning *yourself*. They are all irregular verbs. In the right column, the verbs indicate the way you are positioning the *object* (or anything else separate from yourself). They are all regular. It’s easy to keep these two sets of verbs straight: The verbs on the left all have the letter *i* as their first vowel. Remember that “the *i*-verbs indicate how *I* change my position.”