

The Past Participle in English (complete lesson with examples)

In this lesson about the past participle in English we will see its formation and utilisation (ex: been, liked, played...)

What is the past participle?

Past participle indicates a past and finished action or moment.

How to make the past participle in English:

1. Regular verbs:

For regular English verbs, the past participle is formed by simply adding an 'ed' to the verbal base, or a 'd' if the verb ends in the letter 'e'. This is why the past participle is also called "the ED form of verbs".

- live => lived
- seem => seemed
- enjoy => enjoyed
- pour => poured
- hope => hoped
- like => liked
- jump => jumped
- play => played
- paint => painted
- enter => entered

With a one-syllable verb, you must double the end consonant and add "ed":

- chat => chatted
- chop => chopped
- stop => stopped

Unless it ends in a -w, -x or -y:

- sew => sewed
- play => played
- fix => fixed

If the last syllable of a long verb is accented and ends with a consonant, it must be doubled:

- incur => incurred
- prefer => preferred
- travel => travelled

Be careful, when the verb ends with a consonant followed by a -y, you have to replace it by a -ied:

- try => tried
- marry => married
- fry => fried
- reply => replied

Finally, it is necessary to remember certain regular verbs that end in a way specific to the past participle:

- panic => panicked (c becomes -ck)
- free => freed
- dye => dyed

2. Irregular verbs:

For irregular verbs in the past participle: there is no real rule and you have to learn them by heart. A few examples:

- know => known
- arise => arisen
- catch => caught
- choose => chosen

It is sometimes possible that the irregular verb is identical to the verbal basis and the preterite, for example:

- **cut** (base form) => **cut** (preterite) => **cut** (past participle)
- **hit** (base form) => **hit** (preterite) => **hit** (past participle)

Or it is the same as the preterit:

- **pay** (base form) => **paid** (prétérit) => **paid** (past participle)
- **bind** (base form) => **bound** (prétérit) => **bound** (past participle)

When to use the past participle in English?

1. To form the passive voice in English:

- His room was well **cleaned**.
- My flight has been **delayed** because of the storm.
- He was **injured** in a car accident.
- This school was **opened** in 1993.

2. Past participle used as an adjective:

Past participles can be used as an adjective in front of a noun:

- I am **bored**.
- She feels **tired** today.
- It's a **stolen** car.
- She was **interested** in the movie.
- Tom Cruise is a well-**known** actor.
- This house is **abandoned**.
- His toy is **broken**.

3. To form different verbal forms (past participle is in bold):

- Present perfect: I have **learnt**
- Present perfect progressif: I have **been** breaking
- Past perfect: I had **learnt** English
- Past perfect progressif: I had **been** learning
- Futur perfect: I will have **learnt**
- Futur perfect progressif: I will have **been** learning